

NEWSLETTER OF THE CASTLECRAG PROGRESS ASSOCIATION INC

No. 109

Seventy two years of community development

August/September 1996

ISSN 0814 - 2054

At the last General Meeting of the Castlecrag Progress Association held on the 25 June 1996, the following motion was carried: "That John Syriatowicz submits a one page letter to be published on the front page of The Crag which will retract incorrect statements made in Issue 108 of The Crag" Mr. Syriatowicz' letter is published verbatim. The Editors of The Crag append reference notes to the letter on page 3.

"FORESHORE BUSHLAND TO STAY!

The editorial in the June/July issue of the Crag (No. 108) regarding the recent decision in the Land and Environment Court removing some Foreshore Building Lines in Castlecrag contains many statements which are false or misleading. It is a matter of extreme concern that the Crag should publish such demonstrably inaccurate information.¹

The decision of the Court to declare invalid the FBLs on the properties fronting Edinburgh Road and Sugarloaf Crescent cannot result in any development that will have Castlecrag looking the same as Seaforth or Mosman. No new development is possible on the foreshore in these areas because of the presence of wide swathes of Open Space between residential land and the foreshore is typically 140 metres wide, while on Sugarloaf Crescent it is a minimum of 180 metres wide.²

When the Transport Corridor was lifted in 1977 from the northern escarpment of Edinburgh Road it was replaced in the same year by an Open Space Reservation. This fully protects this land from development, more effectively than any FBL, including those lots which are privately owned to the water. The FBL was not introduced until 1986, some 9 years later, and was not placed on the upper limit of the proposed freeway but some 40 metres higher up the escarpment.³

The decision of Justice Bannon does not rest on a narrow definition of "foreshore". His honour found these particular lines to be manifestly unreasonable and disproportionate. The decision does not threaten any significant area of bushland in Castlecrag; nor does it set a precedent which will undermine the legitimate use of FBLs throughout NSW. It does, however, require Councils to act reasonably in the application of FBLs. Perhaps it is this requirement to be reasonable that some of the more extreme elements in the community find so objectionable.

As one of the landowners who won this "landmark" case I wish to affirm that the applicants have no desire or intention to destroy valuable bushland. We do, however, wish to preserve the value of our properties and are not prepared to have this value destroyed by planning instruments which are applied in an unreasonable and discriminatory manner. We have consistently and publicly expressed our desire to work with the community to achieve a fair and reasonable way of protecting environmentally sensitive areas. We reaffirm this commitment. ⁶

The Reasonable Green Group was formed for the purpose of working towards the achievement of planning outcomes which are fair to the environment and fair to individual landowners. The RGG has attempted to restore balance to the environmental debate in Castlecrag by the distribution of balanced information countering the type of inaccurate and misleading information as is contained in your editorial. We are gratified that more and more residents are beginning to hear and take note that there may be more than one side to the debate. This is demonstrated by the last meeting of the Castlecrag Progress Association resolving to have this letter published on the front page of the Crag.

It is time now to seek consensus and to work together for the benefit of the whole community, with honesty, and respect for the legitimate rights of all residents."

JOHN SYRIATOWICZ

The Story of The Castlecrag Community Centre

by Joyce Batterham

The kindergarten, library, meetings of local groups, elections, social functions: all are part of the Community Centre, so residents know it and have used the facilities but may not be aware of its history.

alter Burley Griffin marked this area "to be reserved for community use" when the Estate was surveyed in the late 1920s. Few knew of this proviso, but Edgar Deans and Frank Duncan, early residents who worked closely with Griffin, were aware of it. By the 1940s, Castlecrag was an established suburb, though small (estimated population between 700-800) and more like a village. Most residents were young couples, there were many children and a kindergarten was needed. Mr and Mrs Stoker offered part of their home in Edinburgh Road as a community kindergarten to be run by the parents. A committee was formed to help Phyl Stoker. The number of children attending increased rapidly and two dedicated young kindergarten teachers. Olive Mason and Naomi Long, were employed. Fees were four shillings (forty cents!) per week and a hot lunch was organised by a roster of mothers. Our teachers came from Willoughby and walked down Edinburgh Road, collecting children on the way. With children attending from Northbridge, Willoughby and even Chatswood, the kindergarten was rapidly out-growing the existing accommodation.

