

## Community Fair October 15

The Castlecrag fair is our biggest community event. Artists, Entertainment, Interactive art... and so much more.

## Local Hero recognised

Andy Watts gets bravery award from the Governor for saving young Sophie's life. See story page 5.

# Will Castlecrag get it's right hand turn signal?

Castlecrag may be a step closer to getting a dedicated turning lane and signal at the intersection of Eastern Valley Way and Edinburgh Rd.

Stephen Head from the Transport Roads and Maritime Services has written to the Premier, and State Local Member, Gladys Berejiklian, advising that a formal proposal has now been drafted.

The proposal provides for:

- A new 30 metre right turn lane on Edinburgh Rd East.
- The loss of 20 parking spaces during peak hours on the southern side of Edinburgh Road West.
- The loss of 6 parking spaces during peak hours on the southern side of Edinburgh Rd East.
- Permanent removal of 6 parking spaces on the Northern Side of Edinburgh Rd East.
- The introduction of traffic signal phasing.

Mr Head tells us that the Transport, Roads, and Maritime Services will now liaise with Willoughby Council to ensure the community is properly advised of the proposal and community opinion will be considered.



Must we keep running the red light?

He says, there will also be an information stall and presentation event at Willoughby Council to support the proposal. However, no one from the RMS has mentioned this to Willoughby Council.

*The Crag* has had no luck in getting any further details from the Premier's office, we are still waiting for them to get back. Council has had no communication about

the consultation process and their requests for more information have also gone unanswered. This one may take some time yet, so we encourage you all to call the Roads and Maritime Services 13 22 13 to move it along.

The RMS proposal and any updates will be discussed at the October CPA meeting advertised below. We welcome your input.

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## NOTICE OF CPA GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, 18 October 2017

8.00pm

**Meet the newly re-elected Mayor  
and Sailor's Bay Councillors.**

**Raise your matters of interest.**

**Discussion of RH turn from Edinburgh Road.**

In the Marion Mahony Hall, Glenaeon School, 117 Edinburgh Rd, Castlecrag  
All welcome. Refreshments will be provided.

## THE CRAG

is the community newsletter of the  
Castlecrag Progress Association Inc.

PO Box 4259  
Castlecrag NSW 2068

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

emails to the CPA:  
[info@castlecrag.org.au](mailto:info@castlecrag.org.au)

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

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**Vice President** Dr John Steel  
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**Committee** Lindy Batterham  
Ruth Kendon  
Gay Spies OAM  
**Editors** Lindy Batterham  
Sandra Odorisio

### Write to us

*The Crag* is a community newsletter and we welcome letters and contributions from residents about local issues. We do not publish anonymous letters. Items should be sent to the editors by email to: [editors@castlecrag.org.au](mailto:editors@castlecrag.org.au). They should be concise (preferably less than 250 words for letters). Please include your email address or phone number as we may need to edit items to fit the space available. Editorial guidelines are on the web page.

### Advertising Enquiries

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### Design, Typesetting & Printing

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### 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.

## From the Editors

In this landmark issue of *The Crag*, we highlight the upcoming Fair. As well, we focus on a few very interesting and special locals – heroes in both human and insect form. The stories of our humans are inspiring, including those green thumb gardening gnomes near the head of the valley in Warner's Park. We hope to ignite

your interest in Native Bees with our centre-spread which is buzzing with our community bee project.

Finally, we encourage you to do some time with your closest bushcare group. You won't get the badge of 'True Crag Local' till you do!

*Editors*

## This is the 200th issue of *The Crag*

The first was printed by the CPA in 1974 and was only one page. Since then, *The Crag* has chronicled the history of our community and discussed the things that mattered. Over the years the number of pages have increased and this issue is our first 16-page newsletter. Could we now perhaps call it a magazine?

Looking back over the last 200 issues, a theme has emerged of a community with a strong sense of place and history. *The Crag* has reported on the community's efforts to stand up to over-development and protect the Griffin legacy.

These efforts include the long and hard fought campaigns to save the local public school from closure and sale and, more successfully, stopping of the Warringah Freeway coming through the suburb with a bridge to Seaforth. An appreciation and importance of community connections and native bushland, birds and wildlife have been strong elements across the 200 issues.

Forty years ago, the new development at the Quadrangle shopping complex was the hot topic. At that time, there were two service stations with one house between them on that strip, with a



*The Quadrangle site when it was Warner's Dairy c1930,  
Photo Hermann Junge. Courtesy WBGS*

Commonwealth Bank next door. The proposal was to have 17 shops and 8 floors of flats above. Community opposition was strong.

The Progress Association spent over \$6,000 in its campaign to achieve a design that was more in keeping with the character of the area. It made a presentation to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal on the Quadrangle shopping complex. The Tribunal ruled in the Association's favour to insist on major changes to the design, which most importantly included height restrictions.

The new owners of the Quadrangle are keen to develop the site into a mixture of residential and commercial, with a focus on eateries. Big changes are on the drawing board for our village square.

*The Crag* will continue its proud history of keeping you informed.

Keep *The Crag* coming to your door!

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Castlecrag 2068

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

## From the President

The CPA is once again putting on its biennial fair. Its main objective is to encourage community engagement and at the same time provide the Association with enough funds to support *The Crag* and our various other projects.

