

THE CRAG

**NEWSLETTER OF THE
CASTLECRAG PROGRESS
ASSOCIATION INC.**

Eighty three years serving the community

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CASTLECRAG PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

OUR NEXT MEETING

7.30pm for 8pm, Tuesday, 22 February 2011

The Castlecrag Community Centre, The Rampart
(down laneway near intersection with The Postern)

**Speaker: Jacky Talbot,
Arts & Cultural Manager, Community Services, WCC**

YOU ARE WARMLY INVITED.
REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED.

Willoughby Incinerator



From 1930s. 'Photo courtesy of Local studies Unit, Willoughby City Library'.

Jackie Talbot will talk about the history of the Incinerator and the restoration process conducted by WCC whereby the building has been adapted for reuse as the Incinerator Art Space and café.

Designed by Walter Burley Griffin in association with Eric Milton Nicholls, it opened in May 1934 as the Municipality of Willoughby Reverberatory Refuse Incinerator, closing in 1967. In 1980 it was converted to a restaurant, then to office space in 1989; in 1996 it was damaged by fire.

Willoughby City Council's extensive restoration work was assisted by a grant through the Australian Government's National Heritage Investment Initiative.

The building, situated at 2 Small Street, will officially reopen in March 2011 with a café at street level, artist studios in the middle level and art space on the bottom level. The first exhibition, 'Melting Moments' by regional artist Janet Taverner, will be held 2-27 March, 2011.

Prestigious Award to Castlecrag Florist

Congratulations to Jodie McGregor and staff on their continuing business success story with their latest awards of Local Business, and Florist of the Year at the 2010 North Shore Times Business Achiever Awards presented at a gala dinner held in November 2010.

This is the latest in a long series of awards made to Jodie and her team. In addition to the North Shore Times award, in 2010 they were once again Australian Small Business Champion Florist and won the Sydney Flower Market Award of Excellence, as they have done every year since 2003. In 2010, Jodie was also recognised as

Business Person of the year in the Inner West Local Business Awards. Over the past 10 years since establishing their business at Annandale and Castlecrag, Jodie and her team have received a plethora of prestigious awards since her role as Official Florist at the Olympic Arts Festival in 2000.

Jodie's husband Stu White, part-owner of the business, commented that they opened at Castlecrag due to the close proximity to the city and wonderful village feel where locals support the community and the local businesses. He said 'We have been thrilled with the support we have had since opening at Castlecrag. ... We've already

seen people shop and order with us following the win and hope it also helps bring more people to the Castlecrag village. We'll be continuing to source unique and interesting flowers that our Castlecrag customers have really demanded from us. We love focusing on new and interesting blooms for people to show off in their homes.'

Jodie continues to share her time between the two stores and her three children Pirra 8, Remi 5 and Carter 3. She is clearly a woman of exceptional talent and we salute her on her great success and contribution to the Castlecrag community.

THINK LOCALLY!

SHOP LOCALLY!

EMPLOY LOCALLY!

THE CRAG

is the community newsletter of the
Castlecrag Progress Association Inc.

PO Box 4259
Castlecrag NSW 2068

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Write to us

The Crag is a community newsletter
and we welcome letters and contributions
from residents about local issues.
We do not publish anonymous letters.
Items should be sent to the editors
by email to: editors@castlecrag.org.au
They should be concise
(preferably less than 250 words for letters).
Please include your email address or
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items to fit the space available.

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President's Musings

2011 is shaping up as an exciting year for Castlecrag. We also look forward to Energy Australia finishing their upgrade works, and the repairs to our footpaths and roadways. We also understand Council will be undertaking an upgrade of the pavements etc around our village centre. This is long overdue, and will greatly assist our local retailers. And early planning has commenced for the Castlecrag Bi-annual Fair.

On the 29th of October 2010, as a community representative, I was asked to speak at the opening of the new classrooms, staff areas and hall at the Glenaeon school on Edinburgh Road. The buildings were officially opened by The Hon Peter Garrett AM, MP. In his speech, Mr Garrett recalled his connection with Castlecrag—weekend work at the old Castlecrag Squash courts until his music career took off... Congratulations to the

school on achieving such a quality outcome on a tight budget. The school will also be making its new hall available for community groups and events.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our advertisers, most locally based, which make the continued publication of *The Crag* possible. A special thank-you to our Editor, Margaret Chambers, and her support team, and Robin Phelan from rocketdesign for her skill in design and production. If these people did not support us both financially, and with their time, *The Crag* would simply not exist.

The season's best wishes to all residents, and I hope you enjoy the information in this edition. As always, we look forward to receiving your comments and suggestions.

James A Fitzpatrick
President

Castlecrag Progress Association

Sustainability

Sally Hamilton, Director of Sustainability Projects at WCC, was key speaker at the CPA general meeting on 26 October.

Council's commitment to sustainability can be seen in its Sustainability Charter, which details its response to climate change and other aspects of the environment.

We were pleased by the significance and extent of work undertaken by Council under its Sustainable Environment Branch. The work of this Branch is funded by Council's e.restore program made possible by the introduction of an environment levy. e.restore also funds bushland programs and infrastructure services.

The responsibilities of Council's Sustainable Environment Branch are:

- Waste Services
- Environmental Health
- Sustainability Projects
- Sustainability Education, including ClimateClever, and
- Better Business Partnerships.

Sally discussed Council's greenhouse emissions and water conservation targets

and achievements in the above areas, including Council's:

- use of renewable energy, e.g. use of solar power at its new depot saving \$4,300 per year and of natural gas cogeneration at Willoughby Leisure Centre saving 600 T GHG and \$40,000 per year,
- GreenPower offsets, and
- water efficiency projects including stormwater collection and re-use (5,000,000L) at The Concourse.

