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### CASTLECRAG PROGRESS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

#### Election of Office Bearers 2013

and

#### Guest Speaker: Paul Storm

President, Willoughby District and Historical Society

Speaking on the subject of 'AUSTRALIANA'

Paul is a most engaging speaker who will share with us his eclectic collection of mostly architectural and ephemeral items

**8pm, Thursday 11 June, 2013**

The Marion Mahony Griffin Hall at Glenaeon School  
121 Edinburgh Road Castlecrag

## No say on your neighbour's DA – update on the latest White Paper proposals



### New Planning Laws for NSW

Following from the unashamedly pro-developer Green Paper which was on public exhibition in

2012, the NSW Government has recently released a White Paper which is the next stage in developing the new planning laws. Community comments on the Green Paper have been largely ignored in the White Paper so it is hard to believe that the Government is placing communities at the centre of the new planning system.

The White Paper has at its core the ability for developers small and large to obtain rapid approval for most developments. Neighbours and the local community will have no right or opportunity to comment on individual development proposals. The objectives of the new planning system do not explicitly include Ecologically Sustainable Development, climate change mitigation, residential amenity or quality of life.

### Community Voice Silenced in 80% of individual development decisions.

Since the current planning legislation was introduced in 1979, members of the community have had a right to comment on the large majority of development proposals. These critical public participation rights improve the quality of development decisions and give the community a voice on development proposals that affect their environment and way of life. The White Paper proposes the removal of these rights

for 80% of individual developments with these developments being fast tracked as Complying Development or Code Assessable Development. Code Assessable Development will not be restricted to small scale development projects.

### Complying Development will be approved by Private Certifiers

Despite concerns expressed by the community and many local Councils, there is no attempt by the State Government to break the direct employment relationship between developers and private certifiers. With the increase in Code complying development there will be increased reliance on private certifiers.

### State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs) will be repealed

Of particular relevance to Castlecrag is SEPP 19 - Bushland in Urban Areas. SEPP 19 protects from development bushland on private property which is adjacent to publicly owned bushland. There are many properties in Castlecrag which adjoin reserves and some of them have valuable bushland which provides important amenity as well as protection of flora and fauna. This bushland is also important in contributing to the green and leafy character of Castlecrag which has attracted so many of us to live here. It is mooted the SEPPs may be incorporated in yet-to-be formulated NSW Planning Policies which will have no legal force.

### Growing Community Opposition

Growing opposition to the government's proposals has led to the formation of

the Better Planning Network, a growing alliance of 370 community organizations. The Castlecrag Progress Association, the Castlecrag Conservation Society, WEPA and the Federation of Willoughby Progress Associations are all members.



*Treasure our surroundings! Photo D. Pope*

### It is vitally important that as many people as possible comment on the White Paper before June 28th at

[www.planning.nsw.gov.au/a-new-planning-system-for-nsw](http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/a-new-planning-system-for-nsw).

To get ideas for your submissions visit the campaign website: [www.betterplanningnetwork.good.do](http://www.betterplanningnetwork.good.do), from: [www.facebook.com/BetterPlanningNetwork](http://www.facebook.com/BetterPlanningNetwork) from: [www.twitter.com/BettPlanNetwork](http://www.twitter.com/BettPlanNetwork), the Environmental Defenders Office NSW: [www.edo.org.au/edonsw/site/policy\\_briefing\\_notes.php](http://www.edo.org.au/edonsw/site/policy_briefing_notes.php) and the Nature Conservation Council NSW: [www.nccnsw.org.au/campaigns/planning](http://www.nccnsw.org.au/campaigns/planning).

These sites will be updated as full analysis of the White Paper becomes available.

**Richard Wyllie**

## STOP PRESS:

**CASTLECRAG COMMUNITY FAIR**  
Sunday 2 June 10am to 3pm – Castlecrag Shopping Village

THE CRAG

is the community newsletter of the Castlecrag Progress Association Inc.

PO Box 4259  
Castlecrag NSW 2068

web page:  
[www.castlecrag.org.au](http://www.castlecrag.org.au)

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[info@castlecrag.org.au](mailto:info@castlecrag.org.au)

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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](mailto:editors@castlecrag.org.au) They should be concise (preferably less than 250 words for letters). Please include your email address or phone number as we may need to edit items to fit the space available.

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Castlecrag Progress Association news and update

March 2013 meeting report

Over 80 people attended this meeting, chaired by Vice President Kate Westoby, to hear both WCC General Manager, Nick Tobin, outline the process for Haven Amphitheatre refurbishment/reconstruction and WCC Director Infrastructure, Steven Head, discuss a proposal for Castlecrag Shopping Precinct Streetscape Revitalisation. CPA committee was pleased to provide the forum for these important presentations.

Haven Amphitheatre refurbishment

As an introduction, Jack Metcalfe, a Member of the Haven Amphitheatre Management Committee, spoke briefly on the history of the Haven Amphitheatre, particularly from the time of its resurrection by the community from a desolate state in the 1970s.

As readers know from recent editions of *The Crag*, the Haven Amphitheatre Management Committee had already engaged (on a pro bono basis) architectural and engineering consultants to produce, for consideration by Council, a concept proposal to replace the existing deteriorating stage with a new, lower maintenance structure. The Committee had started raising funds and had applied for a grant for this purpose.

