

NEWSLETTER

NEWSLETTER OF THE CASTLECRAG PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

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* SIXTY THREE YEARS OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT *

Dear Residents,

Sue Randle, Vice President (958 6344)

After a very wet start to the day of the Tenth Willoughby Funfair, we 'muddled' through and went on to make over \$660 on our trash and treasure stall. I'd like to thank the organisers Kathy Burgess and Marcella Stevens and all other residents who gave their trash or treasure, time and support. Special thanks must go to Mr Frank Duncan for his generous donation of a most interesting record collection, many sought-after and classic books, and pottery and porcelain articles.

The Progress Association's Bicentennial Project is to be an oral history of the residents of Castlecrag. We need volunteers and any information that would assist in making this a successful community project. Please drop a note in the letterbox at 12 The Parapet or phone Mary Baker 958 5518, if you are willing to help. We look forward to your support in this venture, and thank Geoff Sherington of the University of Sydney and a resident of our suburb, for the guidance he has given us so far in this project.

The Special Meeting held on 15th August at our school was well attended by concerned parents and citizens old and new. Mr Anderson, District Inspector of the Dept of Education, addressed the meeting and advised that although the future of the school was under review, no final decision had yet been made, and that full consultation would take place with the community. A committee has been formed to prevent closure of our school, and has contacted the relevant politicians and ministers. A meeting has been arranged with The Hon. Peter Collins, Member for Middle Harbour, on 5th October 1988. However, we note with dismay the report in the Sydney Morning Herald 1st October that Castlecrag School is among those to be closed at the end of 1989.

Amongst the many traffic, speeding and parking problems in Castlecrag, those experienced in The Parapet are causing special concern, especially near the junction with The Postern. Residents living near this narrow corner have expressed their strong concern at the dangerous practice of parking there.

Willoughby Council held a meeting on 26th September at which the Foreshores Building Line was discussed, and a resolution will shortly be made public.

THE NEXT MEETING OF THE CASTLECRAG PROGRESS ASSOCIATION WILL BE HELD AT 8PM ON TUESDAY 25th OCTOBER AT THE COMMUNITY HALL, THE RAMPART. ALL WELCOME.

THE NEXT MEETING OF THE CONSERVATION SOCIETY WILL BE HELD AT 80 THE BULWARK ON FRIDAY 4TH NOVEMBER 8PM. NEW MEMBERS ARE WELCOME.

The Crag is edited on behalf of the Castlecrag Progress Association by Mary Baker 958 5518 and Kerry McKillop 958 4516. Please send letters or items of interest to Mary Baker, 80 The Bulwark.

The Greiner Government has announced a plan to 'rationalise', that is to merge, public schools. Our own Castlecrag Infants School is under threat to be merged with Willoughby Public School, because it normally has less than 100 pupils.

It is true that the value of the school site in dollar terms is high; it would command a fortune as a residential area or as a retirement village. But the cultural and human values are much higher. Since it was established in 1951 many local residents have attended the school and now have children there. The confirmed enrolment for next year is already 79 and the longer term prospects are higher. It is not true that Castlecrag has an 'old' population; our postcode area 2068 has 14329 residents (Census 86) and of these over 8000 live in the Castlecrag Peninsula.

When the school was originally established it was intended that it would expand into a full primary school, but this has not developed and it remains an infants school for 5-8 year olds. From our children's point of view it is 'our school' which provides the ideal sheltered transition from kindergarten to the big world. It is a family school where the parents and citizens, the teachers and children themselves, are one whole active and convivial group. Education in its root sense (e-out, ducere-to lead) means leading out. There could be no better way of leading out our children to being secure and well established. This conforms to the view that the most important years are those before the age of eight.

These community values are recalled by families who have lived here over forty years. Some of us remember weeding out rubbish and planting trees in the school grounds in the early fifties. Others have patiently continued these practices over the years with results which are readily apparent today. If we were aborigines we would proclaim it a sacred site.

(Ed: SMH Oct 1 '88, page 1 article "Govt. to close 15 schools....." includes C'crag Infants School 1989)

There is another consideration. The site is zoned as an educational area. We are well aware of the tendency of modern centralised governments, of whatever persuasion, to take a cavalier attitude to such impediments regardless of local values and heritage. If the Greiner Government or any other, were to try to deprive us of our heritage, we would insist that the whole site be retained for its educational potential, as a library, a youth trade training centre, a TAFE unit, a music centre (we need a Castlecrag choir and a Castlecrag band) and a village hall.

If the present government is not to go down in history as the Greedy Greiner Government, it had better leave well alone. And from Willoughby Council we would dearly like to see every tree in the school grounds surveyed, tagged and identified under a tree protection and preservation order.

