



CASTLECRAG
PROGRESS
ASSOCIATION

THE CRAG

A voice for the community since 1925

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Shakespeare. Winter Solstice. The Haven. The Griffin Legacy

Beginning with a dawn performance of Romeo & Juliet. Story p7

Community and Council working together to preserve. Story p8

People flock to pop-up gallery shop



Crag Arts Pop-up Gallery / Photo: Debra Player

CastleCrag has a long history and connection with the arts and has been a well-known and respected art enclave. In recent years this connection with the arts has not been as evident.

The Crag Community Facebook page, founded by Hugh Stowe, Stuart Frith and Matthew Keighery, has been instrumental in starting conversations about local issues and encouraging community involvement. It was one of these conversation starters that led to the callout for a Local Arts Co-ordinator. While there was no response to fill such a role, it did prompt Debra Player to contact Hugh with her idea of a Pop-Up Shop for local artists.

Hugh liaised with Quadrangle owner Dr. Quek to see if he would be in a position to support local artists. A huge champion of the arts, Dr. Quek was delighted to assist. A site was secured, Debra engaged in a Tenancy Agreement and on March 18 a callout to local artists/artisans/hobbyists

was made to see if anyone was interested in joining a Pop-Up Gallery shop to sell their art for a modest fee to cover costs.

The name Crag Arts, logo and communication tiles were developed together with exhibitors, Kate Clarkson graphic designer and her sister, media specialist Joanne Horsley.

Crag Arts Gallery Shop opened on April 26th and featured nearly 30 local participants selling their handmade works ranging from artisan sourdough bread, soap, delicate original knitwear, jewellery, whittled spoons, baskets, digital photography, glass fusion sculptures, stained glass windows, pottery, an illustrated children's book and of course paintings.

A number of these participants have been students of the nearby Willoughby Arts Centre, one of the oldest independent art centres in Australia. The expertise includes professional artists, hobbyists

and everything in between, with most members of the group holding full time jobs. All the items are made with love - because this is what people love to make in their spare time.

Locals enjoyed stopping by the beautifully presented Crag Arts Gallery shop. Visitors in the first week had seen the promotion on social media, including Facebook and Instagram. Word of mouth also generated visitors as family members and regular walkers shared the news about the "Pop-Up".

Local shops and restaurants benefited from the Crag Arts shop with all exhibitors extending invitations to family and friends outside the area to visit. Many lunches, coffees and purchases were made by visitors and exhibitors alike.

The Crag Arts Gallery Pop-Up shop was a resounding success in terms of community involvement, reinvigoration of the arts in the Crag and support for local artists, including full payment for their many sales.

Let's hope it is the beginning of things to come. There is talk Crag Arts will return at Christmas time.

Debra Player



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THINK LOCALLY!

SHOP LOCALLY!

EMPLOY LOCALLY!

THE CRAG

is the community magazine of the
Castlecrag Progress Association Inc.

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We welcome letters and contributions
from residents about local issues.

Send to: editors@castlecrag.org.au

Letters should be concise (preferably less
than 250 words).

Editorial guidelines are on the web page.

Disclaimer: The CPA and *The Crag* is not
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From the Editor

It was wonderful to see some of our local artists come out of their studios to exhibit their works at the Quadrangle. Let's hope it can happen again before the demolition. Wouldn't it be better to have a space filled with life and creativity than empty and unproductive? Admittedly, I'm not on top of the economics of it but it seems like a good idea to me!

CPA has recently re-published the historic book *Castlecrag* that was created by local artists last century. We are proud of our achievement and hope you will be interested to buy a copy. Details opposite.

This issue we are giving some space to our new Councillors to help you become more familiar with them and their priorities on Council.

The recent event at the Haven was a memorable occasion, and the beginning of a new lease of life for our precious amphitheatre. Neighbours came together to chat, picnic and listen to the sublime

music especially created by Oli Chang as a tribute to Marion. A couple of actors in the audience were very inspired by the space and the opportunities it posed for their style of performing. Council was approached, which is keen to see the Haven used again, and as a result, as you will read, we have a special treat in store around the time of the winter solstice. Rug up and bring your cushions and blankets with you.

The story *Harry and the Shops* last issue triggered memories for some readers, including from the cheeky bugger below. So very 1950's when blowing up letterboxes on Cracker Night seemed to be a rite of passage for boys of a certain age. I'll publish the sequel *The Other Side* next issue - we've run out of space this time!

Contributions are always welcome.
If you have an idea for an article please get in touch.

Let's more bibs and bobs to read. Enjoy.

Letter to the Editor

Reading the history of the shops I am reminded of all the names. Ergo I have a bunch of anecdotes to give you.

Pat McGrath, the barber, had a full house on Saturday mornings. Each of us would get his standard short back and sides. Pat's left hand, cigarette between fingers, was firmly clamped on your head. We came home smelling of Kool smoke and Californian Poppy.

The Maniscalco (later anglicised to Manis) fruit shop kept the soft drink empties at the back now Chandler Lane. We used to nick the empties and cash them in for an ice-cream sundae.

The Ampol servo sold a sticky orange drink called Fanta for 1 shilling. It was years later that I discovered that this was a drink

invented in Nazi Germany by the Coca Cola company.

I used to buy chemicals from Mr Stenning to make fireworks. He had everything a young pyromaniac needed. He must have been one himself.

Sides of beef were delivered to Kings butchers from a large truck which may have been refrigerated. I cannot be sure. Great halves of cow were shouldered over bloodied protective clothing and taken into the shop. Great chopping blocks were a feature of the shop as were the very physical performances of the butchers, a sight to see.

Doug Chandler did a roaring trade in fireworks come Empire day which seamlessly converted into Commonwealth day (24 May). The tuppenny (two-penny) bungler destroyed letter boxes better than anything.

We all loved Mrs Nolan. She was the sweetest thing in every sense.

In Raper's window was a map showing the route of the proposed Seaforth to Castlecrag bridge and northern escarpment freeway to Alpha road (if memory serves). It never eventuated. Instead we are getting tunnels but that is another story.

