

THE CRAG

NEWSLETTER OF THE
CASTLECRAG PROGRESS
ASSOCIATION INC.

Seventy nine years of community development
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Castlecrag Progress Association

6/77 Edinburgh Road,
Castlecrag
Web page:
www.castlecrag.org.au

President: John Steel

Vice presidents: Kate Westoby

Gay Spies

Secretary: Elizabeth Lander

Treasurer: Diana Jones

Committee: Gloreen Goldin

Bob McKillop

Peter Moffitt

Jill Newton

Howard Rubie

General Meetings

Tuesday 22 June 8 pm

Tuesday 24 August 8 pm

Tuesday 26 October 8 pm

Castlecrag Community Centre

Membership renewals for the
Progress Association are now
due for 2004
(please see page 6)

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

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

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A Word from the President

Following the Annual General Meeting and election on 16 May, John Steel is the new President of the Castlecrag Progress Association. Past President Kate Westoby is a Vice-President and we welcome Gloreen Goldin to the committee. The full Committee is listed in the adjacent column.

John is a research scientist who has retired recently after 30+ years with CSIRO, culminating in a senior management role leading a major project on parasitic infections of livestock. John has lived in Castlecrag for 25 years, during which time he has developed a keen interest in the conservation of the built and natural environment, together with heritage issues.

'It is a great honour to be elected as President of the Castlecrag Progress Association which has served this community for almost 80



John Steel

years. Over that time CPA members have done much to improve amenities and stimulate community life whilst at the same time striving to conserve what is so special about this place in terms of our natural and human heritage for the benefit of future generations.

Today the need for awareness and vigilance is greater than ever, if we are to maintain the unique character of our community which attracted many of us here in the first place. In part, this is facilitated by greater participation in community groups such as ours, so that there can be better exchange of various viewpoints and improved understanding. In the forthcoming year your committee is attempting to organise a range of social events which will appeal to all age groups, long-established and recently arrived members of the community, and I ask you to give freely of your ideas and participation for the benefit of all.

Please contact me on 9958 5804 or any member of the committee with issues of concern for the community, or come along to our regular General Meetings and discuss them there with other members.'

John Steel

Castlecrag Conservation Society 2004 MEETING SCHEDULE

Thursday, 24 June
Thursday, 26 August
Thursday, 28 October
All meetings at 8 pm

All welcome
Castlecrag Community Centre

Castlecrag Progress Association

SPECIAL MEETING

Tuesday 22 June 2004

Agenda:

Constitution Revision

Followed by a Committee Meeting
(we welcome members of the public)

Community Centre at 7.30 pm

Community Bytes

Community Events

The Progress Association has appointed Gloreen Goldin as its Activities Director. Gloreen has put forward several community initiatives on behalf of the Progress Association. These comprise:

Seniors' Shopping: Cannot get out; need to be picked up? A small group of local residents will help elderly or frail residents on the last Thursday of each month. Council transport will be arranged to pick everyone up to go to Chatswood for shopping, banking or Medicare. If you are not well, provide a shopping list.

Numbers are limited, so please call Gloreen on 9967 9133 or 0418422998 if you require this service.

Melbourne Cup Luncheon: A fantastic lunch at 'Lunch' is planned with a wonderful fashion show. Further news in future issues of *The Crag*.

Movie Club/Music Morning: A regular get together is planned for senior citizens and those who would like to meet other local residents (available to everyone, any age group). If you are interested in participating, please call Gloreen 9967 9133 or 0418422998 to see if this is viable.

2004 Enviro-Grant for Castlecrag

The Castlecrag Progress Association has been awarded one of five 2004 Enviro-Grants, a Council *e.restore* initiative for schools and community groups to help improve the long-term environmental sustainability of Willoughby City. The grants encourage involvement from members of the community who might not normally have the opportunity to participate in environmental projects.

