

NEWSLETTER

NEWSLETTER OF THE CASTLECRAG PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1988

* SIXTY THREE YEARS OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT *

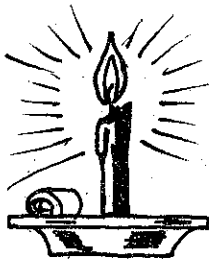
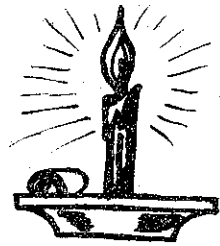


THE HAVEN THEATRE 530A COMMITTEE
and THE LOCAL CHURCHES INVITE YOU

TO

CAROLS

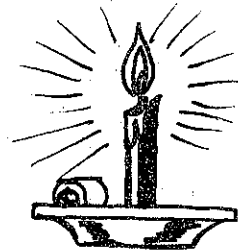
by CANDLELIGHT



*Conducted by the
Rev. Alan Wilson*

with

GUEST ARTISTS



on SATURDAY, 17th. DECEMBER 7.30p.m.

at THE HAVEN THEATRE cnr. The Scarp and The Barricade.

*Join the singers at the Castlecrag School at 7.0p.m. and
walk to the Theatre. Performance begins about 7.30p.m.*

Note: Parking is not available at the theatre. Free buses will
leave the school at regular intervals for those who do not wish
to walk.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Eric Kaye

After five exciting months camping in many parts of Australia, it is good to be back home again. One of the most pleasing things I observe on return is the keen spirit present in our Progress Association. Rita and I joined the Association shortly after the War (from memory about 1946) and with the exception of about five years which we spent overseas or away from Castlecrag, have always been members. During this time there have been many outstanding committees, and I consider the present committee to be one of these. I believe that the present success is in no small measure due to the large number of competent young people now in the group. The number of problems facing our community at present give cause for worry and I thank Sue and all the other committee members who carried the load while we were away.

Finally let me wish all in our community a very happy Christmas and New Year.

WARRINGAH FREEWAY AND CASTLECRAG SCHOOL UPDATE

Eric Kaye

As most of you will know, our Association has fought the construction of a freeway through Castlecrag for over 40 years. Because of the threat which the continued existence of the corridor represents, this fight continues. Despite the reassuring words of Peter Collins at our special meeting in March, prior to the State elections, the change in government has triggered a spate of rumours to the effect that consideration was again being given to its construction, probably as a privately funded tollway. This was heightened by statements in the press that the Minister for Transport, Mr Baird, had said that the freeway would be constructed in the lifetime of this parliament, and that he had commissioned an artist's impression of a new bridge over Middle Harbour.

The second issue of grave concern to our community, is the Government's announced intention to close the Castlecrag School, as part of their educational policy. This directly disadvantages our parents with young children, and distresses older residents who fought hard to establish the school and are now proud that it has become a focal point in the community.

To advise our local member and the Government of our views on these matters, three delegations from the Association have met with Peter Collins recently. The first of these on 5th October comprised our vice president Sue Randle and Susie McIntosh (School Committee). They sought Mr Collins' support against the proposed closure, and left with him a letter opposing it. The second delegation comprising Gay Spies, Adrienne Kabos, Howard Rubie and Gordon Shrubbs, visited Mr Collins on 19th October and expressed apprehension at the Government's policy on transport, and sought a rational approach to urban transport planning. They submitted the letter printed on the following page of The Crag. Mr Collins agreed to respond to both these matters at yet another meeting on 16th November. This delegation consisted of Sue Randle, Gay Spies and myself for the Progress Association, and Susie McIntosh and Bruce Wilson for the School. Peter Collins discussed the two matters with us, and in respect to the freeway wrote an open letter to members which is reproduced in full on page 4. He stated that his Government 'had no plans at all to go ahead with the freeway at present, but that the corridor must remain intact for its possible use in the future'. He also stated that he supported the construction of a link road from the end of the present freeway at Willoughby Road to Eastern Valley Way, but because of financial restraints he was unable to get government support for this at present.

In the case of the school he was not supportive of our stand and strongly defended the Government's policy for closure. He did agree however to meet with further representatives, when the demographic and sociological study the school has commissioned, is completed. A full report will appear in the Jan/Feb Crag.

Mr Collins praised the Committee for the professionalism of our submissions and agreed to address a community meeting at the school on Saturday 10th December.

