

NEWSLETTER OF THE CASTLECRAG PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

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* SIXTY FOUR YEARS OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT *

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Eric Kaye

The Environment Planning and Assessment Act was introduced in 1979 by Paul Landa, then Minister for the Environment and a resident of Castlecrag. Most would agree that despite early teething troubles, the Act, administered by Local Government, has proved to be generally successful. Amendments to it have been made over the years in the form of State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs). The State Government is now in the process of amending that part of the Act which relates to Medium-density Housing. The amendments will allow a developer, whose proposals have been refused by Council, to appeal directly to the Land and Environment Court. In this case the Court will deal with the matter only as a Building Application, and is required to assume that rezoning to medium-density is already in force. This effectively takes planning control out of the hands of Council and is in my view a dangerous precedent.

In concept the Medium-density Housing provisions allow a developer who has acquired say four adjacent 1/4 acre lots, preferably fronting 2 or 3 streets, to redevelop the total site with medium-density buildings and common recreation facilities. Thus an area which originally housed four families could then house 60 or more people. Controlled by responsible Local Government and carried out by sensitive developers, there are areas where such development could be socially desirable. With Council control and planning removed, however, I have grave fears for the future of our urban environment. (continued over....)

THE NEXT MEETING OF THE CASTLECRAG PROGRESS ASSOCIATION WILL BE HELD IN THE COMMUNITY HALL, THE RAMPART, TUESDAY 20th JUNE AT 8PM. ALL WELCOME.

THE CONSERVATION SOCIETY WILL HOLD ITS NEXT MEETING ON FRIDAY 21 JULY 8PM AT 78 THE BULWARK. NEW MEMBERS ARE MOST WELCOME. President Harold Spies 958 8569

Please accept/renew my membership of the Castlecrag Progress Association, for which I enclose \$4, and/or a donation (\$) to cover costs such as the printing of The Crag.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Please make cheques payable to Castlecrag Progress Association, and send to the Hon. Treasurer, Diana Jones, 72 Linden Way, Castlecrag, 2068.

We are very pleased to welcome the many residents who have joined the Progress Association since our last newsletter.

The amendments to the Act are intended to provide increased housing in already fully developed precincts throughout the metropolitan area. This will have the beneficial effect of reducing our urban sprawl and the increased population density should make public transport more financially viable. On the other hand, however, public services such as sewerage are already over-extended and such unplanned medium-density housing will exacerbate these problems.

With more people will come more cars and greater traffic density on our roads. This inevitably will generate demands for more freeways and major roads. I am firmly convinced that this demand must be met not by more roads, but by better public transport in particular underground light rail.

Earlier this month Rita and I represented the Progress Association at the Urban Transport Conference, held in Sydney. I will report on this at our next meeting. An excellent keynote address was given by Prof. Peter Groenewegen (Sydney University), and I quote his concluding remarks:

'...contrary to (the statements of) the Minister for Transport, there may be very positive benefits from a little more congestion on our roads. Despite the very heavy financial costs of operating motor vehicles, car travel is continually increasing. This suggests that direct economic penalties are unlikely to induce car owners to switch to public transport. Increased congestion on our roads may therefore be the only realistic mechanism to encourage people to switch to socially more beneficial public transport. Travel time saving for private car transport, paradoxically, can then be seen as a public 'bad', making 'savings' estimates from highway construction as provided by the Minister even more dubious. Given the looming petrol shortage and its trade balance implications, more has to be done to improve rail transport than 'tarting up' the stations and similar cosmetic changes which constitute the rail rejuvenation principles of the Greiner Government. Additional rail networks should be planned now, at the beginning of the planning stage for new urban areas. Freeway construction, which on overseas evidence cannot achieve what it sets out to do, should be quietly shelved. Not only will this give a better urban environment, it will also make a substantial contribution to the national economy over the decades to come.'

Please keep in mind our trash and treasure stall at the Willoughby Fair in September, for which we need donations of old books, records, toys, games and small household goods. Ring Joyce Batterham (958 4161) Rita Kaye (958 6146) or Sue Randle (958 6344) to come to collect items you no longer require and may wish to donate. This is our major fundraising effort with proceeds going to our newsletter, and 25% to the Castlecrag Conservation Society.

Congratulations! Dr Garth Nicholson one of our members well known for his tireless fight against expressways and for cycleways, with his Sydney Univ. research team and colleagues at Duke University USA, has located the chromosome for the genetically inherited disease known as CMT which is a neuromuscular disorder. The discovery is a world first and will lead to effective treatment of the disease, and also enable prenatal diagnosis of the condition.

The Salvation Army appeal in our suburb has exceeded \$4,000, with local collectors reporting that Castlecrag residents have once again given most generously to this cause.

