



CASTLECRAG
PROGRESS
ASSOCIATION

THE CRAG

A voice for the community since 1925

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JUNE 2023

Community Fair revived!

Many opportunities for YOU to be involved. *Story p6*

Concrete footpath canned

Residents oppose Council plan and are listened to. *Story p7*



The Making of *The Paradise Plan*

Puppets Marion and Walter reflect by Lake Burley Griffin – photo Mary Anne Veliscek

In November 2022, the Progress Association (CPA) received funding from Willoughby City Council's Community Grants Scheme to assist in the production of a short film which documents the gigante (giant) Griffin puppets and their role in community life since their creation in 1989. Through the puppets, the film also explores the Griffins work, locally as well as in Canberra, and in particular how Marion's contribution to that plan was hugely under-rated.

The impetus for the making of a film came with the recent de-installation of the Castlecrag Exhibit in the Landmarks Gallery at the National Museum of Australia (NMA), where the puppets have been the outstanding feature for the past 12 years.

Originally, with an absurdist bent, the narrative of the film saw the puppets

'escaping' from the Museum in their bid to get back to the Crag, having become tired of standing around on display all that time, and not able to get outdoors to walk in nature nor canoe on the lake.

However, some in the Museum hierarchy did not see the light-heartedness of the storyline, and thought it reflected badly on the Museum in that the institution was portrayed as a prison that treated their objects badly! As a result, the script was reworked so that the motivation to leave was that Marion was so homesick for Castlecrag she had to return to the Angophoras, flannel flowers and her Haven for her own mental well-being.

Each puppet requires three puppeteers to move, two on arms and one to wheel the central trolley. Back in the day, the centre person carried the puppet holding the

large central pole which rested in a flag holster. However, as the puppeteers aged and safe work practices became more apparent, some years ago the puppet's central pole was moved onto a trolley to make it less strenuous to operate.

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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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Write to us

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
responsible for information or advice in
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seek their own personal, professional advice.

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From the Editor

It's been a long time between *Crags*.
It's good to be back in the chair to bring
together a diverse and interesting range of
local stories.

We have news from our artists and their
projects in a number of forms. What
comes across is how often one's local
environ is reflected in a person's art in a
direct and conscious manner but also in
subtle and often unconscious ways. The
upcoming exhibition at the Concourse
for the Gai-maraigal Festival Stories of
Country and Truth (see below) explores
this theme. It's heartening to read about
the familiar, and see artistic representations
of where we live, which is why Australian
content on our screens and in literature is
so important.

Fabia Claridge's newly published novel
Patchouli Memsahib is reviewed; the
reader is invited into her Griffin-designed
lounge room in the house where five
generations of Claridges have resided over
the last century.

The news that the development of the
three shops on the northern side of
Edinburgh Road will now not proceed at
this time has been met with relief by many.
People are licking their lips in anticipation
of Didier and Ganache's return later
this year.

There's more to explore - an inspiring
people-power story from our neighbours
in Middle Cove, plus details of the Fair,

and a story of a snake that slithered into
someone's shower!

On a somewhat serious note, the
continuation of this magazine relies on one
or two people stepping up to take over
the reins of editorship. In the Spring issue
last October, I asked for support to get the
February issue together but there was no
response, so it didn't happen.

I'm back again for the Winter production,
but this is the last issue of *The Crag* that
I am able to commit to. Whilst my heart
and history is in Castlecrag and I feel a
connection to this piece of country as
closely as any whitefella could, I no longer
live in the Crag and I will be in Europe
visiting my daughter this Spring when the
next issue is due. I am happy to support
and guide as necessary but I can no longer
lead this publication. If no-one comes
forward, *The Crag* will have to go into
a recess.

Many thanks to our regular contributors,
and to those who have written pieces
for this issue and to those who have
offered to contribute articles in the
future. Many stones form an arch
and many stories make a publication.
Whoever takes over will have considerable
content to get started with as well as an
established process.

If you have something to offer, please
get in touch. Job description provided
on request!

Lindy Batterham

Gai-maraigal Festival highlights

- **(Re)telling: Stories of Country and Truth** (15 June to 9 July): An exhibition at Art Space on The Concourse curated by Muruwari woman Dr Virginia Keft, bringing together emerging and established Aboriginal artists from around Australia to present new and existing works that showcase their resilience, strength, and connection to culture. The exhibition of painting, sculpture, photography, weaving and textiles include works by Dennis Golding, Jason Wing, Virginia Keft, Edwina Green and Shana O'Brien.
- **Art with Dub Leffler Workshop (28 June):** Award winning illustrator, animator and writer Dub Leffler presents a hands-on art and storytelling workshop for primary school aged children at Chatswood Library. Leffler



Virginia Keft, *Imprints of Country, 2022, raffia, silk, eco-printed with eucalyptus leaves*

is known for his soft, realistic portraits
and has collaborated with the likes of
Sally Morgan, Banksy, Coral Vass and
many more.