The Sustainability Education program has set the community's greenhouse gas target to 15% reduction by 2015 from 2002 levels. The sustainable house at 34 Devonshire St, Chatswood was opened in September 2010 and the ClimateClever Home Assessment Service, ClimateClever Apartments Programs and solar and heat pump hot water rebate schemes have all been implemented.

Peter Lisle, Project Officer WCC, discussed the Better Business Partnership. Peter's article will appear in *The Crag* in May.

Castlecrag Progress Association Inc. Membership Form

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2011

I wish to renew / apply for membership for the CPA Inc., and enclose payment of: \$

(\$10 per person, \$5 per student)

If you wish to make a donation, it will be most welcome. I enclose my donation of: \$

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Court refuses Castlecrag development proposal 'Too big for the site'

In October 2010, the Land and Environment Court delivered a strong judgement rejecting a development application for a large new residence in the Griffin Conservation Area in Castlecrag.

The appeal against the refusal by Willoughby Council followed several amendments to the applicant's development application for the site over the past two years.

In her judgement refusing the appeal, Commissioner Sue Morris said *'The planning principles for the Griffin Conservation Area must be upheld to ensure that the importance of this area is not lost to large scale, non-sympathetic forms of development that do not respect the natural environment and landscape setting.'*

At the Land and Environment Court hearing, the Walter Burley Griffin Society, the Castlecrag Progress Association, and several local residents made submissions and expert witnesses included heritage experts, arborists, and planners.

The main issues in the matter were the size, bulk and scale of the proposed dwelling,

whether compliance with the height control is unreasonable and unnecessary and the impact of the development on the Griffin heritage conservation area.

The Commissioner found that the proposed development presented as a four-storey building. Not only did it breach the height controls but its floor space significantly exceeded the maximum GFA and FSR controls for the site. She said 'the dwelling is too big for the site'. Not accepting the proposition put by the applicant's barrister that she was restricted to the immediately adjoining development when assessing the character of the area, its context or the locality, she said *'Whilst I accept there are large buildings, buildings that are three storey in height and buildings that are visually prominent, I note that these are in the minority, would have been built prior to the making of the LEP and DCP and should not be used to justify further forms of inappropriate development.'*

She also said *'The Griffin Conservation Area is at the crossroads in terms of whether it will retain its important character due to the age of the housing stock and therefore*

it is of utmost importance that the comprehensive objectives included in the Council's planning controls are given weight in the determination of applications.'

In concluding the Commissioner found: *'The Griffin Conservation Area is an area of high heritage significance and contains a number of individual heritage items. It is clear from the extensive planning controls that apply to the site and the clearly articulated statement of desired future character for the area that the community expectation is that development of the area will remain subservient to the landscape setting.'* ... *'A merit assessment of the application has also shown that the application is not appropriate for the site in its context and that there are other design alternatives for the site which would meet the planning controls...'*

The Commissioner found that the proposed development 'fails the principle of being subordinate to the landscape setting'.

The Judgement can be found at <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/cases/nsw/NSWLEC/2010/1280.html>

Mayor's open letter to residents about unauthorised building works

The Mayor of Willoughby, Councillor Pat Reilly, has recently written a strong letter to residents about the problems with unauthorised building work.

He emphasised that 'planning and building regulations are in place to protect Willoughby's natural and built environment and help maintain the character of our local neighbourhoods', which character has been 'prescribed and endorsed' by the community.

The Mayor acknowledged that most residents, builders and architects follow the correct process and obtain council approval when required but noted some intentionally overlook these controls to try and mislead council in an effort to get around the planning controls. He emphasised the issue goes beyond mere "accidental" building

work or misunderstandings about the requirements. He said there is also an 'attitude by some owners, builders and architects who consider Council's role to be a nuisance or an obstruction that should be avoided wherever possible'.

The Mayor listed Council's concerns, which included the lodging of development applications that are well outside the standards and have no hope of approval, the lodging of incompletely drawn plans whose lack of detail and ambiguity is used later by the applicant to his/her advantage, conditions of approval being ignored and owners and builders ignoring Council and building what they want in the hope that Council will never find out.

The Mayor emphasised that Council is prepared to prosecute those responsible

and order demolition of such works. He referred to Council's Development Enforcement Unit whose duties include monitoring building sites, taking action against unauthorised work including legal action if appropriate to ensure building works are undertaken in accordance with approved plans.

In concluding he said that 'prevention is better than cure' and 'I ask if you are intending to undertake building works please co-operate by ensuring compliance with Council's standards. Problems you may have should be addressed with Council prior to commencing your building works. Be assured, our aim is to meet your personal objectives as best we can within a community context while appreciating all stakeholders' legal delegations, time and cost.'



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Castlecrag Notes

Valda Wilson: Castlecrag singer at Westminster Abbey

Following *The Crag's* report (August 2010) on soprano Valda Wilson's spectacular career, we now congratulate her on being chosen by Richard Bonyngge to sing at the Thanksgiving Service for Dame Joan Sutherland on 15 February 2011 in Westminster Abbey. She will sing *Faure's Pie Jesu* and Mozart's *Exsultate, Jubilate*. The Royal Opera House Orchestra of Covent Garden will be conducted by Maestro Antonio Pappano.

Valda currently works for the Dresden Semperoper in Germany. She hopes to return for a holiday in the 'Crag later this year and maybe sing with her friends at The Haven Amphitheatre, in her words, the greatest Green Room in the world. Her father Bruce, referring to Valda's upbringing in Castlecrag, said: 'It takes a village to raise a child.....'

