

# THE CRAG

NEWSLETTER OF THE  
CASTLECRAIG PROGRESS  
ASSOCIATION INC.

Eighty years serving the community  
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February 2005

*Castlecrag Progress Association*

6/77 Edinburgh Road,  
Castlecrag  
Web page:  
[www.castlecrag.org.au](http://www.castlecrag.org.au)

**President:** John Steel

**Vice presidents:** Kate Westoby  
Gay Spies

**Secretary:** Elizabeth Lander

**Treasurer:** Diana Jones

**Committee:** Gloreen Goldin

David Harrop

Bob McKillop

Peter Moffitt

Jill Newton

Howard Rubie

## Coming Events

**Wednesday 16 March:**

**PA General Meeting**  
(see box below)

**Tuesday 26 April:**

**PA General Meeting**

**Sunday 5 June 2005:**

**Community Fair**

Please see page 6 for  
membership renewals

**The Crag** is edited by  
Bob McKillop 9958 4516  
Elizabeth Lander 9958 5384

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

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## Castlecrag Heritage Forum

The public forum *Keeping Castlecrag Special!* sponsored by Willoughby City Council and the Progress Association on 26 October 2004 was a great success with over 100 residents attending.

The forum explored the special qualities of the suburb that the community may seek to retain and helped to explain the processes that are used to achieve the conservation of the built and natural environments. The aim was to demystify the issues and correct misinformation.

With Deputy Mayor Terry Fogarty in the chair, Bob Clark of the Sydney Harbour Trust led the session on Castlecrag's special character derived from its harbour setting. He covered the pressures for change, highlighting the scale and design of buildings and the need to retain tree cover as the key issues that need to be addressed if Castlecrag's special character is to be maintained. Bob emphasised that what we do now will have major future impact. Castlecrag is different from other places,

and it is best to build with an understanding of this local character. As Bob said, people who know Castlecrag say affectionately, "Ah! Castlecrag."

Professor James Weirick gave a most informative and entertaining presentation on the special features of the suburb. He reminded us that Griffin had made a gift of the foreshore and bushland reserves for the whole community, and these set a fundamental structure for development of Castlecrag that persists today. He said it has been demonstrated on many sites that the Griffin aims are still relevant and possible to retain, that there is a sense of continuity with the Griffin philosophy here; modern houses can still be sited so that the bushland filters the views of the buildings.

Sydney's Deputy Lord Mayor, John McInerney, tackled the myths that are often spread about the financial implications of heritage listing. He said that there is no doubt that a conservation area classification does add value to a property

when compared with equivalent properties outside the conservation area. The development controls add certainty, and the specific and unique environment is valued. As a result, listed properties are often easier to sell.

Castlecrag planner and urban design specialist Peter Moffitt noted that there are over 200 items listed on the Willoughby LEP, covering both buildings and other assets. In examining the way in which a heritage listing might affect a property owner, Peter said that a property owner can sell, rent and maintain a property in the normal way. They can owner can apply to the Valuer General for a heritage-restricted value on a listed property. Finally, Environmental Services Director, Greg Woodhams outlined Council's planning controls and DCPs, which provide the means to enunciate shared values such as heritage. The chair opened the forum to general discussion and questions.

**Lorraine Cairnes**

### Castlecrag Community Library

Castlecrag residents are urged to support the Community Library, which is located at the Community Centre off The Rampart. Library hours are:

Tuesday 3.00 to 4.30 pm  
Thursday 2.00 to 5.00 pm  
Saturday 10.00 am to 12 noon

Closed Public Holidays

**Phone: 9958 8395**

### Castlecrag Progress Association

#### GENERAL MEETING

**Wednesday 16 March 2005**

(Please note changed date)

**Castlecrag Community Centre, 8 pm**  
**Guest Speaker: Gladys Berejiklian,**  
**Member for Willoughby on**  
**development, traffic & conservation**

The Community Centre is off the access road from The Rampart. Please park in the street and walk down.

## Community Bytes

### Golden Trowel Award

Congratulations to Pat Starch who received the *Golden Trowel Award* at the Willoughby Council Bush Care Volunteers Christmas Party on 4 December 2004. The award is given for an outstanding contribution by a volunteer to bush care and in Pat's case this was for her work in Casement Reserve, Castlecrag over an extended period.

### Northbridge Bowling Club

Northbridge Bowling Club, located in Warners Park adjacent to Castlecrag, is seeking new members. A cordial invitation is extended to all residents to visit the club to check it out and inspect its facilities. If you are thinking of giving it a go, give them a call on 9958 5188 and a game with coaching can be organised. For further details, see the Club's new advertisement on page 3.