Actions by some opponents to the Committee's concept proposal for this Council asset have now prompted WCC to commission a new design and formulate a development application. Nick Tobin elaborated the steps involved in this process. The DA will include construction drawings and material selection and it will follow the usual process including the normal notification process. An external consultant will assess the application and Council will then determine it. Approved works will be undertaken when finance is available. Issues needing to be addressed for the refurbishment/reconstruction process include: a review of relevant Plans of Management and assessment of heritage issues; the built form; drainage/sewer connection/toilets and costs v benefit. The planning and development application should take place over the next year to 18 months. Audience comments included

the need for a Master Plan for the whole Amphitheatre site to guide future works.

Castlecrag Village Centre proposal

Steven Head discussed the Council proposal for revitalising the public domain of the Castlecrag Village Centre early in the 2013/2014 Financial Year. He said the project involved repaving both northern and southern sides of the shopping precinct, removing brick planters, providing new eucalypts in selected locations and new tree surrounds of informal timber seating. He added that the upgrade provided an opportunity to tie in with the 'Interpretation Project' that is currently underway.

Central to this project is a new entry 'gateway' at Eastern Valley Way. However as the project is driven by budget, members of the audience raised concern about constructing the 'gateway' on a minimum budget, and suggested it would be better to wait until sufficient funds are available for a 'gateway' that will truly do justice to our beautiful suburb. A brief opportunity to provide feedback on the concept was available through Council's website. The concept was also exhibited on the notice boards near the shops and in the Castlecrag library. If you haven't seen the plans and/or haven't commented as yet, See [haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au/castlecrag-village-upgrade?module=forum&sort=by=recent](http://haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au/castlecrag-village-upgrade?module=forum&sort=by=recent).

Discussion followed both presentations and Nick and Steven answered questions.

President's Resignation

Secretary Jill Newton informed the meeting that, sadly, James Fitzpatrick had resigned as president of the CPA. James has been our President for nearly three years and during this time has been an inspirational leader of, and contributor to, the community. His vision and design skills gave us confidence that wonderful things are still possible in Castlecrag. Such people are rare and his resignation is a great loss to the community. Vice President Kate Westoby in thanking James for his contribution echoed the sentiments of us all by hoping that he will remain on the committee. This feeling was echoed by those in attendance.

Castlecrag Progress Association Inc. Membership Form

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Address: ..... PO Box 4259

Phone: ..... Email: ..... Castlecrag 2068

..... info@castlecrag.org.au

## CPA news continued...

### Public Forum on the NSW Government's Planning Review WHITE PAPER in Castlecrag

By the time this edition reaches residents, a meeting will have been held, hosted by Castlecrag Progress Association and Willoughby Environmental Protection Association on 14 May 2013 in the Marion Mahony Griffin Hall at Glenaeon School. This information session was arranged to inform our local community about the changes proposed for the NSW Planning System.

Speakers invited were:

**Corinne Fisher**, co-founder and convenor of the Better Planning Network (BPN) and President of the Lane Cove Bushland and Conservation Society. The BPN is an affiliation of over 360 community groups across New South Wales (including CPA and WEPA), striving for a fair, NSW planning system that protects our environment, natural and cultural heritage;

**James Ryan**, Chairperson of the Nature Conservation Council's Planning Committee, Councillor on Cessnock City Council and a solicitor. The Nature

Conservation Council of NSW (NCC) is a non-profit, non-government organisation representing more than 100 community environment groups across NSW.

The White Paper is available to download at: [www.planning.nsw.gov.au/newplanningsystem](http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/newplanningsystem). The closing date for submissions is **Friday 28 June 2013**.

CPA encourages Castlecrag residents to read the paper and make submissions.

### "Australiana" for CPA AGM 11 June 2013

The Castlecrag Progress Association is delighted that Paul Storm, currently President of the Willoughby District and Historical Society, will be guest speaker at our AGM on Thursday 11 June.

Paul is a former schoolteacher who has spent most of his life in Willoughby and most of his married life in two old houses. He says that both of these circumstances have led to him developing an interest in old things, some of which he has rescued from Willoughby Tip, and demolitions of old houses. From both of these sources came a select group of bits and pieces with an Australiana flavour leading to a discreet collection mostly of architectural and ephemeral items.

## ELLA MARY YOUNG nee Hood (1919–2013)

Castlecrag lost a magnificent character recently but all can rejoice in her long and fruitful life. Ella Young gave great service to the community and will always be remembered by family and friends.

She lived in Castlecrag for more than fifty years in three different family homes, successively built as a result of her energy and drive. Ella was an associate of Gordon M. Jenkins and Associates, Architects for about twenty five years. This was a significant achievement at that time for a non-architect woman in a male-dominated firm.

While living in Castlecrag Ella's passion was producing, directing and acting in countless plays for the Castlecrag Players, over two periods of her life: 1950s-1970s and again from 1990s to 2003. The plays were rehearsed and performed in her own and other private homes. She had a strong vision of how a play should be presented, with Ibsen and Terence Rattigan being favourite playwrights, but was not afraid to edit them to improve any slow or "irrelevant" scenes. On the other hand she was serious and thorough, and always tried to select plays that were out of copyright, or gain written permission for their use.