Editor

Castlecrag Pharmacy Award

Congratulations to Mary Bogner of Castlecrag Pharmacy, a finalist in the Outstanding Pharmacy category at the 2010 North Shore Times Business Achiever Awards. Castlecrag Pharmacy has been 4 times winner in previous years and a finalist every year since 1993.

Haven Amphitheatre News

The Amphitheatre was alive in December with more than the usual wildlife and daily free concerts featuring Songs of the Cicadas and Birds!

First up was Richard Tulloch's adaptation of Randolph Stow's novel, *Midnite: the story of a wild colonial boy*, directed by Lenore Robertson for the Epicentre Theatre Co's production. Audiences were engaged and enthusiastic about the show according to all reports, including a poll conducted by the shuttle bus drivers on the way back up the hill! The set was delightful and the bush band fitted in perfectly to add an authentic musical dimension to the play.

The year ended with a very successful Carols by Candlelight on Christmas Eve, which upheld the tradition of community

singing and sharing of this special time with family, friends and our community. Fifteen minutes before start time all cushions, rock ledges and perches were taken, but the full buses and people on foot kept coming. It was standing room only up the top! Next year we will provide more chairs up there, as we always do for people with mobility challenges, but patrons should remember to send a forward party or come by about 7pm if they want to secure seats/cushions.

Thanks go to Marlene Vaughan who again produced the show and rehearsed the singers including the wonderful Canadian chantress Tricia O'Callaghan. Thanks also to the committee members who produced the show (lights, sound, front of house crew; candle seller, stage manager, ushers, bus drivers, door openers and traffic controller) for your community.

It typically takes a minimum of 15 volunteers to mount productions at the Haven. In the interests of seeing the Haven continue its work, would you or a family member like to be involved at any level? The ageing committee needs support! There are openings in all the above positions, as well as the opportunity to learn publicity, catering, sound, lighting and stagecraft skills from highly experienced professionals, invaluable to those considering a music/theatre/event management career or just wanting to learn new skills or contribute theirs. Perhaps you'd like to be involved by serving coffee and icecreams? Or do you have an idea for a show you'd like to discuss with us? Community service has many rewards, and also looks good on a resumé! Phone or email us at info@thehaven.biz.

Lindy Batterham
Vice President, Haven Amphitheatre
Committee 9958 2127

Vale: Lisa Purser 1946–2010

Originally from Melbourne, Lisa Purser had a rich and varied professional life. She lived in Indonesia for many years and became an expert in Asian textiles, and was highly regarded both in Indonesia and internationally. Lisa moved to the end of The Scarp in the mid 1980s and told of

being absolutely delighted to find a bushy stone amphitheatre at the end of her street. She attended a couple of productions, learned that the space was managed by a community committee and started talking with the group; it wasn't long before she was offering support with her arts administration skills. Lisa brought and implemented a new level of administrative professionalism and expertise to the Haven and was a highly competent and valuable secretary of the Haven Amphitheatre 530A Committee for nearly 20 years. She and partner Danny were always hands-on at working bees and performances. In October 2009 Lisa was made a Life Member of The Haven Amphitheatre.

Lisa was also an enthusiastic committee member of the Walter Burley Griffin Society in the early 1990s and put a lot of energy into supporting the Society's events and endeavours.

Lisa's other enormous contribution to the community was as a member of the Save our School group (SOS*CRAG). Unlike most on the committee who had young children, Lisa's children were just finishing their school years but Lisa was a woman of principle and believed in the right of a young child to a local public school, and saw how it worked as a facilitator of community cohesion. Lisa was heavily involved in the campaign, writing minutes (again), attending meetings with politicians, not to mention three years of picket duty to keep the Green Bans in place.

We acknowledge and give thanks to Lisa Purser for her enormous contribution to the Castlecrag community over 20 years—for her intelligence, her insight, her freshness, her friendship, her wisdom, her positivity, her generosity of time and spirit and her pure hard work.

'Selamat jalan ibu

Lisa passed away peacefully at home, with her family, Sunday, October 24, 2010.

Under a full moon washed by the falling rain. Let her love, wisdom and strength continue in all of us.'

(*The Sydney Morning Herald* 27 October 2010 Obituary, Lisa Norton Grimwade Purser)



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The Bulwark, Scarp and Neighbours' street party Photo: Lorraine Cairnes



Warners Park Community Garden group Photo: Mandy Wilson

Howard Rubie: Life Member of the ACS

Further to our article in *The Crag* in May 2010 about Howard Rubie's induction into the Australian Cinematographers Society (ACS) Hall of Fame, Howard was made a life member of the ACS at a ceremony held at the Menzies Hotel in December 2010.

A life member of the ACS is 'a full, active or retired member who for long and distinguished service the Society, has been recommended and nominated by an ACS Committee, and then approved at a National general meeting'.

We congratulate Howard on his achievements.

Street Parties and neighbourhood get-togethers

An annual gathering of neighbours is an excellent way to catch up with the locals or meet new arrivals. Many streets and neighbourhoods in Castlecrag organize such gatherings, and there are many benefits in getting to know those who live nearby.

Most gatherings are held in the month before Christmas, and some are held at Australia Day or at other times. As far as we know, no-one yet celebrates the birthdays of Walter Burley Griffin or Marion Mahony Griffin—but why not?

Organizing such an event just takes a little initiative and not much time. You'll just need to decide on a date, time and venue. People can bring their own drinks and some nibbles to share. An invitation is dropped in

the letterboxes of your street. We'll publish some advice on the logistics of organizing street parties in *The Crag* delivered at the end of the year, when most parties are arranged.