For more information visit <https://www.visitchatswood.com.au/Events/Gai-maraigal-Festival-2023>

Keep *The Crag* coming
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www.castlecrag.org.au/join

From the President



I am thrilled to provide you an update and insights into the remarkable strides we have made together in our community, pre and post pandemic. It is through the collective

efforts, commitment, and enthusiasm of our committee, members, residents, and businesses that choose to foster positive change and aspire to a brighter future – we are Castlecrag, 102 years strong and solid rock.

Our progress association’s first meeting occurred 10 November 1925, and ever since has been an independent medium between government and community, hosting scheduled information meetings for members and the public with guest speakers including elected representatives, state and local government department representatives and local identities.

We act for the community by responding with considered submissions to government, seeking to improve outcomes that affect Castlecrag and the City of Willoughby. We support a sense of community by among other things, holding the Castlecrag Fair which brings us together.

Democracy is fair and fare, witness the recent NSW election and congratulations to all the candidates for having a go with true Australian gusto! Eventually the electoral process returned the Hon. Tim James MP to NSW Parliament. Congratulations Tim. We look forward to continuing our constructive engagement with you on local matters and in your capacity as Shadow Minister for Fair Trading, Work Health and Safety and Building

Willoughby Council recently passed worthy Notices of Motions:

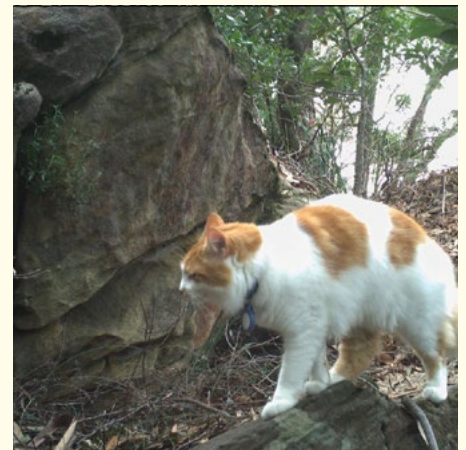
1. Investigate establishment of an advocacy program to assist residents to comment on DAs and planning proposals. This initiative will return to Council for consideration shortly for budgetary consideration.
2. Increase the maintenance budget by an extra \$1million p.a. as part of the budgetary planning process for the next three years. The aim is to improve the presentation of our suburbs, funded through normal operating revenue and be prioritised for tree management, weeding (including traffic devices), litter patrols, and the general appearance of garden beds in high traffic areas.
3. At its 22 May meeting, Council passed a motion seeking to have the NSW Electoral Commissioner hold a referendum at the 2024 council election. The purpose of the referendum would be to decide whether the mayor should be elected by the councillors every two years (with one less councillor) instead of by a popular vote.

In my previous report, I raised deep concern regarding the proposed changes to Council’s Advisory Committees and thankfully we were heard, and a revised position was achieved – thank you for listening, Council. The final membership of Advisory Committees as per Council meeting minutes 27 March 2023 includes residents from Castlecrag. Mark Crew, Kay Donovan, Lorraine Cairnes, Gay Spies and Scott Graham were appointed to the Bushland & Natural Heritage committee, Eva Coulam and Gay Spies to the Sustainability committee and Debra Player to the Cultural & Creative Arts committee. I believe we have a higher representation than any other suburb, despite our small size! Well done to all and thank you for volunteering your expertise!

In closing, together, lets continue to make a positive impact as we face urban renewal

of our local centre and in the shortness of time, witness a rekindled, thriving, and inclusive community that we proudly call home. We are grateful for your ongoing support, dedication, and belief in our shared reality that is Castlecrag.

Denis Fernandez



Why cats should be kept indoors:

Each year in Australia, new peer-reviewed evidence has revealed cats kill an estimated:

- More than 1 billion mammals, like the vulnerable greater bilby
- More than 399 million birds, like the extremely rare night parrot
- More than 609 million reptiles, like the vulnerable great desert skink

Overall we lose over 2 billion animals to cats alone each year.

Cats have already contributed to over 20 native mammal extinctions. **The survival of at least another 124 native Australian animals on the brink.**

CPA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**Wednesday, 28 June 2023
7:30 - 9:00pm**

Guest Speaker: to be advised

**Meeting to be held by Zoom
- link will be sent to members or
by request**

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CASTLECRAG



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Business as usual

From the Mayor



Thank you to everyone who provided feedback on the Planning Agreement for The Quadrangle development. The development proposal has had strong community interest and differing perspectives and Council staff have been positively acknowledged by community members and Councillors on the way in which they carefully considered all 500+ submissions and their thoughtful responses to them. The Voluntary Planning Agreement was revised and is open for comment up until 30 May. This revision secures the public benefits to support the development growth resulting from the increased density at the subject site and includes: dedication of 8 car parking spaces for public use at the subject development's commercial carpark, design and delivery of works to upgrade a public pathway extending from the rear of the site to The Postern, monetary contribution

of \$100,000 towards public artwork in accordance with Council's Public Art Policy and a public meeting room for community use located within the proposed development. Find the documents at www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au/2-draft-voluntary-planning-agreement-for-100-edinburgh-road-castlecrag

