

NEWSLETTER

NEWSLETTER OF THE CASTLECRAG PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

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* SIXTY FOUR YEARS OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT *

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Eric Kaye

In her excellent Castlecrag, a Community History (reviewed elsewhere in this issue) Esther Leslie while writing of the influence which Griffin had on the development of our beautiful suburb, issues a warning that this could be wiped out by major and ruthless development. She writes:

'Threats have and will continue to occur. It is hoped that the Castlecrag Progress Association will continue to be the articulate voice of the community and remain constantly vigilant. High-rise construction and an extension of the Warringah Freeway are the greatest threats to the environment and the relaxing tranquillity and charm of the suburb.'

Esther's warning is eloquent and timely. To maintain this vigilance I urge all concerned residents to actively participate in the activities of the Association. The Annual General Meeting to be held on 28 February is your opportunity to elect a committee for the next twelve months.

I make mention of two community activities during 1988 which deserve special praise. They are not Progress Association initiatives but ones which have our full support. The first is the bush regeneration project in Sugarloaf Creek by a project team organised by WEPA. It was funded by a Bicentennial Grant and made possible by a great deal of voluntary work. Now known as the Valley of the Water Dragon, it is a magnificent passive recreation area. To all who worked so hard to achieve it, particularly Gay and Harold Spies, our sincere thanks.

Finally, our thanks to the Haven Theatre 530A Committee who this year staged more performances than in any year since it was established by the Griffins over 60 years ago. The performances were excellent and all very well received.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE CASTLECRAG PROGRESS ASSOCIATION WILL BE HELD IN THE COMMUNITY HALL, THE RAMPART, TUESDAY 28th FEBRUARY AT 8PM. ALL WELCOME.

THE CONSERVATION SOCIETY WILL HOLD ITS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ON FRIDAY 24th MARCH 8 PM AT 80 THE BULWARK. NEW MEMBERS ARE MOST WELCOME.

Please renew our membership of the Castlecrag Progress Association, for which we enclose \$4, or donation:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Dear Editors,

1989 is an important year for our community. Unlike many city dwellers, we are fortunate to live in a suburb that was designed for people to appreciate its natural beauty by way of our public reserves, parks, walking trails and amphitheatre. It was the hard work, foresight and determination of my parents' generation that got us the community centre, library and school. These are all our common ground. We need such public facilities for our common good.

The threatened closure of our school has deep repercussions, whether or not we have children at the school. One of the last things Castlecrag needs is more traffic on our roads at peak times, but as parents we will be forced into our cars to deliver and pick up young children who have made friends all over the municipality. The children will not grow up with a sense of community; of belonging to and caring for the suburb.

We need to keep control of our own lives and not let the Government make us feel powerless, as if there is nothing we can do to effect a change or compromise to their decision. If we find that the school is being under-utilised, we then (as a community) ascertain the community's greatest needs and work together to make that happen. We need to conserve what we have in Castlecrag. It is quite unique, and right from the beginning of white occupation our community has had a history of involvement, self-determination and community spirit. We cannot let it die.

Lindy Batterham

Dear Editors,

The saga over the occupation and care of the waterfront cottages on Sugarloaf Bay, recognised as an important part of Castlecrag's heritage, continues. For unexplained reasons Council has resolved and is now endeavouring to transfer these waterfront properties to the State Department of Planning. The occupants have cared for and maintained these places with no security apart from offsetting their costs against any market rental, which Council agreed with in 1983. The properties belong beneficially to the ratepayers of Willoughby and it is beyond reason (legally or otherwise) why now Council without compensation is willing to relinquish significant local land resources to the State. This is a local issue and Council must remain responsible - the State has enough problems without dictating our local needs.

