

# THE CRAG

NEWSLETTER OF THE  
CASTLECrag PROGRESS  
ASSOCIATION INC.

Seventy nine years of community development  
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August 2003

Castlecrag Progress Association

6/77 Edinburgh Road,  
Castlecrag  
Web page: [www.  
castlecragcommunity.com](http://www.castlecragcommunity.com)

**President:** Kate Westoby

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Bob McKillop

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**Treasurer:** Diana Jones

**Committee:** Peter Moffitt

Jill Newton

Howard Rubie

Gay Spies

John Steel

**Meeting dates for 2003:**

**Tuesday 26 August 8pm**

**Tuesday 21 October 8pm**

**Committee Meetings:**

**Tuesday 23 September 8pm**

**Tuesday 25 November 8pm**

Progress Association membership  
form is on page 6.

Please send all correspondence  
and membership renewals to the  
above address.

The Crag is edited by  
Kerry McKillop 9958 4516  
Elizabeth Lander 9958 5384

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## Castlecrag Community Fair 2003

The 2003 Castlecrag Community Fair on 1 June was an outstanding success. Fine weather brought large crowds and the event served its purpose of bringing our community together. Once again, our mayor, Pat Reilly, officially opened the Fair and met with many of those attending.

All our community groups in The Crag conducted stalls or activities at the Fair and Willoughby Council was well represented with a range of education displays. There was a range of items on sale and all the community groups reported good support for their activities.

The Association extends a big thank you to Kathy Rosenmeyer and her helpers at the *Trash and Treasure* stall. We are indebted to all those who helped make this such a success. Thanks are also extended to the businesses which participated in the Fair and helped to make it a wonderful day for our community: Castlecrag Newsagent, Shamrock Meats, Rodney Clark, Castlecrag Florist, Castlecrag Quality Meats, Castlecrag Fruiterers, Momo Interiors, Castlecrag Pharmacy, Galleria, Mia, Travelplan Australia, Lunch, Clipso, Christina's Restaurant, The

Professionals, LJ Hooker, PRD Nationwide, Richardson & Wrench, Treats & Temptations, Flavours of Peking, Source and Castlecrag Cellars. With this generous assistance, we covered the cost of staging the Fair and there was a small surplus.

### AGM 2003

Our AGM on Sunday 4th May was well-attended and Guest Speaker Linda Cardew gave a most interesting and informative talk on the Civic Place proposal.

Kate Westoby in her President's Report gave the following summary of the Association's activities over the past year:

*Guest speakers at our meetings have included Greg Woodhams, Council's Director of Environmental Services, who spoke on the thorny issue of Development Applications. For those with interest in the history of Willoughby, local resident Ian Rannard gave a fascinating talk on the market gardens which once flourished in the area bounded by Eastern Valley Way and Alpha Road. At an earlier meeting, Council's Traffic Engineer Tony Lehmann (page 3)*



Willoughby Council displays at the Fair. Bob McKillop



The publication of *The Crag* newsletter is made a reality by advertising from our local businesses. Thank you for your continued support of the Association's newsletter to our community.

Castlecrag Progress Association

GENERAL  
MEETING

Tuesday 26  
August 2003

Guest  
Speaker,  
James  
Smallhorn  
The Griffin

## Community Bytes

### Edinburgh Road LATM

Castlecrag residents will be aware that the roundabout at the Edinburgh Road—The Postern—Rutland Avenue intersection has been constructed. They may be wondering what happened about the other traffic management measures proposed for Edinburgh Road and Sunnyside Crescent.

As noted in *The Crag* No. 146, the proposed works to enhance traffic safety measures on Edinburgh Road were the result of long-standing community agitation since 1973. The proposed devices were painted on the road surface in March-April 2003 and consultations were held with residents immediately adjacent to the devices. This elicited responses from a number of residents. A majority of these were opposed to the proposed speed retardation devices, although others strongly supported the proposal, arguing it was about time action was taken. No opposition was expressed to the roundabout.

As a result of this opposition, Council's Transport, Traffic & Access Committee agreed that the Edinburgh Road slow ways and the proposed treatment of The Parapet-Edinburgh Road intersection would not be installed pending further consultation and possible modification. Work proceeded on the roundabout. The total budget allocated for the traffic scheme was \$160,000, half of which came from a RTA grant. The unused funds for the scheme were transferred to other works. There is no provision for the Castlecrag works in the 2003-2004 Council budget.