Wayne Davies



Photo: Debra Player

CASTLECRAG has a rebirth!



In the early 1970s a book titled CASTLECRAG was created by local writers and artists. It offers insight into the social and cultural life of the Crag during the 40s, 50s and 60s. The publication's main purpose was to raise funds for the local public school, Castlecrag Infants, and in particular to fund the bushland regeneration and restoration of the school grounds.

The centenary of the Griffins' Castlecrag, in 2021, provided renewed impetus for the Progress Association to publish a second edition of this historic gem.

Architect Eva Buhrich and sculptor Bim Hilder are attributed with the original design of the book, which with great respect to them, has been meticulously duplicated. Other well-known contributors were Gwen Meredith OBE MBE, who

wrote the long-running ABC radio serial Blue Hills and the artist and Bulletin cartoonist Bernard Hesling OAM. Many of the contemporary photos were taken by Max Dupain OBE AC, resident of The Scarp for many years. Max's son Rex, has recently written an atmospheric piece where he reflects on growing up in the Crag in the 50' -70's -an excerpt of which contributes to the forward of the second edition, but appears in full on page 7 in this issue of *The Crag*.

The first edition was widely enjoyed and bought out within a couple of months. There was only ever one print run of what became a much sought-after publication. Over the years it has become a treasured heirloom, and has caused many an upset within families of multiple siblings when it came to distributing the family possessions with the passing of the parents!

A second edition was investigated back in the late 1980s, to help fund the community campaign to save our precious local public school. The first edition was published by Arthur and Marea Weller. They were very happy to have it reprinted for the benefit of the community, as were the other living authors of the stories.

However, the old printing plates had been discarded, and the photocopying technology at the time left a lot to be desired. Coupled with this, the community

was busy fighting to save the school grounds from being sold off for multi-unit housing and so the second edition didn't eventuate. Following the closure of the school in 1989, the Government rezoned the site to medium density, permitting over 60 townhouses to be built. However, Green Bans and a 3-year community picket and occupation of the site prevented this from happening, yet the zoning still remains.

Thirty years on, and fifty-odd years since publication, the second edition has emerged. Thanks to the CPA committee, and Leon Smith in particular, for making it happen.

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can be purchased directly
from Jason and Leanne at
Castlecrag Post Office
for \$30.

Alternatively, email
info@castlecrag.org.au
with your order, transfer
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From the President



This will my last report to you as President. As I foreshadowed some time earlier, I will not re-nominate for the position. Instead, Denis Fernandez has

agreed to nominate for the position. As I reported in my last report, Denis joined the CPA Committee earlier this year and is a CPA Delegate and Vice-President of the Federation of Willoughby Progress Associations.

Both Lindy and I have been asked, by the existing Committee and by members, to stay on the Committee as Editor of The Crag and as Secretary of the Association respectively. Accordingly, both of us have been willing to accept re-nomination to these positions. Gay Spies, Kate Westoby,

Diana Jones, Ruth Kendon and Leon Smith have all agreed to accept re-nomination.

We have a number of Committee members who have not sought to be nominated this year. Craig McCarthy wants to spend time travelling and with his grandchildren; we are hopeful that he will continue contributing to the Crag as he has done, so well, over the last year. John Moratelli has decided that his being on the CPA Committee may complicate his new role as Ward Councillor. We thank John for his significant contribution the CPA's efforts, particularly in regard to the Beaches Link Tunnel and to reducing speed limits in Castlecrag. Eddy Johnstone is also not seeking nomination citing time pressure due to other commitments. We thank all three much for their contributions over the last year.

Following my last report, in April, I can report that we still have no news regarding the Quadrangle. However, to paraphrase Mark Twain, the news of its sale has been greatly exaggerated. As late as 27 April,

Dr Quek advised CPA that he expected his Planning Proposal would go on display in July this year with construction beginning in March next year. He remains committed to the final design and to further community consultation once the DA is submitted to Council.

One important happening since my last report is the wonderful event staged by CPA and WBGS in the Haven to celebrate Marion Mahony's Sesquicentenary. The talented Crag-grown Oli Chang was commissioned to compose a musical piece as a tribute to Marion. More on that on page 6.

Let me say in closing what an honour it has been to serve as the President of the CPA for the last 4 years. I am immensely grateful for the support I have received from so many of the residents of Castlecrag and I am sad that the circumstances forced Lindy and me to move away. But, somehow, we are not quite done yet.

Paul Stokes



Castlecrag lies on Gai-mariagal/Cammeraigal Country.

Their hand prints, middens, found artefacts and rock engravings in the caves and bushland around us are evidence that this was their home for many, many years.

We acknowledge and pay our respect to Elders - past, present, emerging and to all First Nations people.

Keep The Crag coming to your door!

JOIN or RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP to CPA

Visit www.castlecrag.org.au or post form below

I wish to renew / apply for membership for the CPA Inc., and enclose payment of:

\$20 per person \$

(Cheque or direct debit to Castlecrag Progress Association Inc. BSB: 032 199 Account No: 355621)

\$10 per student

If you wish to make a donation, it will be most welcome. I enclose my donation of:

\$

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Address:

PO Box 4259

Castlecrag 2068

Phone: Email:

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From the Councillors



John Moratelli

I am honoured to have been elected as one of the councillors for Sailors Bay Ward as the lead candidate for the Local Independents for the Environment (LIFE) team.

Running on an unashamed environmental platform, I was struck by voters' receptiveness to our commitment to protect and enhance our local environment by opposing the Beaches Link Tunnel (BLT), improving recycling, protecting and enhancing our green spaces, and improving Council's engagement with the community.

Now that the election is over, I'm busy familiarising myself with Council's procedures and policies, and talking to residents. My aim is to achieve as many of the items on LIFE's platform (www.sailorsbaylife.org) as I can during this term of Council.

Although I was successful in having Council adopt a strong anti-BLT position, it was disappointing that it wasn't prepared to spend up to \$10,000 to obtain advice on a possible challenge to any planning approval.