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

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62 years ago, I was a young man of 23 working in a very good job for a Chartered Accountant in Melbourne at £5 a week. When offered £8 a week as Secretary/Accountant of a Sydney company I accepted and soon discovered that this company was the Greater Sydney Development Association with a Mr. Walter Burley Griffin as Managing Director. At that time they had an office in Bligh St.

This was before the Harbour Bridge was built and it was not long before I found myself walking down Edinburgh Rd. from the tram in Willoughby Rd. There I met Walter Griffin in his office/home in The Parapet. Also there were his wife Marion and his staff: Louise Lightfoot, Henry Pynor and the stenographer secretary: Cappy. I soon got to know the Philips, Foxes, Herberts, Hilders, Trinnicks, Beebys and others; and I started to get involved in the social and other activities of the community.

I noticed that Cappy was taking a special interest in me and I took a special interest in her and we were married 60 years ago in 1929. Shortly after, we were able to rent the Griffin stone house at 140 Edinburgh Rd. for £1-10-0d per week. With Cappy's earnings of £3 per week and my £8, we were fairly well off but she soon ceased work and then came the depression years when all earnings - and interest too - were compulsorily reduced by 10% and even that was not always paid to me on time. So we shared the house with Frank Duncan and his wife while their house (which has recently been sold) was built, each paying half the rent.

And what could we see from that house then? Bare rocky ground with a very rough track where Edinburgh Rd. is now. In those days Castlecrag was a happy hunting ground for anyone who wanted firewood or soil and the top of the ridge was very bare. On the school site we could see the remains of the 2FC Wireless bulidings.

In the Depression years of 1930 to 1939 there was no school, no made road, no transport and only half a dozen or so houses. My wife and I were soon involved in the Neighbourhood Circle, the bridge club, the tennis club, the play reading group and the Progress Association. There was a wonderful co-ordination of the group to work for improved conditions. I was Secretary of the Progress Association for 13 consecutive years and then I was President for another 4. For issues of wider concern we sent delegates to the Willoughby Municipality Federated Progress Associations and I was concurrently Secretary of that for 8 years and President for 2. I must have been a glutton for punishment because after that I was an Alderman for 8 years of which I served 2 years as Deputy Mayor and 2 years as Mayor. But I was only one of a number who also did much and helped to co-ordinate what we were trying to achieve.

And we achieved a lot. Let us recall some of the needs we worked upon in the early years through the Progress Association.

(To be continued next issue)



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THINK GLOBALLY, ACT LOCALLY
Harold Spies, Conservation Society

'Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth.' (Isaiah 5:8)

Recently I was reading a book 'World Without Trees' by Robert Lamb, in which he describes the potential effect on the planet if all our forests are destroyed, the Greenhouse Effect. Looking at the publishing date it was, to my surprise, 1979. Ten years have passed and we are just starting to sit up and take notice. Lamb even describes the destruction of Amazon rainforests in Brazil even then, and goes back even further in time when he refers to the Brazilian state of Sao Paulo losing two thirds of a 60% tree cover between 1910 and 1950.

'Trees...dinosaurs of our era'

The Greenhouse Effect is mainly, but not solely, due to increasing concentration of CO2 in the atmosphere, caused by burning of fossil fuels, by deforestation for timber, fuel, roads or agriculture; accumulation occurring at an ever increasing rate since the Industrial Revolution and technological advances eg the chain saw. The forests of the world, especially the tropical rainforests are, along with the phytoplankton of the oceans, the major sinks of the world where CO2 is fixed and stored by photosynthetic action. This bound carbon is later released when the trees die, then decompose or are burned. Rainforests are also important because of their vast content of animal and plant species; they are genetic reservoirs. Anthony Huxley says 'We can replace temperate trees, but the tropical rainforest is the unrepeatable climax of millenia of evolution, forming the most diverse assemblages of plant species and associated animal life which man will ever know - trees may well become the dinosaurs of our era - if the birthrate is not soon curbed I believe man may follow them into limbo.'

PATH TO PARK FUN RUN - 25th June.

A 10.5km run commencing at 10.0a.m. in Spring Street Chatswood and finishing in Willoughby Park. Proceeds from the run donated to N.S.W. Society for Crippled Children. Great prizes to be won too. For information, entry forms and details of cost, please phone: 412-9107

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C O T T A G E S U P D A T E

In response to requests from numerous residents that we keep them informed on matters to do with the cottages on Sugarloaf Bay, a letter was sent to Mr. A. J. Payne, Town Clerk, Willoughby Council, after the last general meeting of the Progress Association requesting -

"that no further action be taken on the cottages by either Willoughby Municipal Council or the Department of Planning until a Heritage Study on the Northern Escarpment of Castlecrag, and in particular the foreshore cottages, be completed, as recommended by the National Trust in their report of 30th March, 1989."