The Progress Association will use its grant to provide advice to residents on indigenous plants for the garden to enhance biodiversity and to reduce water use, in a brochure listing suitable indigenous plants for Castlecrag.

Edinburgh Road Traffic Matters

Tony Lehmann, Council's Group Leader on Traffic Management addressed the April meeting of the Progress Association. He provided advice on the current status of Edinburgh Road improvements and answered questions from the floor. Construction of the three additional traffic calming devices will not proceed, but bicycle lanes will be marked. In response to concerns raised, a Petition to the Minister for Roads requesting the implementation of a right-hand turn arrow from Edinburgh Road into Eastern Valley Way, Castlecrag is being prepared. This will be made available at the local shops on selected Saturday mornings.

Infants' School Emblem

The impressive tiled sign used for the Castlecrag Infants' School has been in the safekeeping of the Progress Association since 1990. Repairs have recently been made to damaged tiles. We are seeking suggestions from residents on the most suitable location for this important symbol of our community spirit, providing public access to it while ensuring its secure preservation.

momo

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Innovative Water Management

Mark Sabolch, the Water Management Engineer at Willoughby City Council, was guest speaker at the Progress Association's AGM on 16 May 2004. He spoke about water in Castlecrag from both the perspective of an environmental water engineer, and that of a boy who grew up in the 1960s environment of Castlecrag.

Mark's early childhood was in Castlecrag, his architect father having built the family home in The Bulwark. The house applied many of Walter Burley Griffin's principles, with its flat roof and grey brick finish melding into the bush setting. The blocks on either side were vacant, so his early educational experiences were of the 'enchanted bush'.

While Griffin's achievements in relating the built to the natural environment are well known, the relationship of the fabric of Castlecrag to water is less appreciated. Griffin saw the importance of keeping the creeks as nature reserves to maintain the aesthetics of the bush and to ensure that the bays received clean water. The Castlecrag landscape design provides 'zones of transition' from the built to the natural environment.

As the built environment has become more dominant, native vegetation has been lost and the creeks and bays have become degraded, especially after storms. Mark presented



Demonstration rainwater tank

photographs of recent examples of pollution from litter and scouring of creeks in Willoughby. Often sediment from building sites and other man-made interventions is deposited in the creeks and this kills off the biological life of the creek. He included extreme cases where chemical spills had caused major fish kills in our local creeks.

Willoughby Council is monitoring the environmental condition of the creeks by sampling the water and sediment, and measuring the presence of sensitive animal and insect

species, such as the damsel fly. On the Signal Index of water quality, which uses a 1-7 scale with less than 4 being severely impaired, all the Middle Harbour creeks rate around 3.3. Against the AusRiverAS biotic index, the Willoughby creeks averaged around 'D' (impoverished). Thus, the creeks draining into Middle Harbour are in poor condition environmentally.

The key issue is, do people care? This is a difficult question to answer, but testing under the *Streets to Creeks* project suggests that residents are now more aware of where stormwater from their street goes. The results show, however, that residents regard problems associated with urban density and its impacts more highly than those of stormwater and water quality.

Mark spent some time outlining innovative stormwater management practices to reduce environmental impacts in future. These include vegetative drains in the median strip of roads, the use of roof gardens and greater use of rainwater tanks. A demonstration rainwater tank with plumbing for internal use and planter boxes that collect roof runoff have been installed at the community centre at Warner's Park and there is optimism that innovative stormwater management practices will be applied to the LandCom development site at Willoughby Market Garden Park.

30 Years of Conservation

The Castlecrag Conservation Society has a proud record of conserving the natural and associated built environment of Castlecrag. It commenced as a Conservation sub-group of the Progress Association in the 1960s and was constituted as a separate organisation in the mid-1970s.

Under its first president, Beverley Blacklock, the Society carried on the aims of the Conservation group, especially the removal of exotic weeds in our reserves, the planting of indigenous native trees in private gardens and streetscapes, and upholding Griffin's concept of buildings that complemented the surrounding bush. The Society now also liaises with other local, regional, state and national conservation bodies and lends support to conservation issues in general.

