



NEWSLETTER OF THE CASTLECRAg PROGRESS ASSOCIATION INC.

Sixty eight years serving the community

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MARCH 2015

President's Report

The last few months, over Christmas, have been quiet. However, we are getting started again with planning for upcoming events, including the Castlecrag Fair.

Sunday 7th June will be a good day to put in your diaries for the Castlecrag Fair. We are holding the Fair in the shopping precinct and Simone Selby is once again coordinating activities. Planning is well underway and the very capable Michael Selby is handling sponsorship. This bi-annual event is not to be missed.

We are inviting local people to hold stalls, especially local artisans to sell their work. There will be a jumping castle and this year we are inviting buskers to entertain us. Get that child you've been paying all those music tuition fees for out on the street! They could work up a short act, routine or repertoire to perform. Of course big people are welcome too!

CPA will again be holding a bookstall. Profits go towards the running of the fair, printing of this newsletter and any other community projects that are deemed worthy. Donations are sought: books, DVDs/CDs, games, puzzles, and computer games. Now is a good time to de-clutter! We can pick up from your home.

The fair tradition, now in its 16th year, was an initiative of the Progress Association. We see it as a way of supporting and bringing the community together and encouraging a sense of community we felt was lost since the closure of the public infants school in 1989. For forty years it was the way local families met and formed ties. Building a sense of community is an

important part of our raison d'être.

Our local shopping centre is also a vital part of our community. We encourage you to support local business. We enjoy the friendliness and familiarity and if we are not walking there, we enjoy the ease of parking and accessibility.

IGA applied for a licence to sell liquor. The CPA wrote a letter objecting to the application. We feel our area is already well serviced with a wide choice in liquor outlets including Castlecrag Cellars. If you agree with this view, please sign the petition at the Cellars. The word is we would be much better off with a fishmonger than yet another alcohol outlet.

As President of the CPA, I have been invited by Willoughby Council to be part of the Haven community consultative group. We will meet three times in the coming months with the consultant who will be preparing the design options for the Haven stage. We are keen to get our precious amphitheatre stage back and fully functioning both as a performance space that treads lightly and for passive recreation for all to enjoy informally.

Kate Westoby

Contacts:

Castlecrag Fair – Book a stall, register a busker, offer of sponsorship:

Simone – 0421 369 643

Picking up donations for the Fair:

Mark – 0412 971 861 or

Kate – 0402 465 522

SAVE THE DATE

CASTLECRAg FAIR Sunday 7th June

**Stallholder and fair enquiries
to Simone Selby
on 0421 369 643**

We are also looking for musicians
and performers interested
in busking at the fair.

EDITOR REQUIRED

**We are seeking a new
(honorary) Editor for *The Crag*,
our local community
newsletter published by the
Castlecrag Progress Association,
to commence in January 2015.**

The Crag is published 3-4 times
per year and you will be responsible
for sourcing and editing items
as well as liaising with
the writers, local advertisers,
and the President of the CPA.

The editorial guidelines are available
on our website at
www.castlecrag.org.au.

Please contact the Secretary, CPA,
on info@castlecrag.org.au
to discuss the role,
or to find out more.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- 2 News from Mayor Gail
- 3 Vale Zena Popov
- 4 Castlecrag Notes
- 5 Houses of Castlecrag
- 6 News from our Ward Councillors
- 7 Giant Puppets extend their stay
Bim Hilder sculpture in Wagga Wagga
- 8 Crisis in local public schools
- 9 Update on the Haven Amphitheatre
- 10 Environment News

NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETING

8pm – 10pm, Wednesday 15th April 2015

GUEST SPEAKER: MARK CREW

Mark Crew is the president of the Castlecrag Conservation Society.
Mark will give a presentation on his recent trip to Antarctica and treat us
to some of his photos.

This will be a joint meeting of the Castlecrag Progress Association
and the Conservation Society.

**In the Marion Mahoney Hall, Glenaeon School,
117 Edinburgh Rd, Castlecrag.**

THINK LOCALLY!

SHOP LOCALLY!

EMPLOY LOCALLY!

THE CRAG

is the community newsletter of the
Castlecrag Progress Association Inc.

PO Box 4259
Castlecrag NSW 2068

web page:
www.castlecrag.org.au

emails to the CPA:
info@castlecrag.org.au

Please send all correspondence and
membership renewals to the above address.

COMMITTEE 2013-2014

President Kate Westoby

Vice Presidents David Harrop
Dr John Steel

Secretary Dr Paul Stokes

Treasurer Diana Jones

Committee Ruth Kendon
Gay Spies OAM

Acting Editor Ruth Kendon

Assistant Editor Dr John Steel

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: info@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.
Editorial guidelines are on the web page.