As one participant writes, "We who were privileged to be involved were transported by Ella from our work-a-day worries, to a make-believe world full of interest and intrigue, insights into the human condition crafted by skilled playwrights, and insights into neighbours who became friends through these shared experiences"

Ella "lured" her actors into rehearsal with a glass of wine and nibbles, and also loved and excelled at cooking for dinner parties. She had a great interest in The Haven Amphitheatre, participating in several productions there during the 1990s.

She was a postmaster's daughter, and as such went to six different primary schools but matriculated from Parramatta High School in 1935. She married Gordon James Young in 1943, having met him at Universal Studios where they both worked. They had one son, Michael, born in 1946.

Thank you to Michael, Bill Donnelly and Bruce Wilson for the information above.

## THE THOMAS TALMACS ORCHESTRA

This Orchestra is the creation of Thomas and Isabel Talmacs. In mid 2012 they decided to create a chamber group focussed on bringing a wide variety of music to an audience in less formal settings. Their players are mostly graduates from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. Thomas is the Orchestra's artistic leader, and arranges all the music performed by the Orchestra.

Hungarian Gypsy style music is at the forefront in the Orchestra's repertory, and Thomas' Hungarian ancestry fuels his desire to establish this style of playing here in Sydney. On top of his formal qualifications, he spent time with South Hungarian violinist Andras Racs, when he learned how to treat pieces in the Gypsy style. This music developed as a completely aural tradition since its founding, roughly from the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries. Thomas believes that Gypsy

music is thoroughly set amidst the Austro-Hungarian classical tradition, and evolved from the rich musical world created by Joseph Haydn, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ludwig van Beethoven and Franz Schubert.

In addition to this style of music, Thomas has a strong sentiment towards the North German Lutheran tradition, in particular Buxtehude, Bach and Brahms, whose works feature regularly as transcriptions and arrangements in the Orchestra's concerts.

Both Thomas and Isabel (nee Taussig) were lucky enough to see and hear renowned Gypsy players in Budapest on their honeymoon. They now live in Castlecrag.

During this winter on the first Sunday afternoon of each month, we can enjoy a chamber music concert by the Thomas Talmacs Orchestra. They will perform in the Marion Mahoney Griffin Hall at Glenaeon School at 3:30pm.

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## Castlecrag NEWSBYTES

- A new Italian Restaurant has opened at the Griffin Centre, its candlelight shining forth most evenings. We would like to welcome Luca and his team to Castlecrag at "Artusi". They are open for dinner Tues-Sat, and lunch Sat-Sun.
- Two local lasses have set up their dog walking business, called "Wagging Tails". Your dogs should be very happy!

## Castlecrag NEWSBYTES

- Willoughby Council has a draft Open Space and Recreation Plan available for comment on its website: [haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au](http://haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au). In Castlecrag, there are proposals for creating a small park on Sugarloaf Point. Comments should be sent to WCC to be received before July 1.

## Castlecrag NEWSBYTES

- The end of summer and the cooler weather means the outdoor cabarets at the Haven have to be put into "mothballs". The last two shows have been fantastic. Thanks to the performers, caterers and the organisers.
- The biannual Castlecrag Fair is on Sunday June 2. Hope you will be there (or were there!). A full report in the next *Crag*.

### Willoughby Sculpture Prize

Finalists of the Willoughby Sculpture Prize 2013 have been announced, with 50 artists chosen to exhibit their works in the biennial art prize this September.

The Willoughby Sculpture Prize 2013 exhibition will run from August 31 to September 22, as part of the Willoughby Spring Festival, with an opening and award ceremony held at the Incinerator Art Space, Willoughby on August 31.

For the first time, the exhibition will extend in to a second location at the Art Space on The Concourse, Chatswood. In addition to sculpture, the exhibition will also showcase site-specific installation.

The Willoughby Sculpture Prize 2013 winner will be awarded \$20,000, sponsored by Willoughby City Council and Shead Property, and the recipient of the Emerging Artist Award will be awarded \$3,000, sponsored by Mr Vitamins. The public will have the opportunity to vote during the exhibition period for the winner of the \$1,000 People's Choice Award, sponsored by Mezze Café.

### Brass and Percussion Festival Workshop

Willoughby Band received a grant from Arts NSW to host a youth workshop to promote brass music making in the

community. They have contracted Lee Bracegirdle ([www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lee\\_Bracegirdle](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lee_Bracegirdle)) to run a masterclass and prepare the group for a concert at the end of the day. Lee is the former associate principal horn of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

The Band would like to assemble a group of young brass musicians (12-18), put them under the guidance of this world class musician and see what they can achieve in a day.