We are still collecting donations of pre-loved art and books for our stall. Phone Mark 0412 971 861 for pickup.

This year Simone Selby, Co-ordinator of the fair, has broadened the emphasis by asking our local artists and artisans to display and sell their work. We were successful, and grateful to Willoughby Council, in obtaining a grant of nearly \$3000 to help cover the increased costs in mounting this year's fair. However, we have also found that Council has embedded a whole new level of bureaucracy for local events by way of form-filling, road closure permits, lease of footpath, and a detailed traffic management plan.

Putting on the fair has reached such new heights that it has tired us out! We will definitely need new blood to organise any future fairs. Do put the 15th October in your diaries and let your extended family and friends know about this vibrant community event.

Whilst we all welcomed the letter and news that the RMS has a proposal to introduce a Right Hand Turn arrow, it seems that no-one in that department is charged with doing anything about it. Even Council has had no response from them... This isn't good enough – action



*Kate Westoby on the bookstall at a past fair*

is needed on this now, before more pedestrians are injured. There are some alternate ideas circulating with regard to the proposed dedicated right hand turn lane. Please come with your thoughts to the next meeting so we can move this proposal along. Someone's got to!

The CPA is here to enhance and protect our natural and manmade environment. Please contact us if you have any concerns or matters you wish to raise.

On this note, I would like to thank Ben Gerstel for his help as an architect for many years in ensuring the CPA responds to DA's of concern. He has now stepped

down from this position so we need someone to fill this void. If there is anyone willing and able to peruse the DA's and alert us to any concerns, that would be greatly appreciated.

Our next general meeting is Wednesday 18 October to which we are inviting our newly elected Councillors. We will be asking them to speak on issues of importance to them and to respond to questions from the floor. Get to know your representatives and let them hear about your issues and concerns. We look forward to seeing you there.

*Kate Westoby*

**New WHS regulations require more voluntary traffic wardens to be on duty at the fair.**

**We *truly, really, urgently* require people to take a shift-even if it's only for an hour!**

**Please step in and help your community on the day. Full training provided! PH: Simone 0421 369 643**

## CRAGCHAT 2017 – the Oral History Chat Tent

The CPA is documenting and encouraging people to contribute to our community's oral history. At the fair, there will be a booth in the top car park with a camera set up where former and current residents of all ages are encouraged to enter and reflect.

Even if you've only been a Cragite for a short while, we want you to tell us your favourite place or walk in the area, or why you like (or don't like) living in Castlecrag. What are your memories? Perhaps it's the changes you've seen over the years or a particular story you

have about this place you'd like to share. Especially if you and your family have been here for a long time, as have the Walter family, who moved into Rutland Avenue as newlyweds in 1953.

We're looking forward to collecting memories over the decades about this place and its people. Who remembers when the sulphur-crested cockatoos arrived? Was it late sixties?

*Come and tell us at the fair...*

Are there other individuals or families who have been here since the 40's, 50's and 60's who would be happy to

share their stories? We can come to you if you can't make it to the fair. We are interested in later arrivals too, but seniority takes priority.

And if you are a local filmmaker or media/communications student looking for a project, we would love to hear from you. There are lots of stories to collect and people are literally dying before we can get to record theirs!

Please visit the **Cragchat** stall. We'd love to hear from you. Otherwise, email [editors@castlecrag.org.au](mailto:editors@castlecrag.org.au) or CPA contacts on page 2.



## From The Mayor and our 2017 Councillors



### Mayor Gail Giles-Gidney

I am delighted to be re-elected as Mayor of Willoughby City Council.

I am very pleased that Cr Hugh Eriksson has been re-elected and

that he will be joined by Denis Fernandez and Brendon Zhu. My thanks to outgoing Councillors Rachel Hill and John Hooper for their community service over a number of years. They have left big shoes to fill.

As a resident of Castlecrag, I understand the importance of strong local representation and I have an appreciation of this wonderful peninsula and all it has to offer. Over the next three years you can expect me to support our village lifestyle along with our unique environment.

I remain committed to being open to all residents' views and if you would like to contact me please email [gail.giles-gidney@willoughby.nsw.gov.au](mailto:gail.giles-gidney@willoughby.nsw.gov.au) or call 9777 1001.



### Hugh Eriksson

I was first elected to represent Sailors Bay Ward in 2012, and since then have worked towards building new infrastructure including all weather playing

surfaces, playgrounds and upgrades to local roads.

I hold a Master of Management from UTS Business School. I am also currently completing a Master of Dispute Resolution

from UTS Law. I am employed as the Senior Policy Advisor for a peak not-for-profit industry body in the ICT sector. My fiancé Victoria and I, along with our two dogs Marnie and Rosie, live in Castlecrag, as our family has done since 1959.



### Denis Fernandez

In terms of my priorities for the Castlecrag community, I look forward to resolving the following with the support of Councillors and Community: The Haven;

Traffic management at Castlecrag Shops and intersection of EV Way; finalising the Reserve Action Plans; revisiting planning controls with regard to the Griffin Conservation Areas and Shop precinct.

I have gained over 20 years experience across Australia and globally in managing clients infrastructure and development projects within the built environment, government and infrastructure sectors.

I have unique expertise across diverse disciplines to contribute to board decision making and have assisted organisations in the transport and housing sector, retirement and aged care sector and renewable energy sector with project approval strategies.

