



CASTLECRAG
PROGRESS
ASSOCIATION

THE CRAAG

A voice for the community since 1925

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No. 211

August 2021

OAM to Local Vexillographer A man whose passion became his profession. Page 6.

Our Heritage at Risk? ... on the sunnyside too. Page 7.

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...In its unspoiled grandeur Middle Harbour vies with the world-famous Riviera, Italian Lakes and Norwegian Fiords...

As we hurtle towards the Centenary of the Griffins in Castlecrag this November, it seems apt to share some of the Greater Sydney Development Association's promotional material of the time. There were posters promising Paradise on Earth, such as the one above, as well as brochures and two beautiful little black & white booklets – Castlecrag Album circa 1924 and Castlecrag Homes circa 1929, from where the above quote was taken. Sydney Living Museums has thankfully archived them digitally as part of its Caroline Simpson Library and Research Collection for all to access.

<http://collection.hht.net.au/fullRecord.jsp?recnoListAttr=recnoList&recno=13100>

<http://collection.hht.net.au/fullRecord.jsp?recno=7896>

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SHOP LOCALLY!

EMPLOY LOCALLY!



The Crag is the community magazine
of the Castlecrag Progress Association
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membership renewals to the
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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 We do not publish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
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advice in contributed articles or letters.
Readers should seek their own personal,
professional advice.*

From the Editor

The House that Bob Built

It's been a while since the last Crag. Production has been delayed because I have been pre-occupied with selling up my family home of over 70 years.

My deep connection to the suburb and Deans lineage extends back to before my birth, to the early 1920's when Uncle Edgar Deans, who had been employed by the Griffins in Melbourne, moved to Castlecrag with his wife Cappy, to take on the role of Secretary to the Greater Sydney Development Association. In the intervening years he convinced his parents to settle here, as well as two of his siblings with their growing families. Edgar bought land on Edinburgh road, and in this issue my cousin Kaaren tells the story of a fire she experienced when she was a young child.

My grandparents lived in The Bastion and Uncle Rawson bought the Griffin house in the Citadel, where my parents also lived in the 1940's. After the war they bought the block of land on Edinburgh Road and began to build a simple bungalow designed by local architect and friend, Chris Sorensen. Chris designed a number of homes in Castlecrag during the 40's and 50's, as well as the old squash courts in The Postern now being demolished. Bricks were not available after the war, so my father quarried the rock cliff at the front of the property to build the sandstone foundations whilst waiting for the bricks.

By the time I was born, our family home on the edge of the Northern Escarpment was complete. As I grew, the valley below became my playground and along with other local kids, we would spend our days exploring the caves and overhangs, scrambling up and down the rocks and creeks, spotting eels in the pool at the

mudflats and climbing our favourite trees. Like others whose childhood was immersed in nature, I developed a strong sense of what Indigenous people call Connection to Country.

Bob, my father, was able to die in the home he built 35 years before, which was a great comfort, as was the knowledge that we had accepted his invitation to build a floor on top of the single storey so that, with our support, Joyce could stay in her home and my growing family could move back to the family home.

As a child, I used to climb up through the portal (manhole) and balance on the roof beams across to the wooden gable, where there was a knothole and I was able to peer deep down into the valley and dream of building up. I gave birth to my second daughter in our new top storey and we lived as a family of three generations until my mother passed away in 2006.

In 2020 the house below us was sold and the new owner submitted a DA for demolition and rebuild. We were shocked at the mass of the new design, with its 5 metre wall coming right across and robbing us of most of our view down into the valley. We studied Council's Development Control Plan (DCP) and felt confident that the design was in breach of this instrument that is designed to control development, to protect rock ledges and uphold the principle of view sharing. Along with 14 other parties, we wrote letters of objection but sadly for us (and the Northern Escarpment) the Council Officer recommended approval, as did the planning panel. View sharing was not addressed. The DCP has no effect!

So, if you think your view (and sunlight) will be protected by the DCP or at least



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Presidents Report



My first duty is to report the sad passing of Dr John Steel, one of our most long standing and stalwart Committee members. John was a great friend to Castlecrag and to

the Committee members with whom he served. He will be greatly missed.

Meanwhile the COVID pandemic continues to dominate our lives. In April this year, CPA held its AGM, that had been held over from April last year, by Zoom. We had more than 40 members log in and Councillor Hugh Eriksson, acting as Returning Officer, declared the result of the ballot for Committee members that was conducted electronically in the 2 weeks prior to the meeting. The new Committee Members are listed on page 2.

Willoughby Council's 'Have Your Say' for a proposed park, informally referred to as 'Marion's Park', at the corner of The Postern and Edinburgh Rd, closed at the end of May. The idea of a park first emerged in the Local Centres Strategy and was reported by the Mayor in the last issue of this journal. The key issue of contention in the community has been the impact of the park on the availability of parking at the shops. The matter went to Council on Wednesday 12 July. The CPA Committee's position since mid-2020 has been one of overall

support for the park but with concerns and reservations about the loss of the car parking. There are many older residents who value those parking spots highly. Council adopted the Plan for the park but deferred implementation subject to a suitable solution to the parking problem.