If you would like to participate, the details follow:

- Date: Sunday 23rd June 2013  
 Time: Registration at 1pm  
 Masterclass and Rehearsal 1:15pm to 6pm  
 Dinner is served to participants at 6pm  
 Free Concert at 7:30pm  
 Approximate End at 8pm  
 Venue: Joe Ciantar Rehearsal Centre, 8 McIntosh St, Chatswood  
 Cost: \$10 for Willoughby Band members,  
 \$15 for non-members.  
 (Membership to the youth is free)  
 Website: [www.willoughbyband.com](http://www.willoughbyband.com)  
 (participants can pre-register)  
 Email: [secretary@willoughbyband.com](mailto:secretary@willoughbyband.com)

### From Home to Museum: Celebrating 100 years

Celebrating the centenary of Boronia, the Federation cottage that houses the Willoughby Museum, this new exhibition tells the history of the building and the people who made it home until its transfer to the Willoughby DHS in 1988. It also explores Boronia's setting in the South Chatswood Conservation Area.

The Federation house is uniquely Australian and Chatswood of the 1920s excelled in the genre. The exhibition covers the battles by residents to protect these historic houses in their garden settings during the 1980s, which resulted in the National Trust establishing the first conservation area in Willoughby.

Council declared the South Chatswood Conservation Area in 1996. The exhibition explores this era, including the emerging pride of its residents the grand heritage of the area.

- Location: Willoughby Museum, 58 Johnson Street, Chatswood  
 Open: Each Sunday from 21 April 2013 from 1-4pm.  
 Admission: Adults \$5, Seniors \$4, Family \$10.  
 Website: [www.willoughbydhs.org.au](http://www.willoughbydhs.org.au)  
 Phone: 9410 3203

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## A Guided Walk with Ben

Ben Gerstal is The Crag's regular writer on the interesting houses of Castlecrag, and here he writes of some guided tours that are available in Castlecrag and elsewhere. These walking tours, under the auspices of the Australian Architecture Association, are available at various times of the year; Ben is a volunteer guide for several of the walks.

The Australian Architecture Association (AAA) was formed in 2004 and is the only not-for-profit organisation dedicated exclusively to increasing public awareness and appreciation of architecture. Its vision is to enable the public to understand, enjoy and discuss architecture, locally and beyond.

The aims of AAA are:

- to promote contemporary architecture to as many people as possible
- to broaden the promotion of architecture in Australia, leading to greater understanding of the value of good contemporary architecture and a growth in culture of architecture

Years ago, along with a team from the Castlecrag Progress Association, I helped develop a walk in the Griffin Estate, which as well as houses designed by WBG, noted other interesting architecturally-designed houses to form a walk of interest.

I brought this walk to the AAA, being an architect practicing in Castlecrag and therefore knowing the area very well. Then I developed a second Castlecrag Walk, which started at the well known landmark house at 265-267 Edinburgh

Road, the Audette House designed by architect Peter Muller. This was featured in one of my articles in *The Crag* (No.176, August 2010). Since then, I have developed walks for the AAA in Middle Cove, Castlecove and now McMahons Point.

All these Sydney suburbs have wonderful examples of domestic architecture from some of the well-known and not so well-known Sydney architects. These local walks are usually about 2 hours long, held on Saturday afternoons starting at 2.00 pm. To book and pay, you go online at [www.architecture.org.au](http://www.architecture.org.au)

The AAA has a comprehensive programme of tours which cover the city of Sydney: a walk through time in the city; Redfern; a Rocks tour; and a Sculpture walk. The AAA also organises talks from local and overseas architects, and exhibitions.

Some of the most exciting tours the AAA organises are the Residential House Tours. These are usually held on a Saturday and are organised around visiting five architect-designed houses open to AAA members, friends of AAA and the public. Attendees can meet the architects who have designed these houses. The tour is structured with a pick-up by coach at Customs House. This whole-day tour includes lunch. Previously, these tours have been held on the lower north shore with a lovely lunch always being served at Martha's, here in Castlecrag.



Ben Gerstal and group outside WBG Edinburgh Rd house

The latest Open House Bus tour explored residential projects across the inner east and the inner west of Sydney. These residential tours are very enjoyable and get booked out very quickly as places are limited to the number of seats on the bus.

As you are aware the Castlecrag Fair is being held on the 2nd June. The AAA will have a stall there where you can find out all about our tours. The AAA will also be running a Special Castlecrag Fair Walking Tour in the Griffin Estate, so do not forget to book for that tour.

It is very satisfying to me to be a volunteer tour guide for the AAA. My passion is Australian domestic architecture and what could be better than imparting my knowledge to people who share the same interest. I am very lucky to have Castlecrag at my doorstep.

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# Reminiscences of the New Haven Scenic Theatre

## – a letter from Elizabeth Lander

My memories of the Amphitheatre go back to when I was in utero.

My parents, Anne and Ken Thomas, were newly engaged and met Edgar Deans, still in his position as secretary to the GSDA, one afternoon in May 1939 with a view to buying land in Castlecrag. It was a very windy day so the aim was to purchase a block that was less open to the elements and that was relatively flat to enable easier building of their planned two bed roomed house. So they chose the site at No. 7 The Bastion and were in occupation by early 1940.

In those days the population of Castlecrag was small; there were no street lights, and The Scarp, the upper section of The Bulwark, Edinburgh Road and Rockley Street were dirt roads. Outside toilets were a fact of life, the only shops were those at what is now designated The Griffin Centre and the 207 bus service ran hourly. It was hardly the centre of the universe, but nevertheless an interesting bohemian suburb. (Guido Barrachi, third in the hierarchy of the Australian Communist Party and his partner Betty Roland, a writer of plays, lived next door to my parents. Their house at No.3 The Bastion was designed by Eric Nicholls for the performance of plays.)