Frank Duncan, who had experience with co-operative societies in England, suggested we form a co-operative society to secure control of the community land. So, in 1943, the Castlecrag & East Willoughby Community Advancement Co-operative Society was formed. Shares were ten shillings (\$1) each. An A.G.M. was held, officers and Board of Directors elected, and legal procedures commenced to transfer the land from the Greater Sydney Development Association founded by Walter Burley Griffin. (ED: Joyce was Secretary of the Co-op., and has been on the committee ever since).

An Agreement was drawn up, providing for the land to be transferred to Willoughby Council — to avoid paying rates — but the administration and use of the land and building was to be controlled by the Co-operative. Willoughby Council agreed to subsidise the Society on a pound-for-pound basis, to raise the money to build a community centre. The community engaged in a positive frenzy of fund-raising. The Second World War was still on, with rationing and all goods in short supply, but

we scrounged and scavenged for materials and we knitted, sewed, baked, made felt and wooden toys and held a series of fairs on (what was then) vacant land where the shopping centre now stands. In between, we held card nights, raffles and baby-sat. At The Pinnacle, a table was set up to serve afternoon tea to people from neighbouring suburbs who came for a bush walk on Sunday afternoons. One thousand pounds (\$2,000) was our goal, which may not seem so much today, but blocks of land were selling for a few hundred pounds, and it was a massive effort for a small community.

Working parties of residents cleared the land, dug drains and foundations, erected playground equipment and built a shelter shed. Architect Eric Nicholls (Griffin's partner) designed and supervised the building, donating his services. It was a day of great jubilation when the Castlecrag Community Centre was officially opened in November 1947. Our friends, Olive Mason and Naomi Long, came back as the first kindergarten teachers and stayed until 1952.

Fund-raising was still necessary to equip the Community Centre and the Kindergarten. The Co-operative Society administered the Centre, working closely with the Kindergarten Committee.

Centre became too great a task for the Co-operative. Some of the most active and enthusiastic members had diverted their time and energy to establishing the Infants' School of Castlecrag. At the final A.G.M., it was resolved that the Co-operative was no longer required by the local residents and the Board was directed to take steps to wind it up.

Willoughby Council agreed to take over the maintenance of the building. The Kindergarten Committee was also finding it difficult to find staff and run the kindergarten after the original teachers left, and in the mid-50s, it was given to the Kindergarten Union to administer. Council appointed a committee of local residents to assist in the maintenance and control of the Community Centre and this Committee, successive kindergarten committees, library committees and Council have worked together to extend and equip the Centre to the present high standard.



We should remember that it was the vision of Walter Burley Griffin that provided the land for community use and pay tribute to those early residents who worked so hard and demonstrated that a community pulling together can move mountains and make dreams come true.

Did The Crag publish inaccurate information on the Foreshore Building Lines in Issue No. 108?

We believe the information published was not inaccurate. The purpose of the motion quoted on page 1 was to correct what some perceive to be incorrect and to allow CPA members also belonging to the 'Reasonable Greens', an opportunity to present their point-of-view in The Crag.

The motion succeeded by a majority of votes, which included the CPA committee. The views expressed by Mr. Syriatowicz are his and do not reflect editorial opinion.

REFERENCES APPENDED TO LETTER ON PAGE 1

The only inaccurate information we can establish is that "a Foreshore Building Line was then placed on the upper limit of the (Warringah) freeway". This should have read: "on approximately 70m contour on the Northern Escarpment"— as we stated in the inset box headed 'FBLs Brief History In Time'. We also omitted to list every FBL-affected street in Castlecrag: Edinburgh Rd Northern Escarpment, The Tor Walk, Linden Way, Knight Place, The Scarp, The Barricade, The Bulwark, Rockley Street and Sugarloaf Crescent.

2&3 On The Northern Escarpment, Public Open Space (Zoning 6a, Existing Recreation) only applies to that land in Council ownership or already acquired by the Dept. of Urban Affairs & Planning (DUAP) and transferred to Council. The (Warringah) freeway reservation was replaced by a County (now Regional) Open Space Reservation, Zoning 6C. This still applies to portions of those lands in private ownership or in the hands of the Roads and Transport Authority (RTA). This zoning recognises the regional environmental significance of the area. It signifies intent.