### Castlecrag Website

Have you checked out the Progress Association website at [www.castlecrag.org.au](http://www.castlecrag.org.au) lately? We made a significant update to the site in October, adding new material and improving its structure. Further improvements were made in January 2005, adding new contacts and restructuring the 'History Timeline' for easier access. Further material will be added by the time you receive this issue of *The Crag*.

Annette Frith, who has been managing the website on behalf of the Progress Association will be leaving Castlecrag in February. She has kindly offered to continue the administration of the site, for which we are most grateful. We wish Annette all the best in her future residence.

### Fundraising Dinner

Councillor Mary Johnston is organising a fundraising dinner for former Castlecrag resident Alain Thomason on Saturday 26 February 2005 at Club Willoughby. Alain and his wife Linda, moved to North Queensland in October 2003 to live out their dream. Two weeks after arriving there, Alain had an accident while pruning a tree and is now in the spinal injury section at Royal North Shore Hospital. He is unable to move from the neck down and is on a respirator. There is no insurance payout and Linda and son Bayden live with her mother in Seven Hills, commuting to RNS when they can.

The band *Diamond Dogs* is booked and there will be an auction of prizes kindly donated to the cause. Mary is keen for local groups to organise a table for a good night's entertainment. Contact Mary on 9958 1236 for information and bookings.

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## President's Musings

By any measure, but particularly in terms of attendance with a capacity crowd of over one hundred, the recent public forum on *Keeping Castlecrag Special* was a great success. Without doubt this was due to the calibre of the speakers and the highly relevant aims of the forum to promote understanding of the geographical and historical basis of this suburb's special qualities and the processes available to us all in seeking to conserve and enhance our built and natural environments. We are indeed grateful to Willoughby City Council, and to the Mayor and General Manager in particular, for promoting and facilitating the idea of this forum in the best overall interests of this community, and thereby helping to overcome some of the mystery and misinformation on heritage issues which has arisen in recent times. The Progress Association was pleased to assist in the organisation of the event in the interests of better communication within the community.

Your committee saw this forum as the first of an ongoing series of events designed to explore issues of major importance to Castlecrag and promote better understanding of community values, and will be considering ideas for "where to from here" at its first meeting of 2005 in mid-March. We are keen to hear all points of view that may have arisen from this initial forum, so ask that you communicate your ideas to us. It was especially pleasing to see so many new faces as well as the longer-established stalwarts at the forum. In order to maintain and grow the relevance of the CPA in serving this community for the 80<sup>th</sup> year, we need involvement from all of you, so please join us if not already a member and fearlessly contribute your thoughts and ideas to the Committee and at our general meetings – and particularly the next one on 16 March.

**John Steel**

## Federation Matters

**The Federation of Willoughby Progress Associations is the umbrella organization of the nine progress associations (PAs) in Willoughby City.** It provides a forum where issues that cut across the boundaries of individual PAs are reviewed and submissions are made to relevant authorities.

**Issues of concern** to the Federation include Council's development policies and controls, development policies and matters in Chatswood CBD, traffic and transport, electro-magnetic radiation and matters relating to the environment and natural heritage.

An issue of interest to Castlecrag is the **development pressure currently impacting on Northbridge.** As peninsular suburbs, Northbridge and Castlecrag experience similar problems – there are restricted entry points to the suburbs generating traffic congestion at peak periods and high land values result in pressure for large residences, which in turn impact on the natural environment and the amenity of other residents. In Northbridge these issues are keenly felt and the PA has been active in putting these concerns to Council and bodies such as the RTA. Their 'solution' of diverting traffic through South Willoughby and Naremburn generated some excitement in those areas, so a sub-committee of the Federation undertook a more objective assessment.

A current concern is the future of the **Willoughby Incinerator** designed by Walter Burley Griffin in 1931. A private

company restored the building in 1979 for a restaurant and Council granted the company a 50-year lease. The lease has been on-sold twice and the building was refitted for offices, but has been vacant for some time. The mortgagee has taken possession of the lease and has approached Council for financial assistance to renovate the building and for a further extension of the lease.

A meeting of Councillors, Federation PA delegates and representatives of the Walter Burley Griffin Society on 6 January discussed the future of the Incinerator. It was recognised that making the building suitable for public use under today's regulations would be very expensive and may compromise the heritage features of the structure. One suggestion was to seek public use (eg, a community facility such as a gallery) of the top floor and private commercial use of the two lower floors. The future of this major heritage asset remains uncertain at this stage, but it is hoped that a positive outcome can be achieved. The Federation will continue to monitor this matter.

*Bob McKillop*



### Northbridge Bowling Club

**Make Northbridge your Club!** Try your hand at bowls – it's good exercise and lots of fun. Regular playing days are Saturday, Monday, Tuesday (ladies only) and Wednesday and there are frequent social activities. Superb location and excellent facilities with licensed bar. **Phone 9958 5188 for information**

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## Carols at the Haven

It is a Castlecrag tradition that every Christmas Eve, Carols by Candlelight is presented by the Haven Amphitheatre Management Committee.