In December 1940 my parents walked around The Bulwark to attend a Nativity Play at the Amphitheatre. My mother was about to give birth to me and forever afterwards my father said that she was the Virgin Mary, not the actress who played the part, because it was she (my mother) who was about to have the Christmas baby. This was probably the last production at the Amphitheatre due to the many restrictions imposed on the country during World War II. A long period of non-use of the Amphitheatre allowed it to be forgotten and to become an impenetrable area of weeds. Few people knew of its history or its existence.

As children in the late 1940s we used to take adventurous walks to have picnics

near the tadpole pools in the bush at the uninhabited end of The Scarp and in passing would look down onto the relic of the Amphitheatre and wonder how on earth anyone could perform plays there when there was no sign of that being possible.

Addie Saltis and her husband Con came to live in their Bill Lucas designed house at No. 70 The Bulwark in 1963. Addie was a trained librarian and took a keen interest in local history. Almost every issue of *The Crag* in the late 1960s and 1970s printed an article written by her on aspects of Castlecrag's history. Addie was also a trained bush regenerator and probably an original member of the Castlecrag Conservation Society.

I am pretty sure that her interest in local history alerted her to the existence of the Amphitheatre and to aspire to its rebirth. So, a great plan, approved by the Municipality of Willoughby, was put into action and the clearing of the Amphitheatre began in 1974 (or thereabouts) by members of the Conservation Society and other interested people.

Some of those were John Llewellyn, Beverley Blacklock, Dianne Street, Ann Korner, John and Addie Lee and Sylvia Taylor. Robert Sheldon agreed to do the architectural work and placed the stage where it now stands. David and Beverley Blacklock donated a substantial sum towards the construction of the stage and were made Life Members of the Progress Association in recognition of this generous act.

In 1976 (? 1975) *Salome* by Oscar Wilde, starring Patricia Sheldon, initiated the second coming of the Amphitheatre and since then there has been no end of wonderful productions in the beautiful, natural setting of The Haven Reserve.



*Greek set on The Scarp, 1930s*

Marion Griffin would be sending praises and congratulations from her grave if she knew that her vision had been re-awakened to such sturdy life.

When Marion Griffin was producing plays at the Amphitheatre the land above it, The Scarp itself, was used as the stage, as was the land sloping away below it. The stonework above the Amphitheatre which supports the roadway of The Scarp is an engineering work which was designed, and its construction overseen, by Walter Griffin. It has significant heritage value. Some years ago at the opening of The Stoker Playground I met a woman, in her nineties, who had appeared as an angel in one of the early productions. She had been a bridesmaid to Phyllis Stoker when she married her husband Michael. I am not sure if she is still alive but Judith Keller who lives next door to the Stoker's old house Bayview keeps in touch with the Stoker's daughter Annette so could perhaps enable contact to be made with her.

*These are just a few scraps of memories, and I hope that they may be of some use. I look forward to the Amphitheatre's being able to continue its work in giving pleasure, interest and entertainment to all its visitors. The cultural life of Castlecrag has been and is enhanced to a remarkable degree by the Haven Amphitheatre Committee's work at the Amphitheatre. I send my congratulations to all of you on the great work which has been done and I'm sure will continue in the years ahead.*



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## Castlecrag's Walkways – conflicts of access, privacy and heritage



Walter and Marion Griffin's Castlecrag is soon to be celebrated with two commemorative walks. These walks will be supported by a map, an app, the way finding posts that you may have noticed popping up around the place and the ongoing upgrade, maintenance and sometimes reclamation of public land.

We are fortunate in Castlecrag that public land is plentiful. The abandonment of plans to make Castlecrag an expressway linkage to Seaforth and Griffin's development, regarded by some as arguably the most generous act of property development in Australian history, have contributed to our very fortunate situation.

The Griffins were schooled in the progressive architectural ideas of Chicago of the beginning of the last century. Theirs was a democratic architecture for people that was inspired by nature and philosophy. Walter trained not just as an architect but as a landscape architect and urban planner, so his plan for Castlecrag was mindful of the importance of the rocky contours and its native vegetation.

Rather than the typical grid pattern of streets with red roofed houses and paling fences that ran from the shoreline to the ridge and obscured any sense of the sandstone beneath, his plan followed the contours. The walkways, that could also double as service corridors, provided the pedestrian linkages between streets and the shops, shoreline, outdoor theatre or the bushland reserves in between where neighbours could meet and nature could be enjoyed. Castlecrag became known as a cultural and spiritual hub, it thrived but the Griffins' vision was derailed by the depression and Walter's untimely death in India in 1937.

Today, after more than fifteen years of progressive improvements, many of the walkways are able to function in something like the way that Griffin envisaged. But, the walkways are sometimes considered to be an intrusion to residents' privacy or to bring social problems to the backdoor.



Our wonderful walkway Photo: Matthew Keighery

As a person who lives on a walkway, I have a perspective that comes from experience. I live on a relatively busy walkway that connects Castlecrag with Warners Park, Northbridge and Sailors Bay. I have lived here for ten years. I view Castlecrag as a quiet place without population pressure. I have never considered the small number of people who walk by an imposition.