The picture shows the annual gathering of The Bulwark, The Scarp and Neighbours held last December at The Haven Amphitheatre (venue by courtesy of the Haven Committee). It was attended by around 80 people and four dogs. This gathering has been a regular event since 2005. Among other street parties held recently were those at Sugarloaf Crescent and The Battlement.

Community Garden

Willoughby's Community Garden, located at Warners Park in Northbridge, provides an opportunity to learn, be inspired, get exercise and spend time socialising with members of your local community.

The group meets on the first Saturday and third Sunday of each month, from 8–11am in summer and 9am–12 noon in winter. A council officer, Andrew, is usually present at each meeting. Decisions on what will be planted and where, and future directions the garden will take, are taken by the group as a whole.

There are no individual plots. All produce is shared among the group at the end of each meeting. Tasks range from harvesting seed from spent crops, sowing new seed in propagation trays or direct into the garden, preparing beds for planting, maintaining the compost bins, weeding, pruning, applying organic fertilizers, staking, and creating

fences and simple frames to protect/support the vegies. The garden aims to be as organic as possible.

The gardeners first met in July 2007 at the original market gardens site on Eastern Valley Way at the end of Mowbray Road. Since then they have moved sites twice. Many of the original members are still regulars today. They have learned an enormous amount and have been happy to share their experiences with other groups setting up community gardens, both within and outside Willoughby. For example, they have had a few working bees with the residents on the Barton Road housing estate (who set up a community garden in early 2009) and one at the demonstration edible garden at the Sustainability Hub, 34 Devonshire Street, Chatswood. The garden at Warners Park is proving to be a great venue for workshops too, with practical classes on organic gardening and sustainable eating being held there.

The Willoughby Community Garden is always happy to receive new members. Experienced vegetable gardeners and novices are very welcome. Please contact Mandy on 9777 7875 or at: mandy.wilson@willoughby.nsw.gov.au if you'd like to join the group or would like advice on vegetable growing, or if you'd like your name added to the community garden email contact list.

You can view Willoughby Council's community garden policy at: www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au following 'Your Street' and 'Community Gardens' links.

Mandy Wilson
Bushcare Co-ordinator, WCC

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The Houses of Castlecrag

Continuing the series of articles by local architect Ben Gerstel, highlighting some of the amazing houses located in our suburb built through the decades from Griffin's time to today.

Ben is a volunteer guide for the Australian Architectural Association (www.architecture.org.au) and conducts walking tours around Castlecrag and Middle Cove.

27 The Parapet

This house in Castlecrag has always intrigued me. It has no red brick walls, terracotta roof tiles or timber windows, unlike most of the other houses in the street. Instead, it looks very modern, like the architect-designed houses of today. These have grey-painted, cement rendered walls, a flat roof and steel framed windows and doors. The house is clearly the work of an architect, but who?

After investigation, I found out the house was designed by the architect Hugo Stossel in the year 1950 (i). Stossel was born in 1905 and emigrated from Hungary to Australia in 1938 (ii). He commenced practice in Sydney in 1947 and contributed a scheme for the Sydney Opera House Competition in 1955 and for the Rocks Redevelopment Competition in 1963 (iii). He returned to Hungary in his retirement and died in 2002 (iv). From 1962 he lived at 63 The Bulwark in a house of his own design which is currently undergoing renovation. He ran a medium-sized architectural practice with offices in Darlinghurst Road, Kings Cross, and later in Pitt Street Sydney, designing a large number of home unit buildings.

After the Second World War, a number of European architects emigrated to Australia. The most well known was Harry Seidler. Lesser known architects included: L T Rayner, George Molnar, Francis Feledy, Charles Hayes, George Reves, Ferdinand Silberstein-Silvan, Hans Peter Oser, Emery Balint, Dr Henry Epstein (v) and Hugh Buhrich. Hugh Buhrich was a German architect who emigrated to Australia also in 1938 (vi). He lived in Castlecrag where he built two houses for himself and his family. These architects introduced the

European modernist style of architecture to Australia.

This style represented the new technologies, materials and methods of construction used overseas at the time. The architecture was stark. Cement-rendered masonry walls were painted white. The roofs were flat and the steel framed windows were in long horizontal strips. The overall appearance was rectilinear and geometric. There was neither ornament nor historical references to other styles.

27 The Parapet reflects this style. It stands out from the other houses around it because of its unconventional appearance and lack of detail. The only detail in the house is from the function of the windows or fenestration. There is a horizontal strip of steel-framed casement windows on the ground floor, contrasting with four, vertical, paired, steel-framed French doors on the first floor. These doors all open onto a terrace. The parapet or top of the wall has been finished with a shadowline.

A continuous white line or brick corbel (protruding brick course) runs from the top of the column at the entry porch on the left-hand side of the house, continues above the head of the ground floor strip window, and becomes the roof of the garage. There are no unnecessary elements; everything has a purpose.

The house appears very solid. To contrast this solidity, a light-filled, steel-framed glass sunroom has been added at the back of the house. This sunroom has been designed to incorporate the glazing proportions of the original house.

Internally the house is almost original but

has been adapted to suit the lifestyle of the owners. Bathrooms have been upgraded, joinery changed and the kitchen relocated to the rear of the house to appreciate the established garden. The kitchen is now drenched in northern sunlight and is the centre of the house.

There are three bedrooms upstairs, each having access to a terrace. The upstairs hallway is wide enough to accommodate a study. Other interesting features are an overscaled fireplace and mirror above the mantelpiece. The fireplace surround first appears to be slabs of stone but on closer inspection the slabs are of concrete.

The house has been in the same family since it was built. The owner remembers coming to the house when she was a toddler. Her grandmother bought the house from the builder. She also planted the garden which remains today.

