

THE CRAG

NEWSLETTER OF THE
CASTLECRAG PROGRESS
ASSOCIATION INC.

Seventy eight years of community development
ISSN 0814 - 2054

No. 142

June 2002

Castlecrag Progress Association

President: Kate Westoby

Vice presidents: David Harrop-
Bob McKillop

Secretary: Elizabeth Lander

Treasurer: Diana Jones

Committee: Tina Hicks

Peter Moffitt

Howard Rubie

Gay Spies

John Steel

General Meeting

Tuesday 25 June 8pm

at the Community Centre

Greg Woodhams

Director of Environmental Services

will discuss

'The Development Process'

Refreshments will be served

Castlecrag Progress Association
Inc.
6/77 Edinburgh Road,
Castlecrag

The Crag is edited by
Kerry McKillop 9958 4516
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Please send all correspondence
and membership renewals to the
above address.

Membership fees for 2002
are now due
(see membership form on last page)

Gwen Meredith, Blue Hills and Castlecrag

Those who attended the Progress Association's AGM on 21 April were treated to a most interesting address by Dr Michelle Arrow on former Castlecrag resident Gwen Meredith. Extracts from the address follow:

Frank Clewbow of the ABC commissioned *The Lawsons* in 1943 to be broadcast as part of the Country Hour, a daily program intended, in Meredith's words, to be 'sugar-coated-pill propaganda', to educate farmers in new farming. The serial debuted on 21 February 1944 and headings like 'The Lawsons are real people' started to appear later that year.

Blue Hills replaced *The Lawsons* in February 1949 and ran for 27 years until 30 September 1976. The ABC historian Ken Inglis commented that *Blue Hills* 'became an Australian metaphor for longevity.' Meredith said herself that she tried to make her characters 'real Australian people.'

Crucial to the success of both stories was their 'Australian-ness'. Their country settings, Australian accents and nationwide broadcasting range gave the serials a powerful national appeal, particularly when considered in relation to the crime thrillers and westerns that were the staple diet of commercial radio listeners. A *New Idea* journalist declared in 1967 that '*Blue Hills* is as Australian as the Melbourne Cup or pie and sausage.'

Blue Hills provided a place for the discussion of many 'mildly controversial' issues of the 1950s and 60s: the assimilation of Aborigines, the work of Alcoholics Anonymous and whether the nation had a moral responsibility for the illegitimate children of Australian servicemen in Japan, to name a few. Meredith dealt with what she called 'the Aboriginal question' with comparative sensitivity for the era, but not all listeners were impressed when she revealed that one of her characters to be a 'quarter

caste Aboriginal.' Arthur Caldwell wrote to the head of the ABC stating that: 'the serial causes humiliation to our Aboriginal race' and another angry listener complained that 'it is extremely bad taste on [her] part to make this the reason why Sally and Andy cannot marry!'

Michelle Arrow and the audience discussed Gwen Meredith's time in Castlecrag; living in the *Gingerbread House* at the end of Edinburgh Road between 1949 and 1962. It was noted that Meredith did not take an active role in community affairs during her Castlecrag residency, Michelle commenting that she travelled widely in Europe at this time. Publicity articles often expressed surprise at Gwen Meredith's urban status. Michelle views her as a city writer following a long tradition of mythologising the country for the benefit of nationalists of all political hues - a well-established Australian literary tradition that stretches back to the 1890s.

Demystifying Development Applications!

What happens when a developer or a neighbour proposes a development that affects you? How do you make your voice heard? These issues are of concern to Castlecrag residents with the present spate of property development. The Progress Association has brought these concerns to Council and Greg Woodhams, the Director of Environmental Services, has agreed to address our June meeting. Please come along and participate; it promises to be an interesting evening.

Castlecrag Progress Association

JUNE GENERAL MEETING
Tuesday 25 ~~April~~^{June} 2002

Guest Speaker: Greg Woodhams
on Willoughby Council's
development processes

Castlecrag Community Centre at 8pm
Refreshments will be served

Community Bytes

Congratulations Ian!

Castlecrag resident, **Professor Ian Fraser** was one of 35 Australians to be awarded Officer (AO) in the General Division in the Queen's Birthday Honours list. The citation reads:

For service to medicine in the areas of obstetrics, gynaecology, reproductive endocrinology and family planning as a leading practitioner, researcher and educator, and to the establishment of professional and educational standards.