I hold a Bachelor of Town Planning, am married with 3 school-aged children attending local schools and have lived in our ward since 2004.

I look forward to working with Hugh, Brendon and the rest of the elected representatives to respond to our community.



### Brendon Zhu

It is a privilege to be elected as your representative of the Sailors Bay Ward for Willoughby City Council.

I have extensive experience and a passion for youth

leadership initiatives and in this coming term I hope to increase the awareness and opportunities of engagement for young people to positively contribute to our local community.

I also aim to explore additional avenues for the utilisation of technology so that the services of council are innovative and adapt to the changing needs of the community. I hope that I will be able to meet you at the upcoming Progress Association meeting, the Street Fair or at other future events in the community.

I've created a Facebook page so locals can reach me through social media. Please visit me at <https://www.facebook.com/CouncillorBrendonZhu/>.

### Check out Council's diary dates: [www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au](http://www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au)

Find out about native bees from entomologist Tim Heard 21 October.

Tim provides an in-depth understanding of native bee species and to how to keep stingless bees.

The workshop will include a demonstration of how to split a hive.

*Bookings essential.*

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## Bravery Honour for a Castlecrag Hero

Castlecrag hero Andy Watts received his bravery award this month after rescuing a young family friend from the tray of a runaway ute.

The incident happened 4 years ago, while on a family holiday in the Upper Hunter. Andy and his best mate, Bill Penrose, saw the truck start to roll towards a deep ravine with 3 of their children sitting in the back tray. While two of the children jumped out, young Sophie Penrose was frozen with fear.

Andy was able to race to the truck and somehow scrambled into the moving vehicle. As it gathered speed and careered toward the ravine, Andy scooped the little girl into his arms and threw himself out of the vehicle, taking the full brunt of the fall on his back and legs.

Sophie came away with a few scratches and bruises but Andy had to be helicoptered to Hospital where it was thought he might lose his leg. While doctors managed to save the leg, it's been a long recovery. Andy's knee will never be the same again, but he's satisfied the outcome was worth it.

Mr Penrose nominated his mate for the award and topped it off with a promise of free beers for life for the man who saved his daughter from the unthinkable.

For Andy receiving the award was "a surreal experience, quite overwhelming and a wonderful wrap up to the saga."

Young Sophie received a medal as well



Andy Watts with Sophie Penrose and His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret'd) after receiving his bravery award.

on the day and the families remain close.

"Bill and I were always close mates. We were like brothers to start and not much has changed. We all went to the Oaks afterwards to celebrate and in a quiet moment I thanked him for nominating me and he thanked me again for saving Sophie."

"Memories of that rescue will stay with me for the rest of my life – my knee is a bucket full of bolts still and I've got the limp to remind me, but the outcome was more than worth it... I must admit though I don't enjoy seeing those trucks in traffic. That does give me a bit of a chill."

## Artists/Creatives REGISTRY at the Fair

In 1988, as part of the Bicentenary, Council engaged local historian Esther Leslie to research and compile local histories of the Willoughby area.

Eight books were published including *The Suburb of Castlecrag – a community history*. It's an interesting read and amongst a few books about our suburb available for borrowing from both Castlecrag and Willoughby Libraries. It contains a register of 'Castlecrag's Artistic & Cultural Community' compiled by Rita Kaye, the then (long-serving) editor of *The Crag*, and will be on display at the Fair.

The register spans across the artforms and previous decades, displaying over 120 names, quite a few of them well-known in their fields, as well as nationally famous folk like Johnny O'Keefe, Leonard Teale, Gwen Meredith & Betty Rowland. Thirty years on we would like to revisit this register of Castlecrag Creatives, so if you identify as one please sign on to the 2017/18 updated version at the Progress Association stall at the Fair. At least one new category will need to be added – that of new media and digital arts – not a concept in 1988!

If you can't make it to the fair but would like to be added to this list, send us an email at [info@castlecrag.org.au](mailto:info@castlecrag.org.au) or drop us a line to PO box 4259 with a brief description of your area of creative pursuit.

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## Fishnet Fashion helping the environment

For Castlecrag swimwear designer, Fiorella Castro, fashion and protecting the environment go hand in hand.

Her Seapia label creates swimwear exclusively with fabric styled from econyl – a fibre made from a blend of powder-ground old fishing nets and discarded plastic bottles retrieved from the world's oceans, with nylon.



It's hard to imagine that a blend of 78 percent ocean waste and 22 percent nylon could look and feel so soft and natural... but it does.

Add to this durability and stunning prints from her collaboration with fellow artist Eduardo Wolfe-Alegria (they share a Costa Rican heritage) and Seapia is a label with much promise and serious heart.

"Creating an awareness is really important to us. It's predicted that in ten years from now there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish. So every garment we make from this really good quality fabric, we know we are cleaning up the oceans."

The fabric is made in Italy, via Slovenia, where the world's largest econyl recycling plant is located. The old nets and bottles which are collected from oceans around the world are ground down on a massive scale.

"We're not the only ones using this fabric – hopefully everyone will be using it one day and we can all take some pride in manufacturing ethically."

For now, Fiorella's Seapia swimwear label continues to be based in her Castlecrag living room, and her first season's styles are available on her Seapia website.