### Plaques for Reserves

Have you seen the new plaque in Casement Reserve? This fine plaque is the result of submissions to Willoughby Council by the Progress Association and the Walter Burley Griffin Society, in response to a proposal to erect large corporate signs in each of the Castlecrag Reserves. We argued that these large signs would

be inappropriate for the small reserves of Castlecrag and that appropriate signs should be low key and set in stone, preferably in engraved bronze and naming the reserve. Use of the sculptured *Banksia serrata* by Bim Hilder that has previously been used by the Progress Association for plaques in Castlecrag, was recommended. It was recognised that this approach would achieve a significant cost saving for Council and the proposal was readily adopted. The first example in Casement Reserve represents a positive outcome for all concerned.



**Northbridge Probus Club Inc.** is an association of retired and semi-retired professional and business men with a basic purpose to provide regular opportunities to keep their minds active, expand their interests and enjoy fellowship. Sponsored by Rotary, it is non-political, non-sectarian and non fund raising. Formal meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month to hear talks and arrange outings. The meetings are from 9.45am until noon. The Club welcomes potential members as visitors.

For further information call the club President, Barry Whitelaw (9958 7761) or Secretary, Richard Harvey (9958 1004).

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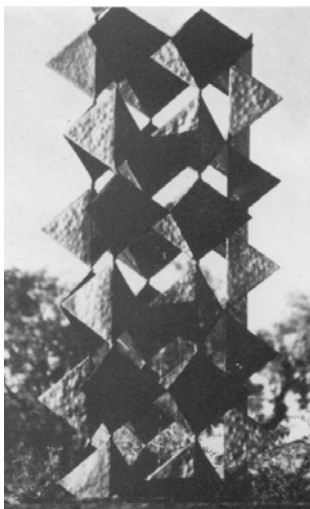
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## The Griffin Memorial Fountain

Willoughby Municipal Council celebrated its centenary in 1965 and in Castlecrag we decided to mark that occasion by erecting a memorial to the creator of our suburb, Walter Burley Griffin. A proposal was put forward by the Castlecrag Community Centre Committee and Bim Hilder was asked to design an appropriate sculpture. It was thought that it would be best placed on the island which used to exist at the corner of The Postern and Edinburgh Road but on the recommendation of Edmond Harvey, a most talented local artist, the island at the corner of The Sortie Port and Edinburgh Road was substituted. So, Bim got on with his creation of a magnificent water sculpture made of copper and based on a tetrahedral motif and the community set about raising money to fund the enterprise. Which it did, in no time at all, and by over four hundred pounds!

The fountain was unveiled by the Mayor, Alderman Laurie McGinty on Centenary Day, 23 October 1965 to the great pleasure of the many residents who attended. He planted a tree nearby to further record the occasion, trees were planted at the shopping centre, some Griffin houses were opened for inspection and a demonstration of the design and construction of *Knitlock* tiles was held in the school grounds. Time has passed and the pumping, drainage and electrical systems of the fountain are in serious need of upgrading. The fountain is classified as a heritage item and Council, despite attempts to get the fountain operational again, has decided that the best way to keep it functioning into the future is to completely upgrade its hydraulic and electronic items with current technology. It has estimated the cost of restoration to be in the vicinity of \$50,000. Funds to do this are not available in Council's current annual budget but it is giving some thought to seeking funding from heritage bodies. It would be wonderful if the Castlecrag community were again to come together to assist in the financing of the fountain's restoration. The fountain is a remarkable and significant item in our suburb and its preservation is important for the man it honours and for generations to come.



James Smallhorn, from Willoughby City Council's Open Space Branch, will speak on the restoration of the fountain at our 26 August general meeting.