Advertising Enquiries

Diana Jones at
info@castlecrag.org.au

**Copy & Advertising Deadline
for next issue**

Friday, 15th May, 2015

Design, Typesetting & Printing

Robin Phelan & Associates ☎ 0407 467 376
Frontline Printing ☎ 9438 3000

Disclaimer

The CPA and *The Crag* is not responsible for
information or advice in contributed articles
or letters. Readers should seek their own
personal, professional advice.

NEWS from Mayor Gail Giles-Gidney

This year marks
the 150th
anniversary of the
proclamation of
the Municipality
of Willoughby.
It's a chance to
reflect on and
celebrate our
community as it
was, as well as
taking pride in

the City we call home today. I look forward
to joining you all at the various celebratory
events and activities that are planned for
throughout the year.

The new streetscape at the Quadrangle
Shopping Village was completed just
prior to Christmas and it looks great! The
upgrades not only mean new pavers,
garden boxes and bench seats, but also
greater accessibility to the area for all the
community.

The Haven Amphitheatre Management
Committee has four new members who
will bring experience and enthusiasm
for the staging of community events
and performances at the Haven, joining
the existing hard working Committee
of Castlecrag residents. Design options
for the stage renewal and refurbishment
will be developed over the next two to
three months ready for broad community
consultation.

I am sure you are all keen on an update

on current parking issues. I must thank
the community for their participation last
year in community consultation on both
the Willoughby City Parking Strategy and
Northbridge Plaza Car Park. Several options
for the Northbridge Plaza are now being
developed, and feedback from the Parking
Strategy consultation has been collated
with recommendations to be put forward
to Council over the coming months.

Possible council amalgamations are also
a hot topic, with the State Government's
'Fit for the Future' initiative. I am taking
the issue very seriously, and all options
need to be investigated very thoroughly
to ensure we have the best option for our
community. We also need to work closely
with neighbouring councils to determine
the benefits for each community.

I look forward to seeing many of you out
and about over the coming months at
many exciting events planned, including
Seniors Week activities all through March
and the Heritage Festival in April and May.

Gail Giles-Gidney

To Contact Your Ward Councillors

Hugh.Eriksson@willoughby.nsw.gov.au
Or phone 0481 033 443

Rachel.Hill@willoughby.nsw.gov.au
Or phone 0477 768 949

John.Hooper@willoughby.nsw.gov.au
Or phone 0418 239 195

Meet The Candidates

The NSW State Election will be held on Saturday, March 28th. The Federation of
Willoughby Progress Associations will host a "Meet the Candidates" event so
that locals can hear policies and ask questions. More information is available at
<http://northbridgepa.com.au/events/meet-the-candidates-state-election/>

When and where:

Thursday, 19th March from 7.00 pm to 9.30 pm
Dougherty Community Centre
7 Victor Street, Chatswood NSW 2067

Castlecrag Progress Association Inc. Membership Form**ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2015 – Due 1 January 2015**

(\$20 per person, \$10 per student)

I wish to renew / apply for membership for the CPA Inc., and enclose payment of:
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If you wish to make a donation, it will be most welcome. I enclose my donation of:

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VALE Zena Popov



I first met Zena Popov in the early 70s when she moved in next door at the top of Sunnyside. Many walkers will recognize Zena, she outlived five cherished dogs in that time and walked early every morn and also late afternoons. This is part of her story.

Born in Tomsk, Siberia in 1913, Zinaida Petrovna Vologodsky was the only child of then-50-year old Petr Vasilevich Vologodsky and his 21-year old wife, Sofia. Petr Vologodsky, a liberal lawyer, became Prime Minister of the anti-Bolshevik Siberian Provisional Government until its collapse. In 1920, the family left home for the safety of Harbin, Manchuria.

In 1930, at the age of only 17, Zena graduated from her school with a

scholarship to Moravian Salem College in North Carolina, USA. She travelled alone to the United States, by train and ferry to Japan and then across the Pacific to San Francisco and on to North Carolina. While in the USA, she met up with her former classmate and suitor, Costya Popov who was spending a year at Stanford University.

In 1934, after four years in America, Zena returned to Harbin and gained employment at the YMCA Russian School, as an English teacher. She became engaged to Costya, who subsequently took up an engineering job on the then longest bridge in China. Zena followed and on November 8, 1936, she and Costya married in a Russian Orthodox church in Shanghai. Their children Sascha (Alex) and Katya were born there in the 1940's. Costya built up an Engineering company employing over one hundred people.