John Llewellyn

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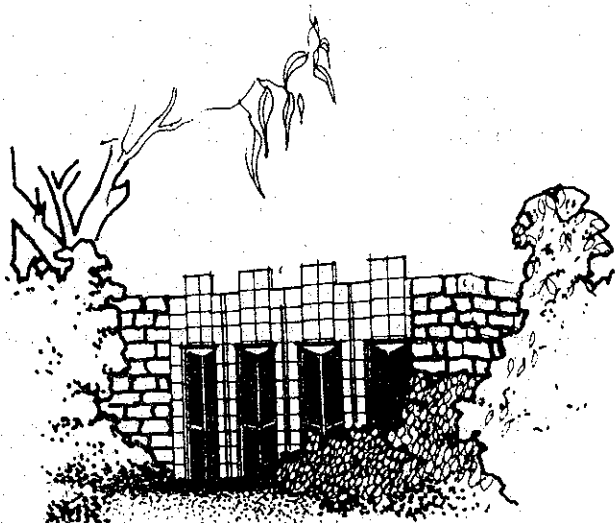
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STOP PRESS!!! CONGRATULATIONS TO CASTLECRAG RESIDENTS. WE HAVE WON A 'KEEP AUSTRALIA BEAUTIFUL' AWARD FOR TIDINESS, IN DECEMBER 1988!!!

AN APPEAL TO KEEP OUR HERITAGE IN YOUR HANDS

Last October a number of local residents formed the Walter Burley Griffin Society Incorporated. The inspiration for forming the Society was the need to acquire a unique house owned by Mr Frank Duncan, who in 1933 had commissioned Griffin to design a small one-bedroom house in The Barbette. Mr Duncan has lived there since 1934 with his wife Anice till 1984, and now finds it too difficult to stay. Only 13 Griffin houses were built in Castlecrag and given the continual occupation by its original owner, this house remains a unique expression of Griffin's architecture - the perfect small house and its relationship to the landscape. Constructed of sandstone and patented 'knitlock' (a 12 inch square cement tile) walling, the house remains in its original state both externally and internally, even to the original kitchen and bathroom. Preservation of the house is supported by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, the National Trust, the Historic Houses Trust, the Heritage Council, and of course Mr Duncan himself who recalls Griffin liking his house very much.

Mr Duncan now needs to move to the Chatswood Dougherty Centre where he has secured a pleasant unit close to services that with age he now requires, and must sell his house, with current valuations around \$400,000. Real Estate agents have advised him that 'the site has everything going for it except the house'.



The Walter Burley Griffin Society would like the opportunity to ensure the preservation of the house and land and has since gained the support of significant local and state organisations and individuals. The original spirit of Castlecrag is still alive in its people and places. Mr Duncan and his house embody this spirit. The need to secure the house in the public trust is urgent and equally, Mr Duncan's trust in our ability to do this needs to be secured for his peace of mind. We urge you to join the Society to enable us to reach a wider audience in order to raise the necessary funds.

The Corporate Affairs Commission has incorporated the Society with registration Y06598-03. The Australian Taxation Office has granted tax deductibility to donors of money or property to the Society, and also income tax exemption for the income of the Society. Its objectives and rules are available from the Secretary and we will endeavour to display copies with the organisations advertising in The Crag.

I/We wish to become members of the Walter Burley Griffin Society Incorporated and agree to accept the rules and objects of the Society.

Membership subscriptions:

- Individual \$10 a year Community Organisation \$100 a year
- Business Organisation \$500 a year

Name: _____

Address: _____ Telephone: _____

Date: _____ Signature: _____

I/We wish to help the Society with the following donation (tax deductible):

- \$ _____ \$50 \$100 \$200 \$ _____

Please make cheques payable to: Walter Burley Griffin Society Inc.
and address to: The Secretary, 12 The Parapet, Castlecrag, NSW 2068 AUSTRALIA

SOS

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NOTES ON
10 DECEMBER 88
MEETING

Eric Kaye

The whole holiday period has passed since some three hundred or so of our residents, parents and children attended a meeting in the school grounds, to protest against the proposed closure of the Castlecrag and 14 other schools in NSW. The meeting, called by the P&C Association, was chaired by Phil Bennett and held on Saturday 10th December, a day on which our local member Mr Peter Collins had agreed to attend. It marked the beginning of a determined campaign which the school committee intends to wage for the next 12 months. The meeting was addressed by: Susie McIntosh, chairman of the Committee; Mr Bob Carr, Leader of the Opposition; Ms Robyn Read, Member for North Sydney; Ald. Noel Reidy, Mayor of Willoughby; and Mr John Aquilina, MP. I spoke briefly for the Progress Association.