\*\*\*\*\*

### President's Report (from page 1)

*outlined proposals for traffic calming installations in Castlecrag, with members of the audience giving suggestions for revisions in keeping with the special heritage nature of Castlecrag.*

*After its long gestation period, we are happy to report that the Association's website is now available. We thank Karen Benhar for her professional input.*

*Recently, the longstanding matter of the Foreshore Building Line has finally been resolved, and the Progress Association congratulates Council for bringing to conclusion a difficult process that needed to address a wide range of interests. While all groups will no doubt have some disappointment at the final result — ours being that the FBL on the Northern Escarpment is not as strong as the line we had hoped for — nevertheless, the outcome will provide significant protection for our foreshores over the coming years.*

>>>>>>

## President's Report (continued)

*The Committee prepared a submission regarding Council's corporate signage in parks, reserves and walkways. This was successful in getting Council's support for installing the Bim Hilder-designed bronze plaques which have been used in various locations in Castlecrag over past years.*

*The Progress Association sends delegates to the Federation of Willoughby Progress Associations which meets every two months, for information-sharing meetings on matters of concern to the wider Willoughby community. The Federation has recently made a detailed submission to Council on the revision of DCP 27 which covers notification of Development Applications to interested parties.*

*Thank you to the hard-working committee which meets every alternate month to our general meetings, and tackles a wide range of issues of importance to maintaining the unique character of Castlecrag.*

**Kate Westoby, President**


### In Memoriam—Valerie (Valie) Langer

*Valerie Langer immigrated to Australia in 1948, having survived transportation to at least seven concentration camps in WWII and a bombing which left her severely hearing-impaired. She arrived with her husband William and her 6 months old daughter Sylvia, in the hope of starting a new life. In the early 1950s she moved into the house in The Battlement which she had designed and which her husband built.*

*Valerie was very creative. She was a trained clothes designer and dressmaker, and spent many days and nights over her treadle machine creating haute couture outfits for her family and friends. Over the fifty years she lived in Castlecrag, many other creative talents were unleashed. She studied art and sculpture at East Sydney Technical College under the tutelage of Harvey and Robert Kippel. She also attended art classes with Bim Hilder on Edinburgh Road with John and Margaret Minchin and other neighbours, honing her skills in various media.*

*She loved attending the opera, theatre and music concerts, but her greatest joy was working in the garden or walking around the streets of Castlecrag with one of her canine pets (of which she had several over the years).*

*Valie enjoyed travelling, often alone, to all corners of the world, but was always thrilled to return home to Castlecrag. She often said she couldn't imagine living anywhere else. After suffering several strokes, Valie Langer passed away on 7th May 2003.*



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## Haven Amphitheatre



The Haven Management Committee has been successful in receiving funding from Council to present two special events in our community as part of the upcoming Willoughby Spring Festival.

We hope you can join us for:

### The Haven Spring Music Festival

**Saturday 20 September 8pm**  
*Benjamin's Big Band in Cabaret*

Join us for a night of dance music under the stars with Benjamin's Big Band, a 30 piece jazz orchestra. A night for the adults in the family! This high-energy performance group, featuring vocalist Shalom Andrews, has that irrepressible big band sound and will play through the contemporary jazz, funk, Latin, and fusion music spectrum. The Haven stage becomes a dance floor for those so inclined to party the night away.

Refreshments will be available. A wonderful night to remember. Tickets \$15.00. For more information on the band:  
<http://www.benjaminsbigband.com/>

**Saturday 27 September 1.30pm & 3.30pm**

**Rem Theatre's**

*The Kookaburra Who Stole the Moon*

Music & storytelling for children & family audiences.  
**An Australian bush story, with members of the Willoughby Symphony Orchestra**

This is the delightful story of a greedy bird who falls in love with the moon and steals it from the night sky. All the other bush animals try to make her laugh so that she will open her beak and set the moon free.

*Kookaburra* is an original score especially commissioned to introduce children to the instruments of the orchestra in an engaging way. Traditional clapsticks, didgeridoo and aboriginal dance forms combine with the music of the classical ensemble to present the unique characteristics of Australian animals. The Indigenous dancer illustrates the music of the *Kookaburra*, Snake, Frog, Emu, Wombat and Kangaroo.



A short interactive workshop follows each performance aiding children in the development of imagination and listening skills through movement, music and games.

*Kookaburra* has performed to sellout houses nationally and internationally. The Haven Amphitheatre is the perfect venue for this musical bush story. Bring the grandparents, toddlers & everyone in between!