It's a Castlecrag tradition that every Christmas Eve the weather is fine and a wonderful time is had by all.

Alas, tradition was not traditional in 2004.

It rained!

Then it presented us with an urban myth. Now the story of this needs to be told and told well, that is best done by the Castlecrag poet lorikeet! Just down from the high country to spin the yarn for you wondering readers of *The Crag* and give you the mail on what really happened on that special night at the Haven.

'Twas the night before Christmas, and Santa yelled "Yike!",  
*"My reindeer have colic; my Helpers on strike  
 We'll have to move Christmas to 'round Easter time,*

*"I'll postpone all Carols to give me some time!"*  
 He called out to Heaven: *"My patience is worn,  
 Don't do nothin' violent, - just send in a storm!*

Down south, in Australia, at Castlecrag's 'Haven',  
 the volunteer stagecrew were all misbehavin';  
 The sound-desk was booming, the lights all blazed bright;

The carolers' harmonies shone in full flight.  
 When in rolled the stormclouds, with Donner & Blitzen,

*"We're all gunna drown"* cried the raven-haired vixen;

*"A second front's coming, due 'round about seven;*

*What have we done wrong to be so cursed by Heaven?!"*

So sadly the stagecrew packed all gear away  
 and sat below stage to brood glum on the fray.

But meteorological science, it seems;  
 failed to account for the power of dreams;  
 Two local Crag families from over the foam,

had flown in grandparents to see their new home.

And come to The Haven to sing, laugh and carol,  
 not knowing the storms had forced plans to unravel.

Then elves and bush spirits waked under the stage,  
 and heard these two groups sing from young to the aged.

Crept out from the bushes (to all folks' surprise!)

and fashioned a Caroling 'fore their own eyes.  
 Just voices! - no music, no sleighbells were rung;

Just voices: "Orana" (Let's Welcome) was sung.

And candles and songbooks, and more and more souls,  
 emerged out of nowhere like orchids and quolls.

Then as the black stormfront slewed off to the North,  
 what should then a'happen? Yes, - Santa came forth!

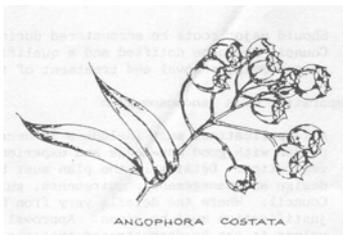
With a "Ho" to the left, and a "Ho" to the right;  
 and a "HoHo" small lolly for eyes shining bright..

Then rellies from Norway and Yorkshire and Rome,  
 Told stories of Christmas Eve happ'nings "back home".

'Til finally the last of the eventide light,  
 slipped westward and left us in candle-lit night.  
 So singers and families left sharing good cheer,

Singing *"Wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year"*

**Bruce Wilson/Harold Rubie**



## Gay Spies OAM

Castlecrag resident Gay Spies has been awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for her service to the conservation of urban bushlands, particularly the Willoughby Environment Protection Association (WEPA). With her husband Harold, Gay was instrumental in establishing WEPA in 1981 and with their faithful band of volunteers, they have accomplished much in the Sugarloaf Creek bushland area and promoted conservation causes generally in Willoughby. The OAM award acknowledges the work of WEPA members as a whole.

Gay has also been active in the Progress Association and is currently vice-president. The editors and the Progress Association extend their congratulations to Gay on her much-deserved award.

The Editors

### Book Review

*Birds of Willoughby - Survey Update 2004.* Author Andy Burton, Published by Willoughby Council 2004. 120 pages

Willoughby Council has produced a very beautiful volume based on the bird surveys and records that Andy Burton, a local resident, carries out for our local government area.

It is well-illustrated with photos of many of the birds and their habitats; the notes on recent records and past observations make interesting reading. It also includes recommendations to Council to assist the well-being of native birds and other fauna and flora.

This book is a must for anyone with an interest in our local birds. Copies of the book are available from Willoughby Council for \$20.