It was, however, great to celebrate Marion Mahony Griffin's 150th birthday at The Haven recently and remember what a wonderful asset she bequeathed.

I am interested in hearing from residents about their concerns and suggestions and can be emailed on john.moratelli@willoughby.nsw.gov.au



Hugh Eriksson

Thanks to *The Crag* for the opportunity to write this column. I wish everyone well given the difficulties of the last few years - not just Covid but ongoing bad weather; it has tested us all!

I'm honoured to be re-elected for a third term representing you on Willoughby Council. As a lifelong Castlecrag resident, I am proud to represent the suburb where my family has lived for over 70 years!

My priorities remain to focus on local government services: waste management, lower rates, parking and traffic. The last Council delivered well considering the difficulties we endured. However, I have heard the feedback that we can do better - I will work to ensure this improves.

Finally, let me thank our former Mayor Gail for her hard work and support over many years - I would not be here if it was not for her. I would also like to congratulate our new Mayor Tanya and fellow Ward Councillors John and Roy on their election. I look forward to working with them.

Victoria, baby Adelaide and I love living here and look forward to many more years in our beautiful suburb.

As always please reach out if I can be of any assistance.

Hugh.eriksson@willoughby.nsw.gov.au



Roy McCullagh

As an Australian of now 20 years, I am delighted to represent Sailors Bay Ward along with John and Hugh. I believe we bring fresh energy and a positive mindset to the new Council; we have formed a positive and engaging working relationship.

As new councillors, we are being kept very busy with briefing sessions, Council meetings and interactions with Progress Associations and Rotary Clubs. A big focus has been the development of the new Willoughby Local Environment Plan (LEP).

My personal focus is very much on local issues:

- Putting new road safety signs in Northbridge and near the Willoughby Leisure Centre
- Addressing resident concerns about safety on the narrow roads of Northbridge
- Street parking issues and rogue boat trailers in Willoughby South.

Going forward, I am here to help. If you have a local issue of concern, email me at roy.mccullagh@willoughby.nsw.gov.au and I will do my best to help you. Or come and meet me at my weekly "Coffee with your Councillor" at local cafes. You might also like to follow me through my Councillor Roy McCullagh Facebook page.

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- Email castlecragtennis@bigpond.com for membership

Haven News. The Amphitheatre Sings Again

For those who live around the Haven Amphitheatre, you may have heard harmonious, melodious and ethereal sounds emanating from the valley on Sunday 20 March. The occasion was a community picnic and concert, to celebrate Marion Mahony Griffin's sesquicentenary plus one!

The planned celebrations underwent so many changes since the idea was first conceived in 2019. COVID prevented the grand vision of creating a new community theatre production to be performed for Marion's birthday in February 2021. Plans were then scaled down, to host a community dinner in November 21 also to celebrate the Centenary of the Griffin's Castlecrag. COVID kept people away again. So, the celebration was reinvented, this time into a picnic at the Haven with a musical performance. It was rained out in February, but by pure chance, the date picked in March was a rare, beautiful, sunny day. Numbers had to be restricted due to COVID and parking limitations and as a result, the invitations were limited to members of both the CPA and the Griffin Society. Both groups jointly funded the event.

The musical component began with a variety of songs from the Baysingers. This choir includes a number of Castlecrag women who rehearse weekly at the Mosman Rowers. They sang from a repertoire that included African songs and original compositions, including a 3 part harmony titled They can't take our song, which was written by actor, writer and choir leader Joanna Weinberg in the dark times of 2021, when singing was banned.

The highlight of the afternoon was the performance by musician and composer Oli Claridge Chang aka Animal Feelings. Oli is a 4th generation resident of Castlecrag. His grandparents bought their Griffin home in The Barbettes during the war. It has housed 5 generations of Claridges since that time. Oli has been living in NYC for 10 years but came back for a quick visit to see family and then was caught here when the borders were closed due to the pandemic. During lockdown he built himself a mini piano, which he played on the day, and has been composing soundtracks inspired by the expansive nature that surrounds Castlecrag.

Oli captured the mood of the event beautifully and sang melodically across octaves, playing his piano to deliver a memorable sound and ambience for the audience. The choir accompanied him with harmonies in three of the pieces. The sound was quite ethereal and perfect for a tribute to Marion in her beloved Haven.

At one point and quite spontaneously, when she heard Oli's music, a young girl ran down to dance in the bottom performance space beside the creek. It was a joy to watch as Aria moved effortlessly and freely, stretching, contracting and spiralling around the circle (like no-one was watching) to the music in a Martha Graham modern ballet style of her own making. It was delightfully serendipitous because that was the style that Marion and her peers, like Louise Lightfoot (who founded the Australian Ballet) danced at the Haven nearly a century ago. It was a very special moment. Marion would have been so very pleased!



Baysingers performing at the Haven



Oli Chang has now returned to New York, but he is keen to perform again at the Haven when he returns in the summer. This time (no-COVID willing), it will be advertised and open to all who buy a ticket. It was a childhood dream come true for this highly talented artist. We are very lucky that he's fallen under the 'Haven Spell'!

Links to Oli's work can be found on:

Instagram@animal_feelings
www.animalfeelings.co



In celebration of Marion's sesquicentenary (plus one), 151 Ganache lemon tartlets were passed around to the audience. The delicious tartlets spelt out (in chocolate) a message:

**WE GIVE THANKS TO
MARION FOR HER GIFTS
TO CASTLECRAIG**

Happy 151 Anniversary!

And thanks to Didier from Ganache who demonstrated his community spirit by charging mate's rates to the CPA for the tartlets!



Oli Chang accompanied by the Baysingers performing at the Haven

Come you Spirits

Come you Spirits is delighted to present *Romeo & Juliet* and *Macbeth* at The Haven Amphitheatre, Tuesday 21st to Sunday 26th June 2022

Who are *Come you Spirits*?

Come You Spirits is a collective of actors based in Kirribilli and touring NSW giving a fresh voice to the greatest stories of our time - to punch through the noise - full of dynamic pace, movement and complex characters, the performances of *Macbeth* and *Romeo & Juliet* are opposites in narrative, but equals in life-affirming declaration. Fast, furious and full of heart.