If you would like to have a closer look and feel of Fiorella's creations she will be showcasing her new season line at this year's Castlecrag Fair.



### Fishing Middle Harbour 1790

Boy man in  
Bark canoe floats in Middle Harbour  
Hands paddle  
Easy labour  
Quiet, alone  
One tooth missing  
Rite of Yoolahng erabadiang  
Boy man stands  
Three prong grass-tree spear in hand  
Thrusts at luderick  
By smouldering stones  
Black Gooredeeeana of Gamaraigal  
Two joints of her little finger gone  
Some ceremonial amputation by the tribe's  
carrahdhis, doctors,  
To help wind acacia fibre fishing lines  
She chews bimbula  
Spits burley  
Chants  
Tempt's bream  
Invites them  
To impale their bony mouths  
On shell hooks  
By smouldering stones

– Max Harris

[southernsoccermax.wordpress.com](http://southernsoccermax.wordpress.com)

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## Glenaeon Rudolf Steiner School is turning 60 years old!

Glenaeon's main campus sits on a large site on the edge of bushland in Middle Cove. Two decades ago, it expanded onto the former public school site in Castlecrag to house its junior school.

Its origins are intricately linked to the Griffins, who, after Canberra and Melbourne, moved to Sydney where they developed Castlecrag during the 1920s with a new vision of community.

Here, Marion Mahony Griffin in particular, pioneered the study of Dr Rudolf Steiner's work and sowed the seeds of Glenaeon Rudolf Steiner School.

Marion laid the two key foundation stones

in the establishment of our school. Firstly, through her working relationship with Eric Nicholls, Walter's successor in the architectural practice. She was also an inspiration to the young Sylvia Brose OAM, Glenaeon's founding teacher. The doors of Glenaeon were opened to just three students in 1957.

Her role in our school's history is acknowledged in our naming of our BER funded hall on our Castlecrag campus as the Marion Mahony Griffin Hall, opened by The Hon Peter Garrett AM in 2010.

The Griffins were ahead of their time; their work leaves a heritage of values that today

we recognise as fully 21st Century values – sustainability, living in harmony with the natural environment, community, design, the importance of the arts, community, plus a fundamental commitment to a non-denominational spirituality.

Underlying all our work is a sense of the balanced human being, which we support by an education for the head, heart, and hand.

Building on the Griffin's inspiration, we now see realised a school of excellence, imagination and creativity springing from the work of Dr Rudolf Steiner.

*Michele Harris*

## CASTLECRAIG PROFILE: Simone Selby, Physiotherapist



Simone has lived in Castlecrag for 21 years. She operates her business from a treatment room in the home she shares with husband Mike, children Ally and Tom, and their Labrador Charley.

*Q. How would you describe your practice?*

I am not at all a conventional physiotherapist. My practice is an holistic practice, which means you're treating the whole person. A patient comes in with

chronic back pain and I'm looking at how diet and lifestyle might affect that back pain and addressing all those things to help them fix it themselves.

My aim is to educate people in how to regain their former good health. I believe that through exercise most musculo-skeletal problems can be improved if not completely eradicated, so I use a combination of Pilates style exercises and core stability exercises and I combine that with modern physiotherapy techniques and acupuncture to improve the clients overall health.

*Q. How long have you been a Physio?*

I have been practising physiotherapy for

nearly thirty years, I've been practicing Acupuncture and Pilates for 20. The last 20 years of my working life has been exclusively via word of mouth clientele. I'm very proud of that.

I attempt to do one new physiotherapy related course a year and one acupuncture related course a year to maintain my ongoing education.

*Q. Are you taking on any new clients?*

I always have room for more clients because most of my clients get better... once they're done they're done. Most people respond so well to a more holistic treatment that a few sessions will usually do it.



**Inspired by Marion Mahony Griffin...**  
...a young Sylvia Brose OAM founded Glenaeon 60 years ago in 1957.

The school's founding principles are **Design:** based on creativity embedded in learning. **Community:** warm and supportive classes based on close personal relationships. **A pursuit of academic excellence:** HSC results within top 10% of NSW high schools.

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## The Bees Knees



*Spiral Bee nest – Thanks to Elke Haegel.*

Who knew Castlecrag was home to colonies of Native Bees and how vitally important they are to us? Not only do they pollinate native flowering plants in our gardens and bushland, but also our fruit trees, vegies, herbs and exotic flowering plants such as camellias.

In an effort to encourage more of Nature's Little Helpers and others to do the same, the Progress Association is funding the installation of a stingless Sugarbag beehive in late October. It will hopefully be placed at The Pinnacle bus stop in Edinburgh Road near Linden Way. We are trusting that people will not disturb, but can enjoy watching, these fascinating bees, as Stephen's family does (see page 9), and may be inspired to install one in their own garden.

Native bees are a potentially overlooked occupant in your garden and while so many of us look and see only the European honey bee buzzing around our flowers, a closer look will often reveal a much broader spectrum of species. Among these are native Australian bees.

There are some 1200 native bee species in Australia and around 60 of these exist in the Sydney region. Locally you are most likely to see the Blue banded bee. This bee is very like the European honey bee in size and appearance but its stripes are blue to

pale grey and black. You may well have glimpsed it without realising its identity. It's worth heading out in the coming months to contemplate a flowering shrub or two, for 2 minutes or 10 to see what comes by, particularly your purple and blue flowering plants such as Lavender, which they favour.