I recommend taking a walk down The Parapet and imagine that the year is 1950. Suddenly your eye captures a glimpse of this house and you cannot believe what you see!

Ben Gerstel
Ben Gerstel Architecture Pty Ltd
 E: bgerstel@optusnet.com.au

References:

(i) & (iv) John Johnson, Willoughby City Library Local Studies, September 2010.

Anne Higham, Australian Institute of Architects-NSW Architects Biographical Information.

(ii), (iii) & (v) Rebecca Hawcroft, February 2005. *Architecture Bulletin*. The Untold Story: Migrants and Modernism

(vi) Anonymous, May / June 2007.

Architecture Bulletin



Photo: Ben Gerstel

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If you go down to the bush today...

Myrtle Rust threat to native plants

If you are a bushwalker, bush regenerator or a bush carer, keep your eyes open for Myrtle Rust, an exotic plant fungal disease previously unknown in Australia. Myrtle Rust (*Uredo rangellii*) is a South American rust fungus first detected in July 2010 on the Central Coast where it has now spread to 30,000ha of bushland.

Myrtle Rust infects plants of the family Myrtaceae, which includes eucalypts, angophoras, tea trees, bottlebrush, watergums, paperbarks and lilypillies. It has the potential to devastate over 5000 species of plants, including some of our most iconic, valuable and well-loved bushland plants.

In Australia so far, the most susceptible plants are willow myrtles (*Agonis flexuosa* - from WA—especially the cultivars 'Afterdark' and 'Burgundy'), turpentine (*Syncarpia glomulifera*) and bottlebrush (in particular *Callistemon viminalis*) all of which are used in landscaping. It has also been seen on watergums (*Tristania nerifolia*).

Myrtle Rust attacks young leaves and stems on which it produces characteristic powdery yellow 'pustules' which contain the infective spores. On turpentine the infection appears as a purplish blotch, followed by the yellow pustules. Leaves then become twisted and withered, leading to shoot death. High humidity, leaf wetness and low light favour spore germination.

Spores are spread by wind, watersplash, insects such as bees, and on equipment and clothing. Basic precautions to prevent spread include laundering of all clothing including hats and gloves. Cleaning of footwear when leaving a site is most important: remove soil or mud and disinfect by spraying the bottom of footwear with 70% w/v ethanol or methylated spirits. These precautions are especially important after visiting one bushland reserve and before entering another.

If you observe plants anywhere

infected with Myrtle Rust immediately contact the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881.

The east coast from Sydney north to the tip of Cape York is most likely to favour Myrtle Rust with potential disastrous consequences for our flora. So far Myrtle Rust has not been detected in Northern Sydney bushland or gardens but your help is needed if it is to stay this way. See the following website for further information: http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/plan_t/myrtle-rust



Gay Spies

Banksia from CPA letterhead

Banksias in Castlecrag

One of the defining plant families of the Hawkesbury sandstone on which Castlecrag sits is the Proteaceae. Proteaceae is an old Gondwanan family with fantastic generic plant groups such as Banksia and Grevillea and the beloved Waratah (*genus Telopea*). But, it is Banksias which I think define the bush and native gardens around Castlecrag.

Around Castlecrag there are many great examples. The walkway from the Parapet at Cortile Reserve past The Lookout Reserve to The Rampart and The Redoubt has many shrub-sized Banksias on show, including *Banksia ericifolia* (also known as the Lantern or Heath-leaved Banksia) with its wonderful orange spikes, and also *B. oblongifolia* (Fern-leaved Banksia) and *B. spinulosa* (the Hairpin Banksia). The flower spikes of these plants are made of hundreds or even thousands of individual flowers which keep the bird life returning to the garden. I've seen ring-tailed possums happily asleep inside the dense foliage. *Banksia serrata* (Old Man Banksia), with its gnarled and twisted trunk, is a great small tree which is being planted

along Edinburgh Road and Sortie Port as a street tree. Some impressive examples of mature trees occur in our bushland but also on road islands and in reserves. I particularly like The Citadel road island with its grass trees and a beautiful *Banksia serrata*.

There is a notable native garden on the left hand side of Edinburgh Road just after Sunnyside Crescent. This sparsely planted garden features some wonderful Banksias. It also has a protea (from southern Africa) which belongs to the same family of plants and blends incredibly well with our native species. Recently my wife brought home a colourful bunch of flowers of the Proteaceae, including Australian species and South African Proteas including Leucadendrons and I was amazed by their similarities with Australian members of the family. But Australia and South Africa have been separated for so long (100 million years) that we share families of plants but rarely genera.

Every garden in Castlecrag should have a place to plant a local species of Banksia, and these beautiful natives will attract birds to our gardens.

Matthew Keighery

Beware of the Agapanthus

Gardeners – It is time now to dead-head *Agapanthus* flowers and dispose of the seeds effectively. Unfortunately this attractive plant has become in some places, including Castlecrag, a bushland weed. Recently there have been reports from Victoria, particularly Flinders Island, of invasions into national parks and other bushland, and we clearly do not wish this to happen in our local area.

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WILDLIFE NEWS • wildlife news • WILDLIFE NEWS

Lizard Refuges and Blue-Tongues

You might have seen short hollow logs in some Castlecrag gardens and wondered why they are there. They provide refuges for lizards and other small ground-dwellers to hide in. The lively small lizards and the grand old Blue-tongued lizards love to lie out in the warm sun, and catch food such as insects. But they have predators, and need a safe place to hide from them. Predators include birds, especially the large birds such as kookaburras, magpies etc, but most dangerous are cats and dogs, and us humans.