At an additional Council Meeting on 15 May Councillors endorsed our draft Operational Plan 2023/24 and draft Long Term Financial Plan and we're now inviting residents to provide feedback on these important strategic plans. The draft Operational Plan details services and projects Council will provide and how they will fund these in the upcoming financial year and includes the annual budget, annual rates, projects and capital works, user fees and charges for Council services and facilities. The draft Long Term Financial Plan has a longer term ten-year horizon and outlines the Council's response to an unprecedented and volatile economic climate which is challenging its current sound financial position. www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au/revised-financial-plan-and-operational-plan-20324

Rangers from the Safe City Unit paid close attention to building sites over the month of May to ensure they 'Get the Site Right'. The Get the Site Right campaign raises

awareness of the impacts of water and sediment pollution from building sites on the aquatic environment and aims to increase compliance amongst both developers and builders. The initiative demonstrates Council's continued commitment to protecting our natural and built environment.

Council is a proud participant of the Gai-Mariagal Festival incorporating a series of events designed to create understanding between the wider Australian community and the Original Peoples of this land. This year the festivals' theme, "Truth Telling ... For Our Elders", invites us to commemorate and celebrate together, converse and walk side by side towards reviewing and renewing our future together. The Festival is a great way for residents to discover Willoughby's indigenous heritage. The Festival will run from 26 May to 9 July 2023 and is centred around significant dates including Sorry Day, National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week. This year a key focus for Willoughby City Council is to share First Nations history with our Culturally and Linguistically Diverse community and we are providing translators at some of the events to make them more inclusive and to encourage everyone to come along and join in. www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au/Home

Mayor Tanya Taylor

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Crag Arts Retrospective



Crag Arts made a welcome return in mid-November 2022 injecting life into the vacant shops at the Quadrangle with their beautiful, locally made art and crafts. Through the generous support of Dr Quek from Greycliff, Crag Arts occupied 3 shops with the street facing shops functioning as a gallery and accommodating large artworks, easels and sculptures.

Curiosity was piqued by the sudden transformation of the once-empty shops, drawing in locals, former residents, relatives of ex-locals, Griffin enthusiasts and patrons of the restaurants and stores. People who drove by regularly enjoyed the ever changing window display and

couldn't resist the urge to drop in to buy or find out more.

This time the intention was to open for 6 weeks leading into Christmas. Due to popular demand the Pop Up continued for 6 months until mid-May 2023, introducing more new artists and new stock. A total of 62* artists, makers and authors participated over both periods, which included 3 weeks in May 2022. This added more paintings, crochet and knitwear, ceramics, sculptures, poetry, fiction, silver plated spoon and fork embellishing, jewellery and the irresistible Castlecrag tea towels, totes and shopping bags to the collection.

Crag Arts was heavily involved with the community, hosting the Castlecrag Montessori School Arts' night, the Sip & Paint and Meet the Artist nights. Over 30 participants attended Play with Clay and Paint & Sip workshops. Local restaurants and Castlecrag Fruiterers supplied nibbles and platters. Free home delivery was often provided and the odd lift home. The team loved meeting the renovators with the blank walls that needed filling with fine art. And the downsizers, who didn't need anything, however, couldn't resist looking and buying something for a "friend".

Although the empty shops may now appear unchanged to passers-by, so much transpired within those walls. Being part of the Crag Arts Pop Up Gallery shop, which the community embraced wholeheartedly, was an incredible experience for the Crag Arts Team. Friendships. Sales. Personal growth. Fitness. Laughter. Meeting so many locals. Providing homes with beautiful, unique artwork. Workshops. Supporting local businesses. Supporting other artists. Support from families, friends and neighbours. Appreciation of art, craft and all things local. It really was a blast.

Thank you everyone for being a part of it. Until next time, hopefully at the Castlecrag Fair in October.

*The number of artists also includes a few Country Cousins, whose sons board at Riverview, or were related to local artists.

Debra Player



Bags 'n' things



Sip & Paint

By Popular Demand the Castlecrag Fair Is Back!

The CPA is pleased to confirm the Castlecrag Community Fair will be held on Sunday 22 October from 10am-3pm around the shopping village.

It promises to be a great day of fun, food, music and community. From activities for the kiddies, delicious food stalls, brilliant arts and crafts and lots of fabulous displays from the various community groups, it will be a great way to connect with your neighbours. The popular Classic Car display will again snake its way along the Parapet.

Want to play a part in bringing the big day together? Then we want **YOU!!**

We are seeking:

Stall holders come along and display your arts, crafts, interesting merchandise or food wizardry,

Musicians to play and sing on the main stage throughout the day (individuals, bands, choirs or groups welcome)

Community groups and organisations in all their diversity and most crucially ...