When the Communists came to power in 1948, Costya feared the worst. He abandoned his business and escaped with his family to British Hong Kong. It was forbidden to take gold, silver or cash out of the country but Zena was able to leave wearing a 5-carat diamond ring, bracelet, earrings and a brooch, as well as her cherished gold watch. These few items helped them purchase a new home in Turramurra.

Zena had to adapt quickly from a life of privilege and opulence in Shanghai to that of 1950s Australia. She had to cook, clean and launder for the family for the first time in her married life. For a few years she even had to resurrect her teaching skills

to become a French teacher at SCEGGS Darlinghurst.

Those who knew Zena will recognise the influence of the cultures that went into shaping her life; her Russian heritage, French and American education, the decades spent in China and the even longer time in Australia.

She always maintained a level of sophistication and grace; her years in China taught her to be the consummate hostess and she would lavish food and hospitality on anyone who was lucky enough to enter her domain. From the losses in her life, she learned dignity and stoicism, even in the face of her greatest loss – that of her beloved Costya in 1997.

Zena lived on for another 17 years in the wonderful Castlecrag home that she and Costya had shared since the early 1970s and it was only when she suffered a fall in her hundredth year that Zena finally had to give up her daily walks and life of independence.

The Popov family continues to be a presence in Castlecrag. Alex has designed five residences and Katya, who brought up her family and lived for many years in the Crag, teaches yoga at the church hall on Thursday mornings.

Summarised and annotated with permission from the family – specifically Alison Hulett Popov's text of Zena's funeral booklet, which was sourced from Zena's hand written autobiography.

Lindy Batterham

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CASTLECRAG NOTES...

The Quadrangle Shopping Village

It has been a busy couple of months at the Quadrangle:

- The new footpath and streetscape is a great success and a fine example of a joint project, with Willoughby Council, local businesses and local interest groups working together to achieve a stunning result.
- "The Tor", a new cafe/restaurant, is about to open in the Quadrangle with new owner George Khawam. George built an extremely popular business – "The Station" – in Wahroonga and plans to operate a cafe/restaurant of similar quality in Castlecrag. We wish him well.
- The Castlecrag Meat Emporium has been incorporated into the IGA Supermarket with high quality fresh meat and a permanent butcher operating seven days a week.
- There will be a new entrance to IGA from Edinburgh Road including an ATM outside on the footpath.
- The Quadrangle has had a major facelift with new paint colours, light fittings and awnings achieving a more modern look.
- The Castlecrag Pharmacy has been reduced slightly in size – a new shop will be opening shortly.
- It has been great to have John and the Castlecrag Post Office back at the Quadrangle.
- The regulated parking in the car park is helping to provide ample parking (at most times) for Castlecrag shoppers.

Jeremy Lynch, Manager

New members for the Haven Amphitheatre Committee

We welcome the new members of the Haven Committee: Angel Neshama, Luke Hastings, Tim Maddren and Belinda Duckworth. We look forward to future events and productions in that wonderful space.

Photographic exhibition at Martha's

Regular patrons of Martha's restaurant in Castlecrag will know that each month a new art exhibition of paintings or photographs will grace the walls. Hopefully you have seen the images of flowers taken by horticultural and garden photographer Lorna Rose. Lorna has been shooting plants and gardens for thirty-odd years, her work appearing in magazines and books around the world. Do drop in for meals or coffee and enjoy the exhibitions.

Boating on Middle Harbour

As a long-term boat owner on Middle Harbour I treasure the environment on, in and adjacent to our uniquely beautiful and rare waterways.

The last few years has seen the usage of upper Middle Harbour increase dramatically. Large cruisers used as ski-boats is a common sight on weekends as is the rafting of multiple vessels on single RMS moorings in precious areas such as Bantry Bay.

In summary many boat owners and time-share skippers do not seem to know or care about fellow waterways users.

There is a rapidly diminishing adherence to good manners afloat to the point where tempers are frayed, the natural and built environments are being severely damaged and the irreplaceable Aboriginal heritage is being irreparably damaged and destroyed.

The excessive wash from large vessels driven at speed or without proper trim often creates surf-like, multitudinous waves has become unbearable for users of many small and medium sized boats. The lack of etiquette afloat coupled with the increasing usage of the Middle Harbour waterways has created a most dangerous situation where someone could be hurt or killed.

Motor vessels over 6 metres in length need to be restricted to a maximum speed in Middle Harbour of say, 8 knots and NO WASH restrictions effectively enforced and offenders penalised. To save manpower, perhaps solar-powered cameras should be placed on strategic Port and Starboard pylon markers, for example the Port marker opposite the entrance to Bantry Bay.