We've taken a unique approach to performance - uniting ancient tradition and the basic human energies of the heart, the masculine and feminine, drive, truth, vision, our connection to the land and the pursuit of something greater.

How do you use sound in the shows?

The soundscape takes the audience on a journey. The actors are amplified to allow for full vocal range in performance and the speakers in the space are supported by large, wooden, constructed flat reflector sheets that look like monoliths from Stonehenge. These are positioned at specific points that hold the principles of sacred geometry and temple building. In ancient temples, like the ones that are 10,000 years old, they used giant stones to reflect and resonate sound in the space - we're using sound in such a way so the whole body hears it.

How will the plays work at The Haven Amphitheatre?

The Haven is magical and enchanting. *Romeo & Juliet* will be performed during daylight and *Macbeth* in the evening. Tuesday 21st June marks the solstice and that first performance will be held at sunrise. The intense burst of dawn sunlight activates the space, and releases serotonin

in everyone's brain, your joy hormone, kicking out the sleep hormone melatonin. When this happens during a show like *Romeo & Juliet* being performed for you in nature, you buzz with vitality.

For the evening shows, we have our own lighting, candlelight, flameworks and hopefully a fire pit as well. Celebrating the natural landscape, most of the acting takes place across the space, the actors being on various levels moving amongst the audience, including the accessibility area on the road, which is actually part of the designated performance space.

By having only four actors playing four characters who tell the whole story of both plays, it means that the narrative is simplified. Audiences who have seen our shows say they felt equally invested with all four characters, not just the protagonists.

If it rains, we'll carry on, embracing all the elements - Earth, Air, Fire, Water, and Spirit - so come on the journey with us.

Workshops

Working with Chi energy, used in Tai Chi and Karate, we've found it creates a very dynamic and charismatic performance style. In our workshops for students and adults we're seeing the impact it has across all industries in all forms of personal and professional communication. As well the significance of employing Chi as part of normal daily life. We in the West think of it as being magic, but for ancient cultures this has been Science since the dawn of time.

A little more about the cast

We're four experienced professional actors who have worked internationally and across Australia, seasoned in Shakespeare and classical theatre, film and TV. The team is made up of Charles Mayer, Jo Bloom, Sontaan Hopson and Nicholas Gell.

Jo Bloom & Charles Mayer



CAST: Sontaan Hopson, Jo Bloom, Nicholas Gell, Charles Mayer

BOOKING

Romeo & Juliet

Tuesday 21st June @ 6:30am

Saturday 25th June @ 10:30am

Sunday 26th June @ 10:30am

Macbeth

Tuesday 21st June @ 6:30pm

Saturday 25th June @ 6:30pm

Sunday 26th June @ 6:30pm

Book tickets: comeyouspirits.com

Email: jo@comeyouspirits.com

Ph: 0416 635 880

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/360167129474841>

Growing the Griffin Legacy

This article was originally published on the Landscape Australia website on 30 July 2021.

The Griffin Reserves system within Castlecrag, on Sydney's lower north shore, is widely recognized as a community development with rich historical significance for Australian landscape architecture. Begun in 1921, the neighbourhood open space network sprawls across the 50-hectare Griffin Conservation Heritage Area comprising Middle Harbour foreshores, 20 interconnected local parks and reserves, several nature-based playgrounds, vegetated traffic islands and the Griffin's Haven Amphitheatre, all connected by over five kilometres of off-road walking trails and pathways. Less well known is the backstory of the project's more contemporary champions, who over the past five decades have collaborated as everyday custodians for this remarkable legacy as landscape professionals, expert volunteers and residents. Many are members of active local community organisations such as the Castlecrag Progress Association, Willoughby Environment Protection Association and the Walter Burley Griffin Society, who uphold the Griffin/Mahony ethos of "building for nature" and support the dedicated work of landscape architects and the open space team within Willoughby City Council (WCC).

Jan Felton, for instance, is a WCC landscape architect who has worked closely with community representatives

for over a dozen years to implement and update The Griffin Reserves Plan of Management. Together with Alfred Bernhard, who leads Council's Bushland team, she has been responsible for site design, community engagement and the day-to-day management of the Griffin Reserves. Community participation in the management and preservation of these landscape architectural elements has been integral to the Council's work in the Griffin Conservation Area. This collaboration has benefited both local residents and visitors. Community participants in the Griffin Reserves Advisory Group (GRAG) have provided Council with significant input towards the improvement of the Griffin Reserves and have played a valuable role in the process of making recommendations as well as promoting, over-seeing and reviewing on-ground outcomes.

According to Bernhard, these achievements have included improvements to reserves and walkways to make them more easily accessible and enhancing community amenity and recreation opportunities; vegetation design and management, including the removal of exotic weeds and the planting locally indigenous species that have been linked with the placement of seating allowing users to appreciate spaces and existing views; the development of designated walking tracks; and biennial open days to connect community members, encourage residents to take an active interest in their neighbouring reserves, and to raise awareness of and

participation in the Council's Bushcare volunteer program.

Guided by reserve action plans, volunteer Bushcare teams play a vital role in managing weeds and replanting with local provenance species, with these incremental activities accumulating to create a significant improvement in the bushland's health.

Bushcare leader for The Keep reserve, gardener, long-term volunteer and Castlecrag resident Matthew Keighery said the program had provided an opportunity to expand his knowledge of native plants and work with bushland remnants within a Griffin-designed suburb.

"We aimed to have the garden we purchased [at Castlecrag] merge with the surrounding plant community. The Council offered bush care training, plant identification courses and other ways to increase my knowledge of the local ecology.

"Working in the reserves alongside neighbours – knowing we are improving landscapes for flora and fauna while also providing amenity for those that live here and visitors – provides great joy. I view myself as a custodian who is supported by the Council's bushland team, their bush regeneration contractors and other volunteers."