The following letter was presented to Mr Peter Collins MP by a delegation from the Progress Association which met with him on 16th October 1988. We include it in our newsletter for residents' information and critical comment:

Dear Mr Collins,

re: Warringah Transport Options

The Castlecrag Progress Association has followed the announcements by your Government on transport issues with considerable interest and apprehension. Taken together, these announcements and the allocation of funds in your recent Budget, indicate a transfer of priorities from public transport to expenditure on roads. While this change may be welcomed by certain pressure groups in the community, it does not reflect the experience and wisdom of modern city planning. From Washington and Los Angeles to Singapore, Hong Kong and Kuala Lumpur; from Zurich and Hanover to Manchester and Newcastle-upon-Tyne, city planners are increasingly investing in modern rail-based transport systems as the solution to urban transport problems.

Sydney's road system undoubtedly faces increasing congestion, but the answer to this congestion requires additional investment in public transport systems with their own rights of way in order to maintain a vibrant and high quality urban environment. The Warringah Peninsula is an area which is disadvantaged with respect to public transport, while the futility of seeking to address transport problems by constructing a freeway has been canvassed fully through the Kirby Inquiry. Subsequently, the Warringah Shire Council, with support from the councils of Manly, Mosman and Willoughby, has proposed Transit North, a modern light rail transit system linking the CBD with the Warringah Peninsula via the most densely populated corridor. An efficient and soundly designed transport system of this nature would provide the necessary infrastructure for the communities along the route to cope with urban living in the 21st Century, yet the Government has not given any indication of support for the Project. Instead, announcements continue to be made on more freeway extensions. As you will be aware, Australian firms have won the management contract to design, build and operate stage 1 of the \$60 million 13km Kuala Lumpur light rail system. If KL can do it with Australian expertise, then why can't Sydney achieve a similar project for the Warringah Peninsula?

The Kirby Inquiry also canvassed extensively the environmental consequences of building a freeway through the urban bushland of Castlecrag's Northern Escarpment. One has only to stand on the rock outcrop in Tower Reserve, the 'crag' of Castlecrag, and look across to the enormous scar created by the road to the Spit Bridge, to realise that similar environmental destruction must not be allowed to happen again.

As a former Shadow Minister for Environment we are sure that you appreciate the environmental significance of Sugarloaf Bay and its surrounds and the importance of maintaining their integrity in these times of heightened environmental awareness. The Bay and its surrounding bushland, which includes both rainforest and mangroves, represent a rare regional resource of great recreational, educational, visual, ecological and scientific significance, a now all-too-rare remaining example of the bushland/waterway complexes for which Sydney is unique among the great cities of the world. All political parties have a responsibility to ensure that these remain for future generations.

As our local member, we seek your support for a rational approach to urban transport planning in the northern suburbs, with a commitment to expansion to public transport infrastructure and, in recognition of the significant environmental values of the area, look forward to an announcement that the Warringah Freeway through Castlecrag WILL NOT BE CONSTRUCTED.



PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

MEMBER FOR MIDDLE HARBOUR

Electorate Office
128a Penshurst Street
Willoughby 2068
P.O. Box 311
Tel. 958 4192

OPEN LETTER TO MEMBERS OF
CASTLECRAG PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

8861 AGN 21

This letter confirms our conversation of 16th November, 1988. I am happy to provide the following information in writing for the interest of Castlecrag residents.

Matters raised by your delegations now on two occasions in recent months have been taken up with my colleague, the Hon. Bruce Baird, M.P., Minister for Transport.

The Government is committed to the retention of land which was part of the Warringah Freeway Corridor.

It is felt that future generations living on the Warringah Peninsular should not be denied, because of massive resumption costs, this option as one means of meeting potential transport needs in the distant future.

This has been our consistent position now for several years and is unlikely to change even though no programme is either in place or foreseen to exercise this option.

As you know, the Government's Capital Works priority for roads in my electorate is to undertake the construction of the Gore Hill Link of the Warringah Expressway prior to 1992. Planning is now well advanced and construction has commenced.

As a further means of alleviating traffic congestion within my electorate, and the adjacent North Shore electorate, I have explored and advocated the construction of linking Eastern Valley Way at Edinburgh Road, Castlecrag, with the existing Warringah Expressway. The Minister for Transport has indicated that he is not in a position to consider this project because of funding limitations.