Most importantly to me and my friends is the devastation and destruction of Aboriginal cultural sites such as middens caused by excessive, frequent and unnecessary wash.

Can you ensure prompt and appropriate action is taken to save the precious environs of magnificent Middle Harbour so all users can enjoy and appreciate their birthright?

John Vaughan

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The Houses of Castlecrag

Photo: B. Gerstel

An interesting house in The Barbican is visited by Ben Gerstel. Ben is a local architect and volunteer guide for the Australian Architectural Association (www.architecture.org.au).

11 The Barbican, Castlecrag

Tucked away in one of the many corners of Castlecrag, is a spectacular house located at 11 The Barbican. It was very innovative for its time because of the use of curved, face concrete block walls, its use of off form concrete, curved glass, circular, acrylic skylights and open planning. To add to this, the house has a dramatic cliff face setting perched over Sailors Bay giving it amazing views.

The house was designed in 1973 by the architect Geoffrey Malone for his parents. It won the Royal Australian Architects Merit award in 1973.

The house is designed over three storeys and has a symmetrical floor plan. The middle / entry level has the public spaces – entry, living, dining, sitting and kitchen. The lower level has bedrooms, bathrooms and an informal living area and access to the swimming pool. The upper level also has bedrooms, including the main bedroom with an ensuite and walk-in robe. All levels have terraces.

It is like a modern day castle. It has circular turrets at each corner of the house. These circular elements appear like massive columns which anchor the house to the site. Between these turrets are horizontal, concrete beams and balconies, some suspended over the cliff to add to the drama.

These circular turrets / columns contain functional elements like stairs, services like bathrooms, laundries, kitchen and storage. They provide the structural support to bridge the primary living spaces and terraces.

Continuing the theme of a castle, the house is entered by a bridge to the middle level. Originally the bridge passed over a circular driveway, but this has been altered by moving the car parking closer to the street.

Malone's design philosophy behind the house was,

"communications and service areas should be solid, circular, with horizontal elements lightly slung between" (i)

The structural elements of the house are quite neutral in colour, grey concrete block, white painted cement render to the concrete and black anodised framing to the windows and doors. To offset this neutrality, splashes of colour were incorporated in the original design.

Since the house was designed in the 70's, the original interior design reflected this period with blue foam, purpose designed seating (to match the carpet) to fit into the curved glass bays. The original kitchen was white with lime green cupboards.




Malone also designed some furniture for the house. He designed a wall desk with low circular tables made from concrete formed within cardboard tubes, coated with red Imperite*, topped with a mirror. The current owners have continued this colourful theme with some planes of bright coloured joinery in the bedrooms.

This is another unique architect designed house in Castlecrag. The amazing thing about Castlecrag is that you can track the history of domestic architecture in Sydney by the houses contained in our wonderful suburb.

* Imperite is a high gloss, two pack polyester polyurethane coating.

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

References: (i) Vogue Living Magazine,
April 15 – June 14, 1974



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News from our Ward Councillors

Rachel Hill

First of all, Happy New Year! I hope everyone has had a wonderful break and enjoyed time with family and friends over Christmas.

Council has hit the ground running in 2015 with Debra Just starting her appointment as Willoughby City Council (WCC) General Manager! Please extend a warm welcome to Debra.

The Haven Amphitheatre has been in full swing over the Christmas period, regardless of the stage being sectioned off, with carols going ahead, a talent show and a movie night! It is exciting to see our community coming together and celebrating this time of year in a special place. Huge thanks to the management committee for their dedication, passion and service to our community and congratulations to the four new committee members for their interest and experience in events. Please visit www.thehaven.biz for the program.

I am keen to progress the addressing of the stage this year and have requested a timeline for the process from Council. I will continue to work with Council on a strategic approach that will ensure everyone within our community is given the same information, in a fair and timely manner with the opportunity to provide input and feedback on the options

presented. As soon as I have information to report I will post it on my facebook page ([facebook/CouncillorRachelHill](https://www.facebook.com/CouncillorRachelHill)) for anyone wishing to connect.

After a number of enquires regarding footpaths in *The Crag* and concerns over child safety WCC consulted the community to identify hotspots and seek feedback. Council are well aware of the unique qualities of the area and are keen to protect the environment so if any action is needed preservation will be taken into account however child safety is paramount and something that needs to be considered as priority so investigation has been necessary. A report is due back to council shortly.

