



CASTLECRAG
PROGRESS
ASSOCIATION

THE CRAG

A voice for the community since 1925

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SEPTEMBER 2020

Local Scouts and Guides in 2020

What are they up to these days? *Story p8.*

A Spikey Story

Echidnas on the waddle. *Story p10.*

King Parrots East of the Valley Way



Have you seen the King Parrots Mural at the Scout Hall in the dip on Eastern Valley Way? It can be seen by passengers if driving from CastleCrag towards Northbridge, but it is best viewed on foot.

The hall is the old Warner's milk depot, built about 1938-39, and has been showing its age. A Federal Government grant was used to engage local artist Hugues Sineux to paint a mural on the side of the stables below. Hugues is a classically trained French artist and muralist now based in Northbridge. With over 25 years' experience, Hugues has transformed hundreds of public and private spaces with painted murals, trompe l'oeil and frescoes both in his native France and now in his new home Australia, including many school playgrounds.

This eye-catching mural overlooks Sailor's Bay Creek at the top of the valley. It depicts a vibrant male and female King Parrot and draws attention to the local wildlife in our urban environment. It celebrates fauna at a time when there are so many species whose survival are at risk in Australia due to urbanisation, predators and climate change.

The mural also marks the beginning of a track that follows the creek all the way down from Eastern Valley Way to Sailor's Bay. It passes through Warners Park with its wonderful children's playground and community gardens next to Willoughby Council's environmental centre, then continues down into Watergate Reserve. Experience being enveloped by beautiful ancient tall trees and marvel at the 6 metre waterfall which is spectacular after rain. You may even spot or hear the resident lyrebird. From the bay, the more adventurous can make their way around to the boatshed and from there all the way around through the Retreat & Castlehaven Reserve to Cheyne Walk. But then how to get home? The Linden Way Hill?

The mural on the side of the Scout Hall. Photos Adrian Spragg.



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THINK LOCALLY!

SHOP LOCALLY!

EMPLOY LOCALLY!

THE CRAG

is the community magazine 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 2018-2019

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- Vice Presidents** Dr John Steel
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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

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

John Steel at
editors@castlecrag.org.au

Design, Typesetting & Printing

Robin Phelan & Associates ☎ 0407 467 376
Printing: Experience in Print ☎ 0411 226 033

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 Editor

The world remains in somewhat of a state of shock around this horrid Covid-19 virus. We have adapted to new behaviours which include not gathering in large groups, wearing masks in public, regularly cleaning our hands with sanitiser and taking a wide berth around people in the street. We've realised it will be quite some time before we can travel freely again, and that life will never be quite the same.

Last issue we were in lockdown and *The Crag* was online only. It was posted onto our website and sent to more than 400 people on the CPA's e-mailing list. If you missed the Corona version in May, you can still find it on our website where every edition, going back to #1 published in March 1978 is located, thanks to our Treasurer/Webmistress who scanned all the back copies in order to have this valuable digital record.

There has been discussion subsequently about whether we should move to online publishing. Some people have been favourable of the idea, and enjoy the

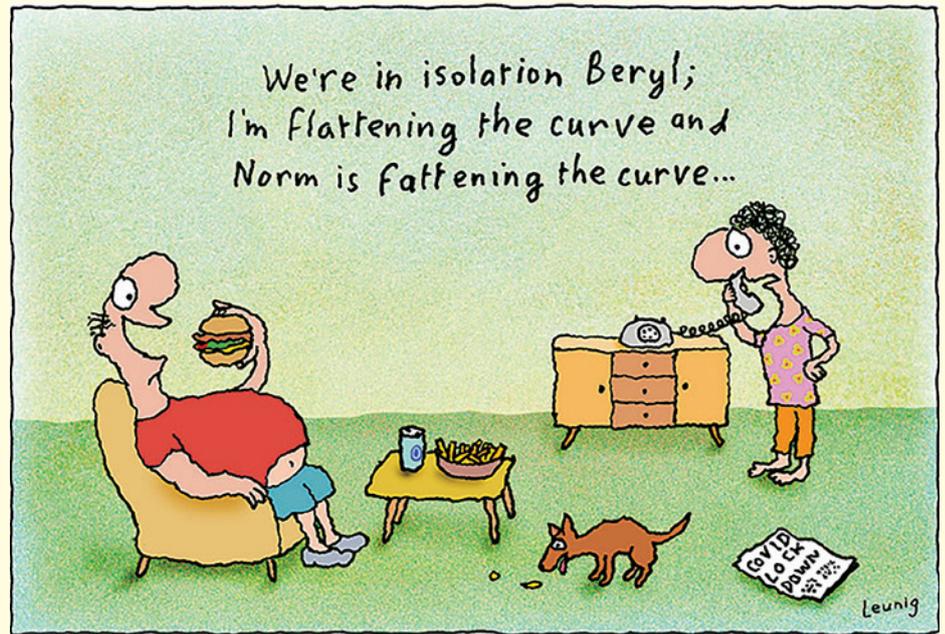
ability to click on a link for further information. A larger number, particularly older residents, have expressed a strong desire to keep the paper version of our magazine, and so that's what we'll keep doing for now. People could opt for an online version only, but then the delivering would be much more complex.

A suggestion has been that those who prefer a hard copy could pick it up at a designated shop in the village. What do you think? Is receiving *The Crag* directly to your letterbox a creature comfort you would like to hang onto, or are you happy with going online to read? How should we deal with the changing landscape?

Let us know: editors@castlecrag.org.au or PO box 4259 Castlecrag.