The Quadrangle development is still moving forward. Dr Quek told me personally of his resolve to deliver Richard Francis Jones' winning design for the site within the 3 storey limit imposed by Council's Local Centres Strategy. He acknowledged that recent results from sales at 3 The Postern had shifted the economics favourably but that there remained a number of challenges to be dealt with and that he would need community support to bring the project to reality. Willoughby Council has indicated that they are expecting a revised Planning Proposal from Dr Quek in the near future.

Meanwhile, the Council elections, having already been delayed by a year because of COVID, will not now take place until 4 December. CPA will be participating in a 'Meet the Candidates' meeting, being organised by Rachel Hill of Northbridge PA. Since nominations do not close until October, I am not presently able to advise when this meeting will take place. If you would like to take part, please send an email to info@castlecrag.org.au and I will make sure to let you know when it's going to happen and whether it is to be live or by Zoom.

Last year we wrote to Council seeking a reduction in speed limits within Castlecrag. The response was disappointing. With Sydney's lockdown set to continue for a while yet, we decided at our last Committee meeting to raise the matter again and ask Council to engage with the community on the issue.

Paul Stokes

Notice of CPA General Meeting

Wednesday, 15 September 2021 7:30 pm

Guest Speaker: Dr Anne Watson

Curator Paradise on Earth Exhibition, Museum of Sydney.

Anne will speak about mounting the recent exhibition and relay stories of Marion Mahony Griffin in Castlecrag | *Likely to be held by Zoom – send an email for the link if you'd like to attend but not on the President's email list. Alternatively, the meeting will be at Castlecrag Community Centre.*

Butcherbird on height pole overlooking our Northern Escarpment view



Continued from page 2

shared, think again! I can't live with a brick wall and a massive house separating me from the valley I love so much, so this is the end of the long family line living in the Crag. Contributing to the community has been a family commitment for almost a century. I will continue on as Editor until a new one is found and there's a lot of tidying up of archives and more local histories to write, not to mention an event to organise that celebrates the Centenary this November!

It seems you can take the woman out of Castlecrag, but you can't take Castlecrag out of the woman!

Lindy Jane Deans Batterham



From the Mayor



Despite the impact of COVID-19, Council has adapted to a rapidly changing environment and I'm delighted to say that we have presented a well-balanced budget,

continuing its commitment to serve the community through new initiatives in response to COVID-19 as well as delivering on all our planned projects and initiatives.

The Willoughby Local Centres Strategy 2036's aim is to promote a network of thriving, attractive and distinctive village centres throughout the Council area. It provides the framework for future planning controls and public domain improvements for eight local centres and will prepare them for growth and renewal over the next 20 years.

Council's endorsement of the Local Centres Strategy followed a long and considered public engagement process which began in February 2017. Position Statements were exhibited for a group of local centres including Castlecrag and these were published for community

input community consultation. Later that year, the community were invited to discuss more detailed planning concepts with Council and provide input into the design of our Local centres – again including Castlecrag. Feedback from this stage of engagement was used in refinement of a single scenario for each local centre which was taken to the community again in early 2019 and promoted widely through a range of channels. Following feedback, Council endorsed the Local Centres Strategy with some amendments in Dec 2019 with a final Strategy being published on Council's website in June 2020.

A Planning Proposal seeking to increase the height and floorspace ratio for the Quadrangle site in Castlecrag was lodged by the proponent Greycliff in June 2020. The proponent provided a concept development to demonstrate their intentions should the planning proposal be successful. This concept, although the winner of a proponent organised design competition was not the subject the planning proposal which was solely assessing height and floor space of the site. This scheme was greater in height and FSR than proposed in the

endorsed in the Strategy.

Officers sought to obtain amendments to the scheme in ensuing months to align it with the Strategy but without success. The Planning Proposal was reported to Council with a recommendation it not be supported for progress to state government for gateway approval as it did not demonstrate sufficient strategic merit. The proponents challenged Council's decision and the matter was heard by the Sydney North Planning Panel (SNPP) on 14 April 2021. The Panel supported the Council's view that the proposal did not demonstrate sufficient strategic merit and should not be allowed to proceed. If a new Planning Proposal were to be submitted, it would need to show alignment with the Local Centres Strategy for Council to be in a position to support it. Council's budget guides the Operations Plan which outlines a range of projects and improvements to support the community over the next twelve months.

Castlecrag specific projects include connectivity and interpretive signs for Castlecrag Reserve and a stormwater upgrade at Sugar Loaf Crescent. Other highlights include the implementation of a public domain masterplan for Artarmon local centre, design and



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Try These Options to Landfill

The old idiom, “One man’s trash is another man’s treasure”, is never more relevant than in today’s throw-out society. In addition to the numerous sites that Willoughby Council has established for residents wishing to discard or recycle their belongings, several enterprising and community-minded individuals and organisations have sprung up. These offer to take a range of “stuff”, from baby clothes and toys to furniture, mattresses, electrical goods and household and outdoor appliances.