There is also another radical way they differ from the European honey bees. The Blue banded (and most of the other Australian native bee species) are classed as solitary bees.

Honey bees are social bees that live in a large colony. Likewise the native Stingless or Sugarbag bees, as they are commonly called, are one of a few native species that live a similarly social existence. That is why they can be housed in a box hive like Stephen's on page 9. Most native bees, however, are solitary, such as the Blue banded.



*Blue banded Bee*



*Green carpenter bee on grevillia buxifolia*

Blue banded bees burrow into the ground or the sandy mortar in brick work, as do Teddy Bear bees. Reed bees, a much smaller bee, burrow into pithy materials including the centre of lantana stems.

Carpenter bees, as the name suggests, nest in timber and Resin bees likewise utilise large borer holes in timber or bamboo hollows. What is great is that it is also possible to build solitary bee houses too, but don't expect to be using their honey, there is only enough for their young.

All these bees are essential pollinators and in some cases they have very specific roles in pollinating native plants. Right now *Grevillia buxifolia* are flowering and I was lucky to see (and hear!) a large Green Carpenter bee collecting nectar.

The large size of the bee ensures that pollen is transferred onto its back from the flowers stigma as it harvests nectar. Smaller bees like the European honey bee pass under this stigma without coming into contact and thus do not help with its pollination.

Other native bees like the Sugarbag bees are generalist pollinators, providing their services and harvesting from many species. Some species, like Blue banded bees and Teddy Bear bees are buzz pollinators.

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These bees are a particular favourite for tomato growers as the way they vibrate their body increases the release of pollen and therefore the plants productivity.

You can find out more about native bees and how to keep them at the Council Bushland stall at the fair or through Tim Heard's workshop. *Details page 4.*

And if you like observing other little things in the garden you may also enjoy the Wild Pollinator Count citizen science project.

*Liz Powell  
Habitat Restoration Officer  
WCC*



*Lipotriches species*



*Lipotriches species on a Dianella flower*

*With thanks to Liz  
for the wonderful bee photos.*

## Native bee hive gift just keeps on giving

My mother wanted to think of something interesting to get me for my birthday, and she introduced me to Native Bees with the gift of a hive 7 years ago. This was a welcome and much appreciated addition to our native garden.

We were initially concerned for the bees safety in our care, given some of the high temperatures that can be reached where we are located on the northern escarpment along Edinburgh Road, but the bees

*Stephen Richardson's native bee house*



have happily thrived. The bees are totally maintenance free and definitely add a wonderful dimension to our native garden.

The only rule to bear in mind is that the hive cannot really be moved any more than 100mm as the bees will become disorientated and lost on their return. However, if the hive is split or relocated more than 2 kilometers, they will successfully reset their bearings and then return to their new home location.

Every second year we split the hive, which is very entertaining for us, and our neighbours, and we get to taste the overly sweet one or two spoons of honey that is produced. We keep one half of the split hive and give the other half away out of the area, often doing a swap back and receiving a split hive in return to establish a new hive within our local Castlecrag community.

The bees are sting free, the size of a very small fruit fly, and they keep busy darting around on warm days, which is great to watch.

We have received knowledgeable support when splitting the bees from Allyson who runs Beecology ([allyson@beecology.com.au](mailto:allyson@beecology.com.au)) and we are sure she would be most helpful for anyone considering establishing bees in their own garden.

We highly recommend the ecologically sound and fun experience that having native bees in gardens provides!

*Stephen Richardson  
Edinburgh Road*

*Close-up of the entry to the bee house*



## AIRBEEenBEE at the Fair

Jan Felton, Community Projects Officer from WCC's Bushland team has designed & had made a beautiful Griffin-inspired Good Bug Hotel for the lucky solitary bees of Castlecrag. People can bee informed and involved by coming to the WCC Bushland stall at the Castlecrag Fair to help furnish the individual apartments of this hotel with nesting material. Get in early to contribute.

When fully assembled, the bee hotel will bee located in one of the Griffin Reserves.

Once in-situ, people are encouraged to observe the hotel to see what might use it. As the bees stock their nesting capsules in the hotel over spring and summer you can observe them coming in and out or see the sealed end of a habitat tunnel once they have completed nesting. Remember, please bee respectful, bee entranced, but just leave them bee.

## Obituary: Robert Stafford Sheldon 13 December 1930 – 25 February 2017

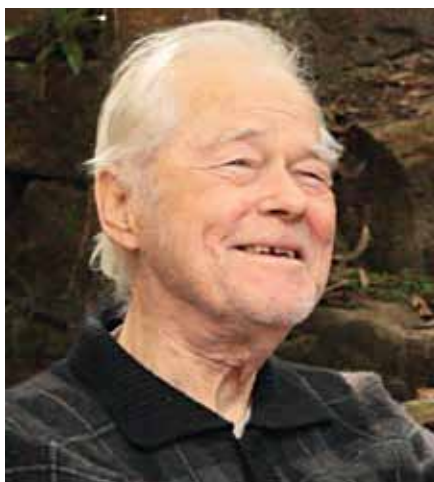
Castlecrag has lost a generous giver to our community with the passing of Robert Sheldon. He and Patricia, who passed away in 2011, began their married life together with a 3 year adventurous honeymoon 'seeing the world' and working in London and Toronto. Upon returning in the early sixties they bought a block of land in The Bulwark, on the high side with glimpses of Sailor's Bay, and by the end of the decade had moved into the house Robert had designed for his family.