On another note, do you have an interest in being connected to those who grow your fresh food? We are looking for someone to become a local food 'hubster' so we can bring **Box Divvy** to our community. Details on page 16.

With thanks, Mr Leunig



Keep *The Crag* coming to your door!

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From the President



Not a lot has changed since my last report. We continue to conduct Committee meetings by Zoom and we are still unsure as to when we might hold our AGM. At the moment,

the only firm requirement is that it be held before June 2021.

The proposed development at 3 The Postern is now before the Court. CPA's submission was only one of about 30 opposing the development and the owner has taken the matter to the Land and Environment Court, even before Council had prepared its report for the Local Planning Panel. We understand that the developer and the Council are engaged in discussions about the proposal. CPA has been advised that "If the Applicant proceeds with an amended proposal,

residents will be notified and provided with the opportunity to comment".

There have been some meetings held between CPA, the Walter Burley Griffin Society and a number of Council Officers regarding the proposal to turn the small carpark, at the corner of the Postern and Edinburgh Rd, into a park dedicated to the memory of Marion Mahony. Council has advised that it would not be possible to complete this project by November 2021, in time for the centenary of the Griffins' Castlecrag. However, Council is preparing a "concept plan for a pop-up park" (see the Mayor's Report) to be available for the event. Council will be seeking residents' feedback on the Concept Plan. On the day next November, we will have an opportunity to see what the long-term result might look like.

In regard to the Quadrangle redevelopment, Dr Quek has advised that he has now submitted a Planning Proposal for the site to the State Government and to Council. He told us that the Planning Proposal

embodies the design that was selected last year by the Design Excellence Jury. The design was exhibited at the Quadrangle in February and published in *The Crag* #207. As soon as we know more about timing we will let you know.

In a new development, we believe that the owner of three of the shops on the northern side of Edinburgh Rd, including Martha's and Ganache, plans to redevelop this site. Martha's decided to move immediately when a shop in Northbridge became available, but Ganache is currently remaining where it is. We do not know anything about the timing for redevelopment nor anything about the development itself. However, we are hopeful that the shop fronts on Edinburgh Rd with their the black-tiled walls and the awnings with their pressed tin ceilings dating back to c. 1942, will be preserved and that Ganache will be able to return once the development is complete.

Paradise on Earth



As mentioned in previous editions of *The Crag*, Sydney Living Museums is developing a new exhibition celebrating the life, career and legacy of American-born Marion Mahony Griffin. Dr Anne Watson has curated Paradise on Earth featuring a selection of Marion's impressive drawings, along with objects, photos and film. The exhibition illustrates her ambition to forge

a better world through social, cultural and environmental advocacy. It highlights her visionary approach to art, design and architecture as exemplified in the utopian "model residential suburb" of our Castlecrag.

The exhibition is scheduled to open at the Museum of Sydney in early November 2020 and run through to April 2021. It will coincide with the 150th anniversary of Marion's birth on 14 February 1871 and the centenary of Griffin's Castlecrag in 2021. The museum will also exhibit a dramatic floral art installation responding to Mahony Griffin's work and is developing an immersive digital experience on the theme of 'Marion's Garden'.

The museum plans to mount a separate 'Sydney Visionaries' display, which will

focus on the collaborative contribution of Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin.

These two activities, at the Museum of Sydney, stand as a prelude to the celebrations currently being conceived by the Walter Burley Griffin Society and the Progress Association (CPA) to take place in Castlecrag for the centenary. You may recall, the CPA had invited Dr Watson to speak at March's general meeting, which had to be cancelled. It was hoped grassroots discussion would ensue regarding ideas for celebrating 'our' Castlecrag in 2021.

It's not too late! If you have an idea or would like to be involved, please contact the Progress Association.



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From The Mayor



The pandemic continues with its ups and downs and many in our community continue to be impacted. We're doing all we can to keep our community supported and I

encourage you to support local businesses. We've continued with vital services and, at the time of writing, we've been able to reopen community facilities in a reduced capacity. We've taken great care in ensuring they have COVID safe plans in place.

At the July council meeting, we carefully considered the impact of COVID-19 and how best we can support our community over the next 12 months. We adopted our annual operational plan and budget for 2020/21 that will bring that to fruition. The biggest spend area for projects and capital works is on buildings and investment properties, followed by environmental projects, footpaths and roads. Projects for Castlecrag include two related to the Griffin Reserves Plan of Management. The first is to improve access to the reserves by renewing paths and associated revegetation works – \$92,882 has been

earmarked. The second is interpretive signs for Castlecrag Reserves for \$15,000. It aims to improve the community's knowledge and engagement with the reserves. In other projects, the stormwater pipe replacement from Rutland Avenue to Sunnyside Crescent will cost \$75,000 and renewing the road surface at Linden Way, Edinburgh Road – The High Tor will be \$80,000. The operational plan includes all the financial details so I invite you to view it on our website. Despite our hardships, I'm confident this operational plan maximises our resources and supports our community into a better and bright 2021.

A concept plan for the 'pop-up park' proposed for the eight space Council car park on the corner of The Postern and Edinburgh Road will be developed. It will be available for your feedback. It's in preparation for next year's celebration of the centenary of the Griffins in Castlecrag and the 150th birthday of Marion Mahony Griffin. Features of the new park will include plantings of local native species, sandstone seating walls and terracing to accommodate the biennial Castlecrag Fair.

Our council staff have noted higher use on bush walking trails since the pandemic and we continue to maintain and make improvements to trails. Remember to take your rubbish with you and keep your dogs

on leads and scoop your dog's poop.