Adele Barnett

In May, Adele Barnett, former editor of *The Crag* and committee member of the Progress Association, fell several metres at her home in The Scarp and was critically injured. Fortunately she is now recovering in Royal North Shore Hospital. ... Adele, we have this message for you: 'All of us in Castlecrag wish you a speedy recovery - we want to have you back amongst us soon.'

Thanks for helping the Salvos

This year Castlecrag raised \$5536 for the Salvation Army Red Shield Appeal 2002. Across Willoughby City about \$84,500 was raised, up 5% on last year and 24% on 2000.

The organisers extend sincere thanks to all those Castlecrag residents who donated to the Red Shield Appeal 2002, and especially to those volunteer collectors who gave their time and effort to the cause.

A special thank you is extended to the school students who doorknocked. Your efforts reflect great credit not only on yourself, but on your family and your school. The Salvos' Certificate of Appreciation is a boost to your CV.

The doorknocking is co-ordinated within the community under the direction of the Salvation Army and Mayor Pat Reilly. The Appeal is always looking for more volunteer collectors. If you can help next year, please phone Diana Jones on 9958 4885 or Bruce Wilson on 9958 3155.

Environmental Workshops

Willoughby City Council, in conjunction with North Sydney Council, is running a series of environmental workshops that seek to enhance the public's knowledge of special areas of bushland management. The *Wildlife Watch Workshop*, on Saturday 29 June, will discuss local wildlife and habitats and how to protect them for the future. RSVP to Mandy Wilson (phone 9777 7718) by 25 June. On Saturday 5 August, the topic is *Aboriginal Site*

Awareness. This will cover a theory workshop and an afternoon tour of local Aboriginal sites. Bookings as above.

Sailors Bay Marina

A Northbridge residents' group, *Friends of Sailors Bay*, has been formed to oppose an application for a major new commercial marina development at the Sailors Bay Boatshed in Clive Park, Northbridge. If approved, the marina would project almost 100 metres into Sailors Bay towards Castlecrag.

The Department of Land and Water Conservation has responsibility for the development application. A similar proposal was rejected in the 1990s on traffic, parking and environmental issues. Public concern about the current proposal centres on the limited vehicular access to the site, restriction of public access to the water and the last of public consultation.

For further information, contact *Friends of Sailors Bay*, PO Box 400, Northbridge 1560; facsimile 9438 3228; or phone Charles Alma, 0401 692 881.

From *The 202*, June 2002

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President's Report 2002

Kate Westoby reported on the year's activities at the Progress Association's AGM on 13 April. The highlights were:

The key issues addressed by the Progress Association during the year were the future use of the former Freeway corridor land owned by the RTA and DUAP, and the proposed use of the former Northbridge Women's Bowling Club site. There has been a favourable outcome in the latter case, while decisions on the future use of the Freeway corridor land are linked to the Master Plan for the 'Willoughby Paddocks' site. Here *Landcom* is developing a Master Plan for the 4.2 hectares. The Plan will involve construction of 76 townhouses, leaving 1.7 hectares of Open Space. The Northbridge Progress Association has lobbied for the provision of different categories of Aged Care in the Master Plan. The Draft at this time allows for 1 in 5 dwellings to conform to SEPP5 principles, but higher levels of care remain a concern.

Once again a very successful *Castlecrag Community Fair* was held on 27 May 2001. It was thanks to the co-ordinating skills of Andrew Kirk that it went so smoothly. While the Progress Association needs the funds generated at such events, the current uncertainty with Public Liability insurance and the workload of organising a successful fair prompted the Committee to decide that the next Fair should be held in 2003. The Committee welcomes support and suggestions for this event.

Four issues of *The Crag* were produced and distributed during the year. Kate expressed her thanks to Professor Carrick Chambers for

his popular articles *A Walk through the Castle* and also to Peter Moffitt for his excellent article on the late architect and educator, Bill Lucas. Willoughby Council has also provided interesting news items. Appreciation was expressed for contributions from residents such as the enjoyable article by Jocelyn Chey on her conservation work in the bush below her house. Special thanks were also extended to those who assisted with the distribution of *The Crag* during the year, namely Judith Keller, Annette and Mac Robertson, Lisa Sherington, Marie Clifton-Bassett, Gay and Harold Spies, Adele Barnett and Andrew and Sue Kirk.