Local resident, experienced bush regenerator and horticulturist Richard Blacklock provides services to Willoughby City Council and local organisations such as the Steiner School, which has a junior



Trail sign with QR code



GRAG Open Day 2018 Cortile Reserve

Growing the Griffin Legacy cont...

campus in Castlecrag and a senior school in nearby Middle Cove. Blacklock's mother Beverley Blacklock was an influential figure in the local community during the 1970s and 1980s, setting up a native garden and plant nursery in Castlecrag at a time when bush regeneration and an appreciation of local plant ecology began to influence the architects and landscape architects, that later became known as the Sydney School.

"Beverley became involved in bush regeneration, helped to start the Castlecrag Conservation Society and was its president for several years," said Blacklock. "She was a great 'hassler' of Councils and the Water Board when they didn't do the right thing by the environment. She was also responsible for the Water Board's first restoration effort using locally indigenous plants."

Blacklock sees a need to not only nurture local bushland, but also a duty to share and nurture knowledge development with local school students.

"The Council has promoted the Griffin Reserve system of reserves, pathways and road islands and is creating incremental improvements. This is helping people to understand that Castlecrag is a place where Banksia, Acacia, Hardenbergia, flannel flowers and even Juncus [rushes] have become the norm. Most of the younger generations understand the palette of plants and colours that we are working with – it's what they expect to see and plant. Children are viewing plant

choice and gardens through a completely different lens to 20 years ago."

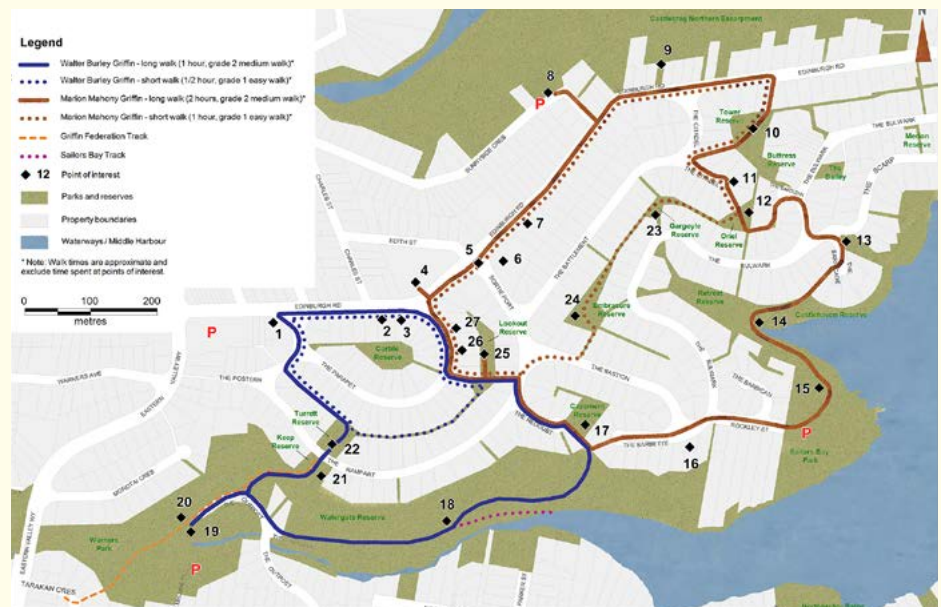
In many ways, Castlecrag provides a model for stronger community engagement in the everyday challenges of nurturing local green space, sharing knowledge with new residents and actively fostering the next generation of custodians. In her sesquicentenary year, Marion Mahony Griffin may well be proud of her and Walter's legacy, looking down over "the Crag" a century on from its inception.

David Martin words and photos

David is a local resident, Registered Landscape Architect, Sustainability

Strategist and member of the Griffin Reserves Advisory Group.

Author's note: Adrienne Kabos, Meredith Walker and James Weirick's book, Building for Nature: Walter Burley Griffin and Castlecrag (Sydney: Walter Burley Griffin Society, 1994); Shirley Stackhouse's article 'Love and hard work help to save Sydney's bushland' ('In your Garden' column, Sydney Morning Herald, 1990) and various issues of the The Crag newsletter (Castlecrag Progress Association, 2019–2021) were used as references during research for this article.



Glenaeon students at their Middle Cove campus

The long and winding road that leads to your door...



The Scarp photo: Max Dupain

Walter Burley Griffin's vision of Castlecrag started with the roads following the contours of the landscape. The first houses were his designs, and like the roads, they harmonized with the natural surroundings. Initially, there was more bushland than houses and as the vacant lots were sold off in the 1960's, houses not adhering to Griffin's vision appeared in numbers. The 'new' residents did however want nature at their doorsteps and as the dwellings multiplied so did the sounds of jackhammers and speedboats.

The road to our house elbowed its way from the top of the hill at Edinburgh Road down to Sailor's Bay where the bush met the water. We lived in the last house on a dirt street amongst angophora trees that fell sheets of terracotta bark, while the branches were loud with cicadas. It wasn't so much a place to inspire Art but a place to witness Nature unwittingly create it. Honeycombed rock formations collected coloured layers of sand, owls hooted eerie mantras from caves, and flannel flowers decorated the forest with sunlit petals.

From our house we could see the bay through the trees, and it was always a focal point as it had been long ago for the Cammeraygal people. Below our house a midden with a crusty surface of broken oyster shells turned itself into a small island

at high tide, and whatever the day, the season or year, the shells told a story about time. We also found an aboriginal grinding stone and its accompanying grinder, not dissimilar to a mortar and pestle, and these objects carried our imaginations beyond the backyard.

Nearby, a family lived in a fisherman's shack just above the waterline. The father would cast out his fishing lines at night with hopes in the morning of having hooked a bream, flathead or leather jacket. There were also sightings of dorsal fins at dusk, making the bay a no-swim zone, although if you capsized while sailing you had no other choice.

Through the bathroom window the bay disappeared during hot showers as steam turned to dribbles over the glass. In the same way heavy rain reduced the visibility of the bay, and as it came towards us only the paler of the yachts could be seen, with the sounds of clinking masts coming from where they were moored.