Stay safe and take care in these challenging times.

If you have any issues you would like to discuss with me please phone 9777 1001 or alternatively send me an email at gail.giles-gidney@willoughby.nsw.gov.au.

Gail Giles-Gidney



Please don't buy the plastic bags from IGA! Instead, use the boomerang/cloth/recycled bags on the stands outside IGA and the fruit shop.



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Are you planning to renovate or rebuild? Do you want to know your home's before and after value? Do you need help understanding current selling regulations or identifying features demanded by current buyers?

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For an obligation free discussion, call our office now. Alternatively, if you would like a copy of our "Maintaining and preparing your home for profit" booklet, please contact us today. We will arrange delivery to you.

Craig Ireson
0419 418 614
CraigIreson@mcgrath.com.au

Sharon Ireson
0409 124 054
SharonIreson@mcgrath.com.au

McGrath



GRIFFEN IN LOCKDOWN

No children in Stoker park today.

They've all been told to stay away.

See the silent, lifeless swing – no child to bring it to life in the air – To feel the breeze lifting her hair.

No children in the park today.

They've all been told to keep away.

If you look closely you just might see Old Burley the Griffen behind a tree.

Go a bit closer, he won't bite.

He awaits imagination to excite children who climb upon his back, waving their hands and shouting commands to

"Journey afar to Magical lands!"

He stretches his wings and flies to places where no one cares about dirty faces.

For years he has flown in the minds of the small, So old... you might think he's seen it all.

Then suddenly it came – the pandemic year.

The park, though empty, was filled with Fear.

You could feel it on the tape

that bound-shut the gate!

See it on the sign warning

'No Playing Here'!

Breathe its stifled stillness,

No one dared come near,

Except a lonely magpie

who saw Griffen shed a tear.

Cheryl Tamblyn

April 2020

Old Stories embedded in the Stoker Park upgrade

The Stoker Playground in Edinburgh Road is now complete and has been open for public playing since early July.

The upgrade, designed by Jan Felton and Alfred Bernhard of Willoughby City Council, ensured parts of the original sandstone features were kept and enhanced, such as the statue of Walter the Burly Griffin, which

inspired Cheryl Tamblyn's poem. The plinth on which the statue sits, celebrates the work of the Stokers, after whom the park is named. For about 20 years from the early 40's, they ran a child-minding service in the weatherboard cottage next to the park.

Natural materials sandstone and timber logs, have been used to encourage a sense of natural play and to blend with its bushland setting. The park features a spring wallaby, a climb on goanna and balance poles, which bring to mind the local fauna as well as stilt play of local kids in the 40's and 50's. Perched on top of the poles are silhouettes of local native birds, who often can be heard and seen in the park.

The sandstone castle play structures model the architectural parts of a castle, which link to the name of the suburb and the Griffin Heritage area with its roadways and reserves named after parts of a castle.

The wooden boat structure and wharf area under the big fig tree reflect Sugarloaf Bay's first European industry in the area. Before roads



were built, boat transport was vital, and from the late 1890's boatbuilding & repair work was carried out on the foreshore below. Then named the Yachtsville Estate, 1904 maps show a cluster of 14 boatsheds in Sugarloaf Bay. By 1907, Francis Horsley had erected a large boatshed and a little later he built the stone cottage still resided in today. A century ago boatbuilding was the main activity but today, Sugarloaf Bay is a magnet to day-tripping and overnight boaters.

The new playground cleverly embeds historical & environmental threads from the suburb into the play equipment, and although the children would be oblivious to this, over time, parents could enrich their children's play by telling them the stories of the park.

With thanks to Jan Felton for the wonderful photos.

White Wolves on the Move

The Martial Arts School White Wolf Dojo, has been part of the Castlecrag scene for the last seven years. It's not been uncommon to see young people wearing their Gi (uniform) walking to and from the church hall in Charles Street, but that time has now come to an end, much to the disappointment of their local members. Castle Cove is to gain from our loss.

Rachael Crompton, who built up the school in Castlecrag, had strong motivation for getting involved in martial arts. She explains:

"I commenced training in 2000, at the suggestion of my brother as I had lost all my confidence and was very frightened after a savage road rage incident where I was badly beaten up by another driver. I was taken to hospital via ambulance and lost my job at the time owing to my injuries. Turned out the perpetrator was a convicted rapist. It all went to court and court was traumatic and awful too. Having lived through that real life violence I indulged fully in the martial arts training. Enduring violence as an adult is terrifying. This person wanted to kill me at that moment and its truly terrifying. This gave me tremendous focus and an imperativeness to my training. Anyway long story short is after a relatively short time I realised martial arts was really about improving yourself as a human being.



White Wolf Dojo cubs awaiting instruction

Learning to defend yourself was a 'by product' of the training rather like gaining increased mobility and flexibility is a benefit of Yoga."

Rachel is the first non-Japanese female to receive a Blackbelt in traditional Japanese Jujutsu. She is keen to pass on her knowledge and, most importantly, values of respect and courtesy to our younger generation.

After many years of studying in Japan, Rachel developed her own syllabus. She understood we are not Japanese and our cultural conditioning is so different that the extreme strictness would not suit many of us with our Australian dispositions. She kept the ethos of the Samurai Warrior code within the training but adjusted how she passes it along. Rachel feels like she's a bridge between the cultures.