Some of these are charities, others, not-for-profit. Their services couldn’t be easier in most cases, with free pick-up from private homes at their occupants’ convenience. Callers to Arnie’s Recon (see below) will find that they can even organise a community pick-up of electrical goods discarded by friends and neighbours living in the same suburb. These goods would otherwise be collected in Council clean-ups – much of it consigned to landfill. Instead, most finish up being processed for repair and re-use or recycled for sale or donation. Still more – mostly e-waste products such as phones, computers, internet accessories, amplifiers, televisions, radios, video and CD players – are stripped of valuable components for installation in new, re-assembled working products.

The recycling phenomenon aims to reduce waste, preserve dwindling resources and assist less fortunate people. But it also addresses one of the issues of our time – the accumulation and disposal of waste.

Sydney has three major landfill sites – two which are for putrescible (or organic) and one, at Eastern Creek for non-organic. Any visitor to the latter will testify to its daunting and repulsive magnitude. Scattering flocks of ibis and other scavengers, bulldozers are constantly on the move distributing mounds of material around a site which resembles the sort of giant, open-cut mine one might encounter in the Hunter Valley or the Pilbara. Clean fill is then added on top of the rubbish before another section of the hole begins to be filled. Willoughby Council’s general waste is transported by rail to the Woodlawn Eco-Project facility, 250kms south of Sydney near Goulburn.

It is estimated that every year, each resident of Sydney generates two tonnes of waste. Sydney is currently producing waste at a rate six times our population growth rate. Such sobering statistics indicate the scale of the waste disposal problem unless its creators take responsibility. Manufacturers are now under pressure to reduce packaging, compact waste and use recycled materials in their products. But consumers can do their bit too.

In addition to the recycling sites on the Willoughby Council website, The Crag has composed the following list which it invites residents to consider the next time a council clean-up falls due.

<https://www.arniesrecon.com>

Arnie’s Recon is run by Kingsgrove couple, Lisa and Adrian who offer a free pick-up or drop-off (after COVID lockdowns are lifted) of electronics and appliances. These are then repaired and

offered for re-use or stripped for parts and recycled for scrap.

<https://bower.org.au>

This Marrickville-based organisation (shortly to relocate to bigger premises at Summer Hill) has been operating for 23 years. The volunteer staff welcome donations of furniture, electrical good and appliances and bicycles which they repair – sometimes with recycled spare parts – for re-use.

Facebook – Lower North Shore Sydney, Free Stuff and Low Waste Living

<https://www.generousandgrateful.com.au>

Helping “furnish homes for survivors to thrive” is the motto of Generous And Grateful which focuses on beds, household appliances and furniture. These are provided to people in assisted housing to help them resume a normal life after domestic dislocation.

<https://softlanding.com.au>

This operation provides employment for people who might otherwise find it hard to secure a job by collecting and recycling discarded mattresses. These are stripped of their timber bases and frames, steel springs and foam – all of which are recycled as mulch, metal products and carpet underlay.

<https://www.curbythebilby.com.au/coffeecapsules/>

Do you consume aluminum coffee pods? Join the pilot program with Willoughby Council to stop them going to landfill. Every little bit helps.

Craig McCarthy

Continued from page 4.

construction of affordable housing units at Northbridge, developing more vibrant and usable laneways in Chatswood, upgrades to the Dougherty Community Centre, and the concept designs for the Gore Hill Indoor Recreation facility (\$2.5m). After a number of years of consultation and research, we will finalise a new Local Environment Plan to guide planning and development within the City of Willoughby. Please get in touch if you have any questions or comments: Gail.Giles-Gidney@Willoughby.nsw.gov.au



Notes

OAM for local Vexillographer.

Congratulations to John Christian Vaughan who was recognised in The Queen's Birthday 2021 Honours List for service to vexillography and history preservation. John coined the name for his profession during an interview with the North Shore Times in 1976. Vexillography, the study and art of flag designing, was added to the Macquarie Dictionary in 2013. Some of the flags John has designed include for Willoughby City, Greater Sydney, Lord Howe Island and the Australian Christmas Flag.

You have most likely seen John's many flags flying from the pole in the garden of his home in Sunnyside Crescent. His collection exceeds 5000, which he has been collecting since childhood. Now there's a life-long passion!



Wallaby dreaming.

You can't keep this eager Septuagenarian down! James Cryer has been on his bike again during the recent lockdown, and look what he's discovered. A wallaby in the middle of the peninsula! Just like the ones some of us are lucky enough to find in our backyards. Cosmic!



Castlecrag PO open Saturdays.

Due to the COVID restrictions last year, the PO closed on Saturdays for a short period, but once restrictions lifted, it opened each Saturday, from 9.30am to 1 pm, due to very strong demand from the local community. The PO had to close on Saturdays again during the recent lockdown, but as soon as it's over they'll be back again.

With the dramatic curtailing of local banking facilities, branches and ATMs in recent times, Castlecrag Post Shop is experiencing unusually heavy demand for their banking and related services, and Saturday seems an especially popular day. They also are Western Union approved agents for Money Transfers and receipt. Post Office staff are also trained and authorised to conduct and verify the "100 point

ID checks" required by a number of organisations - the ATO, several banks, Land Titles Office, National Police Checks etc. As well all Australian Passports applications and renewals, and they take approved Passport Office ID photos.