I do appreciate your input and feedback so please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss any of these or boarder Council issues further.

I look forward to working with you for our community in 2015!

Warm regards
Rachel Hill

John Hooper

A philosophical approach

Some friends have asked me, "What is your secret of a wonderful, loving marriage?" This made me think for a moment as married life and relationships do not always run smoothly. My answer was, "romance

comes and goes but I make a decision to be in love". This may sound strange to some but I believe that happiness is a decision. To be happy, to be in love (long term), you need to have made the decision to be so.

For me, neighbours and community are the same, it is my decision to be friends with my neighbour that makes it so. When you make such decisions, it allows you to look past the faults and see the good.

This too applies to Council. During the past year we have had a lot of change. We have lost our Mayor Pat, we have a new Mayor, our GM has resigned, we have a new GM and the State Government is talking about amalgamating all the Councils on the Lower North Shore into one.

Some may see the negative but I see the positive. I have made a decision that this is good; it is a time of renewal and an opportunity to make our city better. It is not to say that the past was not wonderful but as change is inevitable, we all need to make the decision to embrace change to make our community better. When we decide the future is positive, our attitude will make it so.

Let's all make the decision for a better future for our community. I have, so let's work together and see the good rather than the bad.

Regards,
John W. Hooper JP, MA (Macq.)



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News from our Ward Councillors continued...

Hugh Eriksson

Firstly happy new year to all! I hope 2015 is a healthy and happy year.

2015 promises to be another busy year for Willoughby Council and Castlecrag. Willoughby Council recently appointed a new General Manager, Debra Just, Debra was appointed by the Council after an extensive search by Council Committee and an external search firm.

Debra joins us from Adelaide City Council where she has had extensive experience in management, project delivery and financial responsibility. I know Debra will make a great GM and I would like to welcome her to the WCC team!

Willoughby Council delivered on a key infrastructure project, completing the upgrade to the Castlecrag entrance, the project was finished at Christmas and, while I am biased, looks fantastic!

This project was a key piece of works Mayor Gail and the ward Councillors worked hard to be delivered upon and I would like to thank all involved, especially Paul Collings our Director responsible for this project.

For the year ahead Council will consider upgrading parks in the suburb, for example Linden Way Park, I encourage all to submit ideas to Council regarding this.

Finally as many may be aware there is talk of Council mergers, we await to see the State Government plan on this, however I again encourage all residents to contact myself or your Progress Association with your thoughts.

Once again thank you for your ongoing support and I look forward to hearing from you all over the next 12 months"

Hugh Eriksson

Giant puppets to extend their stay in Canberra

The loan of our gigantic puppets of Marion and Walter Griffin to the National Museum of Australia has been extended for another two years.

They were created for a Castlecrag community theatre piece back in 1989 and feature in Landmarks: People and Places across Australia, a gallery exploring a broad history of Australia through stories of places and their peoples.

Castlecrag is one of the thirty-three places the gallery explores. It's worth a visit.

The puppets are apparently popular with museum goers, which is why the curators want them to stay. They are certainly imposing!

Lindy Batterham



Photo: Ruth Kendon

Bim Hilder Sculpture in Wagga Wagga

The Civic Theatre in Wagga Wagga boasts a magnificent mural sculpture by Bim Hilder, one of Castlecrag's famous sons. He worked for Walter Burley Griffin as a builder, and later became a celebrated sculptor. The fountain in Castlecrag is one of his works, as is the mural sculpture in St. James Church on Edinburgh Rd.

The background of the Wagga Wagga mural is a blue sky of mosaic tiles, of the same type and colour as Bim used in the basin of the Castlecrag fountain and on the church mural. The figures and masks are of different metals, dark or bright, mounted slightly above the background. The building and mural are positioned beside the lagoon, and the façade, sculpture and blue sky make a stunning setting for the artwork.

The theatre was completed and officially opened in 1963. When the building was extended a few years ago, the sculpture was preserved. Sadly, there are no longer any signs naming the piece or its sculptor.



Photo: Ruth Kendon

It is definitely worth going to Wagga Wagga just to see this. The photos are better in colour, if anyone would like copies please contact Ruth at kendon@haventherapies.com.

Ruth Kendon



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Crisis in Local Public Schools



Marion and Walter Griffin puppets lead the Save Our School campaign in 1990.

Twenty five years ago, this newsletter featured the fight to save the local public school from being closed and sold off for medium density housing. The community mounted enormous opposition because the school was fully enrolled and it was obvious, even then, that the need would only increase with Sydney's growing population.