"My wish is for all my students – adults

and children – to benefit from the lessons martial arts brings us. Yes of course it's cool moves and kicks for the kids and fitness and a feeling of well-being for the adults, but we also develop a sense of community and belonging and to live in the modern world with an ancient code behind us. The true aim of the martial arts is to improve ourselves as a human being and to be better than we were yesterday. Hence our saying and T-shirt quote; "True victory is victory over yourself".

Rachel has gathered a fine team of instructors to support her at the school. After a few months' stopover at Club Willoughby, they have found a stable base at St Barnaby's Church Hall in Castle Cove. White Wolf Dojo will move there in October, ready to start Term 4 in their new den.

Hopefully, the pack will follow...

Come join the pack



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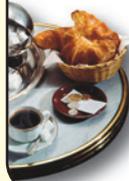
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Well done, Cragites... Generosity Appreciated!

Our annual June winter appeal for warm clothes for Sydney's rough sleepers was an even greater success than last year. Boxes were placed outside the old Cottage & Coast shop for one week, and following a request in the May issue of The Crag, donations came flooding in. Such wonderful generosity from the community! The Tamblyn's managed the day-to-day donations and Peter Moffit and Lorraine Cairns transported them to the Wayside Chapel. Many thanks to both couples. Here's Lorraine's report:

We delivered the huge load of warmth from Castlecrag to Wayside at Kings Cross today, and were warmly welcomed by Charlie, who had received our blankets last year. We arrived (in sunshine) just before they began their daily lunch service, so

we had lots of willing helpers to unload the Ute.

We found that warm clothes were the right donation this year. Because of the COVID19 rules, they were closing at 6 pm instead of 10 pm, and their clients usually ask for blankets later in the night. Since they were closed at this time, the demand for blankets was reduced, but requests for warm clothes high. So the clothes, including the the socks and jocks, were very welcome. Volunteers started sorting the bags as soon as they landed; it appeared to us that their stocks (and socks) were quite low.

There were lots of thanks sent to Castlecrag, and they are looking forward to next year's contribution. We said we'd phone in advance again to see what they



Cheryl and Peter loading the ute.

most need next year. The Wayside Chapel is a wonderful institution and it's an honour to be able to give them a helping hand from our generous community.

And thank you to the Tamblyns for your great logistics organisation!

NORTHBRIDGE ROTARY COMMUNITY FOOD DRIVE FOR LOWER NORTH SHORE

9am to 5pm – Saturday 26 September

Please deliver non-perishable food items to St. Marks Parish Hall, 1A Malacoota Road, Northbridge

Northbridge Rotary is working with several charities including OzHarvest and local charities StreetWork and Taldumunde Northside who will distribute the food to the needy and homeless, especially those affected by the Covid-19 lockdown.

Non-perishable food items include tinned and bottled products (eg vegetables, soup, beans, vegemite, water) and unopened packaged foods (eg pasta, noodles, rice, biscuits). All items must have unexpired dates. This is a **FOOD ONLY collection**, so items such as clothing, bedding etc. will not be accepted. There are people around us doing it tough, so please give what you can.



CASTLECRAG SPORTS CLUB

Between the Parapet and Edinburgh Road lies the Castlecrag Sports Club

- Book a tennis court at the Castlecrag Cellars for **\$15 per hour**
- Call coach Michael Tebbutt on **0410 992 320** for lessons
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Scouting & Guiding Builds Resilience for Life!

Formal research confirms what leaders and parents have known anecdotally for years – that young people involved in scouting & guiding have better resilience, enabling them to thrive and take on all that life has to offer, including the inevitable challenges.

By building resilience in young people, we are empowering them to be able to learn from their mistakes and to understand that failing is okay – it's an integral part of the learning journey.

1st Northbridge Sea Scouts

At 1st Northbridge Sea Scouts our members, aged between 8 and 18, make decisions, take the lead and learn by doing. We meet in the Scout Hall next to Northbridge Primary School, giving them a safe space where they can work with others to plan and embark on their own adventures, indoors and out.

We are fortunate to have a good gender balance through the group and members from a variety of schools. Some join with



Above: Team building

friends, deepening existing relationships and some join to make new and lasting friendships, whilst learning new skills and exploring new adventures.

A highlight of regular activities in the warmer months is the boat shed on Sailors Bay with canoes, windsurfers, dinghies and a yacht. We race our yacht "Herbi" in the local sailing competitions. Our Scouts also go on day and overnight hikes as well as to camps and activities with other scout groups at the weekends throughout the year.

1st Northbridge Scouts and Venturers recently returned from our annual 5-day ski trip to Perisher, staying in the Scouts Alpine Activity Centre in Jindabyne. They snowboarded and skied all day and played games after dinner at night. A great opportunity to be outside with friends, active and safe in these challenging times.

We welcome enquiries for membership at any time, though often have a waitlist for the younger sections. Contact us at www.northbridgescouts.org.au.

We made them ourselves!



Below: Heading out for an evening paddle



And we thought Castlecrag was rocky!

1st Sailors Bay Sea Scouts

1st Sailors Bay Sea Scouts is an active group with boys and girls in 2 Cub (8 – 11 years) Packs meeting on Tuesday & Wednesday nights, 2 Scout (11 – 15 years) Troops meeting Thursday & Friday nights, and Venturers (15 – 18 years) meeting on the weekend/ Monday night. The 2 summer terms are spent on the water operating from the boatshed next to Castlecrag Marina at the end of Rockley Street, and the 2 winter terms operating from the hall at 43 Eastern Valley Way, Northbridge.