The large bank of 508 Post Office boxes, accessible 24/7 in the secure car parking area of the Quadrangle Shopping Centre are proving more and more essential, in this era of online shopping. And the expanded range of greetings cards, board games, general stationery and adult and children's gifts and electronic accessories etc are also popular. Jason and Leanne and staff thank you for shopping locally in Castlecrag.

Castlecrag Winter Appeal

Every year, the Castlecrag community sends winter donations to the Wayside Chapel at Kings Cross, which assists the homeless, rough sleepers, and others on the margins of society. There is high demand for donations of blankets, sleeping bags and warm clothing.

This year The Crag #211 was not published in time to advertise the appeal so the word was put out on the new Crag community facebook page.

Donations flowed in to Peter and Lorraine's carport in The Bulwark over 6 days in June. On the 7th day they delivered two giant Ute-loads of warm blankets, sleeping bags, jackets, jumpers, beanies and scarves, as well as some toiletries, and plenty of shoes and "sox and jocks" to the Wayside Chapel.

After the delivery, Lorraine reported "These were warmly received. Thank you to all who generously dropped off donations. They will be put to very good use."

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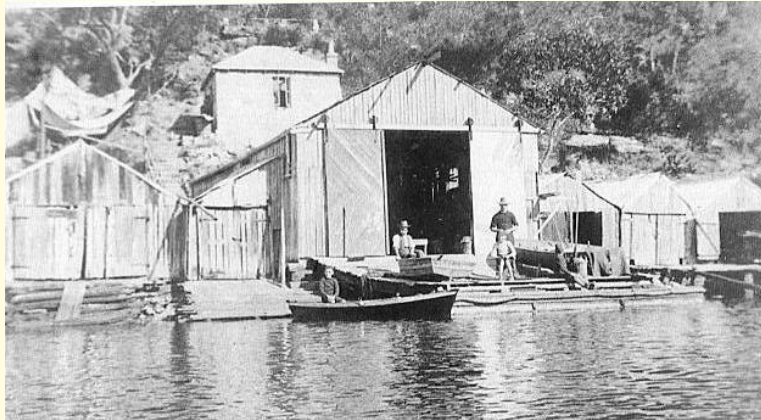
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Our Heritage at Risk. Who Cares?



By the early 1900's, a community had been established on the foreshore of Sugarloaf Bay below the Northern Escarpment, with water-access only. Unauthorised boat sheds were erected around FA Horsley's boat-building business below Stoker Park and fishermen's cottages dotted the foreshore, some of which have been restored and are still lived in today.

In 1916, further around the bay at Torquay Point, at the very end of Edinburgh Road, Willoughby's first wharf was opened, jointly funded by Willoughby Council and the owner of the Torquay Estate. A twice weekly motor-boat service transported passengers to the Spit, where one could catch a tram up to Spit Junction to collect mail and do the shopping. Edinburgh road was just a winding track where horse and carts transported goods.

In November 1921 the Greater Sydney Development Company opened its office in Edinburgh road, where the Quadrangle now sits, with the grand plan of developing housing blocks across the three peninsulas we now know as Castlecrag, Middle Cove and Castle Cove. The grand plan didn't eventuate for many reasons, but over the following decades, the Griffin Estate in Castlecrag came to life and it is largely this legacy, along with its natural beauty, that makes the suburb so special.

The Sunnyside Estate also possesses some heritage gems, yet none of these homes are on the register. All too often it's not until demolition has been approved that the built or cultural heritage value of a property is recognised. One such home that has recently been approved for demolition in Sunnyside was the site of the first school on the



peninsula. Long term resident of Charles Street, Allan Porter took the thoughtful initiative to ask WCC to include in its conditions for demolition a requirement that the house be photographed internally and externally before the wrecking ball hits. Council agreed to this and Allan shares the story of this special house.

Further east on the elbow of Sunnyside Crescent near Edinburgh road, another demolition is about to commence. The "House on the Cliff" at 97 was designed and built by Robert Maclurcan in the early 1950's for his family. It sits on a stunning double block with views right down the valley to the bay and across to Sugarloaf. Although the house is now in a dilapidated state, in its day it drew a lot of attention. A full page feature article on the house was published in the SMH's Today's Living supplement in September, 1953. It was a wonderful

Above left Horsley's Boatshed on Sugarloaf Bay early 1900s. *Top right* Edinburgh Road (Photographer Rita Kaye, 1940s), *Followed by* Edgar & Cappy at Torquay Point (Photographer Hermann Junge c1930, Walter Burley Griffin Society)

example of 1950's architecture with its glass front, high skillion roof and a wooden cantilever balcony jutting out over the cliff. <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/page/1063914?#>

It is no simple task to nominate something for heritage listing with Council, although anyone is eligible to do so. There is a suggestion that the façade of the shops on the northern side of Edinburgh Road, with its black tiles and pressed tin roof should be preserved, but unless there is a sympathetic developer, the remaining original shop fronts will probably go in the next few years. Unless someone has some spare time on their hands to pursue a local heritage listing.