Kate also reported on the 27 March meeting by the Committee with the Mayor, General Manager and Director of Environmental Services at Willoughby Council. The Committee had asked for the meeting because of its increasing concern about the impact of new developments on the character and natural landscape of Castlecrag. A number of anomalies in the way the existing Development Controls are being applied were pointed out. There was constructive discussion on areas where strengthening of the Development Controls is required and the steps that should be taken to ensure that the public is adequately informed about the development planning processes. Greg Woodhams, Council's Director of Environmental Services, has offered to attend the next General Meeting of the Progress Association and make a presentation to help 'Demystify Development' (see page 1).

Traffic Management

We have some news on the long-running issue of traffic management in Castlecrag. The 1998 Local Area Traffic Management (LATM) Study of Edinburgh Road and Sunnyside Crescent had been raised by the Progress Association Committee at its March meeting with the Mayor. Soon after this, Council's Traffic Manager met with members of the Committee to discuss the implementation of the LATM Plan in the 2002-03 financial year.

The consultant's report on traffic safety and management within Castlecrag was submitted in March 1999 and it was placed on public exhibition in March-April of that year. Because of the time period that has elapsed since then, there will be extensive consultation with residents and local businesses on the detailed plans as they are prepared.

In summary, the main features of the LATM Plan are:

- Construction of a roundabout at Edinburgh Road, The Postern and Rutland Avenue, as an entry statement to the suburb. It will be in weathered sandstone with endemic low planting;
- Construction of three strategically located slow point/pedestrian refuges on the eastern portion of Edinburgh Road to control traffic speed and assist pedestrians.
- Low key work in Sunnyside Crescent to address speed and safety issues.
- Support for community claims for a 'right-turn arrow' at the Edinburgh Road-Eastern Valley Way traffic lights. This has been rejected by the RTA.

Bob McKillop



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History of Castlecrag

Over the years, *The Crag* has published a number of articles on the history of the suburb. These have been very popular. We are now seeking to bring this material together in a more comprehensive history of the suburb. Your assistance in contributing to this process is welcome.

The following notes have been compiled by Professor James Weirick, Adrienne Kabos and Bob McKillop based on early issues of *The Crag* and other sources:

- 1879 Willoughby Council requested the Government to survey a road from High Street, Willoughby to Sugarloaf Point, Middle Harbour. Following completion of the survey in the early 1880s, Council progressively, but slowly and crudely, stumped, cleared and formed further sections of what was to become Edinburgh Road. Landowners were called on to subscribe to the cost.
- 1880s The first house in the suburb, one of the historic foreshore cottages was

built. In response to persistent demand for access to Sailors Bay Park, Rockley Street was formed. It was named in 1887 and gazetted a parish road on 19 December 1896.

- 1880s Chinese market gardeners leased many areas of Willoughby, including the area along Edinburgh Road from Second Avenue (east side) to Fourth Avenue and extending through to Sugarloaf Creek.
- 1892 The Suspension Bridge (now Cammeray Bridge) over Long Bay gully was completed in January as one of Sydney's engineering wonders. The North Sydney Investment & Tramway Company was initiated in 1887 by Andrew Armstrong, an interested landowner, and James Alexander Brown to provide tramway access to the Middle Harbour peninsulas. The company planned a tramway from the St Leonards Government tramway in Miller Street near Ridge Street, across the Suspension

Bridge to what is now Castle Cove. A branch line was planned into the Castlecrag Peninsula, terminating near the present 203 bus terminus. The company was a victim of the 1890s Depression and it went into liquidation in 1893. The Suspension Bridge was closed to all except pedestrian traffic in May 1936 and the rebuilt bridge was reopened as the Cammeray Bridge on 9 September 1939.

- 1895 Willoughby Council created Middle Harbour Ward on 10 January.

(to be continued)

Please send any comments and additions to the editors.

The Crag is printed by
Bertram Printing
Bertram Street, Chatswood.
Tel. 9415 1070

Castlecrag Progress Association Inc.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION FOR 2002 DUE 1 January 2002

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Objectives of CPA Inc.

(1) To do everything possible to promote and further the interests of the district of Castlecrag or such other nearby area where it is possible that such benefit should accrue to the advantage of the district and could enhance and stimulate the community life of residents of Castlecrag and environs; and

(2) To conserve the natural and human heritage of Castlecrag for the benefit of future generations.