The business of the Society is carried on by an Executive and a Committee of five members elected at its Annual General Meeting held in the first quarter of the year. The committee meets bi-monthly and organises General (Speaker) Meetings in alternate months. These General Meetings are open to the public and are free. The schedule of meetings for 2004 is given on page 1. The Society's monthly newsletter, *Conservation Update*, provides members with news and views.

The Society welcomes as members any resident who supports its aims and objectives. Please contact Harold Spies, 66 Sugarloaf Crescent—phone 9958 8569—for further information.

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Progress Association Annual Report

The retiring President, Kate Westoby, presented her third annual report to the Annual General Meeting on 16 May, as follows:

The past year has been a successful one for the Progress Association. Our main activities were:

The Castlecrag Community Fair, held on 4 June 2003, was once again a very successful event with a number of community groups and local businesses involved. The Progress Association ran its highly successful trash and treasure stall under the splendid management of Kathy Rosenmeyer. Money raised has been put aside for the restoration of the Griffin Fountain and other community projects.

General meetings. James Smallhorn spoke at the August meeting on the Griffin Fountain, covering the restoration plans and the costs. A community forum was held at our October meeting where a range of issues and ideas were discussed such as Development Applications, traffic problems, tree plantings on Edinburgh Road and the recording of oral histories from long time residents. Willoughby Council's Traffic Manager, Tony Lehmann, spoke about traffic management in Castlecrag at the February meeting.

Council's Development Controls. During the last year Willoughby Council has revised some important DCPs - notably DCP 19(Heritage and Conservation) and DCP 27(Notifications). The Progress Association made submissions on these and we are pleased to report that, generally, the revisions have clarified and tightened the processes and the controls. However, this Association has ongoing concerns about the need for more rigorous application of the Controls.

Traffic. After a longstanding effort by the Progress Association I am pleased to report that there has been some action by Council during the year, the most notable being the completion of the roundabout at the corner of Edinburgh Road, The Postern and Rutland Avenue. The other planned calming structures have been placed on hold pending change in traffic speed and/or accidents. However, some line markings will be painted on Edinburgh Road to demarcate cycle lanes and parking spaces. Other minor traffic improvements have been made in Sunny-side Crescent and The Bulwark.

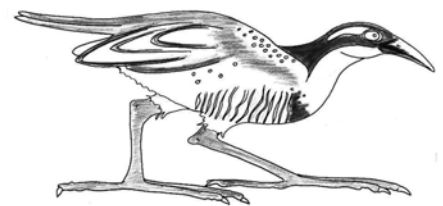
Federation of Progress Associations. Traffic has also been a major issue for the Federation of Progress Associations, which established a subcommittee to examine traffic issues in Northbridge with representation from Castlecrag, South Willoughby, Naremburn and Northbridge. The Federation has been able to establish an umbrella Public Liability Insurance policy that has enabled the five participating Progress Associations (including Castlecrag) to significantly reduce their premiums. Also, through the Federation we have been actively providing input into the planning process of Civic Place. We therefore, note with satisfaction, the endorsement of the project by Willoughby's citizens at the Council poll conducted at the March Council elections. We thank Bob McKillop, Elizabeth Lander and Gay Spies for representing our association on the Federation throughout the year.

The Crag. Kerry McKillop and Elizabeth Lander continue as editors of The Crag publishing four issues culminating in Number 150 in April 2004. We have continued with the serialisation of the history of Castlecrag, which has generated considerable public interest. Thanks are in

order to Bob McKillop, Adrienne Kabos, James Werrick and Elizabeth Lander for putting this series together. We thank all the advertisers for their support and we ask the community to get behind the local businesses that support us. Thanks to our devoted volunteer deliverers: Mac and Annette Robertson, Judith Keller, Lisa Sherington, Jill Newton, Gay and Harold Spies, David and Joanna Harrop and Marie Clifton-Bassett. Thanks also to our expert ex-postman Harry Fox for delivering The Crag. We are proud of our newsletter.