The Kingdom of Love.

A Development Application for demolition of an old property in Castlecrag has raised local interest about its unique history. The DA for 57 Sunnyside Crescent seeks to build a new dwelling on the site.

Application for the construction of the existing dwelling was made by Walter Trinick on March 31, 1927, a time when Sunnyside Crescent itself was new and when the few people who lived in what was to become Castlecrag knew each other on first name terms.

The home is faced in dark manganese brick with a three-ring arch of contrasting bricks. A canopy of broad leaf trees set the house apart from neighbouring homes that came much later.

Walter Trinick was the Sydney manager of Melbourne's Argus newspaper. He was a Melbourne boy keen to explore what he refers to as the maze of Sydney. Every Saturday somewhere in the metropolitan area there would be an auction sale of land and Walter was attracted by the idea that the vendors would provide free transport to the locations and an afternoon tea. One of his adventures took him to the sale of land on the Sunnyside Estate on the Farmer's Wireless Station property (the



early transmitting base for Farmer's Corporation radio station 2FC).

Buying an allotment had not entered his head. However, at the auction in the city at a later date Walter ended up as a successful bidder noting that –

'Mine was the only voice and to my consternation it was knocked down to me. I protested that it was an accident ... So keen were the auctioneers to make a sale that they insisted and offered to

take the only money I had with me 2/6 or 25 cents. The total cost would be \$500 for which I would have to find \$5 per month ... It was the first thing I'd ever owned in my life ... Every available weekend I would find myself heading that way just to enjoy and contemplate it ... to get there meant a train ride from Campsie to Sydney, a ferry trip across the harbour to Milson's Point, a tram to Willoughby then a two-mile walk to the site.'



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Located in Castlecrag Quadrangle shopping village



Design and building of the home became a family affair. Walter's fiancé, Dorothy, had a cousin who was starting out on an architectural career and with Walter's father they were both instrumental in bringing forth ideas and plans which were to include jarrah floors and leadlight windows.

The building program became the catalyst for Walter's parents to move to Sydney – his father, a carpenter, essential in the works. In the meantime – *'Luckily an artist friend who was living in an unusual type of house in the bush had decided to move out to a farm property so we took over and my parents & I lived there until our home was completed and Dot and I were married'*

Walter and 'Dot' were married on September 27, 1927 in Melbourne.

They both passionately embraced the beauty of the area, their new home and people who became their friends

including Walter & Marion Griffin. The Trinick's noted, 'We were home. What more appropriate name for it than The Kingdom of Love'. The name was chosen from the poem of the same name by Ella Wheeler Wilcox. The poem expresses that in continuous searching for the 'kingdom of love', ultimately 'home' is found to be the kingdom of love. Kol was quickly adopted as the abbreviated name and it wasn't until much later that an explanation of the name was made known.

On Marion's return to Australia after her husband's death in India in 1937, Walter T took Marion on a drive to Canberra. It was perhaps one of the most emotionally endearing exercises for Marion to experience as Walter introduced her to people who praised the Griffin's work and the abounding appreciation of what was being achieved.

The Kol and the Ivanhoe School

Dorothy was a teacher and opened

a school in the new house in 1929 named Ivanhoe after the Melbourne suburb where she lived before her marriage. It received certification by Department of Education stating that ... *'the school in Sunnyside Crescent, Willoughby satisfies the requirements for the education of children to the age of ten.'*

In addition to the 'three R's', the school's curriculum included riding the family horses, milking the family cows (Daisy & Buttercup), dancing Madame Bodenwieser style and

participating in Greek plays. The plays were generally directed by Marion Griffin and included family members in the cast. They were performed before audiences of local people in the area now known as the Haven Amphitheatre.

The school commenced with an enrolment of five pupils with employment of an additional teacher when enrolments increased and operated until 1933 when other premises were found. Among the local children who attended the School, were Dr Edward Rivett's two sons, Ronald and Howard.

The development of the site on which the Kol stands was approved by Council in late May. A condition of the approval is that a photographic survey is to be lodged with the Council for its historical archives. The photographic survey is to include a layout plan of the existing building and site with photographs of the interior and exterior including architectural and decorative features.

Although the family sold the Kol many years ago, Trinick descendants still live locally today. Walter and Dorothy's daughter Annette returned when she married Mac Robertson in 1952. They had three children, two of whom have retained the family ties with the Crag. Annette passed away in 2015 (The Crag #195) whilst Mac passed only recently. His Obit appears on page 11.

This page Aerial view of KOL house, Sunnyside Cres & Charles St c.1930s Page 8 KOL house 57 Sunnyside

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**Demystifying
Data for
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Obituaries

John Steel

29 August 1942-5 March 2021



**Dr. John Winston Steel, B.Sc.
(Hons) Ph.D.**

Dr John Steel graduated B. Sc. with honours from the University of Nottingham, School of Agriculture in 1964 and obtained a Ph. D. from the University of New England, Armidale in 1971.

His major research activities included the pathophysiology of gastrointestinal parasites, interactions of nutrition with parasitism and the pharmacokinetics of anti-parasitic drugs in ruminants. John was appointed as a Research Scientist at CSIRO to the Division of Animal Health's McMaster Laboratory in 1969.