NIGELS

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Readers: Why not scribble a
brief letter to the Editor,
on matters concerning the Crag.

AN ORAL HISTORY OF CASTLECRAG
Geoff Sherington

In recent years a number of local communities have set out to record the past by drawing on the memories of those residents who lived through much of the history of the twentieth century. This has all been part of a general interest in local history combined with a new concern to look at the everyday lives of people as much as the major events of the past. In common parlance this has become known as 'oral history' which has developed its own methods and devotees. It has been made easier by new forms of technology, particularly the portable tape recorder. This new approach has been adopted for a number of the more important bicentennial histories including The Australians: A Historical Library, the multi-volumed series published by Fairfax Syme and Weldon and involving over 200 historians. This particular project looked at life in Australia since European settlement by taking a single year and studying social life at specific moments in time. This became known as the 'slice approach' to history which attempted to examine changing Australia at 50 year intervals. The volume in that series entitled Australians 1938 made much use of oral history and looked at family and community life in the period just prior to the Second World War.

As a suburb and community created in the inter-war period, Castlecrag forms the basis for a similar interesting research enterprise which could help to inform those now living here, what it was like to be new settlers in the original bush-suburban setting. Part of the general history of those early years, and particularly the role of the Burley Griffins, has been recorded in print, but what is also needed is the understanding of the changing nature of the suburb, by seeking the assistance of early settlers and families whose associations with Castlecrag stretch back to the beginning. Undoubtedly there is still much of value to be learned about social relationships and life in general during those early years in a community which for its time was an important social experiment.

But we should not stop just with the formative years of Castlecrag. History is literally only yesterday and good social history should try to inform us about our own lives and the way we are living today. Perhaps one way would be to adopt the 'slice' approach and look at our suburb at 5 or 10 year intervals (eg 1935, 1945, 1955, 1965, 1975, 1985). Those who came to live in the area at those particular times might also be persuaded to record what it was like to be a 'new settler' and how they see more recent changes.

There are some problems when you embark on a project such as this, not the least of which is what to do with the tapes once they are recorded! The best place to lodge them is usually the Local History collection of the municipal library. The memories of individuals also need to be put into a general context if they are to become of major use in creating a social history, but such problems can be faced as the project proceeds. The main aim should be to get people involved and interested in taking part both as interviewers and interviewees. Some will be shy and reluctant to talk for various reasons, but all who have lived in Castlecrag even for a short time would have something to contribute. Most of all it is an opportunity to learn more about the community that Castlecrag has been and has become.

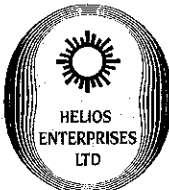
Please contact Mary Baker (958 5518) if you would be interested in participating in this project, either as an interviewer or interviewee.

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CASTLECRAG LIBRARY

The Community Centre, The Rampart

LIBRARY HOURS:

TUESDAYS 3.30 - 4.30PM

THURSDAYS 12.30 - 4PM

SATURDAYS 10AM - NOON

NEW BOOKS LIST:

STIRLING, J	Hearts of Gold
STANCIFF, N	Maria Callas
SEBASTIAN, T	Spy in Question
PETERS, E	Confession of Brother Haluin
KENDALL, A	Tchaikovsky
INNES, H	Medusa
CRANE, T	Hawthorne Heritage
MICHENER, J	Alaska
CUSSLER, C	Treasure
FOLLETT, J	Mirage
DUNCAN, R	China Dawn
NEAL, P	As I Am
NICOLE, C	The Regiment
COLLINS, J	Rock Star
BICKEL, L	Louis Braille: Triumph over Darkness
BARBER, N	Weeping and Laughter
MORTIMER, J	Summer's Lease

and many paperbacks.

WARRINGAH EXPRESSWAY UPDATE

In spite of Peter Collins' pre-election statements that neither of the Coalition parties had any plans to build the Freeway:

- . unconfirmed reports indicate that the NSW Government plans to build the Freeway as a private tollway within five years;
- . a DMR surveying team has been seen recently in the bushland on the Northern Escarpment;
- . Mr Baird (Minister for Transport) has commissioned an artist's impression of a new bridge over Middle Harbour. There are no plans for upgrading the Spit Bridge (SMH, 22 Sept, page 2);
- . it is still acknowledged that the population of the Warringah Peninsula is too small to justify the Freeway. Could there be any connection with Mr Greiner's bid for the 1996 Olympic Games?

If you are prepared to fight the Freeway, please come to the next meeting of the Progress Association.