We stopped the 64 townhouses, but the government refused to listen. As a result we lost remnant ridge-top bushland and community open space. The children lost the right to be able to walk to a local public school and the community lost the meeting place that wove everyone together.

We now have a crisis in our area with huge overcrowding at local schools. And again, it is our children who suffer. Our closest public school at Willoughby now has 1044 students and a 37% increase over the last 8 years. Numbers are projected to continue to grow as housing density in Willoughby increases inexorably. It's simply not good enough!

What happened 25 years ago was unquestionably a mistake. In addition to losing our local school, Naremburn PS was lost, as was much land at Cammeray and Mowbray Public. How useful to the community would all that land be now? Our local member needs to convey to the Premier the huge debt owed to the families of the area who rely on public education.

The Department of Education has finally accepted that Willoughby Public is in crisis but a long term solution requires significant funding. This is in the hands of the politicians. In addition, there is a block

of land adjacent to Willoughby school and it has been vacant for almost 25 years. The government needs immediately to lease or buy this block. This would relieve pressure on the playground which is becoming unsafe.

We need a commitment from the Premier before the election. Please ring or drop a quick line to Gladys urging her government to lease or buy that land for the school and to commit to funding a long term solution to the capacity crisis.

For further detail and to sign a petition go to www.WPSactiongroup.org.

Lindy Batterham

Archive photos of the Save our School campaign, Courtesy Lindy Batterham



Antarctic Voyager



Earlier this summer Mark Crew, our local Conservation Society President ventured to the frozen lands to our south. Travelling via Buenos Aires and Ushuaia (the southernmost city on the planet) in Argentina, from there he and 25 companions boarded the MV Plancius for two weeks of hiking, kayaking, sleeping on ice, visiting penguin colonies, research stations and ice climbing. They were always only a safe distance from their mother-ship.

This expedition was the first philanthropic venture to get five young adult indigenous Australians to Antarctic. There they engaged in team building programmes, mentorship, leadership training and cultural exchanges between all participants. Don't miss Mark's presentation on the trip, at the CPA General Meeting on Wednesday 15 April!

Mark Crew

Get the VIP treatment with UPSTAGE

"The Concourse's reputation as one of the best performance spaces in Australia continues to grow..."

—The Daily Telegraph



A membership scheme called UPSTAGE has recently been set up by the Performing Arts Centre at The Concourse in Chatswood.

For just \$50 a member will be offered a range of benefits including two complimentary tickets (subject to availability), regular e-newsletters, priority booking opportunities, refreshment and parking concessions, backstage tours, access to exclusive events and other goodies. Membership would make a ideal gift.

For more information call 8075 8111 or visit www.theconcourse.com.au/upstage to sign up online and start benefitting immediately.

Carols at the Haven

On Christmas Eve, even though the stage had been closed off, the community once again enjoyed Carols at the Haven.



Photo: John Vaughan

Update on the Haven Amphitheatre

Julie Whitfield, Open Space Manager for Willoughby Council, has kindly updated us regarding current progress on refurbishment of the Amphitheatre.

- Craig Burton/ CAB Consulting was appointed in February to prepare design options for the stage improvements.
- The role of the community consultative group will be clarified prior to its first meeting with CAB. In brief, the role of members is to provide insight (and some ideas) into possible options to inform CAB's consideration of options. It is not a decision making body and will not have power of veto over the options that proceed to broader community consultation. The latter will be a matter reserved for the consulting firm (CAB) and Council.
- The main tasks for CAB identified in the consultant's brief are:
 - o To meet with the Council Steering Group
 - o Review the documentation relating to the Haven Amphitheatre
 - o Meet with community representatives on 3 occasions
 - o Prepare draft design options
 - o (Council to place the options on community consultation)
 - o Consider community feedback
 - o Complete the final preferred option in preparation for a recommendation to Council (ie sketch plan, cost estimates, special issues (eg tree protection, power supply, heritage, acoustics, structural, ecological etc)
- The anticipated timeframe in 2015 is as follows:
 - o Consultant appointed by end of February (completed)
 - o Community reference group meets three times between March and May
 - o Public exhibition of all design options during May/June
 - o Report to Council – August

Julie Whitfield

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ENVIRONMENT NEWS • environment news • ENVIRONMENT NEWS

Cane toad on the loose

A cane toad was recently found amongst some leaf litter in a backyard in Edinburgh road, just near the hospital. It was captured but then sneakily escaped so is now at large and getting larger, unless some poor kookaburra has tried it for dinner!