Website. I reported last year that we were about to establish our website. However, we had some technical difficulties so we advertised in The Crag for a volunteer to manage the website. I'm pleased to report that Annette Frith has come forward in response and with her help the website has been updated and established with a new ISP. Please check our site at: www.castlecrag.org.au. We welcome any comments and suggestions for further improvement.

Committee. Finally, I would like to thank the members of this committee for all their hard work. They are all people with a love of this area and are committed to enhancing and protecting our natural and built environment as well as encouraging a sense of community. A lot of work is carried out throughout the year



Buff Banded Rail

Wet Wanderer in Willoughby

Willoughby is celebrating the local appearance of the Buff-Banded Rail, an elegant and unique bird of wetlands and waterways seldom seen in the city.

The Buff Banded Rail has recently been noted in Willoughby and is said to be creating a stronghold in the Middle Harbour area. According to our local bird expert Andy Burton, the increase in numbers around Castle Cove and Middle Cove means the Buff Banded Rail could be here to stay.

The water bird spends most of his time on the ground foraging for food and so is threatened by foxes, feral cats and other domestic animals. Its presence suggests that Council's fox baiting program and improvements to local creeks and estuaries are succeeding.



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Willoughby Council Matters



Environment in Focus

Entries are invited for the Willoughby City Council Environmental Photography Prize and Exhibition, *Environment in Focus*. The competition will enable Willoughby to showcase its beautiful natural environment. Willoughby City Council Mayor Pat Reilly invited photographers to submit images taken within our local government area to promote the variety and magnificence of our natural environment. Entries should support the competition's theme; '*Willoughby's environment, it's living, what a terrible thing to lose*'.

Two thousand dollars in prize money will be awarded across two categories: 'Open' and 'School Student'. A selection of works will be exhibited at the Mowbray Scout Hall and in its bushland surrounds from 22 August 2004. The launch of the exhibition and announcement of the award winners will also feature Photographic Bushwalks.

Castlecrag Library

The Castlecrag branch of the Willoughby Library has been in existence for over 50 years. It is located at the Castlecrag Community Centre and it open from 3-4.30 pm on Tuesdays, 2-5 pm on Thursdays and 10 am to 12 noon on Saturdays. It is the only Willoughby Library branch to still be manned by volunteers.

Our library includes, for example, many books suitable for pre-schoolers and it is a good reference source for material relating

to Walter and Marion Griffin and their work in Castlecrag. Do come and use our community-based, friendly library service. New borrowers are welcome.

Chatswood Railway Station

The proposed redevelopment of Chatswood railway station and transport interchange is a major project for Willoughby. Known as the Chatswood Transport Precinct Project, it will provide a new railway station with a concourse below the platforms linked to a new bus interchange, three residential towers, additional retail space and underground parking.

The Development Application is on public display from 31 May to 29 June at Willoughby City Council and Library, as well as the TIDC Chatswood Display Centre at the station.

Letter to the Editor: Telstra Broadband

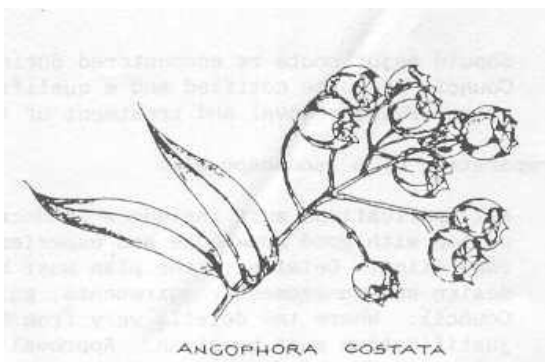
Dear Editors,

I urge the Progress Association and residents to lobby Telstra to provide broadband services to the whole of Castlecrag. It is pitiful that we have worse telephone services than many rural areas, although we are so close to the CBD!