Robert received many architectural awards and recognitions over his career, including a Life Fellowship of the RAI in 2002. He was a Foundation Fellow of the Institute of Arbitrators and Mediators, 1976, President of the Rotary Club of North Sydney, 1978–1979 (of which he was a member for 43 years) and a Paul Harris Fellow, Rotary International, 1994.

His office was local, in the block of shops where the Chiropractor is now on Eastern Valley Way. His practice was general, including all types of housing, commercial buildings and shopping centres and he was a pioneer in the area of kit homes. His practice also extended to Papua New Guinea where he designed a large factory in Lae, the Air Base for PNG Defence Forces at Port Moresby and medium density housing for expatriates on the hill above Port Moresby.

In 2009 Robert's work was recognised when he was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the General Division for service to architecture as a practitioner and administrator, through contributions to a range of professional organisations and to the community.

Patricia was a keen actress and drama teacher and the inspiration and driving force behind his involvement in the design and reconstruction of the Haven Amphitheatre stage. In 1975 Beverley Blacklock, Addie Saltis & others from the



Progress Association and Conservation Society had begun weeding and removing the dumped rubbish, uncovering the (stone) bones of the western terrace. With Dee Street, they approached neighbours Howard Rubie & Patricia to mount a production in the newly uncovered amphitheatre. What else could a loving architect husband do but volunteer to design a local stage on which his actress wife could perform? In 1976 *Salome* had an 11 performance season over 3 weeks and the revival of Marion's Haven began.

The Sheldon's bond with the Haven Amphitheatre continued for over three decades, as they served on the WCC Haven Management Committee. Patricia produced *Carols by Candlelight* for over twenty years, often with a nativity play involving students from her voice classes. Robert was Vice President for many years and with extensive committee input, drew up the plans for the 1992 redesign of the Haven stage, encompassing an undercroft store/change room, toilet and kitchen sink.

When events were held at The Haven, Robert's role was as traffic controller. He was a respected elder and giver to the community. The Sheldons made a significant contribution to the cultural memory of the second & third era of Castlecrag's precious Haven Amphitheatre.

They are survived by their two children, Kirk and Miranda (Petrina) and are fondly remembered by all who knew them.

*Adapted from Jill Newton's previously published article in The Crag #172 and Robert's bio from [www.thehaven.biz](http://www.thehaven.biz).*

*With thanks, Mr Leunig*



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## Obituary: John Walter Denmark Gibson 21 January 1926 – 19 July 2017

John Gibson died peacefully after a short illness. He'd been admitted to hospital 5 weeks earlier on no tablets nor medications... a very rare occurrence in these times for someone aged 91.

John was born in 1926, the first of 3 sons, to his parents Irene and Hope Gibson. He was educated in Killara during his kindergarten, infants and primary school years, then completed high school at Sydney Grammar.

It was wartime when he finished school so he joined the Royal Australian Airforce. For 18 months John continued his training, mostly flying Tiger Moths.

During the years 1946-49 he studied Mechanical and Electrical Engineering at Sydney University. Luckily he met his wife of 66 years, Joan Kerr, during his first year of University.

After completing his degree John worked in Sydney, later securing a job in Middlesborough, England. Joan joined him there shortly afterwards and they married in 1951. They both worked hard in the UK and never became accustomed to the bitter cold and food rationing. The Gibson family has been raised on the mantra of "Waste Not, Want Not", a legacy of that period in their lives.

Soon after they returned to Australia they bought a vacant block at 1 The Rampart, Castlecrag and built their home, solid brick, then later added a few extensions as the family grew. John worked in Sydney as an engineer, the last and longest position was with Email, a white goods company.

John, the engineer, had always wanted to build things. He'd built canoes as a lad but as the 4 children grew up he had an urge for something more ambitious. Like many pilots, he became fascinated by sailing.

He went for his first sail on a NS 14 with the legendary Frank Bethwaite. He described the sensation of the boat as



"moving like a bird", and he was hooked. There began his 50+ year love of sailing. John has owned, built and repaired countless boats.

The Gibson family became members of the Northbridge Sailing Club and enjoyed many happy years sailing in the weekend races. He would spend most of the week repairing all the boats, then launch them again on the weekend, often 3-4 different boats at the same time. As they moved into bigger boats they sailed with the Middle Harbour Yacht Club.

Joan and John have both been involved in

*The lawn in Lookout Reserve cared for by John*



many community activities and have walked the streets and path-ways daily... they have known and enjoyed all the hidden tracks, and little pockets of nature. Their faces would be well known to the tribe of regular walkers in Castlecrag.

For many decades they have nurtured the public reserve adjacent to their land and ensured it has become a fine example of native vegetation... just like their own garden. John mowed the quite vast lawn in Lookout Reserve on a regular basis for over 50 years for everyone to enjoy, right up until early this year, when he was 91 years old. Unfortunately he died before being presented with a Certificate of Appreciation from Council for this effort.

John will be missed by his devoted wife Joan, children Andrew, Georgina, Ken and Malcolm and twelve grand-children.

John, a kind, intelligent, funny, reserved, dignified gentleman.