He was made Manager of the Division's research program on Control of Parasitic Infections in 1987 and was made Head of McMaster Laboratory in 1989. He was also made Assistant Chief of the Division in 1990.

ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING 12 APRIL 2021 | 7.1 MAYORAL MINUTE – PASSING OF DR JOHN STEEL

PURPOSE OF REPORT To report on the passing of Dr John Steel and to convey Council's condolences to his family.

DISCUSSION It is with much sadness that I advise of the passing of Dr John Steel on 5 March 2021. Dr Steel was involved in many areas of our community over many years - especially the Castlecrag Progress Association, the Haven and Bushcare. He served as Vice-President of the Castlecrag Progress Association from 1998 and then became President from 2004-2007. In 2013 John again took on the position of Vice President which he served dutifully until his recent death. John was an active committee member, serving in executive roles and often providing "the voice of reason" to many local issues. He also found time to act as Assistant Editor, Advertisement Manager and Deliverer for The Crag. John was a keen photographer and documented many local events, including the Fairs.

He was an advocate for The Haven, working with interested community groups to create a consensus. He was a great supporter of the preservation of our natural and built heritage. As a Founding Member of the Oriel Bushcare Group, he had a strong interest in environmental sustainability and acted as a Co-ordinator in many local bushcare projects. He welcomed new members to the group, sharing his knowledge and often provided morning tea.

For over twenty years, John made an enormous contribution to the community he loved. He was a man of intellect, integrity and enthusiasm and will be greatly missed.

MOTION That Council note the passing of Dr John Steel and write a letter of condolence to the family.

MOVED COUNCILLOR GILES-GIDNEY

CARRIED The Motion on being put to the meeting was CARRIED to become the resolution of Council. Voting For the Motion: Unanimous



For John Steel – Our Own Superman

We miss this man of Steel, this man so true, who served the Crag on CPA for more than twenty years.

With calm and clarity of mind he kept us all on reason's path and earned our deep respect. His voice was soft, his manner kind and gentle.

Never heard from him was rais'ed voice but all would hear his words and listen with respect. And ever was he stalwart, loyal, and fair.

He was a friend to those he knew, and gave to others of himself and in return was loved. He was our friend our guide, and counsel wise. We loved this man of York, as he loved us.

With open mind and wit and charm and twinkle in his eye, a hint of mischief often time would clear away confusion, to let us see the truth he saw, and so bring resolution.

This man of Steel was brave and strong, and like a compass kept us to the right direction. That compass now has gone and left a hole within our hearts and souls, just memories to console.

He liked a drop of fine red wine, and oft would share a glass with us, and when tomorrow, problems find, we'll drink to him and ask ourselves, "Well, What would John do now?"

In final days he did it tough but held to those he loved, and we, and family, did give to him the same. And when at last his time had come, we drew some comfort, that he did not pass alone.

Vale, John Winston Steel.

Paul Stokes

**Alexander McNeilage
("Mac") Robertson
4 May 1926 - 23 March 2021**



Dad fell in love with Castlecrag when Edinburgh Road was nothing more than a winding dirt track. He married Annette Trinick in 1952 and together they moved into a small shack at 359 Edinburgh Road, the home of Annette's grandmother, Agnes Trinick. Dad's idyllic descriptions

of this time in Castlecrag include tales of boating from the wharf below the house and walking or biking through the bush. Less idyllic was the fact that there was no electricity or gas so that all cooking had to be done over an open fire and, in the same way, water had to be heated for washing.

Annette's parents Walter and Dot Trinick, who lived at the KOL in Sunnyside Crescent and were friends of Marion and Walter Burley Griffin, gave Mac and Annette land further up Edinburgh Road as a wedding present. On this land, with the help of a carpenter and the occasional contracted tradesman, Dad built the home that was to be our family home for the next 67 years.

Dad was born in Lithgow, and moved to Sydney when he was just 17. He worked in a Laboratory for Vulcan Oil while studying engineering. He happily escaped engineering by joining the Air Force in 1944. Here he hoped to learn to fly, but as his Leaving Certificate included French, he was diverted into the Air Force's linguistics course. On passing his Japanese studies, he was stationed, as a translator, near the

Straits of Shimonoseki. While there, he swapped his alcohol and cigarette ration for money which he spent on Japanese scrolls. On returning to Sydney, Dad began an economics degree at Sydney Uni where he met my mother.

Dad started a business selling books to secondary schools while keeping up multiple activities outside work, like running, bushwalking and in his later years, bowling. He was an Elder in the Presbyterian and then the Uniting Church, and a Rotarian. He and Mum were long term subscribers to the Sydney Symphony, Sydney Theatre Company, and the Australian Opera. Two weeks before his death, Dad enjoyed a performance of Tosca.

Dad loved travelling and, notably, joined a dig in Pella, celebrated his 70th birthday at Everest Base Camp, and finally, aged 86, went to Antarctica. But of all the places in the world, for Dad, there was no place as wonderful as Castlecrag.

Fiona Burman.