I like hearing their chatter, women on workouts and young kids being taught by fathers and mothers about the bush. From time to time, they provide an opportunity for a conversation and even a friendship. But usually they simply walk by and the moment is as brief as when anyone passes your house. At times, I have tourists asking for directions. For example there was the Frank Lloyd Wright devotee from England whose interest in Griffin derived from the fact that he and Marion worked for Wright.

All in all, the walkway is a really positive part of my relationship with Castlecrag and our community. Many walkways are yet to be reclaimed and it is important that people view them for what they are, public assets that may provide amenity to the community. It is also important that any discussion about walkways or footpaths considers their

benefit to a wider community's need to access shops, shoreline or the occasional walk in the reserve.

Matthew Keighery, Castlecrag resident is also a committee member of the Griffin Reserves Advisory Committee (GRAC). GRAC meets with Council representatives eight times a year to discuss and advise on plans and improvements for the Reserves. The Committee is currently looking for new members.

### How well do you know your suburb?



Where is this quiet place for a chat?  
Answer on page 10 Photo: D. Pope

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# The Magic of Castlecrag

*This is a story from a little booklet about Castlecrag, written in the 1970s for the Castlecrag kindergarten. The author, Blossom Hopkinson, has captured some of the special qualities of early days of living in our suburb.*

Once upon a time there was a Magic Griffin who married a Magic Griffiness. They made themselves a little house of stone and special tiles in the Bush. They hid the house amongst the trees and rocks, lived there very happily and knew about Fairies.

They wove a spell upon the land and called it Castlecrag. Everybody who came to live there was under the spell and built the same kind of little stone house, hidden in the Bush. Some of the Bush land the Magic Griffin saved up and let nobody build there. It was especially for walking on, or sitting on to think, or just sitting on. The Magic Griffin made little Bush tracks for people to walk through and he made roads and circles so that the people from the Big World Outside would lose their way.

He named one circle The Barquette, another The Barbican, then one The Bartizan, then another one The Barricade. Thus anyone from Outside would spend his time roaming around the Bush and enjoying it, instead of being back in the Big World Outside. This was part of the Spelling of Castlecrag.

The longest road that ran along the top of the Land was a curly, soft, dirt road. People would walk along the curly, soft road, up the White Hill, round the great



*"The Great Grey Gum Tree" on Edinburgh Road  
Photo: D. Pope*

grey gum tree, down the Twisty Hill, to the Bay. More and more people came to live at Castlecrag, but they were still under the Spell of the Magic Griffin, and they hid their houses, and had little rocky tracks instead of flat paths. Of course only friends could find the way to anybody's house. There was still a lot of walking up and down the curly, soft road and, if you walked along there, someone would see you and ask you in for a cup of tea. Sometimes, though not very often, the People of the Crag went into the Big City far away. Then the old shoes they wore for Crag walking were not quite the thing

for the Big City, so they brought their City shoes with them, tossed the old ones over a low stone wall, went to the City and picked up the old shoes on the way home. Yes, although the curly, dirt road was full of bumps and hollows (which made pretty lakes in the rainy weather), people did ride bicycles, with perhaps a pack on the back for carrying food in.

The Shops at The Top sold meat, flour fruit, soap and oil for lamps. When they wanted milk, the people would hang a billy can on a gum tree and put some coins nearby. In the morning there was a billy can full of milk and the coins had gone! No one ever knew who left the milk: no one ever saw him.

The Baker baked bread in a Big Oven, Up at The Top, and he and his son, Billy the Baker used to bring loaves around and put them in boxes near houses. This was because the people put coins in the boxes and so the Baker would leave a loaf to say "Thank You". Billy the Baker was always running, always smiling as he came in the twilight with fresh bread. The Baker and Billy have gone from the Crag long since, but the Big Oven can still be seen. Up At The Top.

In the Dark Dell on The Barricade, the People used to play, dressing up in long white gowns. It was SO dark in the Dell that they made puffs of pink cloud, or green cloud, or white cloud, which lit up the players so that the others could see them.

*continued on page 9*



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## The magic of Castlecrag

*continued from page 8*

They do tell that a fisherman down in the Bay, glanced up one night into the darkness and thought he was perhaps in heaven when he saw an angel form appear in a puff of cloud.

As more and more people came to live on Castlecrag, the first people, and the second people found they could not know them all. There were just too many. Also, cars had come, and these cars used to sped the new people up the curly, dirt road so fast that nobody had time to greet them. So many cars there were, the curly, dirt road was uncurled, and the soft dirt was covered up with concrete. And the great grey gum was felled by a Woodsman from Outside. And the people cried.

Part of the Spell was broken when the curly dirt road was made straight and hard, and the great grey gum was felled. The Twisty Hill, too, was covered in concrete, but it was never tamed. It is still the Twisty Hill.

Although people did not stop and talk so much as when walking, it soon became the fashion to stop and talk in cars. If a couple of friends were about to pass in their cars, they would just pull up and have a friendly chat, while any other car behind just waited.