VOLUNTEERS to help run our stalls and supervise the traffic and crowds. If you can give some time we have a job for you. This is a community fair run by and for this community. Please show your Spirit and give us some time!



Local classics. We've already got a good selection of delectable pre '75 classic cars but are always interested hearing about other beauties lurking in local garages. Contact Scott scott@particlesales.com

FREE TRAINING for a Traffic Controller.

This is a short course to qualify as a STOP/GO person (17 years +). CPA will pay for training in return for your services at this and hopefully other Fairs. (Trained personnel is a requirement of the traffic regulations we need to adhere to.)

Consider getting together with a group of neighbours to host a stall to sell your quality pre-loved clothes. Or White Elephants!

If you have books in good condition to donate to CPA's stall please call Trish to arrange. (Please – no sets of Encyclopedias!)

Contact Trish Lunn on 0407 213 067 or at trishlunn@bigpond.com to find out more or register your interest. We look forward to hearing from you!



Mayor Tanya Taylor (left) with Jan Felton (right) and Mary Anne Veliscek (centre) on Award presentation day in the garden

2023 Citizen of the Year awards

Over the years, Castlecrag has been the home to quite a few people who have been bestowed with a WCC Citizen of the Year Award. The ceremony occurs on Australia Day, and this year although being unable to attend, our very own CPA member and Crag contributor, Mary Anne Veliscek joined those ranks by receiving the Cultural and Community Development Award for her work at the local Market Garden Park Community Garden.

Mary Anne is responsible for initiating the building of raised garden beds at the garden to accommodate users with physical disabilities to get involved with gardening. Readers of *The Crag* may recall Mary Anne writing about the project in April 2022, as part of her regular Market Gardens column. She successfully secured funding for the construction of the garden beds through WCC's Community Grants Program.

With help from other members of the group, Mary Anne and her husband and engineer David Carolan (who cleverly designed the beds) worked extremely hard to make these accessible garden beds a reality.

Congratulations to them both!



Michael tending the new accessible beds

Concreting a Concern in the Cove

Earlier this year, a Middle Cove resident may have come knocking on your door, seeking signatures for a petition to Willoughby City Council (WCC). Perhaps you were one of the 230 Crag residents who signed it, requesting that WCC:

“Not proceed with the concrete footpath at Rembrandt Drive, Middle Cove. This is due to the significant negative environmental impact of replacing the grass verge of the bushland suburb, with concrete.”

It all began in February 2022, when residents witnessed Council (WCC) contractors ripping up the existing grass verge and trees in front of 83 to 59 Rembrandt Drive. Those living immediately adjacent to the footpath had received notification of the planned works, but there was no consultation nor notification of residents beyond that immediate zone.

Later that month all residents of Rembrandt Drive received a letter from WCC Planning and Infrastructure Department referring to the works which had already commenced, and advising that phases 2 and 3 were planned, continuing the path for the entirety of Rembrandt Drive, including the street front of Harold Reid Reserve entrance.

A small group of concerned local residents undertook a survey which found the following:

- Almost all residents wanted Council to commence consultation prior to undertaking further works;
- The vast majority of residents were against the concrete footpath;
- The reasons given for not wanting the footpath were:
 1. There are existing functional grass footpaths on both sides of Rembrandt Drive;
 2. Negative impact on the environment from removing grass, bush and

trees and replacing these with one kilometre of concrete;

3. Negative visual impact for locals and visitors on our bushland suburb, destroying the heritage of the suburb, designed to seamlessly connect to the adjacent bushland which takes up over half the suburb;
4. Some homes reported having ongoing water/flooding problems in their homes and were concerned with Council’s plans to install a concrete path meaning much less natural absorption of water;
5. A number of residents had bought in that location due to the natural beauty; and
6. Unnecessary costs from council management spending where it is not needed, ie looking after the interests of Ratepayers.

In August 2022, 109 residents of Rembrandt Drive signed a letter to WCC opposing stages two and three of the concrete footpath in Rembrandt Drive for the above reasons.

That month WCC undertook its own survey and found the following:

- “Across all participants of our online survey there was majority opposition to the proposed footpath extensions” (p387 Nov 22 agenda, Attachment 2);
- “74 percent of Rembrandt Drive residents opposed the proposal” (p387);

Despite these findings, a Council Officer’s report recommended that the concreting proceed, which is what motivated the residents of Middle Cove to create a petition to determine the attitude for the concrete footpath in surrounding areas. They walked nearly every street in Castlecrag and parts of Willoughby and Northbridge to collect signatures.

Over 90% of those at home signed the petition, concerned with the notion that



The unappreciated path

concreting soft surfaces decreases water absorption and therefore creates greater run-off into the nearby properties and bushland. It is reported that these residents were also concerned about unnecessary Council expenditure for infrastructure that most people saw as unnecessary and actually detrimental to the highly valued local bushland that they chose to live on the fringes of, and are keen to protect.