It is not known how the toad arrived on the peninsula. Perhaps it hid in a tray of mangoes over Christmas. Or in a load of landscape supplies. There are many possibilities. It could have even hitch-hiked a lift from The Shire, where they have been trying to eradicate an outbreak in Taren Point for the last seven years!

We need to be on the lookout for more. If anyone has had landscape supplies brought in recently (especially sugar cane mulch) it is important to closely check and monitor the area. POND OWNERS – please watch this area and listen to the sounds being emitted. They lay their eggs around water but only males make noise.

Make sure you check out the link below which has sound recording and info on how to catch a toad safely! We all need to know the call of a cane toad, even if we don't have a pond. Please train your children to listen out. If you find and capture a toad as described in on the website, put it in a container like a shoe box with air holes and the lid securely attached with string or tape. Give it some



vegetation to sit on but no need to feed it! Contact Council immediately as below.

Then you are permitted to brag very loudly! Your photo will be published in *The Crag*, you will be put on a pedestal and receive a local bravery award at the Castlecrag Fair. How's that for motivation!

If you believe you have seen a cane toad, please:

1. Check the identification on this website,

which has photographs of native frogs and recordings of their calls, as well as of cane toads. The toad's calls are quite easy to distinguish.

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/pestsweeds/IdentifyingACaneToad.htm>

2. Notify Willoughby City Council by calling Bushland Officer Megan Covey on 9777 7710.

Lindy Batterham



Native Wildlife Sightings

Left:

This large goanna has been spotted two or three times over summer on the Northern Escarpment.

Photo: Niall Ferguson

Right:

Sea eagles are often seen hunting; I never expected to find one in my garden.

Photo: Ruth Kendon

Tell Us About Your Wildlife Sightings
– Share Your Photos!

Send to info@castlecrag.org.au



KEEP THESE PHONE NUMBERS HANDY

For URGENT police assistance including a suspected crime in progress

000

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

9414 8499

To give information about any criminal activities, phone Crime Stoppers

1800 333 000

The Police Assistance Line (PAL)

131 444

ENVIRONMENT NEWS • environment news • ENVIRONMENT NEWS



Stop the Chop members demonstrating outside the offices of Gladys Berejiklian, our local State MP. Photo: Gay Spies

STOP THE CHOP Tree slaughter continues...

The NSW Government has made only weak responses to community opposition to the 10/50 legislation, which was introduced in a knee-jerk reaction to the Blue Mountains bushfires in October 2013. Ostensibly, by removing 'red tape', residents could take responsibility for protecting themselves from bushfire by removing trees and other vegetation from their property, that they, and not trained professionals from the Rural Fire Service, assessed as a bushfire hazard. Never mind that there was no scientific basis for such a proposal.

The result was an orgy of tree clearing facilitated by an explosion of inexperienced cowboy tree loppers, some offering cheap deals if a whole street signed up.

After a huge outcry from residents and local councils, particularly in the 'leafy' areas of the North Shore, Hills District and Northern Beaches, the government in September announced minimal changes to the 'entitlement' areas in which clearing was allowed.

They also announced an inquiry into the 10/50 Code which accompanies the legislation. The inquiry is ongoing and is not likely to be finished before mid-2015. Willoughby Council has sent three

submissions opposing the legislation and the Code.

Since the introduction of the Code hundreds of trees have been removed. Willoughby, where an exact count has not been possible, has lost over 350 trees, many of them huge old Blue Gums, Blackbutts and Angophoras, some over 100 years old. West Chatswood has been particularly badly affected. Hundreds more have been removed in Lane Cove and Ku-ring-gai. In the vast majority of cases, bushfire risk has not been cited as a reason for removal. Reasons are as trivial as disliking leaves on the grass, but commonly are to improve views or to allow for development.

Sustained pressure for a moratorium on clearing in urban areas lead to a further backdown, on 26 November 2014 in which the 'entitlement' areas reverted back to the old rules:

- Within 100 metres of Category 1 Bushfire Prone vegetation; and
- Within 30 metres of Category 2 Bushfire Prone vegetation, as defined on existing Bushfire Prone Land Maps.

But the onus remains on the owner, with no training in recognition of threatened species, assessment of slope of the land, or of Occupational Health and Safety Regulations. Importantly, the requirement

for assessment of bushfire hazard by professionals from the Rural Fire Service, a system that worked well before the introduction of the legislation, has not been reinstated.

The state-wide enquiry announced by the government has already identified at least 12 aspects of the legislation and the Code that need to be amended or clarified. Surely this is reason enough to announce a moratorium!