The land does not become Public Open Space until it is acquired by DUAP. Those who still own land to the water have had for some years, the right to demand that DUAP purchase the *Regional Open Space* portion of the land.

Until Regional Open Space land is finally in public ownership and management, it is vulnerable. It carries no requirement to manage for the values for which the reservation was applied. It reinforces the importance of the way land adjacent to it is developed. The FBL is an important tool in protection of this Regional Open Space. Although the majority of the northern escarpment is a Dual Occupancy Exclusion Zone, if the FBL did not exist, subdivision of some properties would be possible and situations such as seen in Seaforth or Mosman become a distinct possibility.

In Sugarloaf Crescent, there is **no** Regional Open Space Reservation. The subdivisions with residential zoning almost to the creeks are something of an anomaly, even though topography and vegetation are similar to nearby land zoned for regional significance — a fact recognised by the 1982 Local Environment Study and Local Environment Plan (LEP)25 in placement of the FBL.

The only Public Open Space below Sugarloaf Crescent

extends from property boundaries to the relevant waterways; Sugarloaf and Camp Creeks. (FBLs apply in respect of a bay, creek, harbour, river, lake or lagoon). This Open Space is a narrow strip varying between 6 and 24 metres, *not* 180 metres as claimed.

References: DUAP, Willoughby City Council.

The FBL was introduced and operative from 1980 in Sugarloaf Crescent and from 1982 Edinburgh Road. It was gazetted in 1986 (see point 1). Reference LEP25.

- Justice Bannon's definition of foreshore and 'reasonableness' are matters for the Appeal which Willoughby City Council and the DUAP have resolved to mount.
- We quote our local member Peter Collins Q.C., speaking at the Federation of Progress Associations of Willoughby meeting of 1/6/96 (1) and in writing to A. Barnett dated 18/6/96 (2).

"The recent Land & Environment Court judgement of the Foreshore Building Lines in two places in Castlecrag has implications, not only for Castlecrag, but for all of Sydney Harbour and beyond. The decision will set a precedent one way or another."

"The decision as it stands could have major repercussions for neighbouring Councils with respect to the preservation of foreshore land. Every step should be taken to resist such development as a result of the initial FBL decision."

Minister for Urban Affairs & Planning, Craig Knowles:

"The significance of this judgement is appreciated and the matter will be given close attention. You may be assured that the Government is committed to protection of sensitive foreshores areas both in the City of Willoughby and in other parts of the State." 25/6/96.

All **remnant** urban bushland is significant, as acknowledged by SEPP.19 (State Environmental Planning Policy 19: Bushland in Urban Areas, gazetted 1986). See also the publication Taken For Granted — The Bushland of Sydney and its Suburbs, Kangaroo Press 1990, by Benson, D.H. and Howell, J.

- The affirmation to protect the 'valuable bushland' is noted, but the statement also seeks to enhance the value of properties by removal of protective planning instruments.
- Our FBL feature in *The Crag 108* was prepared to provide a balanced response to the material previously distributed by The Reasonable Greens. The Constitution of the Castlecrag Progress Association Inc., Article 1.2:2 *Objectives* states that the Association is: "To conserve the natural and human heritage of Castlecrag for the benefit of future generations." (Ed.)

HIGH LEAD LEVELS CONTAMINATE THE HARBOUR

Sugarloaf and Sailors Bays are among the areas of Sydney and Middle Harbours contaminated with high levels of lead, according to a recent study by the University of Sydney's Environmental Geology Group (SMH 13 July 1996). "The harbour would rank as one of the most impacted sites in Australia" according to the study leader, Dr. Gavin Birch.

The SMH report noted that heavy metal contamination in Sydney has continued to rise even after the closure of chemical industry plants, suggesting stormwater runoff from roads and leaching from contaminated sites and/or landfill as the most likely sources.

While scientists have long been aware sediments in Sydney Harbour are highly polluted, the study, which tested more than 5,000 samples in the Sydney region, is the first to identify the full extent of the problem.

Another problem identified was the extent of the lifting of sediments into the water column. Until now it was assumed that the toxic sediments which can be up to 1.5 metres thick, were harmless if undisturbed. Research revealed that these sediments were continually mixing with the water, exposing sea life to the toxins.

(ED.)