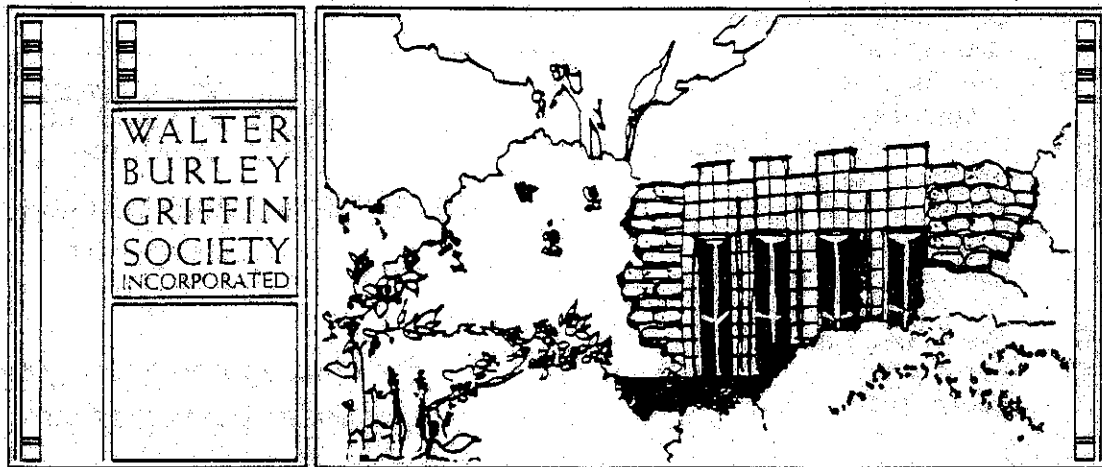
The stone cottage and the two waterfront Federation cottages have now been classified by the National Trust and we have not heard from Council whether a proper study of all the open space lands is to be completed as requested by the Trust.

LOCK YOUR GARAGE!!



In the Newcastle area alone over the past four months thieves have stolen \$100,000 worth of goods in raids on garages and sheds. A long way from Castlecrag you say? Well, only last month the car of one of our residents had the upholstery slashed whilst it was in their unlocked garage. 'Enough said!'

Thanks to your Neighbourhood Watch action, burglaries are being kept down. Sure, some still occur, but don't throw up your hands in despair. After all, in spite of a police force, crimes continue. But, think what things would be like without our police!!



□ ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO THE SECRETARY □

After six months of actively lobbying the NSW Government and its various departments, the Walter Burley Griffin Society Incorporated was very disappointed that the Government announced at the last minute that it would not financially support the acquisition of The Duncan House, the finest example of Walter Burley Griffin's domestic architecture, despite earlier indications to the contrary.

The Society had requested a Conservation Order (with Mr Duncan's agreement) from the Heritage Council as part of its application for funding. Almost as a consolation prize, the Minister for Planning announced an Interim Conservation Order on the house, only the night before the auction.

In view of the Government's clear indication that it would not support the public acquisition of the best example of Griffin's architecture, the Society has decided that it must increase its efforts to raise funds independently to acquire a well-preserved Griffin house when one becomes available.

In the meantime the Society will continue to acquire Griffin memorabilia and reference material and would appreciate any assistance or donations (remember donations over \$2 are tax deductible).

Adrienne Kabos, Secretary

WOMEN'S YOGA GROUP.

A women's yoga and meditation class meets at 8.30am Sundays at the Castlecrag Community Centre and is seeking new members. A qualified yoga teacher helps one learn to relax and unwind. For further info phone 971 7058 or 958 5143.

CASTLECRAG LIBRARY

The Community Centre, The Rampart

TUESDAYS 3.30 - 4.30PM

THURSDAYS 12.30 - 4PM

SATURDAYS 10AM - NOON

NEW BOOKS LIST: (abbreviated)

- COURTNEY, B Power of One
TYLER, A Breathing Lessons
NICOLE, C Pearl of the Orient
CLANCY, T Cardinal of the Kremlin
SANDERS, L Timothy's Game
McCARRY, C Bride of the Wilderness
SHELDON, S Sands of Time
BLOCH, M Secret File of Duke of Windsor

MANTLE, J In for a Penny (Biography of Jeffrey Archer)
BRYSON, J Evil Angels (Lindy Chamberlain)
SEYMOUR, G The Contract Kingfisher

GOLDIE, P Under Southern Stars
SUZUKI, D Metamorphosis
MOWAT, F Woman in the Mists (Dian Fossey)
SMITH, D AUSTRALIAN ENCYCLOPAEDIA
FAST, H The Pledge
FORBES, C The Greek Key
COTTEE, K First Lady
McLEAN, A Death Train