Mr Bennett had the unpleasant task of advising those present that Mr Collins would not be attending, nor had a written statement been received from him.

Susie McIntosh gave an excellent outline of the action which the Committee had already taken. She attacked the Government's policy and stated that the struggle would continue through 1989 to save Castlecrag and the other 14 schools.

Mr Carr said that he was deeply concerned for the future of state education in NSW, and that it would 'require people like you, with commitment to go out and advocate the survival and strengthening of the state education system'. He said that he feared the decision to close the 15 schools was part of a 4-5 year program to dismantle public education.

Robyn Read said that access to quality education is the right of every child in our society, but that the present Government was taking away that right, partly to get those who could afford it out of the public school system, in a cynical cashing-in of public assets. However, this school belongs to us all, we own it, it is on public land.

The Mayor, Noel Reidy said: 'Our schools are not for sale. There has been no consultation, and we want to know from the Government, 'Why are you closing this school? Are you going to sell this asset? If so, what are you going to use it for?'. He then read the resolution passed by Council on 5 December: That Council

1. support the State Government's drive to fully utilize every public asset to maximise the return commensurate with the risk;
2. express concern that closure and sale of Castlecrag School does not appear to have been fully researched by the Minister's Staff or Department or consultation taken place with those affected including parents, citizens and local government;
3. considers on the evidence currently available that there is too high a long term risk of future overcrowding of Willoughby and nearby schools;
4. request the Government to reverse the Minister's decision to close the Castlecrag School until the full facts are revealed to and discussed by the relevant parties.

John Aquilina the shadow Minister for Education, a former teacher and a person who rates education above all else including politics, strongly supported the actions of the Committee in this campaign. He said, 'the brochures and information prepared by your Committee says it all, and says it very well. There is nothing good in education about being big, what is good is where you have intimate classes where teachers and students get to know one another'. His final words were a challenge, 'Keep up the good fight!'.



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SUGARLOAF BUSH REGENERATION OPENING

The official opening of the Sugarloaf Bush Regeneration project in the catchment of Sugarloaf Creek - designated the Valley of the Water Dragon - was performed on 20 December 1988 by the Member for North Sydney, the Hon. John Spender. The master of ceremonies, Mr Don Burke, commenced proceedings with the following comments:

I think what we are doing here today is more important than the people here realise. Australian cities are unique in that we have more virgin bushland than any other major city in the world. In New York people would have no idea of what native plants are; they have probably never seen them. Those who live in Britain would not even know what their native plants were. Sydney, of all the cities in Australia, has by far the best bushland. It is a critical resource which the rest of the developed world does not have.

A pivotal area for Sydney has been Castlecrag. The early work of Walter Burley Griffin in establishing his suburb and restoring the bushland was a farsighted and critical thing for the city. The tragedy for Castlecrag is that, for most of the 50 years after Griffin established the suburb, the residents did not follow his vision and use of the area turned into abuse. Much of the access to the bush was walled off and residents dumped their rubbish in the bush. Nonetheless, the area is still wonderfully good. The damage has not been horrendous and what we are about today is reversing the damage which has occurred.

I see Castlecrag as being the Terania Creek of Sydney. Terania Creek as a rainforest was not especially significant, but what Hugh and Nan Nicholson did there turned the tide. With the support of Neville Wran, it was the beginning of the end of rainforest logging. Castlecrag is pivotal to getting urban bushland right. Other suburbs will look to us for leadership. Other forgotten valleys may be saved if this works as well as it looks like working. It is quite critical for the development of Sydney.