In the meantime, the ambience which attracted so many people to live where they do, is being lost, along with habitat for birds, animals and insects, the wildlife corridors which allow movement of fauna. The shade provided by large trees is much needed on hot summer days as is the lowering of the temperature to which they contribute. The hollows in the very old trees, which provide homes for possums, kookaburras, lorikeets and many other fauna, are irreplaceable.

If you hear chainsaws in your area, immediately call Willoughby Council on 9777 1000 and ask for the Ranger. Continue to lobby your local member and press for a commitment to a moratorium followed by repeal of this appalling 10/50 legislation at pre-election Meet the Candidate Meetings.

Gay Spies

Diary Dates • Diary Dates • Diary Dates

Castlecrag Progress Association General Meetings:

15 April – General Meeting of the Progress Association and Conservation Society combined.
 17 June – Annual General Meeting
 16 September – General Meeting
 All commence at 8pm in the Marion Mahony Hall at Glenaeon, Edinburgh Rd.

Willoughby Environmental Protection Society AGM:

Guest speaker Dr Leigh Martin will talk about 'Living Landscapes Under Threat'.
 All welcome. Free, with supper afterwards.
 Tuesday 17 March 2015 8pm
 Marion Mahony Griffin Hall, Glenaeon, Edinburgh Rd.

Castlecrag Bushcare Groups' Meeting Dates:

First Monday of the Month

- Tower Reserve, 9-12noon, contact Jocelyn Chey 9967 5136 or Lisa Clarke 0404 806 406

First Sunday of the Month

- Cortile Park care, 8.30-11.30, contact Sue Burk 0404 470 443
- Edinburgh Rd 2011, 9-12noon, contact Keith Ferguson 0408 518 509

Second Saturday of the Month

- Gargoyle Bushcare, 9-12noon, contact Cherrie Wilson 478 181 182

Second Sunday of the Month

- Retreat Reserve, 9-12noon, contact Lorraine Cairnes 9958 1213 or Jill Newton 9967 4933
- Keep Reserve, 9-12noon, contact Matthew Keighery 0408 203 511

Third Sunday of the Month

- Oriel Reserve, 9-12noon, contact Mandy Wilson 9777 7875
- Casement Reserve, 8.30-11.30, contact Sue Burk 0404 470 443
- Torquay Estate, 9-12noon, contact Jo Nolan 0419 234 235

Meet the Candidates

Thursday, 19 March 2015 – 7pm to 9:30pm

Come along to meet, listen to and question the local candidates for the State election on March 28th.

Address: Dougherty Community Centre, 7 Victor St Chatswood.

Wednesday, 4 March 2015 to Sunday, 29 March 2015
10:00am to 4:00pm

Intersections: The Art of Architects

Official Opening: 6pm-8pm, Wednesday 4 March 2015.

To be opened by Willoughby Mayor Gail Giles-Gidney and introduction by Glenn Barkley, Independent Curator and Art Month 2015 Artistic Director.

Three trained architects exhibit their art practices in ceramics, sculpture, light and site-specific installation. Informed by architecture their art reveals an unrestrained creativity that allows for chance.

Address: Incinerator Art Space, 2 Small St, Willoughby

Cost: Free

Contact: Kathie Najar on 0401 638 501
 or email kathie.najar@willoughby.nsw.gov.au

Thursday, 19 March 2015 – 12:30pm to 1:30pm

Talks@Willoughby presents Andrew Tink

From Federation to the Sydney 2000 Olympics, hear former politician Andrew Tink, bring Australian history to life when he speaks about his latest book Australia 1901-2001: a narrative history.

It was a century marked by the trauma of war and the despair of the Depression, balanced by extraordinary achievements in sport, science and the arts.

Address: Chatswood Library on The Concourse, Lower Ground, 409 Victoria Ave, Chatswood

Cost: Free

Contact: Willoughby City Library on 9777 7900
 or email library@willoughby.nsw.gov.au

Thursday, 19 March 2015 – 8:45am to 4:45pm

All Aboard For the Steam Train Explorer

Join Willoughby Community Aid for an exciting day trip to Trainworks, the historic train and rail museum at Thirlmere. Tour the Great Train Hall which houses the biggest collection of rolling stock in Australia. And the best part – relive old memories with a return trip to Buxton on a restored steam train.

Delicious morning tea and lunch are included.

Address: Dougherty Community Centre, 7 Victor Street, Chatswood

Cost: \$35.00

Contact: Debi Rose on 9777 7824
 or email debi.rose@willoughby.nsw.gov.au

Diary Dates is a service by the Castlecrag Progress Association.
 Please contact: info@castlecrag.org.au with details of forthcoming events and activities for inclusion.



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