

AS WE REMEMBER

A History of the Russel Vale Community from the early 1900's to the 1950's compiled by the Russell Vale Local History Group for the Russell Vale Community Arts Association 1994. PO Box 107 Woonona 2517.

This attractively produced book is a little gem. Russell Vale is something of a forgotten community. Not one student in my Year 8 class at Lake Illawarra High could tell me where it was, although some claimed they'd heard of it. This book explains very clearly why such a fine suburb exists and continues to survive.

In doing so it provides some great vignettes. It's amazing how things change so quickly. In 1928 you could stand on the dirt main road between Woonona and Corrimal and "there wasn't any traffic, only a horse and cart. If you heard a bus you heard it a mile away. We used to play marbles on the main road."

Sixty years on, lead and benzene fumes spew from the same spot, silently stunting the brains of young children.

But at least some things get better. *As We Remember* covers a horrific story by John McGoldrick, a miner at South Bulli Colliery, dusted at 38 years of age and sacked without compensation rights.

The book is full of lots of tidbits of 'real history' like this, all presented in a very lively, coherent and readable fashion.