One evening a southerly bluster blew in a large windowpane, and while the rain and the wind entered the house a whirlwind of newspapers began to circle above the dining room table. We were living with nature and all its moods. Possums arrived in our courtyard each night for a slice of apple and honey, and the birdsong lasted

from dawn till dusk. In the bush below our house majestic water dragons crept about the rocks and creek, while blue tongue lizards made idle pace. When the tide was low hundreds of red soldier crabs surfaced from holes in the sand, while the remaining metal frame of a sunken fishing boat grew rust.

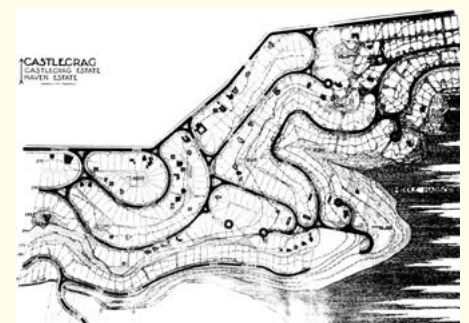
Castlecrag was in a different era then. There were no mobile phones or laptops and when children left the house, they were free to roam the streets and the bush reserves as they pleased. Neighbours didn't mind if you took short cuts through their properties and because everyone knew each other, the place felt safe. Dogs were unfenced and often unleashed and microchipping for pets didn't exist. Ernie the postman would do his deliveries accompanied by two dogs who volunteered each day to run alongside him as he peddled his way around the suburb. The dogs defended him against the snarling canines guarding the letterboxes and the inevitable dogfights occurred along the way. Sadly, the postal circus came to an end when the two dogs began entering houses and chasing household pets such as guinea pigs and cats. One of the dogs was ours.

Another distinguishing feature during this period in Castlecrag were fires. There was an abundance of vacant lots and plenty of fallen timber, and to burn off waste material or build a raging bonfire wasn't unusual. In fact, there was often a trail of smoke in the sky and the fires brought neighbours together, particularly at night.

When the tar was finally laid down on our street and bringing an untold smoothness, the skateboarders and the push-bike riders felt they were in Heaven. If only Walter Burley Griffin could have seen their faces then.

Rex Dupain, Amman, March 2022

Formerly of The Scarp.



Houses of Castlecrag - 36 The Rampart

Ben Gerstel is a local architect and volunteer guide for the Australian Architectural Association.
www.architecture.org.au

This was to be a challenging site for anyone as it is a defined flame zone site on 3 sides of the property. To add further complication, the site is located in the conservation area of the Griffin Estate.

A flame zone site is the highest bushfire rating. The current Australian Standard, AS3959 – 2018, Construction of Buildings in Bushfire Prone Areas, has been upgraded due to the recent fires New South Wales has experienced. To build on a bushfire prone site requires extensive research on what materials can be used and consultation with the bushfire consultant.

The site was bought by a young couple, Charlotte and Michael Fayle. Charlotte is an architect and Michael a landscape designer. For Charlotte, this was going to be a test for her. If you drive by the house, you can see the amazing native garden that now covers the front yard credited to Michael.

The existing house was an original, single storey apricot coloured brick 1940's bungalow with a blue concrete tiled roof. It was dark inside. The existing front bedroom and garage (now a workshop) were retained.

Charlotte's solution was to redesign the house to accommodate a growing young family, providing a variety of play areas, in-law accommodation and lots of different gardens. Her design was to open up the house to draw in the winter sun, with openings to frame the surrounding bushland and to have a series of landscaped terraces. Her premise was to have the architecture as a backdrop to the landscape. This loosely follows Griffin's theory of having the architecture subservient to the landscape.

Her approach was to try to keep as much of the existing house as possible with the additions being cost effective and site sensitive in scale and materials. Existing brick walls were retained and now bagged to give a rough texture more in keeping with the surrounding bush. Other materials selected for the build are earthy in colour to connect with the surrounding bush and vegetation like the surrounding angophoras.

The west side of the building houses the living area with links to the entry and gallery kitchen, as well as a front northern terrace and a disguised plunge pool.



Interior living area



Street view

A part first floor addition now sits over the east side of the house, containing bedrooms and bathrooms. The first floor has been angled at the rear to create privacy from the adjoining neighbours.

The exterior walls are covered with corten steel which gives a brown rusted appearance. Also, above the garage and the spaces behind the garage is a native garden to lessen the impact of the first floor to the street.

All the new gardens and outdoor spaces have been designed to respond specially to its location on site and the aspect to the sun. These spaces connect to the house by stone paving, timber decks and steel mesh walkways.

Another aspect of the design of the house, which is now important when building a new house, is to introduce sustainable features. Some of these features incorporated into this house are a 6 kilolitre rainwater tank, solar power, ceiling fans, a slow combustion fireplace, hydronic floor heating (hot water is passed through pipes located in the concrete floor



Aerial view

slabs), water wise native gardens and low E glazing.

For a young architect to design her own house for her first project as a sole practitioner under such difficult circumstances is amazing. This is a job well done.

Taro Studio: www.tarostudio.com.au
 Reference: Houses magazine issue No.145

Ben Gerstel
www.bengerstalarchitecture.com.au

Obituary - Amiel Christie. 1920-2022



Amiel was born at home in Cremorne, Sydney and died in his Castlecrag home of 63 years. His early years were spent in Murwillumbah and at Collaroy.

In 1937, he was awarded an exhibition (partial scholarship) to study Medicine at the University of Sydney. This was essential after the hardship of the Depression years. With the advent of the War, the degree was accelerated by cancelling the long summer holidays to enable graduates to join the defence forces as quickly as possible.

One story Dad was fond of telling was about when, in May 1942, he was studying late into the night before his final year exams. He was at his then home in Kirribilli, when he heard an almighty noise. The next day he fronted up to Sydney Hospital for his exam only to find complete mayhem. During the night, a Japanese midget submarine had penetrated Sydney Harbour and had sunk the ferry Kuttabel with a torpedo, killing 21 men.