To their credit, WCC listened to these objections and at the February '23 Council meeting, decided not to proceed with the project.

There are a number of streets in Castlecrag that have grass or gravel verges as footpaths. Sunnyside Crescent is one such area where, some years ago, WCC proposed to lay a concrete footpath, but local opposition concerned about loss of trees and run-off into the bushland also brought about its demise.

Rather than perceiving that pedestrian safety of these streets lies in concreting the verges, perhaps we should consider an alternative approach. Reduce the speed limit to 40 kph throughout the suburb! Glebe and other Sydney suburbs have done this. Why can't it happen here?

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- Call coach Henry on **0431 149 533** for lessons
- Email castlecragtennis@bigpond.com for membership

Fascinating Fungi

Fungi are a diverse group of organisms that exhibit a wide range of characteristics and lifestyles, capturing the imagination of naturalists across the world in recent years. They come in various shapes and sizes and can be found in virtually every environment on Earth, from the depths of the ocean to the tops of mountains. Yet they are still very mysterious and poorly understood with less than 5% of the estimated number of species described to date.

One aspect of fungal diversity is their morphology, or physical appearance. Some fungi are unicellular (yeasts) while others are multicellular, forming complex structures like mushrooms, coral like forms, brackets or the leaf like forms of some lichen. Fungi vary in colour, texture, reproductive structures, metabolism and overall appearance.

Fungi are also diverse in terms of their ecological roles. Some fungi are decomposers, breaking down dead organic matter and recycling nutrients back into the environment as well as capturing carbon. Others are mutualistic, forming beneficial relationships with other organisms, such as mycorrhizal fungi that form vital symbiotic associations with the roots of plants. Some are parasites, infecting and living off other organisms.



Gymnopilus junonius - Spectacular Rustgill



Boletellus emodensis - Shaggy Cap



Cyptotrama asprata - Golden-scruffy Collybia



Omphalotus nidiformis - Ghost Fungi



Several species of Foliose Lichen on sandstone

There are even predatory fungi that are capable of capturing and consuming microscopic animals.

It is these ecological roles which are of particular interest when it comes to environmental protection and restoration. There are currently several great projects and organisations helping people access information about fungi and their value.

Fungi Map (<https://fungimap.org.au/who-we-are/what-we-do/>) brings citizen scientists and researchers together to better understand fungi.

Local Lands Services (<https://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/regions/central-tablelands/key-projects/fungi-guide>) has also produced and packaged up information about fungi for land managers and the community.

Fungi4Land (<https://fungi4land.com/fungi4land-story/>) is a project which aims to give information about fungi to improve land use and restoration.

Council recently hosted a talk by researchers from Macquarie University who have been studying fungal diversity and their ecological roles in the northern Sydney area. The talk explored a range of other subject such as the impact of disturbance on fungi and the effectiveness of restoration techniques. You can now see a recording of the talk on Council's YouTube channel <https://youtube/398bxGvJdM> and follow our wildlife watch program to see more fungi related activities in the future.

Simon Brown
Wildlife Officer WCC

Book Review



Fabia Claridge

Patchouli Memsahib is the second novel by Fabia Claridge, a third-generation resident of Castlecrag who spent most of her adult life in Asia. The novel takes inspiration from her experiences during her time growing up in Castlecrag, and later living and working in Bougainville, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Thailand.

At a time when Australia had its back turned on Asia and when "White Australia" buried its origins, the narrator is pulled by destiny to Asia and its people, finding not only beauty and cultural experiences but also love and betrayal. She forms deep family bonds, finds community and different ways of being along the

way. Beyond the personal, this journey is set against a backdrop of the political upheavals in Asia throughout the 1960s to the 21st Century that have seeded the world we have today. We observe history slowly turn the page as the story sweeps further back in time, to pre-war days through the lives of the characters we meet.

This complex family saga first invites us into the bohemian world of the Crag in the 1950s and early '60s. We encounter the mysterious mariner, Kon, who lives in a fishing shack in the bush down by the bay and Bernard Hesling, flamboyant writer and artist who performed in the Play Reading Group.

Later in Bangladesh we meet Queenie, a charismatic clairvoyant, whose prophecies challenge the narrator's world view, after she finds them years later in an old handbag in a suitcase. This novel asks us to question the nature of destiny, beyond even the point where choice and opportunity meet along life's path.

Local resident Petrina Milas says, 'It is so enjoyable and funny...the locals will love to read about the halcyon days of The Crag...'

Jan Cornell of 'The Writer's Journey' says, "Patchouli Memsahib has such wonderful descriptions, atmosphere, characters and narrative flow. A rich experience. I will definitely be recommending it to others.'

Julianne Sanderson
ex-local resident, drama coach.

Castlecrag Library

Our community library is slowly recovering from the effects of long Covid.

A newly retired Teacher Librarian has volunteered to open its doors on Tuesday afternoons between 3pm -4.30pm. Mrs Wacky Westoby specialises in Children's literature and is happy to guide children and carers with their borrowings if desired.