"Utterly rapt attention was the order of the hour among several 4 to 8 year olds watching this bewitching blend of music, mime and storytelling ... with the help of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra plus a didgeridoo they combine a fun introduction to the various instrument's sounds ... expressively mimed by the dancer the antics of each animal - frog, snake, emu, wombat and kangaroo - are each accompanied by its own signature music. Rarely have I seen so many small people so thoroughly and happily engrossed"

– *The Scotsman (United Kingdom Tour 1996)*

**Friday October 31, Saturday November 1 & Sunday November 2 8pm**  
*Under Mulgawood (World Premiere)*

A play for voices written by Will Christie based on the renowned *Under Milkwood* by Dylan Thomas. Witness the birth of the Aussie version in its first-ever performance.

The Haven Shuttle bus operates to and from all performances, commencing from Castlecrag shops 1 hour before the event.

For further information, ring the Haven Hotline—9405 5078

or Howard Rubie 0418 648 870

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## Civic Place Project



Since the Masterplan Exhibition opened in the Civic Centre foyer in late April, there have been over 1000 visitors to the Exhibition. The Civic Place website [www.civicplace.com.au](http://www.civicplace.com.au) has hosted 1490 sessions and 58,000 hits.

Comments from those visiting the exhibition have been overwhelmingly positive, with over 70% openly expressing support for the project. About 4% of visitors to the exhibition have been negative about one or more aspects of the project or design and around 24% of visitors have not expressed a view.

If you haven't been to the exhibition, why not visit and talk to one of the Council officers. Your opinion counts and Council urges you to be informed. The exhibition is open Mondays to Fridays 10.00 to 4.00pm and Saturdays 10.00 to 2.00pm. Contact Linda Cardew 9777 1015.

## Litter Campaign

*Are you sick of seeing litter at your local shops?* If you are, Council would like your input into a new litter prevention campaign for Castlecrag and Northbridge.

This campaign is part of the 'Streets to Creeks-Sailors Bay' program and seeks to reduce litter in shopping areas in the Sailors Bay catchment.

Council seeks community help to decide what this campaign should involve. A community workshop will be held on **Saturday 30th August, 9am—12:30pm**, so that everyone who is interested can come together. It will be facilitated by an independent party and will be held at the Warner's Park Centre. A delicious morning tea and lunch will also be provided - so please RSVP. Everyone is welcome - young and old, residents and shop-owners.

Please call Erika Van Schellebeck, on 9777-7942 for information.

## Willoughby's Heritage

Local historian Paul Storm is seeking the views of our city's residents on how we can link the Civic Place Project more closely with our living heritage. He would like to see the Project incorporate a sense of Willoughby's identity, a uniqueness, that will give ourselves a greater sense of our own place.

Paul cites the Bicentenary Banners and the Town Hall's Wurlitzer organ built for the Arcadia Theatre in Chatswood in the 1920s as Willoughby's hidden heritage treasures that need to be given prominence in the new Civic Place. The Civic Place planners have embraced Paul's ideas and are keen to obtain community input on how the Civic Place can showcase Willoughby's history and character.

If you have ideas that could be taken up in the Civic Place, then come along to the Progress Association's General Meeting on **26 August**. We also be giving time to this matter at the meeting.

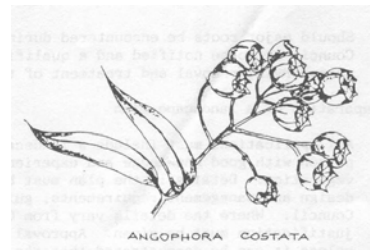
## The Bushland Heritage of Castlecrag's Reserves

In April 1998 Willoughby City Council established the Griffin Reserves Advisory Committee and its members consist of residents of Castlecrag, the Councillors of our Ward and Council staff. Its functions are to review the current Plan of Management for the Griffin Reserves in Castlecrag as it relates to the ongoing implementation, development, work and management of these areas and to advise on aspects of the use, control management of Griffin Reserves for consideration by Council. Its duties include monitoring and advising Council on the health and condition of bushland in the reserves and encouraging the visitation, promotion and enhancement of the natural and built features of the Griffin Reserves.

Much work has in the Reserves and Islands has been overseen by this committee since 1998. The work has been done using bush regeneration contractors and in some reserves working with residents. It is funded by Council. The nature of the work is necessarily slow and it will be some years before Griffin's system of inter-related Walkways and Reserves is again able to be used safely. Regeneration and planting in The Buttress Reserve, below The Tower Reserve, has been underway for some time, but last week the contractor arrived to start work and was horrified to discover that vandals had ripped out plants and slashed or destroyed trees. All her efforts to restore the natural vegetation of this reserve had been made null and void.