After his service with the Royal Australian Army Medical Corp, he travelled to England, as so many of his generation did, to gain his Pathology specialist qualifications. He returned to Sydney and attained his MD through the University of Sydney. In 1955, he married Betty (from Melbourne) whom he had met in London.

Back in Sydney, Amiel and Betty bought a block of land in Castle Cove, which was then just opening up. Later they sold the

land and, in 1959, instead of building, purchased the house at 170 Edinburgh Rd from Edgar Deans. The house was designed by Eric Nichols. It was here that they raised their 4 children, Andrew, Jonathan, Rosemary and David. The children all attended Castlecrag Infants and then went on to Willoughby Primary School.

Amiel was a familiar sight catching the 7.50 am 203 bus, from the stop near St James church, on his way to Wollongong where, for over 50 years, he had a successful Pathology laboratory. Andrew and Jonathan remember staying overnight at Mrs Stoker's creche when Amiel and Betty travelled.

Betty passed away 10 years ago, but Amiel was determined to stay until the end in his beloved Castlecrag, looking at the view of Middle Harbour.

Everyone who met Amiel remarked on what a gentleman he was. He was a product of his times; he often wore a tie and tweed jacket casually. He had an enormous memory and would recall details vividly from decades before. Castlecrag folk will remember his 1979 Olive green Mercedes which he drove around the neighbourhood until his 98th birthday. The car has now been passed on to another local family. So, it will still be around!

Rosemary Christie.

Longevity 101.

As Dr Christie's neighbour, friend and gardener, I had the good fortune to experience his engaging manner and wry humour. I attended Castlecrag Infants School with his children and still communicate with his daughter Rosemary; more in recent years, as he aged. He retained a spritely mind beyond his one

hundredth birthday. That birthday was in the early days of the pandemic; the second in his lifetime. Rosemary is to be commended for fighting to keep her father at home, obviously with the appropriate care. She said that achieving this was a bureaucratic nightmare. She knew full well if her father had been admitted to a nursing home that her ability to see and care for him would have been greatly reduced.

On occasions Dr Christie would share tales of his life. Interestingly, he was never boastful, despite his many achievements. Part of his character and gentlemanly manner was to use the expression 'see you anon' on saying farewell. He mused once that a friend asked him not to say this when departing. When asked why, his friend's response was "don't you work in autopsy"?

Dr Christie travelled to England professionally with his son David and visited his old old medical colleagues who were now world renowned academics. David was left sitting in a draughty University hall while his father was whisked away by fellow academics. At some later time, he was retrieved by one of these academics, of whom he asked 'Are you some sort of club?'. He was then taken to an Honour Board where he was to see his father's name emblazoned – he was a member of the Royal Society. Later, he asked his father why he had never known of his father's achievements. He was told "There is no need to talk about that, we take small steps so that others may take great leaps".

For myself and many others, he will be sorely missed.

Mark Crew

Housing Crisis For Gigante Puppets of Marion and Walter!

The puppets are cultural icons of our community. They were created as part of a community theatre piece in 1989 at the Infants School and starred in *Marion's Gift* at the Haven in 1993.

They have been part of the Castlecrag display in the Landmarks Exhibition at the National Museum of Australia for the last 10 years. The loan period is ending soon, and an exhibition space is being sought in Sydney to house the 3m high puppets. We are grateful that WCC has offered to store them at their depot, but it would be so much better if they could be put on public exhibition somewhere, preferably locally, so they can be seen and we could bring them out for community events. Does anyone have an opening, contacts or an idea about where they could be exhibited? Suggestions welcome.



Notes

CHARLES STREET CHURCH IS NO MORE

Part of our social fabric has been lost with the sale of the Uniting Church in Charles Street. This was the first church in Castlecrag, beginning as a Methodist Church in 1948 and becoming part of the Parish of the Uniting Church in 1977.

Apart from the loss for the congregation, the church hall has been a greatly valued community resource over many years. From Sunday School to Ballet School, Physiotherapy, Meditation, White Wolf Dojo and Yoga with both Simone and Katya, many people have benefited from having a community space to come together to practice their discipline. It is a rare resource in Castlecrag and it will be greatly missed. We'll read more about the church and its place in the suburb next issue.

Should there be a heritage order placed on the site to protect the church building or are we ok with the prospect of more of our built heritage being demolished if the new owners have that desire?

COMMUNITY LIBRARY REOPENING AFTER COVID

We are planning to reopen the library next financial year. First day will be Saturday 2 July, with stalwart librarian Diana Jones at

the desk. The library will start borrowing at the beginning of term 3.

Despite all the mould at home, we are very pleased that the books do not seem to have suffered from the long closure.

At this stage we should have enough volunteers to function, but we are always delighted to hear from anyone able to commit to helping out for a few hours each month.

Nothing will have changed. We will still exist in our time bubble untouched by IT, with handwritten records and date stamp and pad, and friendly librarians delighted to welcome borrowers. If you're not already a member, come on down to peruse our shelves full of books and children's DVDs. We're in the Community Centre at the bottom of The Postern.

Hours of opening:

Tuesdays 3pm - 4.30pm

Thursdays 2pm - 5pm

Saturdays 10am - 12pm

Dorothy Fraser.

cdmfraser@hotmail.com

WHO WANTS A FAIR?

The Castlecrag fair has always been a popular community event. The last one was held in Spring 2019, when the world was a different place. Although traditionally

a biennial fair, it was not possible in 2021 due to COVID-19 and the complications and uncertainties this brought. People have been asking when the next one will be.

HERE'S THE RUB

Who from the community will step forward to co-ordinate it?

Who will put up their hand up to be on the organising committee to make it happen?

Sounds like the story of the Little Red Hen! Many of us have busy lives, but maybe this is the time you can participate in some community service. The CPA has many years of experience in hosting the event, and has developed a solid data base and knowledge of the process of making the community event a success. Not to mention the insurance cover! The infrastructure and support base is there, but people are needed to come forward to organise (guidance provided).

Scott Graham is revving up his engine to present another classic car display in The Parapet. It was a great crowd pleaser last time and promises to be bigger and better next time around!