Therefore the probability of attracting massive additional funds to undertake construction of the controversial Sugarloaf Bridge is extremely remote.

I am unaware of any additional or alternative freeway proposals which the Minister for Transport might consider which would affect the interests of local residents in the foreseeable future.

I trust that these assurances will alleviate any concerns which local residents may have regarding use of the freeway corridor.

Kind regards,

Peter Collins, M.P.
Member for Middle Harbour

BUSH REGENERATION IN THE AMPITHEATRE
Deborah Ringe, 530A Committee

Residents have no doubt noticed in previous issues of The Crag reference to our Spring Festival, and hopefully many of you have attended some of the events. Staging the Festival represents a lot of hard work, but one of the major activities which continues all year round is the maintenance of our Castlehaven Reserve.

Last May the 530A Committee which administers the Reserve, asked local resident and qualified teacher of bush regeneration, Sylvia Taylor, to prepare a paper and management plan for the Castlehaven Reserve, incorporating the Ampitheatre. She enthusiastically tackled the project, producing a clear and precise report identifying problem areas and drawing up a three-year plan to restore the Reserve to its former beauty. The management plan formed the basis for a successful submission to Willoughby Council, the outcome of which is a well-organised team of local qualified and trainee bush regenerators who are already producing results.

To give credit where it is due, the project would not have been possible without the interest and financial support of Willoughby Council. Following an on-site meeting with Council's Vic Winterfeldt and Peter Wicking, and Alderman Pat Reilly, it was agreed that a team of suitably qualified local residents could carry out the work, employed by Council on a contract basis. The Castlehaven Reserve 530A Committee now administers the programme, under Sylvia Taylor's supervision, with Council's Bushland Supervisor Kerry Heatley keeping an eye on overall progress.

The first stage of the plan has been to clear climbers which were choking the tree canopy, and generally clean up the Reserve to an acceptable level for events to take place there. Selective weeding and pruning will follow, with the ultimate aim of low level maintenance sessions 3 or 4 times a year. We are currently able to call on 13 regenerators, either qualified or trainees, almost all of whom live in Castlecrag, to work in teams of 3 or 4, for 3 to 4 hours at a time.

We would like to remind all residents that reserves are not dumping grounds for garden rubbish and junk mail. In the initial stages of our cleanup, large quantities of domestic garden refuse were removed. To those who would never consider taking the easy way out, please don't take offence; to the guilty ones, please consider the long-term damage caused to our native bush by such thoughtlessness and selfish actions, and make use of the regular Council collections.

CASTLECRAG LIBRARY

The Community Centre, The Rampart

LIBRARY HOURS:

TUESDAYS 3.30 - 4.30PM

THURSDAYS 12.30 - 4PM

SATURDAYS 10AM - NOON

NEW BOOKS LIST:

MURDOCH, A	Family Business
DURAS, M	Blue Eyes, Black Hair
HIGHMAN, C	Wallis, Secret Lives
LESSING, D	Fifth Child
BRADFORD, B T	To Be the Best
KERR, A	Lanterns over Pinchgut
DICKENS, M	Dear Doctor Lily
ARMITAGE, A	Chapter of Innocence
ROWE, J	Grim Pickings
KELLY, G	Arrows of Rain
DUFF, G	Veg. Microwave Cookbook
TURNBULL, M	Spy Catcher Trial
HUFFINGTON, A	Picasso, Creator and
NORMAN, P	Awful Moments
CORNISH, E	Complete Microwave Cook
BARTHOLOMEW	WORLD ATLAS
DRABBLE, M	Summer Bird-Cage
RENDALL, R	Secret House of Death
GREY, A	Peking
MASTERTON, G	Lords of the Air
ARCHER, J	Twist to the Tale
BOOTH, M	Black Chameleon
CARTER, R	Armada
ANTHONY, E	House of Vandekar
CALLISON, B	Trapp + World War Three
CORNWALL, B	Wildtrack
GARDNER, J	Scorpius
COOPER, J	Rivals
GRAHAM, W	Cameo
EASTERMAN, D	Ninth Buddah
KRANTZ, J	Till We Meet Again
PIZZEY, E	Consul General's Daughter
COLLINS, J	Prime Time
URIS, L	Mitla Pass
LANSBURY, C	Grotto
CRAIG, T	All the Grey Cats

and numerous paperbacks.