The Mayor, Ald. Noel Reidy praised the work of WEPA in bringing the bushland regeneration about. He stated that Council have been supportive of WEPA's work and had recently made a grant of \$10,000 which will enable the work to continue through 1989. He commented that many people did not appreciate the bush before the project commenced, but the efforts of WEPA in involving the local people in the work had brought about a new awareness of the bush. Ald. Reidy stated that the project was a highly significant achievement for the whole of Sydney.

Gay Spies, replying on behalf of WEPA, welcomed guests, particularly the residents of Sunnyside and Sugarloaf Crescents. She said that it was hard to believe such a beautiful area of bushland was so close to the GPO. The National Estate and Bicentennial grants received by WEPA were an important acknowledgement of urban bushland as part of our heritage. Special thanks were extended to the teams which had participated in the work, and for the pride of WEPA members in the project, which they saw as their contribution to the community and to conservation of urban bushland.

The Hon. John Spender supported the sentiments of the previous speakers. He said that we had been lucky that such bushland had not been destroyed, and this was an opportunity to see ourselves as trustees for the next generation. The day's events marked an achievement in saving bushland for the future. He stated that he could not see us ever turning back to the old days when anything was right for development at any cost and for any purpose. He offered thanks to the community for caring about the area, and unveiled the plaque to commemorate the opening of the project.

The President of the Progress Assoc, Mr Eric Kaye, thanked members of WEPA especially Gay and Harold Spies for their imagination and hard work in regeneration of the valley and pointed out that it would be obliterated should the Freeway ever go ahead. Local resident Gordon Shrubbs then read his evocative poem The Valley of the Water Dragon, about the great rocks and pools which are home to families of Eastern Water Dragons.

THE SUGARLOAF BUSH REGENERATION FUND APPEAL

Sugarloaf Creek in Castlecrag runs through the Valley of the Water Dragon. It then joins with Camp Creek and flows through the mangroves of the South Arm of Sugarloaf Bay in Middle Harbour. The bushland in this delightful valley is being regenerated by a project team organised by WEPA.



The regeneration program began in 1985 with a National Estate Grant of \$10,000 and continued with an Australian Bicentennial Grant of \$80,000 in 1986. WEPA currently employs 15 bush regenerators and has contributed approximately \$12,000 in voluntary work. So far, primary work on about one third of the catchment area of Sugarloaf Creek has been completed. The grant moneys have been used mainly for labour costs and will be exhausted early in 1989.

The work, when completed, will allow access to waterfalls surrounded by lovely native bush. There is the potential for a South Arm Walking Track and a link to Harold Reid Reserve through either bushland or the mangroves. The area is an important habitat for native plants, animals and birds. It is also a valuable passive recreation asset for Castlecrag and, indeed, Sydney. To leave the regeneration work incomplete and without ongoing maintenance would be a tragedy.

Money is needed to employ workers, remove rubbish and pay insurance. Your contribution will be invaluable in allowing the project to be carried to completion.

Please don't allow garden refuse, lawn clippings or any household rubbish to enter the creeks or bush. Help regenerate and conserve this lovely valley.

Thank you,
Gay Spies
Gay Spies

President, WEPA.

WEPA AGM 8pm Monday 13 February
Artarmon Library, Elizabeth St Artarmon
Gay Spies will give an illustrated talk
on the Sugarloaf Project. All welcome.

An Open Day with guided walks in the
Valley of the Water Dragon will be held
on Sunday 4 March at 10am and 2pm. Meet
at vacant block beside 63 Sunnyside
Crescent, Castlecrag. Walking shoes
essential. 958 8569

Christine Lawrence
Treasurer, WEPA
19 Cooney Avenue
ARTARMON 2064

Dear Ms Lawrence,

Please find enclosed \$.....(Cheque or Money Order) being a donation towards WEPA's Sugarloaf Bush Regeneration Fund. (Tax deductibility is being pursued through the Aust. Conservation Foundation.)