Griffin's vision for Castlecrag was one in which the natural landscape, not the built form was the dominant feature. The Plan of Management seeks to re-establish this vision and it is a matter of deep disappointment that some would seek to destroy this. Let us hope that The Buttress, after further regeneration work, and as the other Reserves are demonstrating, will become the place of natural loveliness it was planned to be.

**Elizabeth Lander**



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## History of Castlecrag: Part 6

1930s Vernon Arthur ('Bim') Hilder, son of JJ Hider, accepted a job with Walter Burley Griffin during the Depression as a carpenter. At Castlecrag he soon learned a great deal about the basics of design and the creative use of stone and timber. In 1929 he designed and built the house *Wildflower* for his mother, and between 1931 and 1948 he designed and supervised the construction of four more homes in the suburb, including his own at 177 Edinburgh Road. His designs strongly reflect the ideas of Griffin. Bim married Roma Hopkinson, a skilled artist, in 1934 and she became a generous and industrious community worker in Castlecrag. He took up sculpture in 1948 while convalescing from an injury and soon excelled in this art form. He won many major awards, including the Wall Enrichment Competition for the Reserve Bank's building in 1963. For 20 years, Bim opened his home once a week to a small group of interested citizens to develop their art skills and he taught sculpture at East Sydney Technical College for 13 years. Bim was awarded an MBE for services to sculpture and the community in 1979.



Castlecrag residents working on the

1935 Michael Stoker moved to Castlecrag at the invitation of the Griffins and rented *The Pinnacle* on Edinburgh Road. Michael had strong interests in the theatre and was an active performer in the classic plays performed at the New Haven Scenic Amphitheatre. He married Phyllis Cotterell in 1936, left Castlecrag in 1938 but returned in 1942.

1937 Walter Burley Griffin died in India on 11 February. Marion Griffin returned to Castlecrag in May 1937, residing at the Mower House in The Rampart. She left permanently for the United States at the end of 1938. Griffin's partner, Eric Nicholls, carried on the architectural business as Managing Director of the GSDA, but he resigned in 1940 and set up his own architectural practice. His best known work in Castlecrag is the 1938 house at 3The Bastion. It is an original Griffin design which Nicholls reconfigured slightly to allow the production of plays, many of them performed on a commercial basis. Guido Baracchi, the first owner, was a left-wing intellectual who had known Griffin in Melbourne. Betty Roland, his partner, was a playwright and author. Named *Camelot* in the 1950s, the house is now heritage-listed in Council's LEP.

1939 Eastern Valley Way, one of the projects pushed by Griffin and the Progress Association, was officially opened. It linked Lyle and Eric Streets and allowed the introduction of a bus service linking Castlecrag with the City.

1940 The raconteur, writer, humorist and enameller, Bernard Hesling and his wife Flo moved to Castlecrag and rented the Guy House at 23 The Bastion. They moved to the *White House* in The Redoubt.

1940 The reserves and ways of access on the Castlecrag Estate were transferred from the GSDA to Willoughby Municipal Council by Deed of Trust on 28 November.

1942 Phyllis Stoker, who operated a registered child-minding centre at her home *Bayview* on Edinburgh Road consented to establish a preschool group in part of the home. Olive Mason, a trained kindergarten teacher, and her assistant, Naomi Long, were appointed in 1944.

1943 Marion Mahony Griffin gave the Title Deeds of the Haven Amphitheatre to Willoughby Municipal Council on 12 October. It fell into disuse until 1976. 1944 The Castlecrag and East Willoughby Community Advancement Co-operative Society Ltd was formed to raise money for a Community Centre. Frank Duncan, who had experience of co-operative societies in England, was the first president and Joyce Batterham secretary. Land in The Keep Reserve was transferred by Willoughby Council to the Co-operative Society for community purposes. £1000 was raised and matched by the Council. Eric Nicholls donated his services to design the building and residents did much of the labouring work. Funds were subsequently raised to establish the Community Library at the Centre. (*The Crag* 75, May/June 1991)

1944 The Castlecrag Sports Club was established on 17 August to manage the tennis courts in Cortile Reserve on behalf of Willoughby Municipal Council. It remains in operation with two recently refurbished courts.

**Adrienne Kabos, James Weirick and Bob McKillop**

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