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Toni Lynne Foster (7 Dec 1951 to 3 Feb 2021)



Castlecrag lost one of its more social and courageous residents when Toni died on 3 Feb 2021 after many weeks in hospital. Over 100 friends, relatives and neighbours attended the Funeral Service and her family (husband Terry and children, Sophie and Hugh) appreciated the many tributes and words of consolation.

A country girl, born in Dubbo, she grew up in Narromine where her parents ran a fuel and farm machinery business, Toni moved to Sydney

after high school initially attending the Conservatorium of Music before switching to a Social Work degree at Sydney University. After working in Community Health she felt that social work was a bandaid on the tattered body of society and the real ability to affect social outcomes came from the Law.

After marrying Terry, having twins and going overseas to Belgium for a couple of years the family returned to Sydney and Toni commenced a law degree at UTS graduating in 1990 with Honours and prizes in family law and evidence. Toni worked for a major firm in the city then joined Klinger & Associates (in Chatswood) handling mainly family law matters. Toni eventually set up her own firm Foster Associates which quickly grew and was highly successful. She relished taking on the bigger firms and winning favourable results for her many clients.

Toni and family moved to Castlecrag in October 2001 from Middle Cove. Toni enjoyed walking her dog, Billie, up the road and having a coffee with the locals and providing comment, advice, support and if she disagreed argument. She appreciated that Castlecrag is occupied by interesting and (mostly) wonderful people ... and their dogs. It differs from most other suburbs in that

it has more people who are independent and creative, either artistically or commercially, as well as more coffee machines. Apart from supporting the local retailers and coffee shops, Toni's lasting contribution to Castlecrag was her participation and advocacy in the campaign to stop construction of a long and steep driveway to a nearby property. The inclinator which was eventually installed has a much smaller footprint, disturbs less vegetation and is much less intrusive to the 3 neighbouring properties than a driveway would have been.

After worsening health issues due to an autoimmune condition, Toni eventually received a liver transplant in July 2009. Without this generous donation Toni would have died in 2009. Subsequently Toni did less work and more travel both within Australia and overseas, particularly after Terry retired in September 2011. Many people do not realize that to the recipient a transplant is a gift of life. Sure, the transplant involves taking immunosuppressants and other problems and complications which eventually snowball and can overwhelm the recipient. But it gave Toni many good years of life and for those extra years her family will be eternally grateful to the donor and their family.

Terry Weisner



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Solidarity on the 203.

A copy of this story was recently found in a bottom drawer.

A bus is about to leave from the Wynyard terminus for Castlecrag. Passengers have been steadily filling up while the driver and the conductress have been having a cup of tea in the inspector's offices. The bus conductress is a stern woman who counts the standing passengers to find that there is one too many and the bus is in breach of regulations.

Someone will have to get off. No action. Passengers look at their feet in silence. Come on. The last person to get on the bus will have to get off. We're not leaving until that person gets off. Still no action. We'll see if the driver can shift you. She goes to the driver for assistance.

Whoever got on last will they kindly get off the bus. Still no action.

Conductress plays her trump card. She and the driver both leave the bus. We'll get the Inspector. Meantime a new arrival at the bus terminus asks one of the passengers. Is this bus going to Castlecrag? Yes, says one of the passengers. The Inspector arrives presently and uses his gruffest tone. I must ask the last person to get on the bus to get off right away. Naturally the new arrival looking sheepish gets off. The driver and conductress settle back on board. Just before the bus takes off the conductress is aware of a growing level of tittering coming from the passengers. When it becomes obvious,

the conductress in high dudgeon storms off. I am not going to be made a fool of by you people.

She reports to the Inspector and after some time a replacement conductor emerges from the office. Oblivious to the controversy, the new conductor boards the bus and is all set to take off when he sees the poor fellow who had to get off, standing forlornly at the kerbside.

Going to Castlecrag? Yes, he replies. Jump on mate. And the bus leaves.

Anon circa 1960's.

Thanks to Wayne Davies

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Community Gardens

On the heels of a wettish summer, came a dryish autumn and now a coldish winter rules. After removing spent warmer climate crops like tomato and cucumber vines, enriching soils and re-planting, natural magic takes over ... it might be garlic bulbs sprouting, broad beans putting on a growth spurt or pea tendrils clinging tightly as they flower and form pods. Along with the magic of growing produce, community gardens are about the magic of relationships - working together to make communities better and stronger.

Warner's Park

Gardeners at Warner's Park include three Castlecrag families, two with young children. There's something very enchanting about children proudly presenting a pumpkin discovered amongst a tangle of foliage.

As anticipated the yellow tamarillo tree delivered its bounty. Summer harvests lingered in the warm autumn spell ... lots of cucamelon, cucumbers, winged beans, lettuces, cherry tomatoes, cavalo nero, tatsoi and cherry guava. Cooler season plantings now growing include snow peas, broccolini, coriander, spring onions, garlic, pak choi, cabbage, sorrel and daikon.

Of particular delight was the discovery of a symbiotic relationship between the beehives of one of the community garden's neighbours and the community garden. The bees have been happy recipients of garden pollen coincidentally pollinating the garden's flowers. Hive owners, Luke and Catherine, generously acknowledged this relationship by gifting jars of honey to Warner's gardeners. Community weaving some of its best magic.