Lorraine Cairnes

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If you are interested in sponsoring, having a stall or being involved, please call:  
**Gloreen Goldin 9967 9100**

To arrange for your dance or music group to participate, contact  
**Jennifer Kos 9405 5117**

**Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2005  
10am – 3pm**



**The Castlecrag Fair is on again this year on Sunday the 5<sup>th</sup> June 2005. Experience the fun of the fair, a community get together, with many stallholders to tempt the crowd with exotic and interesting wares. Be entertained by local dance and music groups both young and old. Satisfy those hunger pangs with a good old fashioned Aussie snag or food from our cafes and restaurants.**

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We are again seeking pre-loved items for the Trash & Treasure stall — if you require collection of goods please contact:

**Kate Westoby 9958 0215**

## Anyone for Tennis?

The Castlecrag Sports Club has recently celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> year of being part of the Castlecrag community. The committee would like to encourage anyone interested in playing tennis to consider joining our friendly club, located in the Cortile Reserve, close to the shopping centre where we have a clubhouse and two synthetic grass courts. One court is also available to non-members for casual hire; please see Pam's coffee shop in the Quadrangle for availability and bookings.

The three membership categories cater for those just wishing to have a hit with friends, players who want a more serious game (but not too serious) and juniors. Coaching is available for beginners and for anyone whose game needs a little polishing. The coach, Armand Djani, also runs tennis camps in the school holidays. Please contact him on 0418-242626 or 9488-8584 for details.

For more information, please phone the membership secretary, Sue Kirk, on 9967-2327 or the president, Peter Davenport, on 9958-4144.

## LETTER: *Burning Tyres*

When I first heard about incidents of burning tyres in our suburb I thought it was only an isolated case and did not make much of it. Then, a couple of months ago, we were awoken by screeching tyres and went out on to the balcony to see huge clouds of smoke drifting up the street and a car screeching further down the road. Stupid as these kids are, they came back to survey the damage. Unfortunately, it was dark and the streetlights in Rutland Avenue are not regularly placed. I saw a small old red car, possibly a Ford Laser or Toyota Corolla, hatchback with at least two young boys who thought they were having a great time. I have decided to write this letter in the hope that it might help in finding the culprits or at least to make the problem more widely known and to scare them off if these young people live here or have friends here.

**Barbara Grimm**

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## History of Castlecrag Part 12

**1978** Community opposition to the design of the proposed *Quadrangle* shopping complex, which was to have 17 shops and eight floors of flats above, was a key issue during the 1970s. The Progress Association spent over \$6000 in its campaign to achieve a design that was more in keeping with the character of the area. It made a presentation to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal on *The Quadrangle* shopping complex and was successful in achieving major changes to the design, including height restrictions, deletion of a fast-food outlet and a half-case market, together with conditions on signage.

**1978** The Conservation Society engaged noted landscape consultant Judy Messer to prepare a program of clearing and regeneration of Castlecrag's reserves, walkways and islands in order to preserve the remaining indigenous flora. A landscape plan using several hundred trees and shrubs followed. Judy Messer wrote several articles on conservation matters in *The Crag*.

**1978** The Castlecrag Heritage and Classification Committee submitted its proposal to list the Castlecrag Peninsula as a town planning and urban conservation area to the National Trust of Australia (NSW) in March. The Griffin Estate was listed by the National Trust in July 1978.

**1978** Bim Hilder MBE designed bronze plaques using 'early Griffin lettering' and a *bas-relief* of an 'Old Man Banksia'. The plaques were discretely mounted in the Griffin Estates in recognition of restoration work undertaken by the Castlecrag Conservation Society; to define the estate; to promote and encourage retention, conservation and restoration of the reserves and islands; and to honour significant members of the Castlecrag community.

**1979** The death of a child knocked down by a motorcycle on **Edinburgh Road** on Mothers' Day prompted fresh calls for action to improve traffic safety in Castlecrag.

**1980** Bob Ronai, editor of *The Crag*, gave the August newsletter (No.13) a facelift, introducing offset printing and quarto pages.

**1980** The Progress Association protested to the Chairman of the **Commonwealth Bank** for its failure to liaise with the community on the design of the new bank building for Castlecrag. The Association believed the building was too high, too close to the street and of poor aesthetic appearance.

**1980** The Progress Association endorsed its president, Eric Kaye, as its candidate for the Council elections. Eric's aim was to preserve Castlecrag's quiet beauty for the enjoyment of Sydney's future generations. His specific concerns: to continue opposition to the Warringah Freeway, gain increased Council support for regeneration of Castlecrag's bushland reserves, to oppose high-rise flats and support a Middle Harbour National Park. Eric served on Council from 1980 to 1987, becoming Deputy Mayor in 1985.

The National Trust of Australia (NSW Branch) formally classified the 'Castlecrag Urban Conservation Area' in April to recognise: 'Griffin's sensitivity towards the site and his intentions to provide an environment in which Man could be at peace with Nature. The listing is to acknowledge Griffin's ingenuity as expressed in his road patterns and their sympathy for the topography of Castlecrag, and in his series of internal public reserves and connecting footpaths for common use and social interaction.'

**Bob McKillop, Elizabeth Lander and James Weirick**



The Bim Hilder 'Old Man Banksia' relief on the plaque at Keep Reserve

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