I have been enquiring about broadband services for several years and each time I have been told that it cannot be provided because the local exchange is not equipped for such a service. I am advised that the only way I can obtain broadband is by installing a satellite dish. I do not regard this as a satisfactory solution. It is costly, unsightly and provides a less satisfactory connection.

Recently I logged onto the Bigpond web site to complain about a technical fault and found that they have a facility where people can register their interest in obtaining Broadband service. According to the site, Telstra will do a feasibility study if sufficient interest is registered. I was the first person from Castlecrag to register on the site. I am therefore writing to *The Crag* to urge all residents interested in obtaining Broadband to register their interest on the Web site. Perhaps Telstra might then do something about providing us with adequate service.

Jocelyn Chey



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History of Castlecrag: Part 9

1965 The Progress Association organised inspections of some Griffin houses, including the Fishwick, Grant, Wilson, Creswick and Duncan Houses, to raise money for the memorial fountain (see Part 8).

1965 Bim Hilder designed and constructed the **Griffin Memorial Fountain** on the traffic island at the intersection of Edinburgh Road and The Sortie Port, which provides a prominent entry to the Griffin Estates. The plaque is inscribed 'in recognition of the life and work of Walter Burley Griffin'. It was officially opened on 23 October during the celebrations of the Centenary of Willoughby Municipality. On the same day native trees were planted at the shopping centre, several owners of Griffin houses opened their homes for inspection and a demonstration of the design and construction of *knitlock* tiles used in some of the Griffin houses, was organised in the Infants' School grounds. The committee's appeal was oversubscribed by £400.

1968 Castlecrag architects **Hugh and Eva Buhrich** commenced work on their much-admired house at the end of Edinburgh Road. It is partly an addition to a former Griffin *knitlock* home. The exterior of the single-storey pavilion is a mixture of materials, including concrete beams, toughened glass and perforated timber louvres.

1968 Under the new headmistress Mrs Barlow, major building extensions and improvements were commenced at the Castlecrag Infants' School.

1970 The Progress Association raised \$1000 as a contribution to Willoughby Council for the re-erection of the shark net at the beach below the Retreat Reserve.

1970s The Association established a **Heritage and Classification Committee** "to work for the listing of the Castlecrag Estate as an historical precinct by the National Trust of Australia."

1972 *Castlecrag*, a superbly illustrated book edited by Addie Saltis, assisted by local resident and leading architectural writer Eva Buhrich, was published by Castlecrag Infants' School Club to raise funds for landscaping the school grounds and the purchase of native plants.

1972 The television documentary, *Walter Burley Griffin: a draftsman who went to Australia*, was produced by the Australian Broadcasting Commission. It reviewed Griffin's work in Melbourne, Sydney, Castlecrag and elsewhere.



Construction of the Griffin Memorial Fountain in 1965. Note the crystalline shapes in freeform nodules of copper. Photo: Harry Fox

1973 The Progress Association commissioned a team from the School of Architecture, University of NSW, to undertake a redesign of Edinburgh Road to incorporate **traffic calming** measures. The proposal, known as the **Colin James Plan**, was presented in July.

1974 Those landowners in the **Warringah Expressway corridor** who had not yet sold their land to the Department of Main Roads received a letter advising them of compulsory acquisition of their properties. The Association established a committee of approximately 20 residents, some with technical qualifications, to meet the challenge of the proposed construction of the Warringah freeway along the Northern Escarpment of Castlecrag. The committee prepared a Traffic Impact Report; a Survey of Social Effects; an Acoustical Investigation; and an Environmental Impact Study.

1974 *Castlecrag News*, a two-page roneoed newsheet of the Progress Association, commenced publication. It was issued monthly with opposition to the Warringah Freeway the dominant theme, while the local government elections were also covered. There were seven issues in 1974, but it did not appear again until 1977.

Elizabeth Lander, Bob McKillop and James Weirick

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