Suggested Donation (please tick)

()\$15 ()\$20 ()\$25 ()\$50 ()\$100 ()\$500 ()\$.....

Yours sincerely

NAME: (Please print).....

ADDRESS.....

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The Community Centre, The Rampart

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TUESDAYS 3.30 - 4.30PM

THURSDAYS 12.30 - 4PM

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DEIGHTON, L	Spy Hook
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WEST, M	Masterclass
CHATWIN, B	Utz
WESLEY, M	Second Fiddle
WARNER, M	The Lost Father
STEEL, D	Zoya
BROOKNER, A	The Latecomers
STUART LONG	The Seafarers
FRANCIS, D	The Edge
HOWATCH, S	Glamorous Powers
PEDROSA, C	Imelda Marcos
CONDON, R	Prizzia's Glory
O'BRIEN, E	The High Road
HOLT, V	The India Fan
GASKIN, C	The Charmed Circle
DE MILLE, N	The Charm School
FITZGERALD, P	Beginning of Spring
BINCHY, M	Silver Wedding
CLEARY, J	Now and Then, Amen
HIGHSMITH, P	Two Faces of January and many paperbacks and mysteries.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Richard Wheeler



DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT IT!

The 'it' in this case is not a certain credit card, but rather the knowledge that you have told your neighbour of your proposed absence. In spite of all the bad behaviour one hears of, most of us are only too pleased to assist a neighbour by keeping a friendly eye on their house during their absence. Collecting the mail, parking a car in the driveway, etc. So for safety's sake, let your neighbour know when you'll be away. Your

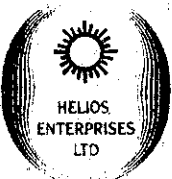
mind will be easier, your neighbour will be pleased to have helped, and there will always be an occasion when you can return the favour. Be a good neighbour, join Neighbourhood Watch. Ring Richard Wheeler 958 6963 for more information.

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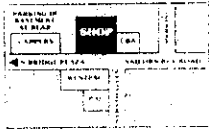
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CASTLECRAG HISTORY BOOK

Rita Kaye

Looking back on the Bicentenary year, and projects commemorating that event, there are two that greatly impressed me. They were both achieved by the voluntary work of many Willoughby residents. One was the Banners Project, the results of which now decorate the walls of the Civic Centre in Chatswood; the other is the set of eight books on the history of our municipality, launched in December 88.

A committee chaired by Esther Leslie was set up to organise this project, with people undertaking responsibility for the histories of the different areas. Esther herself compiled the books on Castlecrag, Middle Cove and Northbridge. She also worked jointly with Jean Michaelides on the history of the suburb of Willoughby.

We of Castlecrag are greatly indebted to her for the excellent book she has produced on our suburb, and would like to thank her for the many hours she spent researching, interviewing and planning, to achieve this result. We now have a detailed record of our area, including dates and recipients of the first land grants made on our peninsula. We meet the people who were involved in Castlecrag at this time, and learn of their backgrounds and interests. We are taken through the development of our suburb from the time of the first European settlers to the present, and introduced to many interesting people on the way. The author leaves us with a greater understanding of and empathy for our chosen home. It is clear that she has a great love for Castlecrag. I now look forward to reading the other seven books on our Municipality.

Note: We have purchased a number of The Suburb of Castlecrag, a Community History and will have them at our next Progress Association meeting 28 Feb. The books are also for sale at Willoughby Library for \$5 each. We urge you to get your copy whilst they are still available.

The Crag is edited on behalf of the Progress Association by Mary Baker 958 5518 and Kerry McKillop 958 4516. We would appreciate the assistance of someone willing to organise the distribution of the newsletter to the network of residents who deliver it to letterboxes every two months.

To buy or sell a home contact:

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