Library opening hours are being reviewed. Would you please on the form below suggest days and hours that would perhaps suit you better than the existing times, and leave the form in the returns box:

I would prefer the library to be open:

WILLOUGHBY COUNCIL BANNERS PROJECT
Chris Burton, Community Arts Officer

The Banners Project began in 1984 and emerged some 4 years later as 14 fabric wall hangings approx 3.6m x 1m. They cover a range of themes from Aboriginal settlement, the beginning of white colonization, transport, war, communications, the arts and technological changes - all with reference to some aspect of the Willoughby Municipality.

Artists, Malcolm King and Yvonne Line, gave inspiration and guidance to the many people who worked on the making of the Banners. These people came from various backgrounds: shoppers, school children, people with disabilities, skilled quilters.

To ensure that a wide selection of our community can view these impressive wall hangings, Yvonne Line is conducting tours of the Banners now permanently hanging in the Civic Centre, Chatswood. Only two more opportunities now remain to join these tours, which will last for one hour, on the following dates: 14 November, 5 December. Bookings are essential and should be made on 412 9109.

QUALITY THEATRE IN A LAID-BACK VENUE
Deborah Ringe for Castlehaven Reserve 530A Committee

It was good to see young people's theatre alive and thriving recently during 'Urban Myths', the opening weekend of The Haven Theatre's Spring Festival in Castlecrag. Perfect spring weather saw family groups enjoying a relaxed afternoon's entertainment in a wonderfully peaceful setting, the amphitheatre designed and used by Walter Burley Griffin in the 1930s and upgraded in the late 1970s. Its bushland location proved to be an idyllic setting for the varied programme presented.

Elanora Youth Theatre's 8-10 year group performed a succinct piece based on the origins of Narrabeen. With accompanying narration, the young artists portrayed a moving tale. 'A Medieval Romance' performed by Forest Youth Theatre drew a steady stream of laughter and demonstrated the versatility of these teenage artists. Local playwright Nick Hughes' play, 'The Red Gum Sprite', could have been written especially for the amphitheatre and its environs, so appropriate was its conservation message. Members of Willoughby Youth Theatre gave a thought-provoking presentation of this piece.

The audience was also treated to delightful musical interludes by the Cecilia String Quartet. Unifying the whole production was the endearing character of a 16 year old Girl Guide, played by Lindy Batterham, with her own 'urban myth'.

The next event to watch for in the Spring Festival is La Troupe Theatre's production of 'Soundjata' - an African story, scheduled for 8pm Saturday 22 and 3pm Sunday 23 October. Dramatic storytelling of a 13th Century African legend, with the advantages of a set designed by nature. Events in November will include a full production of 'HMS Pinafore' by the G and S Society of Mosman.

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ARE WE LOSING THE BATTLE?



Break-ins and thefts are increasing in Castlecrag. With the introduction of NW four years ago, there was a diminution in crime locally and the situation remained unchanged almost up to the beginning of this year. It would seem that the inauguration of NW and the placing of signs provided some protection, BUT without further active participation by residents, the effect is wearing thin. For the Scheme to work, neighbours must talk to each other, and when the unexpected occurs, the police should be notified. The police would prefer to be phoned and arrive to find the persistent caller next door is a genuine tradesperson, rather than by distraught owners of an empty house.

Community safety requires positive effort by all members. Think about it, and better still, DO SOMETHING!

WEPA December Meeting

Make a note of Monday, December 12. Mr Robin Grimwade, Manager of Parks, Kuring-gai Council, will address Willoughby Environmental Protection Association's Christmas meeting on 'Current Trends in Park Management'. Come to hear how Kuring-gai leads the way in management of its parklands and the philosophy behind this. Artarmon Library, 8pm. For more information: Dagmar Elias, 406 4100.

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Letter to the Editor

I am writing in the hope that you can draw attention to the sorry state of much of our local bird life - and that we can find out who or what is the cause of it. I have been feeding birds for many years and have noticed injured birds at times but this year there are many more birds with shocking injuries. At least three Currawongs have only one eye, another has a section of the top beak broken away and there are a number with bad leg injuries. I fed one pitiful Currawong last week which could not stand and I doubt if it has much future. The last straw which induced me to write was the state of a friendly magpie. The top of his beak has beencrushed in, but thankfully he appears to be recovering. Although magpies are known for agression in the breeding season these gentle birds who eat out of our hands, would not attack without good reason. Finally I would make a plea for the locals to leave scraps out for the birds. They will still eat their natural foods but at times this is in short supply and they appreciate a little help. It would be a dead world without them.

N. Robinson.

WE WOULD LIKE TO RENEW OUR MEMBERSHIP OF THE CASTLECRAG PROGRESS ASSOCIATION FOR THE TWELVE MONTHS FROM OCTOBER 1988:

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

Please send this form with \$4 membership fee or donation, to The Secretary, Diana Jones, 72 Linden Way, Castlecrag.