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VODAPHONE LOOMS OVER GRIFFIN CENTRE

After having been rebuffed by the owner of the Quadrangle shopping centre, Vodaphone is now applying to erect its mobile phone antenna, transmitter station and equipment shed on top of the Griffin Centre.

While these would be placed on the middle of the rear section of the roof, the overall height of the antenna would be 15m above ground level and be a dominating feature of the area. The antenna will be secured by guy wires. The equipment shed is the size of a garden shed and would be only partially concealed by a screen.

Apart from the unsightliness, residents are concerned as to the possible incremental effect of the various microwave emissions. There has been no satisfactory outcome of enquiries on the radiation of microwave emissions — the long-term effects may not be determined for some years. Recently, a Sydney kindergarten campaigned successfully to have a similar tower removed from its vicinity. Parents did not want their children exposed to microwave radiation they saw as harmful. While the carrier asserts that emissions conform to the Australian standard, that standard may be questionable as to the long-term safety aspect. Our kindergarten is 200 metres from the site; residences and workplaces are closer.

The equipment is to service Vodaphone's mobile phone network only, to cover 80% of a 'black spot' in its network. The application therefore is commercially driven and has no local community value. The equipment will have strong visual impact on the building said to have been originally designed by Walter Burley Griffin.

Council will consider the proposal at its meeting on Monday 19 August. Residents with particular interest in the matter are encouraged to attend. 4

PETER MEARES



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WIRES BELOW GROUND

The Wires Below Ground sub-committee was established at the meeting of the Castlecrag Progress Association on 25 June, for the purpose of investigating possibilities for undergrounding of electricity, Pay TV and telephone cabling in Castlecrag. Committee members are: Alex Yezerski, Howard Rubie, John Howard, Peter Meares and Councillor Sue Randle.

The committee is hoping to present Optus, Telstra and other service companies with viable alternatives to their proposed overhead rollout, and at the same time to realise Walter Burley Griffin's vision of removing ugly poles and wires from the suburb.

The Castlecrag blockade of the Optus rollout has inspired residents of a number of other council areas in their battles against this visual pollution; Concord, Sutherland, Pittwater and Manly, to name just a few. Media reporting on the issue has varied widely, depending on the business interests of the owners, but it is clear that the cables are being resisted, especially in Sydney's more scenic areas.

The committee has met with Energy Australia and has requested cost estimates for the proposed undergrounding. Once indicative costs are known, options for funding (including by the service providers and by government) will be explored.

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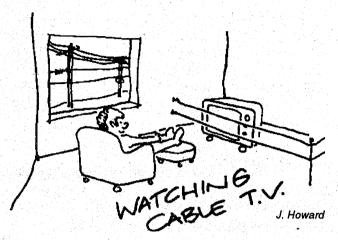
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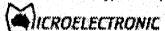
he committee has a difficult task, as the costs involved are huge, and quick answers are needed if Castlecrag is to escape the visual pollution of Optus and Telstra cables.

We will 'keep you posted' on further developments.

JOHN HOWARD

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DEVELOPMENT & DAMAGE

how small bushland reserves become degraded and lost

The Edward's Theory of incremental development states that development of a parcel of land proceeds by a series of steps, which ultimately form a more extensive change than is envisaged at the first step. In other words, although each stage of development can be justified on the basis that it is only a limited change from the conditions existing at the time, in fact, it may represent a major change from the original or most desirable condition.

Put in less abstract terms — the concreting of a scrap of bush is no less effective if it happens not at once, through clearing, but by a process like this;

- 1. Initially, the reserve carried native vegetation in good condition.
- 2. Marginal firebreaks slashed.
- 3. Boundary fences erected: machinery disturbs reserves while manoeuvring.
- 4. Neighbour's spare car is parked there and compaction results.
- Other neighbour heaves garden rubbish and grass clippings over the fence. Bulbs take root, prunings drop seed.
- 6. Sympathetic engineer (or Council person or body in charge) retires.
- 7. Gas pipeline and telephone cable dug through the reserve on two separate alignments.
- 8. Drainage line excavated.
- 9. Local children hack trees and build cubby houses.
- 10. Road widened; substantial disturbance.
- Sickly trees removed because of the danger of falling limbs.
- 12. Lopping for electricity wires.
- 13. Whole reserve slashed for reasons of fire hazard.