The Tuesday session will be a trial run to gauge interest in the service.

The library is also open each Saturday 10am -12pm.

It is hoped to reopen for Thursday borrowing once there are a few more volunteers committed to work at least a couple of afternoons a month from



Mrs Wacky Westoby on duty Tuesdays

3 to 5pm. Could you spare the time? On the job training provided.

For those new to the area, the Library is in the west wing of the Community Centre, access is via the battle-axe driveway at the bottom of The Postern. A wonderful community asset with ramp access.

Book Launch

It was standing room only, as more than 50 locals and friends of Fabia Claridge-Chang recently gathered and pressed together in her marvellous Griffin home to hear excerpts of her new publication Patchouli Memsahib. There is a description of this house in the Barquette, which highlights not only the beauty of the architecture, but also the wondrous writing.

"To the north a high window sought out the moving sun. In the southern part of the octagon was a huge stone fireplace with magnetic power. At high noon on the winter solstice the sun's rays shone directly onto the keystone at its centre. Each part of the octagon looked out onto a different view. The enchantment of the space held sway over our lives through many generations ..."

For the many who came to support Fabia in launching her book, they left reminded of the joy life has to offer, and of this abundant, diverse world.

Purchase the book directly from the author fabia.claridge@gmail.com (she gets more \$\$ that way) or through her website fabiaclaridge.com

Donna Jacobs Sife.



Fabia reading at the Launch



Castlecrag Library

Houses of Castlecrag

The Not Quite Stone House at 177 Edinburgh Road.

Have you ever wondered who designed the copper fountain at the Edinburgh Road and Sortie Port traffic island? It was Arthur Vernon aka Bim Hilder (1909 – 1990) but you’d be forgiven for not knowing this piece of local history as the Sculptor’s name doesn’t appear on the fountain’s memorial plaque. Fortunately, this has recently been addressed by the CPA (see story opposite).

Bim designed and built a house at 177 Edinburgh Road in 1936, for himself on a large piece of land he and his family had bought. It was known as the Hilder Estate. Bim also designed a house next door for his brother Brett at 183 Edinburgh Road and for his mother on the western side of 177. In the 1990s, many years after the estate was subdivided into three blocks, this cottage was preserved and cleverly integrated into a new development which was designed by Alex Popov. As described in *The Crag* #210 Bim also designed and built two other homes in the suburb, all of them with stone. Before that, in the early 1930’s, he led the build of the original Haven Amphitheatre.

In 1992 Bim’s house was bought by the current owners. They were looking for a house on the north side of Edinburgh Road which incorporated the northerly aspect and the amazing view.

The new owners were excited to find a house in the right location, but it was clear they needed more than three small bedrooms for their four daughters and themselves.

The approach of the rebuild was to reuse the existing stone blocks from the original house to build the front of the house, garage and front fence. The location of the garage sits on the footprint of what was Bim’s studio.

A stonemason was engaged to cut each of the existing stone blocks into two. This allowed a stud wall to be built inside the stone façade and to clad as much of the house as possible in stone.

At the back of the house is a two-storey addition. A new ground floor sits over the old deck and a new deck was added to take in the view. This addition was finished in bagged brickwork (western side and the rear) in a light beige colour to reflect the colour of the stonework.

Other original features incorporated in the new build from the original house were steel framed casement windows, doors and tallowwood architraves. A triangular fireplace and stone chimney were also retained. The rebuilding was started and finished in 1994.

Walk along Edinburgh Road past this house and notice a triangular seat built into the front fence for anyone to use to take a rest. The owners did this as they heard that Bim liked to sit on his

front fence and speak to the passersby. Also, they wanted to give something back to the community as well as to be in memory of the man himself.

The owners love the house, especially because it forms part of the history of Castlecrag as well as remembering the character of Bim Hilder.

Ben Gerstel

www.bengerstelarchitecture.com.au



Hilder estate circa 1940. Middle house is 177. All 3 houses still intact and cherished



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Bim's Bench

The Griffin Memorial Fountain was commissioned to celebrate the Centenary of the Willoughby Municipality in 1965. Have you noticed the new bench opposite it at the top of Sortie Port?

Perhaps you've taken the opportunity to sit down and view the fountain from this point.

Some time ago, it was noted that the plaque at the fountain made no mention of its designer/sculptor Bim Hilder MBE.

The CPA committee came up with a fitting way to deal with this historic oversight with the installation of a bench to sit across from the fountain, in memory of Bim. As mentioned in previous issues, among his many achievements as an all-round artist, in his earlier years, Bim was employed as a carpenter and stonemason by the Griffins and lived in the Crag for over 70 years, building a number of heritage-listed homes. He was one of our most celebrated and successful artists and he now has two spots dedicated to his memory where one can rest one's legs.