The Scouting Calendar is normally filled with regular large meets, but 2020 has been an annus horribilis for Scouting, as it has for the world at large. The cubs were ready to join 3,000 others at Cuboree (every 3 years) at Cataract Scout Camp in January when it was cancelled due to the bushfire crisis. The Sirius Cup Regatta attended by all sections in March on Balmoral Oval was cancelled due to Covid-19, as was the annual Scout Hike at Belanglo State Forest, normally attended by 1000 Scouts in 200 patrols visiting some 27 activity points run by leaders and parent helpers.

Each section was obliged to move to Zoom meetings during the height of restrictions in NSW. Since the reopening, the Cubs have participated in bushwalks, a bike ride around Narrabeen Lake, tree planting for National Tree Day, and fun games at the hall – all socially distanced. The Scouts have participated in wide games, dissecting organs under the watchful guidance of parent doctors, and a combined troop hike to Goochs Crater north of Bell in the Blue Mountains in July.

For those who have previously participated in this annual hike, the destruction from the Gaspers Mountain mega blaze in December was stark – though the area was still recovering from the 2013 State Mine fire. The scouts enjoyed the freedom of clambouring over pagodas on Saturday,



Scouting and Guiding cont...



Gooches Crater



Setting up camp in the Crater

cooking damper on the fire, rising early for a non-sunrise in the rain on Sunday, a choice of porridge, porridge or porridge for breakfast, and walking out in the rain, which dampened nobody's spirits.

Youth interested to join our activities in the future should consider putting their names down now on the Cub and Scout waiting lists: <http://www.firstsailorsbay.com.au/>

1st Artarmon Girl Guides

The last few months have seen so many changes to our society, and as a doctor at a nearby hospital I felt the effects of this acutely. The young women in the Artarmon Girl Guide community were no different. With schools closing and large gatherings being suspended during lockdown, the ever-adaptable team of young women in our Girl Guide unit were determined to continue getting together each week. Hence the age of online Guiding took off.

Meeting weekly in the virtual space using video-conferencing was a challenge our

team was more than ready to step up to. I feel so privileged to be a Guide leader and as such, I have never been prouder of each of our kind, talented and resilient young women. Each week saw a Guide step up to the task of preparing a topic that inspired them, to teach to their peers in the virtual meeting space. The group learnt about so many diverse subjects from each other, including anime and manga, wildlife conservation and the zoo and musical instruments. And as strangely isolated as the world of lockdown became, this weekly sojourn into each Guide's interests was both exciting and remarkably helped us to feel closer and more tightly knit than before.

Whilst the layout and format of our weekly meetings may have unexpectedly and completely altered in a short space of time, the fundamental principles of the Guiding traditions remained a central part of each meeting. The girls were able to work toward personal goals and

receive recognition by earning badges. And the ongoing sense of community and companionship was unfettered by change. This helped to provide a lifeline of normality and deepened the connections between this diverse group of friends.

It seems the writer Jaeda Dewalt put it well in saying that "When we learn how to become resilient, we learn how to embrace the beautifully broad spectrum of the human experience."

This group of young women have demonstrated resilience and community and fully embodied the ideals of Girl Guides in Australia. If you, or your daughter, would like to be a part of our group of tenacious young women, please contact us on 1aartarmonguides@gmail.com or contact our district manager Karen Pearson on 0414 682 879. Artarmon is the closest group to Castlecrag.

Guides Zooming and Hiking



Pre-Covid times, Balls Head



Echidnas in our backyards

The Short-beaked Echidna (*Tachyglossus aculeatus*), sometimes known as a Spiny Anteater, is found throughout Australia, including Tasmania, but they are not as common in Sydney as they once were.

Echidnas are egg-laying mammals, Monotremes (the only other Monotreme is the Platypus). She lays one egg, the size of a grape, which hatches after about 10 days. The young "puggle", 12 mm long and weighing half a gram, emerges blind and hairless and stays in its mother's pouch, clinging to hairs inside. The puggle suckles for two or three months. Once it develops spines and becomes too prickly, the mother removes it from her pouch (who can blame her?) and builds a burrow for it. It continues to suckle for the next six months. Baby echidnas stay within the den for up to a year before becoming independent.

Some facts about echidnas

- They are named after the Greek mythological Mother of Monsters, Echidna.
- They have toothless jaws and slurp up ants, worms and insect larvae with their long (15 cm) sticky tongue.



This pic was taken by Cameron Hutcherson at his uncle's garden in The Bulwark. Cameron has helped out in bushcare in The Retreat Reserve with his uncle and aunt, Ross and Maria. He first spotted this echidna taking a rest stop and having a drink of water from their bird water bowl.

- Their body temperature is the second lowest out of all mammals, and they have a very slow metabolism. In the wild they can live for 45 years and up to 50 years in captivity.
- Echidna's maximum speed is 2.3 kph.
- Adult echidnas can grow from 35.5 - 76 cm long and weigh 2.5 - 10 kg.

Predators: Echidnas have few natural enemies, but may be killed by cars, dogs, foxes and occasionally goannas; cats may take the young.

What you should do if you see an echidna?

Wildlife Rescue advises: If you find an echidna in a backyard, it is best not to remove the animal but to let it move in its own time. If being pestered by cats

Yum! Ants on the rocks!

or dogs, request that owners lock them up until the echidna moves on of its own accord. Rescuers never try to relocate a healthy echidna as it risks them losing their scent trail or leaving young unattended in the burrow. Echidnas have a type of inbuilt GPS which we don't want to interrupt, and will move away as soon as it is sure it is out of danger. They are protected in all States and Territories of Australia.

Please **NEVER EVER** use a shovel to try to lift or move any echidna, as this can easily result in broken toes and spines.