TAKE-OVER

Harold Spies, Conservation Society

Take: 'grasp, seize, capture, gain, assume possession of' (Concise Oxford).

Unfortunately we live in a society where material possessions tend to dominate our lives and attitudes. It is often assumed especially by those who have wealth, that larger and bigger in land or dwelling are naturally better. One common example is the taking over of part of a reserve, often bushland, for one's own use. Trees are cut down so that your view is not obstructed; exotic grasses or plants are planted, fences are often extended, or incinerators placed. So in time you come to think of the piece of public open space as your land and fiercely resent any member of the public walking on it or using it.

These take-overs or encroachments are common in Willoughby and other communities, and many are longstanding. As Castlecrag houses are often on the top or sides of ridges backing on to bushland, the temptation to extend is quite strong. Encroachments such as incinerators, tool sheds, barbecues or swings can be readily rectified, however extended gardens enclosed in rock walls, some of which extend for metres into reserves, are serious problems. It is fair to say that some residents do not know where their boundaries are. Willoughby Council has not had the political will to tackle these take-over problems. It is quite decisive about encroachment past the front boundaries, but less so with back boundary bushland encroachments. One recent example now in the process of construction, a rock wall on the Northern Escarpment, was brought to the notice of Council who permitted it to go ahead. This action by a private individual is an alienation of public land, our land owned by Council and held in trust, and under its care and control. A basic principle of ownership is involved here, as any public reserve is land owned by the community with our elected Council as caretaker. No part of any reserve should be alienated for the sole use of a private individual. Council appears to have ignored this principle, although our Mayor, Alderman Reidy, has stated that local government should be sensitive and responsive to the demands of those it represents.

Here in Castlecrag we are fortunate to be surrounded by reserves of bushland, bays and harbour foreshores. If we value this environment, we should care for it, protect it and prevent its degradation by private take-overs, by the dumping of rubbish or garden refuse, or the cutting down of trees.

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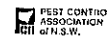
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A pre-Burley Griffin Stone Cottage
Nancy Fleming

In 1921 my late father-in-law whilst medical superintendent at Lidcombe purchased land at Castlecrag on which to build a weekend cottage (a long journey!). He always showed great discernment about land and this block had a large area with a view facing due north over Sugarloaf Bay, with a steep descent to the harbour foreshores. The stone for the cottage was quarried from sandstone nearby.

In 1951 having been given the land and cottage as a wedding present, we moved to Castlecrag, building the 2-storey home between the cottage and Edinburgh Road because the cottage was on the land zoned for the Expressway.

After my family grew up and moved away, I decided to move to the cottage. Architect Barry Kerr helped to renovate the interior; the enclosed timber verandah was repaired, and the fibro kitchen and bedroom areas were replaced with timber to be more environmentally acceptable to the area. The old tin roof was replaced by brown comalco which also blended well with the landscape. The old ceiling made from tea chest panels was replaced with radiata pine and the original sandstone walls sandblasted and sealed. Even the mortar is interesting as it contains numerous seashells. Barry also spent many hours planning the indirect lighting in the main room to give a candle effect. The original fireplace still works well.

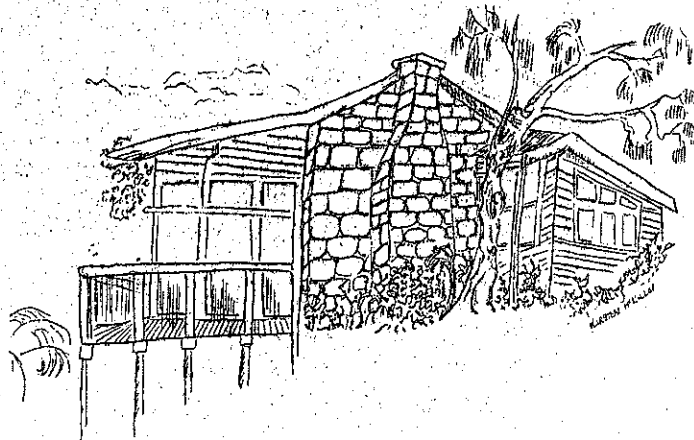
I now have a lovely cottage which is eminently suited to retirement living, with space to have family and friends to visit and share my view. Sunrises in the morning, sunsets at night and kookaburras to feed are an added bonus.