For most of us, it's probably a long time since you saw a large old Blotched Blue-tongue lizard. They are becoming uncommon; many are lost to cats and even cars.

So, if you love having native lizards about, why not create a couple of hiding places for them? You can use a small hollow log, or a loose pile of rocks with many hiding spots, or even an old piece of terracotta drain pipe.

Blotched Blue-tongue Lizards (Scientific name *Tiliqua scincoides scincoides*) are large skinks, which easily become used to humans. They are grey with broad brown blotchy stripes, and grow to over 55 cm.

They have a blue-tongue inside their bright pink mouth. They open their mouth wide to scare predators.

Like all lizards, they do not produce body heat by themselves, but bask in the sun.

A blue-tongue's diet consists of plant material and small animals, which include beetles, caterpillars, crickets, snails and even small lizards. They are very partial to slugs and snails.

Blue-tongue lizards live alone for most of the year. During the mating season between September and November the male will pursue females and fight other males. Female blue-tongues stay within a home base. Males wander over an area the size of about 15 house blocks and claim several females.

The Common Blue-tongue Lizard has up to 25 young at once. Baby blue-tongue lizards are 13 to 14 cm long and weigh

10–20 g. They can live for many years. Lizards in captivity have lived for as long as 20 years, and some in the wild may live for even longer.

The **main predators** that may cut a blue-tongued lizard's life short are lawn mowers, cars, and cats and dogs. Cats are the worst. Dogs are often puzzled enough by the blue-tongue and the threatening behaviour of the lizard to keep a distance. But cats are ambush predators and the lizard doesn't get a chance to show its scary mouth display.

Baby blue-tongues may also end up as dinner for currawongs, kookaburras, raptors or snakes

The greatest risk to your blue-tongue lizard population is to use snail pellets. Blue-tongues love snails. The lizards eat the poisoned snails and then die too. The snail population will recover, the lizard population won't. So it's best to **leave the snail control to the lizards**, they will eventually catch up. Don't panic if you see a few snails. Their presence will ensure that the blue tongues will find a delicious meal.

Another thing to be careful of is blue-tongue lizards hiding in the grass when you are mowing your lawn. The noise will not scare them away. They will more likely threaten the lawn mower with their blue tongue, which in this case is somewhat ineffective.

Keep your cat indoors (which you should try to do anyway), teach your dog to share its food, and of course, don't run your blue-tongue lizard over on your driveway while it tries to warm up in the sun.

Brush-turkey chicks in the Retreat Reserve

We had not sighted Trevor the Australian Brush-turkey here for a few months, but in January noticed that mulch had been scratched from gardens onto paths—a sure sign of Brush-turkey activity. No, it was not Trevor, but Peter spotted the 'culprit'—a very young (half grown, still greyish-brown) Brush-turkey. This suggested that there had been a successful breeding not too far from here, probably somewhere in The Retreat Reserve.

I thought this was delightful news but Peter was not so keen when I told him that a female can lay up to 20 eggs in a season (ref: Pizzey and Knight: *Field Guide to the Birds of Australia*). The young hatch in the mound and 'dig unaided to the surface, then fend for themselves'. So Peter is wondering if he will have to defend his carefully-spread mulch from the other 19 fledglings too!

The Australian Brush-turkey, a large blackish ground-dwelling native bird with a colourful red and yellow head, is a 'mound builder'. They have returned to our local bushland following the Council fox control program a couple of years ago. After the chicks hatch, they are on their own! They must learn to survive alone in the wild and, as ground-dwellers, are not very good flyers. Their worst enemies are dogs and cats. To help these unique birds to survive, please don't allow your pets to wander away from home. Keep an eye out for these amazing young birds, about the size of a bantam hen. You might see them scratching around the roadsides or in your garden, looking for insects.

We have since received the following account of a cat attack from a resident in The Scarp: 'The cat was a young (collarless) Burmese and it killed the chick just as dusk was approaching. It was quite brazen. As I approached, it meowed and proudly showed me the chick (still breathing a little). I picked up the cat and took it out to the street where it broke away from me and raced back up through the garden. I had to chase it to shoo it away. It was quite cross with me for interfering with its fun. Sadly, I got back to the chick just as it died so I buried it to make sure the cat didn't get to it again. The chick would have been about 15cm in length (in case that gives an indication of its age), covered completely in soft downy feathers.'

Our informant continued: 'On a happier note, we had a visit yesterday afternoon from one of the adult Brush-turkeys. We hadn't seen them for a while. I called this one Shelley because she doesn't have a large yellow wattle. She was stalking around on our roof and flew off to sit in the tree when I spoke with her.'

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School Bus Timetable

Are you aware that Castlecrag has a number of school buses that service most local schools?

Getting a free bus pass is just a matter of obtaining a form from your school admin department and sending it to the State Transit Authority.

The benefits of the school bus are numerous including:

1. less hassle for Mum and Dad in the mornings trying to get kids to school in time;
2. reduced traffic congestion;
3. a fun way for children to socialise with other school children;
4. good for the environment;
5. "It's Free!"; and
6. Strengthening demand for the local service and securing its future.

If you feel your child is too young to catch the bus on their own, why not consider the following:

1. Catch the bus with your child a few times and familiarise your child with the routine.
2. Get to know other parents in your street with children who attend the same school and consider a roster where parents take turns in supervising them getting on the bus in the morning.
3. Talk to your school about any other ideas they may have.

Outlined below morning bus timetables for some of the local schools.