A life well lived... in his beloved Castlecrag ... for over 60 years.

*Georgina Gibson*

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# The Houses of Castlecrag

Ben Gerstel is a local architect and volunteer guide for the Australian Architectural Association ([www.architecture.org.au](http://www.architecture.org.au)).

## 13 Sunnyside Crescent, Castlecrag

What's it like for an architect to design a renovation on his own house? Well, here is my story.

The house was a small, dark, pokey 1940's brick and tile, 2 bedroom house. It needed more space and light. The plan was to keep what worked, and redesign the remainder which was the rear of the house, as it had no connection with the backyard. The front of the house was to be kept to maintain the streetscape as the house was one of many similar ones with history and some charm at this end of the street. How things have changed! So the house ended up with a "Jekyll and Hyde" effect, old at the front and new at the rear.

In planning the changes, the hallway was extended through the very small, original kitchen. A hallway is a good organisational device as it can separate the private spaces (bedrooms) from the public spaces in the house, living, dining, family and kitchen. The kitchen was relocated to where the internal dining room was.

A courtyard replaced a small sunroom on the eastern side of the house to bring morning sunshine into the new kitchen. This was also achieved by adding a series of skillion (one way sloping) roofs, pitched at 10 degrees to the north, to bring in the winter sun.

A large family room and deck were added behind the kitchen that faced north. The deck also has a pitched roof to allow winter sun on the deck and provide summer shade. The deck is on the same floor level as the house with stairs leading to the backyard.

A box gutter (internal gutter) ran along the back of the existing pitched tile roof to collect water from here and the new roofs. The new northern wall of the family room could be described as either a wall, or a window due to the large amount of glass in the wall.

The North West corner of the house was designed to be split level to lessen the impact on the backyard. Downstairs is an office / bedroom and above is the main bedroom and ensuite.

To further contrast the difference between the old and the new, the rear construction is a mixture of face brick and light weight construction (timber framework clad in fibro cement). The new windows and doors are powdercoated aluminium in black.

Many of the new windows are louvres. Because of the higher ceiling from the skillion roof, high level louvres were included to release the hot air which would collect in summer time. This is supplemented with ceiling fans. Also, the family room is like a pavilion as it has doors on both sides of the room to induce a cross breeze. These are some typical, passive solar ideas that have worked well in the house.

What I love about the renovation, which is now nearly twenty years old, is that the addition still looks contemporary. I believe a well designed space can stand alone.



Photo: Ben Gerstel

Architecture is about designing beautiful spaces for people that work for them, not designing what type of furniture should go into the space to make it look "nice".

It is a big challenge for an architect to design his own home as an architect has many ideas floating around in his head. The challenge is choosing the right ones. My best advice for people who want to renovate is to live in the house for a period of time to work out how you would change the house and which spaces you want the natural light and sunshine to come into. Have a budget in mind and once you have signed off the design with the type of construction, fittings and finishes obtain an estimate to learn where the dollar sits.

This is where the fun begins...

**Ben Gerstel**  
**Ben Gerstel Architecture Pty Ltd**  
[bgerstel@optusnet.com.au](mailto:bgerstel@optusnet.com.au)

### Correction

*Last issue's photo of 62 The Bulwark was taken by Paul Gosney. It was mistakenly attributed to Ben Gerstel.*

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## CASTLECRAG NOTES...

### North Sydney Community Awards

We are proud to report that the CPA recently received a *Community Group of the Year Award* from local member Trent Zimmerman. Prominent local, Mark Crew, was also presented with a well-deserved *Community Award* for his service to both the Castlecrag community and the local Scouts.

### Eateries

Ni Hao to our new Chinese restaurant **Aroma Gallery** and ciao ciao to **Casa Mia Casa Tua** and soon to be opened **Castlecrag Pizzas**. There have been positive reviews, and now yet another restaurant, **Apera**, has applied for a liquor licence, to open where the Florist once bloomed.

### Watch your chickens – foxes about!

Anyone keeping chickens should be careful to lock them away at night as there is a hungry fox picking off hens in the vicinity of far east Edinburgh Rd and the Tor Walk. Also Sunnyside. So far we have learned of 4 chickens taken by foxes this month.

### Council

Amalgamations and Council elections have come and gone. The City of Willoughby remains. Our Mayor and Councillors have the task of managing our assets and representing us on local issues for another

3 years. Hopefully in this coming term, they will work productively together for the benefit of residents. Come and meet them at the next CPA meeting.

### Spelling mistakes on Signs

We had a great response to our Spotto the spelling mistakes on signs quest. We challenged readers to find the two mistakes that had been pointed out to us by a most observant Robyn Walter. Now more eagle-eyed locals have collectively found FIVE misspellings on our suburb's signs. Can you see them?



### Walk & Talks



On National Tree Day Richard O'Brien led a keen group of locals down along the Watergate Reserve to Sailor's Bay, identifying & discussing tree species, enthusing us all with his passion and knowledge. Those who had never been down this path that winds down to the bay before were in awe of the majestic ancient trees.

People also went bush in Warner's Park with Indigenous Educators who identified some local bush tucker and showed us how to use a golden banksia cone to brush one's hair. We also learnt about the world's first disposable nappy made from paperbark. It's as smooth as a baby's...!