It is a cottage of many happy memories. Bim and Roma Hilder spent their honeymoon there. It has been the first home of many young couples. The informal reception following my second wedding several years ago was held in the cottage and garden on a perfect spring day. Sadly, my husband did not live long enough to really enjoy the cottage, but we were surrounded by supportive friends during his illness. ADARDS, opera, church and social work groups have used my cottage and garden

for informal parties. Dinner parties around the old mahogany table (acquired by my father-in-law during the Depression from Admiralty House), have been most friendly and stimulating.

I have always been most interested in preserving the environment and Beverley Blacklock and other conservationists have inspired me in my quest, to birdscape my garden. I miss my faithful Kelpie dog and would love another canine companion but because I have no fences need one who would not wander; I would not turn away a middle-aged dog who needs a home.

Every day I count my many blessings for being able to live in such a wonderful suburb with so many friends.



OBITUARY

It is with great sadness that we record the death on 17th November of Thora Sorenson, a resident of Castlecrag for over 48 years. Thora and her husband ~~Chris~~ were very active in our early struggles to establish a Community Centre, a kindergarten and a school in Castlecrag, and have been staunch supporters ever since. Our delegation to the Minister for Education requesting that a school be built here, was led by Thora. Sadly, ill health has prevented their participation in local affairs in recent years. Thora knew tragedy in her life and faced it with courage. Professionally she was a teacher, and to all who knew her, an intelligent, caring and forgiving person.



A perusal of our latest Police Report highlights the fact that a majority of the thefts in Castlecrag occur during daylight hours. Again, in almost half the robberies, entrance was gained through unlocked doors or windows! Need we say more? A full report will be in our December NW Newsletter. Be an active Neighbourhood Watcher; help make your home secure by talking NW with your neighbours, exchanging phone numbers, being alert to unusual activities. Communication - that's the key. If you are new to the area, phone Richard Wheeler 958 6963 for information on joining Neighbourhood Watch.

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AT CASTLECRAG INFANTS SCHOOL
ON SATURDAY 10 TH DECEMBER AT 3 PM

AFTERNOON TEA WILL BE SERVED

**PETER COLLINS AND SEVERAL OTHER GUEST SPEAKERS
HAVE BEEN INVITED TO SPEAK**

PLEASE ATTEND AND SHOW YOUR SUPPORT
FOR CASTLECRAG INFANTS SCHOOL
AND PUBLIC EDUCATION

Sue Milner – phone 958 6533
Barbara Thomas – phone 958 3693

Dear Editors,

We are all very concerned to hear of the proposed closure of our school. As most of us are aware, the grounds of this school have been maintained by many caring parents, from the day the school buildings were erected. We have as a community spent many long hours on the planting of local trees and shrubs, and have done our part to help preserve the bird life in our area. The children who have attended the school have grown up with an awareness of how delicate the balance of nature is. What has made our school unique is that the children there were taught the importance of caring for their environment, and had the example of their parents working together to achieve this. The Garden Committee with the co-operation of the teaching staff started a book to record the plantings, and the children who took part.

All the trees and shrubs are indigenous to this escarpment and in doing this we have preserved the natural environment. Our children have had the experience of being in the classroom while gazing through the window to see Rainbow Lorikeets and Wattle Birds feeding from the trees and shrubs the children before them had planted.

We cannot allow the current government to take this away from future children nor do we want the land sold off to private developers. I and many others would stand in the way of any destruction of the gardens. Is the closure of these small schools another saga in the Greiner Government versus the Environment? Governments are around for only a short term but can destroy what has taken many generations to develop. It would be very sad for this wonderful piece of nature to go under the bulldozers. At the very least, these unique grounds should be preserved as a park for all.

Helen Levett

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Obituary

We report with sadness the death on 9.11.88 of Edna Brown who with her sons Ian and Ross lived in Castlecrag for many years. Edna worked hard for both the kindergarden and St. James Church.

HOUSESITTERS AVAILABLE

Responsible older couple available for housesitting in Castlecrag: 28/1/89 to 10/4/89 or part thereof.
Please ring 958 3829.

ANGLICAN CHRISTMAS DAY CHURCH SERVICES

ALL WELCOME

St. James - Castlecrag: 8.0 a.m. St. Johns - Willoughby: 9.30 a.m.

The Crag is edited on behalf of the Castlecrag Progress Association by Mary Baker 958 5518 and Kerry McKillop 958 4516.