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

LECTURE: TUESDAY 27 JUNE 1989

AT HISTORY HOUSE, 6.15 pm
133 MACQUARIE ST. SYDNEY
PHONE 27 8001

LECTURE IS FREE

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CASTLECrag INFANTS SCHOOL

SAVE OUR SCHOOL * COMMUNITY RESIDENTS ACTION GROUP

There has been much activity at the Infants School in recent months while assessing and responding to the decision by the State Government to close our school at the end of this year. In February the P & C Association prepared a detailed submission for the Department of Education pointing out that their decision to close the school was based on (among other things) an inappropriate demographic analysis and on incomplete details of available school capacity and demand in our region. In fact, our initial demographic study (from the last census) reveals that the Castlecrag area has experienced a 37% increase in the 0-4 age group between 1981 and 1986. The Department, however, whilst conceding that these figures represented a truer picture, has stuck to their recommendation to close the school. They have been unable to justify their decision. We have now engaged a highly qualified Statistician (with a large band of helpers) to conduct a detailed telephone census to give us a more up to date picture of the local population. Willoughby Council has been approached for their support; they are realising that with an increase in medium density housing and the loss of Castlecrag school, Willoughby School could be faced with overcrowding in just a few years. Dr Metherell has publicly announced that there will be more school closures, so Naremburn Public is also placed in an insecure position. It appears that the quality of public education is being severely eroded in NSW and if we don't object now it will be too late to save what many of us believe is a basic right of every taxpayer. Our children are our greatest assets, selling off the land from under their feet cannot be seen as responsible management.

At a meeting on 4th May of over seventy residents a new Save Our School Community Action Group was appointed. The committee consists of past, present and future parents and we are working hard to further our cause. We are not selfish, priveleged squealers (as Dr. Metherell asserts) but intelligent, caring, community minded citizens who can see the long term impact of removing such a viable and essential community focus. We actually feel it would be a more selfish act to sit back and let the Government sell this piece of valuable public land!

COMMUNITY FAIR/ REUNION.

Sunday, 30th April saw about 3,000 people crowd the grounds of the school to enjoy and participate in the many and varied activities offered at the Fair. Entertainment was a mixture of local and imported talent, with many ex-students of the Infants School performing in the Castle Cove School Band as well as the dynamic Banksia Singers. Even the fire-eating 'Jester Minute' was an indigenous species (David Blacklock)! Former Mayor of Willoughby and Secretary of Walter Burley Griffin's Company Mr Edgar Deans, gave an informative speech (printed in this issue) describing 'life in the Crag' in the 1930's and '40's. The Castlecrag Community Choir were warmly appreciated for their original songs 'You can't take it away from us' and 'The kids of Castlecrag School'.



TOGETHER WE GROW : SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

CASTLECRAG INFANTS SCHOOL

SAVE OUR SCHOOL * COMMUNITY RESIDENTS ACTION GROUP

The determination and hope for the retention of the school was expressed in the planting of forty native trees (donated by Willoughby Council). Twenty of these trees were set into the earth by families who have three generations living in the suburb, and the rest were planted by ex students. Mr John Spender (Fed member for North Sydney) and Alderman Pat Reilly (Willoughby Council) also planted a symbol of hope for the future of the school.

Apart from all the usual Fair activities, the Progress Association co-ordinated a Local History Exhibition which included Photos going back to the turn of the Century. This elicited much interest, as did the mostly complete record of class photos dating back to 1950.

The day will be remembered fondly by many people for the strengthening of community ties and the warm feeling of community spirit. A spirit that still exists here and which was initiated by Walter and Marion Griffin over fifty years ago.

The campaign to save the school is gaining momentum, we are seeking a broader base of support, becoming stronger and more clear about how to achieve our aims. People's time, inspiration and energy is our greatest asset, if you have any spare time we would love to hear from you, be it for word processing, letterboxing, helping on street stalls or any of the many tasks. Please leave your name and number with the secretary at school. This is a community issue; together we can win. This school refuses to die.

Lindy Batterham.

SOS Community Residents Action Group.

How do we teach our children to respect the earth?

Not to plunder her riches
but to treasure them?

That the great changes that will come in their lives
Will mean the end of the open-go on the factors of production
That the earth is not to be seen as full of opportunities for
them to become the most efficient exploiters of her resources
But rather

that she is full of opportunities for them to become excellent
stewards of the resources that remain
Not to become entrepreneurs of destruction
But custodians of renewal?

Will our children learn these lessons
if they see us let
the gardens of this school be destroyed?

We can save this part of the earth.
Let's do it.

Nick Hughes.

WILLOUGHBY YOUTH THEATRE.

Willoughby Youth Theatre meets on Saturdays (1.30 - 4.30) in St James Church Hall in Edinburgh Rd. under the direction of local playwright and director Nick Hughes. The sessions are great fun and involve theatre games, movement and acting skills and play making. The group will shortly begin a project using large-scale puppets and masks. New members are very welcome. Please ring 958 2127 for details.