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## CASTLECrag BUSHCARE 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 209**  
9-12noon  
Contact Keith Ferguson 0408 518 509

### Second Sunday of the Month

- **Gargoyle Bushcare**  
9-12noon  
Contact Cherrie Wilson 0478 181 182
- **Keep Reserve**  
9-12noon  
Contact Matthew Keighery  
0408 203 511

### Third Sunday of the Month

- **Casement Reserve**  
8.30-11.30  
Contact Sue Burk 0404 470 443
- **Torquay Estate**  
9-12noon  
Contact Jo Nolan 0419 234 235
- **Lookout Reserve**  
9-12noon  
Contact Jessica Davis 0431 317 756  
or Adrienne Kabos 9298 3761
- **Retreat Reserve**  
9-12noon  
Contact Lorraine Cairnes 9958 1213  
or Jill Newton 9967 4933

### Fourth Sunday of the Month

- **Linden Way Reserve**  
9-12noon  
Contact WCC 9777 7875

## Who cares for Bushcare?

There are now 10 local bushcare sites managed by Council, but with dwindling numbers of volunteers. We would welcome some new faces. It's a great way to meet neighbours and learn about natives and weeds! This issue the focus is on the two sites with the highest altitude in the Crag.

### Tower Reserve



I have had the pleasure of being the Bushcare Trainer at Tower Reserve since April 2014. Like many of the features in the area, the name fits in with Griffin's Castle motif. It has the distinction of being the highest point in Castlecrag and boasts spectacular views of Sailors Bay and Middle Harbour. The reserve was also a favourite spot of Marion Mahony Griffin who liked to meditate on the rocky out-crop at its peak. It is one of only two sites in the area where you can enjoy both ocean and harbour views and on a clear day you can see straight out to the heads.

Over time the site became overgrown with invasive weeds and became a tangle of Lantana, Jasmine, and Japanese

Honeysuckle as well as various perennial weeds. The rehabilitation of the site began in early 2013 when Richard Blacklock and his son Erryn, from Lilypilly Indigenous Landscapes, did a fantastic job undertaking the arduous tasks of clearing the weeds and planting local ridge-top species under instruction from Willoughby City Council.

Since then I have had the privilege of working with two fabulous volunteers, Jocelyn Chey and Lisa Clarke, as well as enjoying continued support from Richard and his crew. Their tireless efforts, combined with the site's natural resilience, have allowed us to enjoy some fantastic regeneration. Being part of such a wonderful team has been a very rewarding experience both socially and professionally. I strongly recommend residents join the Bushcare group in their local area and enjoy the many benefits it involves; including getting to know your neighbours and enjoying the beautiful natural areas that Willoughby has to offer.

*Oliver Weston*

### Linden Way

There's a brand new Bushcare group in the 'hood and we're looking for new volunteers! Linden Way Reserve is a small bush block with small rocky outcrops wedged between iridescent white scribbly gums and a diverse collection of shrubs including Banksias, Acacias, Grevilleas and Flannel flowers.



Our most troublesome weed at the site is a weed commonly known as "Mother of Millions", pictured above, or if you'd like

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to get technical *Bryophyllum delagoense*. It gets its name from the 'millions' of tiny plantlets and seeds it produces enabling it to quickly colonise an area. A native of Africa and Madagascar it was introduced to Australia as a garden plant, probably for its drought tolerance and impressive clusters of red/orange bell flowers.

Linden Way has an interesting past as there are suggestions from old aerial photographs that Linden Way Reserve may have been used as a military observation post in the First World War. It's easy to see why.



If you would like to learn more about the history and plants that inhabit Linden Way Reserve stop in and say hi one month. You can find us there on the 4th Sunday of every month from 9 am – 12 noon.

*Monique Van Vugt*  
Bushcare Officer

### Dairy Community Garden

Winter tends to be a quieter season at 'The Old Dairy' community vegetable garden, with many gardeners taking turns to rotate to warmer climes. Although it has been a relatively mild winter, the reduced sunshine reaching our plots does make an impact. On the plus side garlic and celery are doing well, as are broad beans which have been revived following an early set-back.



We've harvested a steady stream of lettuces, mizuna and rocket throughout Winter, as well as some small red cabbages and Brussels sprouts.

For those who have been following our yacon story, the first 'experimental' crop did not disappoint. Many refreshing yacon tubers were dug up, shared and enjoyed.

Along with the true joys of veggie gardening come the alternate 'joys'. Those unpredictable surprises that test our fortitude, ingenuity and sense of humour. Read unknown viruses that wither a whole crop of broad beans, or a flock of delinquent sulphur crested cockatoos that take out 4 months of growth on half our leeks. Or the ubiquitous resident brush



*David with yacon tuber harvest*

turkeys with whom we have an ongoing love-hate relationship. A few of us love to hate them for whatever unexplained damage we sustain.

With Spring afoot, broccoli is starting to rally and some small heads are popping out. We're seed-raising and planting things like radishes, spinach, snow peas, potatoes, beetroots, strawberries and hoping to salvage the remaining leeks which have now been netted.

Join us on Wed mornings around 9.30am at Warners Park, or the first Saturday morning and third Sunday morning of the month.

For more information visit  
[www.thedairygarden.weebly.com](http://www.thedairygarden.weebly.com).

*Mary Anne Veliscek*



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