There was a time when Woodsmen from Outside would come together and invade Castlecrag, with their shiny, sharp axes. Now the people were pretty peaceful, but when the Woodsmen from Outside came with their shiny sharp axes, ah, then would the people run out from behind a

rock or among the trees, and would shake fists, and blow whistles! The Ruler of the Woodsmen would send his men again and again, but soon the Woodsmen had to tell the Ruler that they could not face the 'Crag people and would beg to be sent somewhere else, rather than have to face the rage of the People.

The Dark Dell had not been used for a long time, and the people, new and old, wanted somewhere to play. So they met each other, new and old, young and old, made plays together, dressing up and dancing and singing, and having parties. At one party, some of the men were playing pretty ballet girls, and some young schoolgirls, and one of the women was being a witch. She had green hair, black teeth, a black tattered gown, and carried a BAT.

Even now, if anything is needed by the people of Castlecrag, they get together, make cakes, and lunches, and pour coloured drinks, go to a Party House, and eat the food and drink the coloured drinks and pay some coins and after a while they find they have enough for whatever it is they want.

The Crag ladies play a game called Tennis, during the week days when they have finished their work at home. They go into a house called a Clubhouse, and they knit, and crochet and talk, all at once, and they carve wood, and look at photographs, and listen to the Melbourne Cup and, in case anyone does feel like playing Tennis, there is a Court waiting. Then they take a bat and hit a ball over a net, over the wire fence, into the Clubhouse, into the nearby gardens, down a drain, until they feel

tired. Then they leave, and swim in a pale, blue pool, until they feel ready to go home and cook.

The friendly habits of old Castlecrag are still being kept up. When the People have finished with anything, they put it outside their houses, and leave it for anyone who wants it, to pick up. So, at certain times, anyone wanting a garden chair, a wheelbarrow, a tiny toy piano, a clothes basket or a picture frame, need only stroll around at twilight, and he will find what he wants.

Now the New People want to know what it was like in the Old Days,...so we hope you have enjoyed reading this!



The road to the "Dark Dell" today. Photo: D. Pope

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**ENVIRONMENT NEWS • environment news • ENVIRONMENT NEWS**

**Wallaby in Retreat!**

In late April, Chris, a neighbour of The Retreat Reserve, spotted a Swamp Wallaby grazing in the bushland below his house. The Retreat Bushcare Group has worked hard on bush restoration in the reserve over the last six years, and this exciting observation was a great reward for all their work.

Council's Wildlife officer Simon Brown was very interested and set up a movement-activated Wildlife Cam to see if the wallaby had any companions. He told us that in other sites, the Cam had recorded wallaby joeys.

The Cam was "baited" with a can of sardines and some oats; wallabies don't include sardines in their usual diet but they are curious, and are attracted to investigate



*Brush-tailed possum exploring Wildlife Cam*

strong smells. Over a couple of weeks, the Cam recorded native fauna visits by a brush-tailed possum, a native rat, a posse of Australian Brush Turkeys, and a Buff Banded Rail (a beautiful ground-feeding bird, quite a nice surprise). But no wallabies. A couple of weeks later, a lone wallaby was reported from The Keep Reserve, which has a bushland connection around the foreshore from The Retreat, so perhaps it is the same wallaby "on the move". (Neighbours of The Keep Reserve, keep an eye out, and send your observations to Simon).

A little later in the year we will re-deploy the Cam near The Retreat Creek; although this reserve is very small, it has some undisturbed areas infrequently visited by humans, and we hope that some other fauna are surviving there; perhaps we will have portraits of a Marsupial Mouse (Antechinus), an Echidna or a Bandicoot.

The good news from the Cam was that no foxes or wandering cats were recorded. It seems that Council's fox control program is working. But we did record a Staffordshire Bull Terrier with a red collar, which gnawed away for an hour (190 pics!) and finally crunched up the whole sardine



*Wandering dog captured on Wildlife Cam*

can. Message to residents – please, please, keep companion animals at home or on a leash when out walking; our bushland is the home of amazing native animals, which are no match for dogs and cats.

**Bushcare friends**

Seventeen bushcarers came from Blacktown to the Retreat in March, and a great time was had by all with a huge amount of work being accomplished. July 21 will be the date for our return visit to a Blacktown site. Retreaters will learn about the drier, clay environment and their particular weeds and help a little with their projects there.

**How well do you know your suburb?**

These benches are at the entrance to the pathway to the tennis courts in The Postern.



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## Neighbourhood Watch

(Castlecrag and Middle Cove)  
Police Incident Report January–March 2013

The next 2 Community Safety Precinct Committee meetings will be on June 11th and August 13th at 6.30pm at Chatswood police station. Everyone welcome. They typically last an hour "and a bit".