Please write to us if you'd like to volunteer to co-ordinate or be on a committee to help make the Fair happen again in 2023.



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Market Garden Park Community Garden

Have you ever gazed longingly at plants willing them to visibly grow in plain sight? Our pics below show how much growth some of our vegetables have achieved over a month or so.

La Nina rain continues to hang around as we transition to the cooler season. Interspersed with sunshine this can be a gardener's recipe for happiness.

During March and April gardeners at MGP have shared good harvests of butternut and Kent pumpkins. Green beans and baby eggplants lingered as we embarked on clearing beds, turning over soil and adding manure to prepare for fresh planting.



Butternut pumpkin .. seeds saved for next year

We've set up some new climbing frames and are watching popular cool-climate edibles settle in. Snow peas, snap peas, broad beans, broccoli, garlic, leek, radishes, lettuce, rocket, choy sum and coriander are making haste while the sun



Snap peas and radishes make good companions

shines. There's a bit of vigilance needed for baby snails, sneaky caterpillars and their eggs hiding under leaves. Unchecked, they can quickly demolish a young crop.

Outside the garden our big Bunnings BBQ in March paid off and we have progressed to ordering a new garden shed to be installed soon.

MGP has received some great written feedback recently. After trialling our raised accessible garden beds Mel writes, "I was impressed with the level of accessibility that had been thought into it ... community gardens should be inclusive for all as it is a great way for people to connect, socialise and engage ... often people use gardening as a means of therapy and well-being."

Thank you to Willoughby Council for adding paving beside the raised beds this week.



Mel trying out the raised beds

The idea of health and well-being is also picked up by Mayor Tanya Taylor who visited MGP recently. She writes,

"Thanks so much for taking me through Market Garden Park Community Garden. It was great to see you all and hear about the plans you have. The gardens are really lovely – you should be proud of what you have established – both physically and for the well being of those who have helped to develop the gardens and those who enjoy it."

While with us Tanya picked up some herbs and shared her mother-in-law's tarragon poached chicken recipe. You can find it in the recipe section on mgpcommunitygarden.com

Here's to happy gardening and healthy days. MGPCG currently meets on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 9.30am, weather permitting. For more information contact Janet on janetfrance753@gmail.com

Mary Anne Veliscek words and photos



Garlic growth- 6 April, 13 April, 8 May. Expected harvest -November



Digging up Jerusalem artichokes

Why Blue flowers are bee-loved



Lavandula angustifolia

For the flowers pollinated by insects, it is important to consider that bees have a different colour vision to humans.

Most bees in the garden are European honey bees (*Apis mellifera*), an introduced species in Australia. They are generalists and will feed off any flower so long as no pesticides, herbicides or insecticides are being used. Given the option though, it seems both the honey bees and Australian native bees such as the stingless Sugarbag

bee (*Tetragonula carbonaria*) have a preference for blue and white flowers.

This is because bees have photoreceptors that are sensitive to ultra-violet, blue and green wavelengths making white, bluish and purple blossoms very attractive to them.

Blue is not as common as other colours in the plant world but interestingly flowers in this colour range produce the highest volume of nectar. Researchers have also found that in harsh environments where the number of pollinators is reduced, there is a greater than expected number of blue flowers.

It seems that blue flowers are the best advertisement for bees when competition for pollination is high.

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Centaurea cyanus (Cornflower)

CASTLECRAG 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** 8.30-11.30am
Contact: Tim – 0403 883 254

Second Sunday of the Month

- **Gargoyle Bushcare** 9-12noon
Contact: Margaret – 0407 994 230
- **Sunnyside Brushturkeys** 9-12noon
Contact: Scott – 0431 462 588
- **Keep Reserve** 9-12noon
Contact: Matthew – 0408 203 511

Third Sunday of the Month

- **Caseement Reserve** 8.30-11.30am
Contact: Vicki – 0402 325 531
- **Torquay Estate** 9-12noon
Contact: Jo – 0419 234 235
- **Lookout Reserve** 9-12noon
Contact: Adrienne – 0409 997 076

Fourth Sunday of the Month

- **Retreat Reserve** 9-12noon
Contact: Jill – 0428 880 002



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R&W

LET'S GET MOVING AGAIN THIS WINTER!

Life will tell you to play by 'the rules' – that you should fit in, try harder, bulk up or slim down. But should you listen? No way!

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Remember, what healthy looks like is different for everyone, let's get you moving again, embrace your individuality and join the Anytime Fitness Community!

Do you want to be a part of a welcoming club with supportive staff and a multi generational member community? Ready to start this Winter? Scan below!

SCAN ME



ANYTIME FITNESS

135 Sailors Bay Rd, Northbridge

from page 15

Now that winter is upon us, consider how the cold changes bee behaviour. Native sugarbag bees like to remain cosy in their hives unless the temperature reaches 18-20 degrees celsius, so on a sunny winter's day they will come out to forage.

Honey bees stay active throughout winter as long as it is not too wet, too cold or too windy. This may just mean they have a shorter working day!

Gardeners can do a lot for bees. Think about planting a diverse range of flowering plants that offer blossoms all year round. Consider flower shape, size and perfume. Let the veggie patch and herb garden flower; perhaps go a bit wild and let some weeds flower (like clover and dandelion)- just make sure it is weeded or mowed before the seeds have set!

And if possible, consider incorporating blue flowering plants in the garden or balcony and turn your place into a pollination station!!



Salvia officinalis (Common sage)



Viola sororia (Wood Violet)

Local Native Blue/Purple Flowering Plant for your garden:

Hardenbergia violacea or Purple Twining Pea / False Sarsparilla, can often be found covering the ground or scrambling over rocks and logs. It is distinguishable by its long narrow leaves (4-15cm in length) with almost square to heart shaped ends. A network of prominent veins on the leaves can also be seen. Leaves are alternate. It flowers in Spring (July - October) producing numerous purple pea flowers with yellow centres on racemes. Don't take my word for it but apparently the leaves can be boiled to make a slightly sweet and reasonably pleasant tea

WCC Bushcare Team



Hardenbergia violacea

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