For further information on School bus timetables refer to the following web address:

<http://www.sydneybuses.info/schools/school-services>

Joe Christie

School	Bus Number	Departs Castlecrag	Arrives
Willoughby Girls High	602	8.33 am	8.41 am
Willoughby Public School - Infants	602	8.33 am	8.41 am
St Philip Neri	602	8.33 am	8.56 am
Castle Cove Public	603	8.50 am	9.13 am
Northbridge Public School	602	8.33 am	8.54 am

Sydney Opera Society

The Sydney Opera Society meets monthly on the first Saturday for a program of music, films and lectures by expert speakers on operas currently being performed in Sydney.

The Society originated in 1980 as an evening study group meeting at the Stanton Library. Its local connection began in 1994 when it was rescued from disbanding and Nancy Fleming was elected as its President.

The Saturday afternoon format commenced, first in Nancy's home in Castlecrag, then moving in 2002 to the Willoughby Presbyterian Church Hall on the corner of High and Laurel Streets. Nancy has continued as Vice-President and has been made an Honorary Life Member.

Meetings commence at 2pm, concluding at 4pm with afternoon tea. Entry is \$12, \$8 for members.

A Lecture by Victoria Watson on *Partenope* by Handel will be held in March, and David Schwartz will lecture on *Of Mice and Men* by the American composer Carlisle Floyd in April. This opera will have its Australian premiere in July.

Lecture details are included in the *Diary Dates* section of each issue of *The Crag*. Shirley Robertson, the current Secretary, can be contacted on 9605 5851.

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Stonework in Castlecrag



Many Castlecrag reserves have unique and beautiful sandstone features which have influenced the planning and naming of the Griffin Reserves. Sandstone encompasses something timeless and expresses the spirit of Sydney's landform.

Residents have doubtless noticed the high quality of stonework throughout Castlecrag and particularly in maintaining walking tracks such as the Sugarloaf Crescent to Harold Reid track where erosion has been stabilised with sandstone blocks from demolition sites or excavation material. Although the stone must often be carried through steep terrain, it is worth using to produce a long-lasting result

Stairs leading from The Citadel Photo: Margaret Chambers

which is compatible with the reserves' character.

For some time Willoughby Council's Bushland Management team has been upgrading the reserves' network and access within and between them, working with a highly skilled team of contractors from Hamilton Masonry. Recent examples of their work can be seen on the track between the Barricade and The Redoubt, as well as that between the Citadel and Tower Reserve. The stone edging and bench seat in memory of Joyce Batterham, at the junction of The Parapet and Edinburgh Road, featured in *The Crag No 176*, are other examples of their skills.



Council News

Willoughby Library grant

On 10 November Willoughby Library was awarded a 2010 National Library Community Heritage Grant of \$4,000 to fund a significance assessment of the Local Studies Collection. The collection includes archival records, personal papers, oral history recordings, artworks and maps.

Significant items include domestic and industrial architectural plans by Walter Burley Griffin for buildings in the Willoughby/Castlecrag area.

Draft Willoughby Local Environmental Plan adopted by Council

The new Draft Willoughby Local Environmental Plan 2009 (WLEP) was

adopted at a Special Meeting of Willoughby City Council (WCC) on Wednesday 3 November 2010. The plan sets the zoning across the entire Willoughby local government area.

In 2006 the NSW Government issued a requirement that all NSW councils prepare an LEP consistent with a standard template forcing some councils including WCC to meet State Government targets for housing in their areas.

WCC has therefore had to change the zoning in some areas to manage these targets but with the approval of the Government's Department of Planning has managed to add additional objectives and local controls. Castlecrag has been relatively fortunate, incurring few zoning changes.

The Draft plan was presented to the community in March 2010, followed by consultation to ensure that the community was aware of the plan and able to provide feedback.

The Draft WLEP 2009 adopted by Willoughby City Council will now go to Department of Planning and Parliamentary Counsel for consideration, following which the NSW Minister for

Planning will sign the plan and it will be gazetted. The Willoughby Local Environmental Plan and Willoughby Development Control Plan amendments will then come into effect.

The Draft WLEP may be viewed on Council's website at:

<http://www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au/ignitionSite/uploads/docs/Draft%20WLEP%202009%20-%20exhibition-version%281%29.pdf>

Contact your Ward Councillors

If you have questions or issues to raise with your Ward Councillors, they are happy to be contacted:

Adrian.Cox@willoughby.nsw.gov.au
Or phone 9958 1135

Gail.Giles-Gidney@willoughby.nsw.gov.au
Or phone 9967 0395

John.Hooper@willoughby.nsw.gov.au
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Neighbourhood Watch

Police Incident report October–December 2010 (Castlecrag and Middle Cove)

Incident Category	Details	Address	Premise	Date	Time
Stealing	Steal from motor vehicle	The Bulwark, Castlecrag	Outdoor/public space	Wed 6 Oct	19:00
Located vessel/vehicle	Abandoned	The Parapet, Castlecrag	Outdoor/public space	Thurs 7 Oct	11:00
Stolen vessel/vehicle	Vehicle	Edinburgh Road, Castlecrag	Carpark	Friday 8 Oct	21:30
Stealing	Steal from motor vehicle	Edinburgh Road, Castlecrag	Carpark	Friday 8 Oct	21:30
Assault	Assault common	North Arm, Middle Cove	Residential	Fri 8 Oct	16:00
Malicious damage	Malicious damage to property	Eastern Valley Way, Castlecrag	Carpark	Wed 13 Oct	13:00
Stealing	Steal from dwelling	Edinburgh Road, Castlecrag	Residential	Mon 8 Nov	03:30
Break and enter	Break/Enter and steal	Edinburgh Road, Castlecrag	Business/commercial	Tues 9 Nov	18:20
Break and enter	Break/Enter and steal	Edinburgh Road, Castlecrag	Carpark	Tues 9 Nov	22:00
Stealing	Steal from motor vehicle	Linden Way, Castlecrag	Outdoor/public space	Wed 10 Nov	12:00
Stealing	Steal from motor vehicle	Linden Way, Castlecrag	Outdoor/public space	Fri 12 Nov	11:00
Break and enter	Break/Enter and steal	Edinburgh Road, Castlecrag	Residential	Sat 13 Nov	18:00
Stolen vehicle/vessel	Vehicle	Edinburgh Road, Castlecrag	Residential	Sat 13 Nov	18:00
Stealing	Steal from motor vehicle	The Battlement, Castlecrag	Outdoor/public space	Thurs 2 Dec	18:00
Malicious damage	Malicious damage to property	The Battlement, Castlecrag	Outdoor/public space	Thurs 2 Dec	18:00
Malicious damage	Malicious damage to property	The Parapet, Castlecrag	Residential	Mon 20 Dec	17:00