On 19 June Warner's community



Warner's Park Community Centre officially opens.

The former Northbridge Bowling Club has been transformed into a community venue for local Willoughby residents. Works to upgrade the ground floor of the building into a multipurpose community space including a large auditorium plus a smaller meeting room, commercial kitchen, storage and accessible toilets are now complete and are available for hire.



gardeners took up the chance for exposure and fundraising by holding a stall at the Open Day for the freshly refurbished former Northbridge bowling club ... now Warner's Park Community Centre. Fuller report in separate article.

Meetings are held on Wednesday and Sunday mornings from 10am. For more information contact Hilary on 0414502771.

Left Local gardeners receiving honey. From top Mayor congratulating gardeners, Gardeners standing under the yellow tamarillo canopy, A colourful harvest, Presenting the butternut pumpkin.

Market Garden Park

As summer crops gave way, lettuces, tatsoi and rainbow chard lingered with the last of the lemons and limes. Sprawling pumpkins were lost and found enough times to have gardeners thinking dark magic.



Above Pumpkins. Below Sugar snap peas.

Recently there have been special harvests of peanuts, turmeric and purple sweet potato. White skinned, purple-patterned-flesh sweet potato is not only high in fibre but contains the healthy anti-oxidant beta-carotene. Seeds saved from last year's amazing sugar snaps were shared and sowed ... emerging pods can be spellbinding. Leafy broad bean growth has gardeners on alert with



white oil for pesky aphids. Beetroots and carrots are bedded in, as are garlic, leeks, broccolini, spring onions and sorrel.

On 1 May Market Garden Park participated in community building via the postponed Edible Gardens Trail, the original weekend in March having been deluged out. Later that month sixteen curious little people from Mowbray Place Early Learning Centre toured the garden.

The pictured compost harvesters Maggie and Bronwyn (right), both Crag residents, are extracting an inaugural compost from the new aerobin. Their hocus pocus brew will not take dairy, meat, bones, plastic bags or too much citrus.

Mary Anne Veliscek



Above A satisfying play in the sweet potato dirt for Jutta and Christian. Young visitors from Mowbray Place Early Learning Centre. Below Maggie and Bronwyn

Meetings are held every Wednesday and Saturday morning from 9.30am. For more information visit mgpcommunitygarden.com or email Janet on janetfrance753@gmail.com



A Brilliant Idea - Congratulations!

Market Garden Park Community Garden recently received a grant of \$4,000 from WCC to raise some garden beds making the garden more accessible for people with mobility restrictions, including wheelchair users. The raised beds have been designed by Crag resident and structural engineer, David Carolan. They will offer 2 raised 'pods' where gardeners can stand or be seated as they work in the soil. Incorporating wicking beds for water saving purposes, the project addresses a number of goals including access, inclusion, sustainability, social connection and healthy lifestyles. The gardens are already clearly appreciated by the neighbours, judging by a recent message left.



Fire! Fire! Fire!

A Childhood Memory from Kaaren Whyte nee Deans –

'I would have been 6 ½ years old.'

Our family had moved into our new house, 170 Edinburgh Rd, in about October 1938. The 17th of January 1939 was Margo's 1st birthday and a very hot day. First exciting thing was a box delivered to the front door. It contained an Ice Cream Birthday Cake packed in Dry Ice. I think Joyce had something to do with arranging this as she worked for Peters at some stage. I don't know if she was actually there that day or not. This wonderful thing was put downstairs in the bath, considered the coolest place in the house.

The day got hotter with a very strong West wind blowing. We would have stayed indoors – doors and windows shut. After lunch, Dad (Edgar) left in our car to drive up to Gordon to pick up his sister Ida Haynes and family, so they could join the Birthday Celebration.

When they all arrived back, Dad was appalled to see fire raging in the bush opposite our house (no other houses there then), close to the road and well fanned by the West wind. He rang Willoughby Fire Brigade to be told they



were already attending that fire. Dad could see no sign of them, went looking and found them down in Sunnyside Crescent. This was where the fire had started. Dad had to persuade them that they would be more effective up on Edinburgh Rd, where the fire was advancing. By this time, women and children had been hurried out and taken up to the Guyatt house on Edinburgh Rd – Parapet corner. I remember standing by the road there, looking back at the smoke and feeling very frightened. I would have been standing just about where Auntie Joyce's Memorial Seat is now.

The Brigade, helped by locals, kept the fire away from our house, but it did cross the road, and it burnt through a lot of

bush to the north and beside our block, going down The Battlement and across towards the Citadel (Fishwick) house. I know I was worried about that house, which was unoccupied at the time. I have a memory that someone told me that there was no real damage to the house but that the glass in some of the windows was cracked because of the heat. I don't know whether the fire was stopped by firefighters or by the weather changing. A good "southerly buster" would have helped!

Later in the day, we all went home. There, waiting in its box in the bath was the Birthday Cake – good as gold with "Dry Ice" protection! There was also a sick fireman lying on our couch – probably overcome by smoke.

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