By this time, the reserve is recognised as being untidy, heavily invaded by weeds and containing only a few scruffy trees. There is little point in maintaining such a little-used nuisance and in any case, the kindergarten

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committee (or similar community service) would save \$20,000 if it could use the land as a site for its new building.

Every one of the actions listed above is, by itself and at the time, eminently reasonable ...but the ultimate result is a loss to the community of a valuable natural feature.

It takes a great deal of courage for the controlling authority or one of its officers to halt the process of incremental conversion of unremarkable pockets of scrub into weed infested wasteland then in turn, into something horticulturally 'tidier' or 'more colourful'. Unless the techniques for managing such pockets of reserve land are better understood, authorities won't bother making the effort.

any of us have observed this type of change over a period of years — it is often so gradual that we hardly remember what a particular scrap of land used to look like. This is why Council has addressed a Plan of Management for Castlecrag's reserves. As residents, there is something we can do to halt degradation of such spots: Always question any work involving machinery you see, and if unsatisfied, check it further. Resist the temptation to park your car there, or to interfere with natural vegetation, and remember, the best place for any garden residue you do not compost is in the big green bin.

WHO IS 'EDWARDS'? G.P. Edwards was a Park Manager from Victoria, who wrote this theory as part of a paper entitled: How to Destroy the Bush Without Really Trying', presented at a seminar organised by the Royal Australian Institute of Parks & Recreation, in 1980. The Edwards' Theory is often used by teachers at Ryde TAFE School of Horticulture.

(ED.)





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COMMUNITY BYTES

WILLOUGHBY FAIR: 19 OCTOBER 1996

Once again, the Castlecrag Progress Association will hold a Trash and Treasure stall, which is the Association's only source of funds apart from membership fees. We therefore ask householders to dig in cupboards, garages and other cluttered spaces, so we may relieve you of Aunt Betty's vase, or the whatchamacallit your children hate. All Donations gratefully accepted by phoning Elizabeth Lander on 9958 5384.

'GHOST' IN CASTLECRAG

The Haven Playreaders will tackle Henrik Ibsen's classic play 'Ghost' on Saturday 31 August, 8pm sharp at Ella Young's home. The Master wrote this play in response to concern expressed by the King of Norway that Ibsen's previous play 'The Doll's House' had — for the first time recorded in the history of theatre — a wife who actually left her husband. In 'Ghost' the wife stays. Find out why by being in the audience, as Andrew Frazer, Bill Donnelly, Tony Taussig, Emma Westoby and Ella Young present this story for our entertainment and dissection. Telephone 9958 4751 to book a seat. Wine, cheese and shades of conversation after the performance.

AMPHITHEATRE COMPLETES BUILDING PROJECT

The Haven Amphitheatre committee is relieved to announce that the building project which started with the new stage two years ago, is now complete. Hitherto unimagined luxuries under the stage include an enclosed dressing room with sink, and a toilet cubicle. Electricity has been fitted to the area. Work on the Haven continues, with stone tiers being re-shored and secured where necessary. A very large 'Thank You' to all residents who have helped on the working bees, donating time and muscle on weekends.

NEW BOOKS IN CASTLECRAG LIBRARY

Some of the new books recently purchased for the library include:

Binchy, Maeve This Year It Will Be Different F

Byatt, A.S. Babel Tower F

Clark, Mary Higgins Moonlight Becomes You F Grisham, John The Runaway Jury F

Fitzgerald, Penelope The Blue Flower F Smith, Martin Cruz Rose F

Bragg, Melvyn Credo F Archer, Jeffrey The Fourth Estate F

Briskin, Jacqueline The Crimson Palace Gregory, Phillipa A Respectable Trade F/P.B.

Leon, Donna A Venetian Reckoning F/P.B. Patterson, James Black Market F/P.B. Follett, Ken The Modiglani F/P.B.

Taylor, Alison Simeon's Bride F/P.B.

Lessing, Doris Love, Again F

WILLOUGHBY'S WASTE MANAGEMENT SUCCESS

Willoughby City Council is setting the trend in its efforts to tackle the huge waste management problems facing Sydney councils. According to the Good Weekend feature article of 3 August 1996, Council's introduction of additional 140-litre bins for household waste in July 1995, with the 240-litre bins being used for garden refuse, has resulted in a 56 er cent reduction in waste going to landfill and a 34 per cent rise in recycling. The green waste goes to a commercial company which turns it into compost.