KEEP THESE PHONE NUMBERS HANDY

For URGENT police assistance including a suspected crime in progress
000

For routine enquiries or advice after an incident phone:
Chatswood Police
9414 8499
Lane Cove Police
9428 1977

To give information about any criminal activities, phone Crime Stoppers
1800 333 000

The Police Assistance Line (PAL)
131 444

Reminders to residents

If you witness some 'event'/crime even if minor, Note the:

- i) time, date and place
- ii) description
- iii) numberplate
- iv) continue to observe and contact police or ring 000

Castlecrag Bushcare Groups

Why not join a Bushcare group now and help conserve the bushland in our local reserves? There are nine Castlecrag Bushcare groups supported by Council which provides each group with a trainer and the equipment and tools needed. Bushcare groups in Castlecrag always welcome new members.

Meeting Details:

DATE & TIME	RESERVE	CONTACT
First Sunday: 8–11am	Cortille	Sue Burk – 9958 4295
Second Sunday: 9am–12.30pm	Keep	Matthew Keighery – 9967 2682
Third Tuesday: 9am–12noon	Gargoyle	Margaret Hutchinson – 9958 4230
Third Saturday: 9am–12 noon	Rockley Street	Tanya Coates – 0411 086 105
Third Sunday: 9am–12 noon	Oriel Casement Edinburgh Road Retreat Cheyne Walk	Mandy Wilson – 9777 7875 Sue Burk – 9958 4295 Karen Ferguson – 9958 4417 Lorraine Cairnes – 9958 1213 OR Jill Newton – 9967 4933 Frank Milner – 0409 586 533

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Diary Dates • Diary Dates • Diary Dates

- **Tuesday 22 February 7.30pm for 8pm**

Castlecrag Progress Association (CPA) Inc. General Meeting
Jackie Talbot will speak on the restoration of the Willoughby Incinerator by WCC at Castlecrag Community Centre. All welcome.
Further information: info@castlecrag.org.au.

- **Tuesday 1 March**

Business Clean Up Day
Further information: <http://www.cleanupaustaliaday.org.au/about-the-event/clean-up-for-business>

- **Friday 4 March**

Schools Clean Up Day
Further information: <http://www.cleanupaustaliaday.org.au/about-the-event/clean-up-for-schools>

- **Saturday 5 March at 1.30pm**

Sydney Opera Society
Lecture by Victoria Watson on *Partenope* by Handel at Willoughby Presbyterian Church Hall.
Further information: Shirley Robertson 9605 5851.

- **Sunday 6 March**

Clean Up Australia Day
Further information: <http://www.cleanupaustaliaday.org.au/> for the local clean-up sites.

- **Tuesday 15 March, 8pm**

Willoughby Environmental Protection Association (WEPA)
Talk by environmental lawyer Michael Arch at Artarmon Library.
Further information: <http://wepa.org.au/>

- **Thursday 24 March, 8pm**

Castlecrag Conservation Society (CCS)
AGM and talk by Cotter Erickson, 'Should we be using Nuclear Power?' At Community Centre.
Further information: Matthew Keighery 9967 2682.

- **Saturday 26 March at 8.30-9.30pm**

Earth Hour
Switch off lights for the environment.

- **From Saturday 2 April**

Willoughby Museum
'Tales of Flat Rock Creek' exhibition. 1-4pm each Sunday.
Admission: adults \$4, concession \$3, children \$2.
Further Information: 9410 3203; Webpage (from March): www.willoughbydhs.org.au

- **Saturday 2 April at 1.30pm**

Sydney Opera Society
Lecture by David Schwartz on *Of Mice and Men* by the American composer Carlisle Floyd at Willoughby Presbyterian Church Hall.
This opera will have its Australian premiere in July.
Further information: Shirley Robertson 9605 5851.

- **Sunday 10 April 10.30am**

Walter Burley Griffin Society (in association with the National Trust Heritage Festival 2011)
Guided walking tours: 'Walter Burley Griffin building for nature'.
Wear walking shoes and hat, and bring water. Cost: \$10 WBGS members; \$15 non-members.
Bookings essential: phone 9958 4516 or at info@griffinsociety.org

- **Tuesday 12 April 6.30pm**

Neighbourhood Watch
Briefing for North Shore Local Area Command Community Safety Precinct Committee. Chatswood Police Station. Residents welcome.
Further information: Snr Const Matt Jewell 9414 8499.

- **Other Notices**

Castlecrag Community Library
Opening hours: Tuesday 3-4.30pm; Thursday 2-5pm; Saturday 10am-12noon. Phone: 9958 8395.

Diary Dates is a service by the Castlecrag Progress Association.

Please contact: editors@castlecrag.org.au with details of forthcoming events and activities for inclusion.

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