A free app for echidna sightings has recently been developed for a PhD project; here's the link: <https://apps.apple.com/au/app/echidnacsi/id1260820816>.

The app page says: "We want to learn more about echidnas! Where they are, what they are doing, if they are healthy – so we can work towards their conservation. How can you help? By taking photos and collecting scats (i.e. poo). Although an iconic native Australian animal, we do not know much about echidnas' wild populations, as they are extremely hard to find (when you're actually looking for them)."

We should treasure the echidnas in Castlecrag, and make sure they have bushy reserves and quiet gardens to go about their unique lifestyle.

Lorraine Cairnes

Retreat Reserve Bushcare

Editor's note:

As well as the little fella from The Bulwark and the other from Edinburgh rd, there has been an increase in echidna sightings locally – Cheyne Walk, The Citadel, Battlement and Rampart, Sunnyside Crescent (hence the signs and need to go slow), Torquay Reserve at the bottom of Edinburgh road and in backyards all along Edinburgh Road facing the Northern Escarpment up to Sunnyside. There was even one seen up in the Griffin Centre carpark! Any other sightings? Let us (and the app) know...

See a video of an echidna working out how to climb garden steps: www.castlecrag.org.au/.



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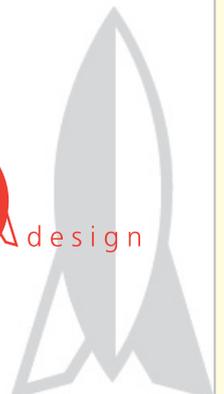
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Alexander (Alex) Robert Strafford Ground

26 January 1931 – 30 December 2019

My father had a life full of passions. He loved what he loved – latterly travel, but also animals, opera, gadgets, Sophia Loren, history, jokes (increasingly politically incorrect) and people.

Alex grew up in Mosman, much indulged by his three older sisters despite war induced shortages. A scholarship at Knox gave him a taste of male camaraderie and probably stimulated his love of learning and entrepreneurial flair. Through a series of coincidences the city boy ended up in New Zealand on a small fledgling piggery married to Babs, the love of his life, and with the first of five children at the age of 27. Thirty-five years later 'Waratah Farms' was selling over 20,000 kgs of pork a week. During this farming time, Alex embraced all manner of innovative practices including automated feeding, shareholder partners, nutritional and genetic research, artificial insemination and international visits to study the latest pig farming techniques (a fortuitously tax deductible pursuit which satisfied his latent travel bug). Collectively, this city boy's efforts were credited with raising the profile of NZ's pig farming industry.

Alex was good with people – he could tell a story, typically selectively embellishing it, and this made him a natural fit for dramatic events. He was a devotee of the Independent Theatre in North Sydney in



his early 20's and the ringleader for many fundraising events in rural NZ during his 30's to 50's. He became involved in community groups especially Rotary in the farming town of Otorohanga. His Rotary involvement extended to the wonderful student exchange programs that saw his family host (and literally adopt) half a dozen young people from all over the globe...

In 1982 Babs and Alex purchased the Felstead House in Edinburgh Road from Babs' mother's estate and they began the slow process of renovating the Griffin house with a view to retiring there. As a Griffin house, the renovations continue.

Castlecrag was a perfect base from which to travel. Globetrotting to visit friends both old and new, children and grandchildren kept him busy. His passports reveal trips to 80 countries, while photographs and video footage, taken with multiple state-of-the-art cameras, document his travels. The countries didn't slide one into the next, but shared a commonality in the friendliness of the people he'd meet. He'd genially strike up conversations with strangers and within minutes would begin subconsciously mimicking his conversational partner's gestures and accents.

Alex had a full 2019. During the year, he travelled to Cambodia, Thailand and Laos, Iceland, Canada and New Zealand. He wasn't feeling well in Calgary and upon returning home he went to his lovely Sydney doctor and sadly received the diagnosis of Advanced Pancreatic Cancer on 29 November.

Alex is survived by his wife of 63 years – Barbara Ann Ground, nee Reading – their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren spread across both hemispheres on three continents. Forever the traveller, he asked that his ashes be put to rest in two of his favourite places – Whangamata in NZ where the family have holidayed for over fifty years, and of course, Castlecrag.

Vicki Craig

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Plot thickens for Community Gardening

As Crag dwellers we're fortunate to have two organic community gardens within walking distance of home. Warners Park Community Garden is well known to Crag readers. Likely less familiar is Market Garden Park (MGP) Community Garden at Mowbray Place Willoughby, accessible by foot from Edinburgh Road or Eastern Valley Way.

The gardens each operate independently with their own character and flavour. Both function on a shared gardens model meaning that the land is tended communally and harvests shared among gardeners – as distinct from gardeners tending their own 'plots'.

Warners Park

Raised beds at Warners Park contain lots of snow peas coming into flower. A semi bushland setting with abundant shade makes for low soil temperature in winter affecting the pace of growth. There have been harvests of yacon, turmeric and galangal. We've had small amounts of various leafy greens including oak and butter lettuces, rocket, bok choy, coriander and kale. Slug visits need keen eyes and patient control.

Leeks and garlic are in it for the long term and doing well. Less so cauliflower which has delivered mainly leaves so far.



With warmer weather coming, there are plans afoot to re-fill the empty raised bed.

Recently planted pepinos have settled in and flashed us a few beautiful purple flowers.



The Snow Pea bed at Warners Park

A perennial fruiting shrub from South America, they produce delicious fleshy fruit which has been described as rockmelon/ honeydew with a hint of cucumber. Pepinos are well worth researching if you're looking to try a new edible in your home garden.