Incident Category	Details	Address	Premise	Date	Start Time
Break and enter	Break/enter and steal	Edinburgh Rd, Castlecrag	Business/Commercial	Sun 13th Jan	4.30pm
Stealing	Steal from motor vehicle	North Arm Rd, Middle Cove	Outdoor/public place	Wed 16th Jan	4.00pm
Malicious Damage	Malicious damage to Property	Edinburgh Rd, Castlecrag	Residential	Sun 27th Jan	6.00pm
Break and enter	Break/enter and steal	Glenroy Ave, Middle Cove	Education	Thur 31st Jan	7.30pm
Malicious Damage	Malicious Damage to Property	Edinburgh Rd, Castlecrag	Residential	Fr 1st Feb	10.00am
Assault	Assault common	Raeburn Ave, Castlecrag	Residential	Wed 6th Feb	3.28am
Break and enter	Break/enter and steal	Edinburgh Rd, Castlecrag	Business/Commercial	Mon 11th Feb	8.00pm
Break and enter	Break/enter and steal	The Bastion, Castlecrag	Residential	Tue 19th Feb	1.00pm
Malicious damage	Malicious damage to property	Edinburgh Rd, Castlecrag	Outdoor/public place	Tue 19th Feb	9.40pm
Assault	Assault common	The Bulwark, Castlecrag	Residential	Mon 11th Mar	4.45pm
Break and enter	Break/enter and steal	Sugarloaf Cres, Castlecrag	Residential	Wed 27th Mar	11.15am
Break and enter	Break/enter intent steal	The Bulwark, Castlecrag	Residential	Thur 28th Mar	1.00am
Assault	Assault common	Lincoln Ave and EVW, Castlecrag	Outdoor/public place	Fri 29th Mar	6.20pm
Malicious damage	Malicious damage to property	Edinburgh Rd, Castlecrag	Outdoor/public place	Wed 27th Mar	7.00pm

### KEEP THESE PHONE NUMBERS HANDY

For URGENT police assistance including a suspected crime in progress

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For routine enquiries or advice after an incident phone: Chatswood Police

**9414 8499**

To give information about any criminal activities, phone Crime Stoppers

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## Diary Dates • Diary Dates • Diary Dates

- **Saturday 1 June, 2pm**

Sydney Opera Society  
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 Willoughby Uniting Church Conference Centre,  
 10 Clanwilliam St., Willoughby  
 Enquiries: Shirley Robertson on 9605 5851

- **Sunday 2 June, 10am–3pm**

CastleCrag Community Fair  
 CastleCrag Shopping Village

- **Tuesday 11 June, 8pm**

CastleCrag Progress Association (CPA) Inc  
 Marion Mahony Griffin Hall, Glenaeon School, 121 Edinburgh Road  
 Speaker: Paul Storm, President of Willoughby Historical Society speaking on 'Australiana'  
 Contact: [info@castlecrag.org.au](mailto:info@castlecrag.org.au) for further information

- **Tuesday 18 June, 8pm and Tuesday 19 July 8pm**

Willoughby Environment Protection Association (WEPA)  
 Marion Mahony Griffin Hall, Glenaeon School, 121 Edinburgh Road  
 See: [www.wepa.org.au](http://www.wepa.org.au) for more information.

- **Saturday 15 June, 7pm and Sunday 16 June, 2pm**

Willoughby Symphony Orchestra "Love Stories"  
 Conductor: Dr Nicholas Milton  
 Violin: Natsuko Yoshimoto in Bruch's "Scottish Fantasy"  
 Tickets: 1300 795 012

- **Sunday 16th June 2013 3pm**

Willoughby Band concert "Across the Pacific"  
 Zenith Theatre, Corner of McIntosh and Railway Streets, Chatswood  
 Adults \$20, Concession \$15, Children (U/16) \$10, Family \$50  
 Information: [www.willoughbyband.com](http://www.willoughbyband.com)

- **Saturday 2 July, 3:30pm, and first Sunday each month**

Thomas Talmacs Orchestra concert  
 Zenith Theatre, Corner of McIntosh and Railway Streets, Chatswood  
 Marion Mahony Griffin Hall, Glenaeon School, 121 Edinburgh Road  
 Donation: \$25/\$15

### OTHER NOTICES

#### CastleCrag Bushcare Groups' Meeting Dates

##### First Sunday of the month

- Cortile Reserve; 8am–11am; contact Sue Burk 9958 4295
- Northern Escarpment; 9am–12noon; contact Richard Blacklock 0417 217 937 or 9958 8468

##### Second Saturday of the month

- Gargoyle Reserve; 9am–12noon; contact Margaret Hutchinson 9958 4230

##### Second Sunday of the month

- Keep Reserve; 9am–12.30pm; contact Matthew Keighery 9967 2682
- Retreat Reserve; 9am–12noon; contact Lorraine Cairnes 9958 1213 or Jill Newton 9967 4933

##### Third Saturday of the month

- Torquay Estate Reserve; 1pm–3pm; contact Jo Nolan 9958 8237

##### Third Sunday of the month

- Beverley Blacklock Reserve/Cheyne Walk, 9am–12 noon, contact Frances Davis at WCC 9777 1000
- Casement Reserve; 9am–12noon; contact Sue Burk 9958 4295
- Oriel Reserve; 9am–12noon; contact Mandy Wilson 9777 7875 or Rob Gibson 0409 035 614

#### CastleCrag Community Library

Support your local library. Opening hours: Tuesday 3pm–4.30pm; Thursday 2pm–5pm; Saturday 10am–12noon  
 Phone: 9958 8395

Diary Dates is a service by the CastleCrag Progress Association.

Please contact: [editors@castlecrag.org.au](mailto:editors@castlecrag.org.au) with details of forthcoming events and activities for inclusion.

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