The bronze plaque with the banksia relief was designed by Bim for the community in the '70's. At some point the WCC logo was added. You'll see the plaque embedded into many other special places around the Crag. We don't suggest you sit on the plaque!



Thanks to Alfred Bernhardt from WCC for his assistance in making the seat happen.



'Bim's banksia' has also been the illustration of the logo for the CPA for many years. If you look closely you'll see his signature down the bottom.

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The Haven gets a mention

What a delight to be pointed to a reference to the Haven Amphitheatre in the novel *Death in the Ladies' Goddess Club* set in 1932 in bohemian King's Cross, Sydney. The novel is described as "Sumptuous historical fiction". It's as if the author, Julian Leatherdale had been personally told of the Haven experience he describes and in which his characters find themselves. It is full of wonderful detail of Marion's production of one of the Greek Tragedies performed in the early 1930's.

When attempting to contact Julian Leatherdale to ask him about his source, it was discovered that he had passed away aged 59 in 2020, the year the novel was published.

To whet your appetite, here are some brief excerpts from the chapter in which the amphitheatre is referenced.

... 'Oh, I was hoping you both might stay for the play,' said Gloria. 'It starts at four-thirty.'

At Joan's puzzled look, Gloria explained that the Haven Valley Scenic Theatre was putting on a play that evening...'

... For her part, Marion helped the residents design and build a community amphitheatre dug out of a gully overlooking the waters of Middle Harbour ... Tonight's production ... was Euripides's *The Bacchae*.

... this bush theatre seemed to Joan to have emerged out of the earth, its sandstone seats pushing up from the native grasses and gum-leaf litter. The whole valley was its stage, with the glittering blue of Middle Harbour as a backdrop glimpsed through trees. The stage scenery was composed of terraces of spectacular rocks, huge boulders, precipitous drops and promontories high over the water. A stream flowed through it down to the sea...

... Marion Griffin made a brief introduction before the play, explaining that the young actors from the local drama club were trained in the Rudolf Steiner method of 'eurythmy'. Whatever

this meant (it made little sense to Joan), the result was that everyone moved like sleepwalkers, bodies held erect, eyes fixed, faces expressionless."

From *Death in the Ladies' Goddess Club* by Julian Leatherdale, published by Allen and Unwin.



The Haven in the 1930's



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Bathroom intruder

We live in Lincoln Ave, Castlecrag and in March an over 2.5m diamond python crawled through our open bathroom window. It broke a light fitting on the ceiling at 3am and when I went to the bathroom and picked the broken fitting up from the floor I did not notice the snake at that time. Thank God!

Next morning I left the house around 9am. My wife Tian was alone in the house. The snake must have moved around as I did not see it when I had a shower that morning. However, when she went to the bathroom later on, she got the shock of her life to see the snake resting on top of the shower wall as in the photo. She immediately ran out into the street very scared. Luckily our neighbour Jerry was outside in his car about to leave. She told him the situation and he donned some gloves and because he knew about snakes grabbed the monster by the tail then the head and took it outside and tossed it back into the bush. He took the photo inside the bathroom.

Hopefully it won't come back ... but we are now ensuring that fly screens will be fitted to all open windows. I was hoping you might acknowledge our gratitude to Jerry for his heroic handling of the situation by maybe publishing this story.

Richard Prowse



CASTLECRAG BUSHCARE Meeting Dates

First Monday of the Month

- Tower Reserve 9-12 noon
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 9-12 noon
Contact: Scott – 0431 462 588
- Keep Reserve 9-12noon
Contact: Matthew – 0408 203 511

Third Sunday of the Month

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

Fourth Sunday of the Month

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



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Community Gardens: Market Garden Park

Produce-wise, nothing seems to say Autumn quite like pumpkins. Those trifid-like vines that took over vast tracts at MGP yielded our best crop of pumpkins yet. Butternut, Kent and Jarrahdale. Three serious specimens were donated to Willoughby Council kitchen for their "At Home with Willoughby" Easter social lunch at the Dougherty Centre on 12 April 2023. Such beauties deserve to be repeated next year so we have extracted, washed, dried and saved lots of pumpkin seeds as well as zucchini seeds from some amazing specimens.

The standout summer harvest was undoubtedly beans – green beans, flat Italian beans and snake beans. Harvested daily, crisp and flavoursome munched raw and equally yummy steamed or added to stew. Our aubergines and zucchini did well too.

Beautifully healthy lettuce and basil flourished in the raised accessible garden beds over summer.



Cate and Zoe holding up zucchinis



Zoe with Summer harvest



Richard arrived with a burst of enthusiasm and positivity



Hamish (Crag resident and D of E student) smashing zucchini for seed saving

Autumn is a fine time to soak up lingering sunshine and get those cooler season crops into the soil. With summer crops cleared, soil turned and enriched in go the broad beans, sugar and snap peas, garlic, beetroot, gai lan, carrots, cabbage, cauliflower, broccolini, silverbeet, lettuce and a few potatoes in a large tub.