Compost bins at Warners remain closed for community contributions. Harris Farm and IGA supply organic matter which is finely chopped, mixed with dry leaves or shredded paper plus rabbit droppings and turned regularly. Good composting does underpin soil health.

Covid-conscious garden meets have resumed on Wednesday and Sunday mornings from 10am.

For more information contact Hilary on 0414 502 771.

Market Garden Park

Gathering momentum over a year or so, six large in-ground beds have emerged, along with an orchard area and more recently a 'flower superhighway' to attract beneficial garden insects. MGP sits on relatively 'high

land' exposed to winter sun. This season it has enjoyed abundant harvests of daikon radish and endives, alongside kale, tatsoi, bok choy, shallots, rainbow chard, warrigal greens, yacon, and some brassicas like cabbage and cauliflower.

Joie de vivre is with Nee from MGP, 'I love worms' she says



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Community Gardens cont...



A Wednesday morning 'socially distanced' meet at MGP in June 2020

Clusters of various salad greens are dotted enticingly throughout the beds. Fresh young snow peas and sugarsnaps are yielding now. Leeks and broadbeans are coming along. Trees include paw paw, lemon, lime, banana, fig and ornamental pears.

Market Garden Park has 4 compost bins on site. It is listed on www.sharewaste.com to accept recycled organic fruit and vegetable scraps from environmentally responsible community members. Cut your vege scraps up into small pieces and please definitely no meat or cooked food which make work very stinky and awful for the bin turners.



Cauliflower at MGP



Australian native edible, Warrigal Greens

Covid-conscious garden meets are held on Wednesdays and every 1st and 3rd Saturday of the month from 9.30am.

For more information contact Janet at janetfrance@optusnet.com.au, by phone on 0403 868 592 or visit www.mgpcommunitygarden.com.

CASTLECRAIG BUSHCARE Meeting Dates

First Monday of the Month

- Tower Reserve
9-12noon
Contact: Jocelyn – 0402 158 518 or Lisa – 0404 806 406

First Sunday of the Month

- Cortile Park Care
8.30-11.30
Contact: Tim – 0403 883 254

Second Sunday of the Month

- Gargoyle Bushcare
9-12noon
Contact: Margaret – 0407 994 230
- Keep Reserve
9-12noon
Contact: Matthew – 0408 203 511

Third Sunday of the Month

- Casement Reserve
8.30-11.30
Contact: Vicki – 0402 325 531
- Torquay Estate
9-12noon
Contact: Jo – 0419 234 235
- Lookout Reserve
9-12noon
Contact: Adrienne – 0409 997 076
- Retreat Reserve
9-12noon
Contact: Jill – 0428 880 002

Fourth Sunday of the Month

- Linden Way Reserve
9-12noon
Contact: WCC – 9777 7875

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Cortile Reserve Parkcare

In famous Castlecrag style, tucked behind houses near the village shops, you'll find the lovely Cortile Reserve. The path leads up opposite the Cellars/Motza carpark in The Postern and comes out the other side near the end of The Parapet. This Griffin Reserve is the only one with active recreational use – the tennis court was on the original Griffin Estates plan and the clubhouse was built in 1928.

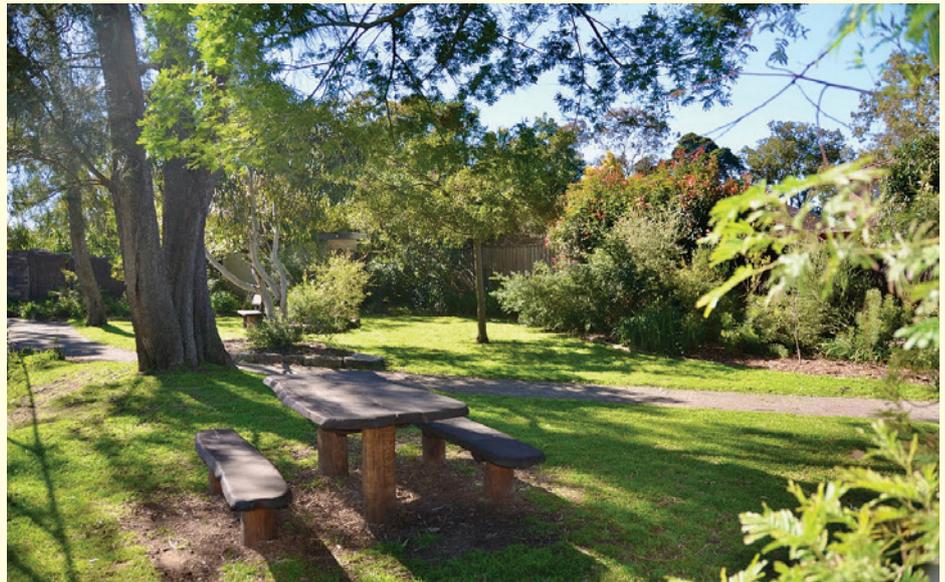
With community consultation in 2009, Willoughby Council completed a Reserve Action Plan for Cortile Reserve, which delivered new curved garden beds, native plantings, upgraded pathways and benches, and a new playground. At the time some very keen residents formed a Parkcare Group and have been committed to improving and maintaining the garden beds for the amenity of all users.

Building on this earlier work, our current objective is to showcase how native plants can be used in an urban setting to provide shade, screening, and create habitat for fauna while enhancing the overall appearance of the reserve.