Council's Waste Management Manager, Jim McCormick advises that additional reduction in landfill waste can be made by the composting of kitchen refuse, such as vegetable and fruit peelings. Council sells compost bins and worm farms to residents at cost price, to encourage such composting. Interested residents can contact Mr. McCormick on 9777 1000.

NEW DRAFT CPA CONSTITUTION

The Castlecrag Progress Association advises residents that copies of the new Draft Constitution and the current Constitution are still available for residents' reference and consideration at the Castlecrag Community Library (open Tuesday 3.30-4.30pm, Thursday 1.00-5.00pm and Saturday 10.00am-noon), or from Diana Jones (9958 4885) or Kerry McKillop (9958 4516).

Copies indicate those paragraphs which have been amended or changed or are new. Omissions can only be found by comparing the old and new constitutions. Members wishing to make criticisms or suggestions for improvement of the draft should submit them to the Secretary in writing, by 29 August 1996.

- The committee and sub-committee will meet to deal with responses 30 September.
- General meeting of CPA to consider changes will be held 22 October 1996
- Special General Meeting to adopt the new Constitution will be held 19 November 1996.

CASTLECRAG COMMUNITY CENTRE

The Castlecrag Community Centre 377 Committee was established by Willoughby Council to administer and maintain the Centre. The committee seeks new members from the community to be appointed to the committee and assist in this pleasant duty.

If you are interested, please phone Joyce Batterham on 9958 4161.

LOCAL ENVIRONMENT PLAN ON DISPLAY

Willoughby Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 95, after many years of preparation and widespread public consultation, was approved by the Minister for Urban Affairs & Planning and gazetted in November last year. The draft Heritage Development Control Plan (DCP), which is an essential part of LEP95 and which concentrates on the detailed requirements for the protection and preservation of our natural heritage, has also been years in the preparation and has undergone expert and public scrutiny.

In Castlecrag, the DCP outlines the history of the Griffin Estate, now to be called the 'Griffin Conservation Area', with its unique system of reserves and connecting walkways, and seeks to promote sympathetic development of appropriate form and scale, which is subordinate to the landscape.

At its meeting of 15 July 1996, Council considered submissions and resolved to amend and adopt the Plan. The amended DCP has been advertised and is effective as of 24 July 1996.

In 1995 the State Government removed the right to subdivision of dual occupancies and proposed a review of all urban consolidation policies. Willoughby City Council has prepared its draft *Residential Strategy*, which highlights constraints of traffic, drainage, open space and infrastructure which limit higher densities in Willoughby. The plan is on exhibition until 4 September 1996 at Northbridge Plaza, or Level One, Council Administration Offices, 411 Victoria Avenue, Chatswood. (ED.)

The next meeting of the Castlecrag Progress Association will be on Tuesday 27th August 1996, 8pm, at the Community Centre, The Postern, Castlecrag.

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APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP / RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership fee is \$5 per person (\$3 for students and those on a fixed income). Membership is for the calendar year and is renewable from 1 January 1996. Members must be at least 18 years of age.

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Our Constitution stipulates that a member of the Association must be a natural person who is a resident or ratepayer of the area (designated in Rule 1.3) being over the age of 18 years and has been approved for membership of the Association by the Committee. Two months membership is obligatory for a member to be eligible to vote, but since approval by the Committee usually occurs one month after receipt of application for membership, voting eligibility usually takes three months. The names of the people applying for membership should be supplied with the membership fee. Membership fee is for the calendar year. A person who was a member in 1995 will automatically be eligible to vote in 1996 as soon as the 1996 membership is paid (as long as the 2 or 3 months qualifying period has elapsed). A family cannot be a member because a family is not a real person. If a company owns a property in Castlecrag, then the directors of the company do not qualify for membership of the Association if they live outside Castlecrag.

The Crag is edited on behalf of the Castlecrag Progress Association Inc. (C/- Newsagent Box 6/77 Edinburgh Road) by Kerry McKillop (9958 4516) and Adele Barnett (9958 6034). Contributions and letters received will be considered for publication where space permits. The editors' decision to shorten or otherwise edit copy is final. The deadline for the next issue is 27 September, 1996.