Young families of gardeners and Duke of Edinburgh students energetically help with soil prep and planting on Saturday mornings alongside more seasoned ones. Friendly Wednesday morning gardeners continue to enjoy catching up over their gardening activities and morning tea cuppas.

For more info, or to contact us, visit <https://mgpcommunitygarden.com>

Mary Anne Veliscek



Chef Jason Sherwill with pumpkins donated by MGP Community Garden



Sarah harvesting beans



Harry and the Giant Bean

Warners Park

Our lovely group of community gardeners based at Warners Park are busy planning their move from their existing site to their new garden being built as part of the Warners Park Master Plan.

Six of their large raised beds have been relocated recently to the new garden site. The members have been using the smaller remaining beds to grow up seedlings e.g. parsley, kailan, green pak choi, broccolini, Chinese celery rat-tail radish, to name a few, ready to plant in the relocated beds in June.

The gardeners are also hoping to have many of their potted fruit trees and perennials e.g. chillies, asparagus,

blueberry, ginger, turmeric, taro and galangal transferred and planted at the new garden. Their well-established compost-making infrastructure and other equipment will also be relocated.

Council is planning a launch at the new garden site for our National Tree Day event on Sunday 30 July.

Join us for some family friendly fun where we will do some planting of natives in our local bushland and also planting some fruit trees and vegies to help kick start the newly built community garden.

Jan Felton
Community Projects Officer WCC



SUNDAY 30 JULY 2023

EVENT

Planting Activity
10am-12pm

Plant Giveaway
10am-2pm

Mulch Giveaway ,
10am-2pm

Guided Bushwalk
10.30am-12pm

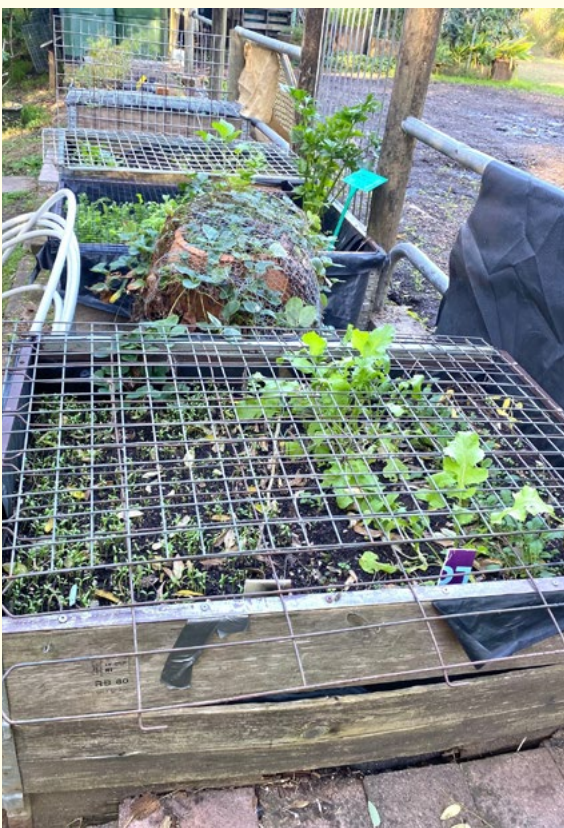
WHERE

WARNERS PARK

End of The Outpost,
Northbridge



New garden at the old bowling green



Seedlings ready to plant in the relocated garden



Raised beds at existing garden



Raised beds relocated to a new garden site

The Making of *The Paradise Plan* from page 1

After many months of research and writing, the film was shot in mid-March, over two days in Canberra, both inside the NMA and by the edge of Lake Burley Griffin. Before heading to Canberra, the puppeteers were skilled up in the Quadrangle car park, using 2 shopping trolleys and long sticks to simulate the action. Regrettably no photos were taken!

Like many volunteers today, the puppeteers came mostly from our active retired folk. Special thanks and appreciation goes to CPA members Mr Fix-it aka Mark Crew, Leon Smith, John Tamblin, Mary Anne Veliscek, Kate Westoby and to Walter Burley Griffin Society members Josephine De Monchaux and Bruce Richards, all who gave considerable time to the project and paid their own way to travel to and stay in, the Bush Capital. The film could not have been made without them!

The Paradise Plan is currently being edited by Canberra based videographer Creswick Collective. It will be shown locally later in the year. Archival footage of the puppets in their first performance *Keep Your Hands Off Our Assets* at the former Infants School and in *Marion's Gift* in 1993 at the Haven Amphitheatre is integrated with the recently shot footage from Canberra in order to tell the story. The soundtrack is by local composer and musician Oli Chang with voices of Marion and Walter spoken by Josephine Bloom and Charlie Meyers from *Come You Spirits*. Donna Jacobs Sife is the voice of the the Museum's audio tour.

The film was written and directed by your editor.

Lindy Batterham



'Marion dear, smell the Eucalypts!' – photo Creswick Collective



The crew – photo Creswick Collective

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