Plantings in Cortile Reserve in 2010

Since 2009, the group has planted hundreds of local indigenous plants, some of which were grown by group members with Council at the Warner's Park propagation group. The specimens we've planted include grasses, ground-



Ten years on the plantings have grown – Cortile Reserve in 2020

covers, flowering shrubs, and trees such as Banksia, Acacia, and Black Wattle. We are progressively weeding and mulching the beds and encouraging native ground cover.

While there's still plenty of work to be done, it's encouraging to look back at the early photos and see how Cortile is progressing. I am really enjoying my involvement in Bushcare – it has introduced me to some great people in our local community and allowed me to work with a group of experienced bushland coordinators at the Council. It's also been a helpful distraction throughout all the COVID-19 restrictions!

We currently have a small group of volunteers and meet on the first Sunday of each month from 8.30am. Please feel free to join us – even if it's just for 30 minutes, an extra pair of hands makes a lot of difference!

For Parkcare contact Tim Stalker on 0409 229 419 or Emma Hayes (WCC) on 02 9777 7942 or by email Emma.Hayes@Willoughby.nsw.gov.au.

The Castlecrag Progress Association has produced a Local Plant guide with photos, descriptions and sources for a range of native grasses, shrubs and trees that are local to Castlecrag. Please follow the link to access the online version: https://castlecrag.org.au/wp-content/uploads/CPA_Local_Plant_Guide.pdf.

The tennis courts are available for casual hire at \$20/hour. Please book at Castlecrag Cellars. For membership enquiries, email Kathryn at castlecragtennis@bigpond.com.



The Cortile Crew

Left to right: *Banksia ericifolia*, *Epicaris longifolia* and *Sydney Boronia*, Photos: Facebook @WildlifeWilloughby



Castlecrag Notes

Castlecrag Montessori School Turns 30!



This year marks the 30th birthday of Castlecrag Montessori School, located in the St James Church hall on Edinburgh Road.

From humble beginnings, it is now one of the most respected and in-demand boutique Montessori schools in Sydney, employing two Directors and three assistants and delivering quality preschool and kindergarten education to children aged 3-6 years.

Parents who come to observe the classroom at CMS will note a beautifully prepared space that encourages child-centred learning, with a focus on developing children's confidence, independence and promoting collaboration with peers.

Enrolments are open for 2021. There are limited vacancies for 2020. An open day will be held on Saturday 19th September, 10am to 12pm, please RSVP to book a time at: info@cms.nsw.edu.au.

Street Library News

The Adult Street Library has been moved to the Quadrangle, near the entrance to IGA. The Children's Library is at the top of the ramp where it has always been. It is good to see the libraries being used and the books moving in and out.



Harry Christie, Melanie Scheller, box artist Sophia Rayson and James Rayson at the children's street library box at Castlecrag Quadrangle. Picture: John Steel

However, it seems some people are using the libraries as a dumping ground for very

old books, eg 40-year-old encyclopedias and textbooks! Please only donate clean books in good condition and no encyclopedias, magazines, textbooks or dictionaries.

The street libraries are a community service provided by the Progress Association. Please encourage your children to look after the books by keeping them on the shelves provided, and closing the door of the box when they have finished browsing.

Correction from last issue

CRA#208 Castlecrag Notes referred to being grateful to Council for the clearing work it undertook in the Merlon Reserve pathway between The Scarp and The Bulwark.

The clearing work actually took place in the pathway at the top of Rockley Street that leads down to the pristine bushland and Sailor's Bay below.

The Merlon Pathway project failed to find a place in the 2020-21 budget. While it remains a gazetted public pathway, it is a bit of a goat-track.

Deliverers

We are looking for people to help deliver our magazine. We are expanding our field and our regulars could do with a shorter run. If you are interested please contact info@castlecrag.org.au.

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Zachary Zeus
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Restaurant Roundup

There's been considerable comings and goings with our eateries. Covid has not been kind to our cafes and restaurants so please support them when you can.

Restaurants still admirably standing...

Apera – • Lunch 12:00 noon to 3:00pm Fri to Sun • Dinner 5.00pm to late, Tues to Sat • Takeaway from 4.00pm to late, Tues to Sat. • Special Friday lunch: Plate of mussels \$22. Delicious. Ad p13.

Bai Yok Modern Thai – Dinner 5.30pm to 9.30pm, Tue to Sun. Take away & delivery. Old favourite. Ad p6.

Centoz Italian – • Dinner 6:00pm to late, Wed to Sat • Dine in – reservations preferred/recommended. Take away available. It's truffle season! Call Chris on 0413 732 526

Motza Pizza – Dinner 6pm to late, 7 days • Dine in, take away & delivery. Everyone's favourite pizza joint! Ad p16.

Gone...

Bistro Mekong – Closed its doors late August.

Martha's – After 17 years in the Crag, Martha's sadly had to move on, but they've only gone a peninsula away AND they still serve take-aways. • Brunch 9.30am – 11.30am Sat, Sun • Lunch 11.30am – 2.30am Wed to Sun • Dinner from 5.30am Wed to Sat. Ad p3.

Yang & Co – Closed but re-emerging in same venue mid-late September as:

The New:

Yang's Tacos & Ramen – • Lunch Friday & Saturday • Dinner Tues to Sat. Unusual combo but specialising in these two styles of 'comfort food'.

Jia Home Modern Chinese – • Lunch 11.30am to 2.30pm • Dinner 5:00pm to 8:00pm Wed to Sun • Dine in, take away & delivery Freshly-made dumplings and yummy Yum Cha at last!



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