

NEWSLETTER OF THE CASTLECRAG PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

No. 72

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OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 1990

* SIXTY FIVE YEARS OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT *

The Castlecrag Ampitheatre Committee

invites you to

CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

Friday 14th December - 7.30pm

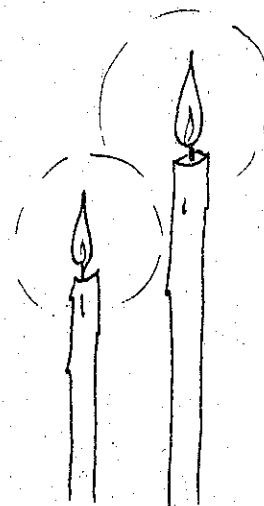
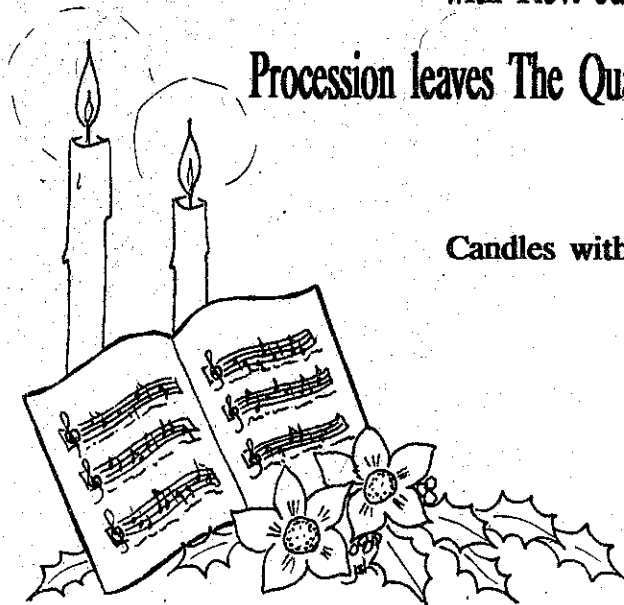
with Rev. Jason Page

Procession leaves The Quadrangle shops at 7pm

Candles with drippguards will be on sale at the theatre

Take the free bus from the shops
via the School
or walk the path between
17 and 19 The Citadel

**THERE IS NO PARKING
AT OR NEAR THE THEATRE**



WALTER BURLEY GRIFFIN SOCIETY INCORPORATED

The Walter Burley Griffin Society Incorporated held its Annual General Meeting at the Haven Ampitheatre on Sunday 28th October with guest speaker Assoc. Professor Jill Roe of Macquarie University who spoke on *Marion Mahony Griffin and Castlecrag in the inter war years*. Dr Roe is the author of *Beyond belief - Theosophy in Australia 1879-1939* which includes a look at Castlecrag during the inter-war years. From that study she has developed an interest in the Griffins, especially their religious and cultural lives. Her most interesting address covered the magical character of Marion Griffin and of Castlecrag, the ideal suburb that she and Walter strove to create. Marion was described as an extraordinary person, of great creative ability. Her talent for magnificent architectural drawings and directing theatre performances (at the Haven Ampitheatre) was combined with a strong spiritualism that resulted in a 'magical world'.

Distinguished guests in the audience included Sylvia Brose, who wrote the play *Mirabooka, the Southern Cross* that was performed in the ampitheatre in the 1930s, and Blossom Hopkinson, who had attended performances of Marion Griffin's plays during the 1930s and 1940s. The giant puppets of Marion and Walter looked knowingly down on the occasion.

The president, John Kabos, then gave a report of the Society's activities during the past year, including the successful application for a dollar for dollar grant of \$6,000 from the Heritage Council of New South Wales to assist in the production of a book titled *A vision for the future - Walter Burley Griffin and Castlecrag*.

He then discussed the vexed issue of the Society's involvement in monitoring proposals to renovate and extend dwellings in Castlecrag designed by Griffin. While this has not been a task that members of the Society find attractive, the lack of protection for the houses is of great concern, to Willoughby City Council, to most of the owners of the Griffin houses, and other members of the community. The finding of a balance between the wishes of the community and the rights of the owner, is difficult.

If the community wishes to preserve and maintain a structure that is important to that community, then:

- . the most effective way would be for the community itself to acquire it. This would also be fairest to the owner;
- . the next most effective way would be to formally restrict what the owner can do, by a Conservation Order. This is fair to the extent that the owner is made aware of restrictions and the importance of the structure, and has access to favourable grants and loans to help the private conservation of the structure;

. the third level would be to have no formal restrictions but to impose *ad hoc* restrictions as the need arises. This could be both unfair to the owner and risky for the community in that the imposition of the restrictions may be too late to protect the structure;

. the fourth level would be to take photographs and fully document the structure, and then not worry about changes to the structure itself.

. finally, there is always apathy, and reliance on memories of what no longer exists.

He went on to draw an analogy with the art world. It would be unthinkable for the National Gallery to take photographs of *Blue Poles* and then employ a prominent artist to paint over it.

All the houses but one in Castlecrag are in the third category, covered by no formal restrictions.

The Society is hopeful that the planned book will go some way towards documenting the Castlecrag houses, and generating greater community awareness and caring.

In conclusion, the president outlined the Society's support for local issues and activities that are consistent with its aims, and with the Griffin ideals.



WALTER BURLEY GRIFFIN MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN

Mrs Addie Saltis

Situated on the island at the junction of Sortie Port and Edinburgh Road, the **Walter Burley Griffin Memorial Fountain** was Castlecrag's main contribution to the Willoughby Municipality Centenary Celebrations in 1965.

It was commissioned by the now defunct Castlecrag Community Centre Committee to honour the memory of Walter Burley Griffin, the architect and developer of the original Castlecrag Estate. The fountain was designed and constructed by **Bim Hilder**, who had worked with Griffin. The design is based on the diamond or crystalline shape favoured by Griffin, in free form modules of copper.

The fountain was unveiled on Centenary Day, 23rd October, 1965 by **Ald. McGinty, Mayor of Willoughby**. On the same day native trees and shrubs were planted at the shopping centre, several owners of Griffin houses opened their homes for inspection and a demonstration of the design and construction of knitlock tiles, used in several of the Griffin houses, was organised in the Infants' School grounds.

The committee's appeal to residents for funds to construct the fountain was oversubscribed by 400 pounds. Much of this was later donated to the **Castlecrag Infants' School** for a preliminary landscaping plan for the school grounds.

Reprinted from *The Crag* newsletter, May-June 1983.

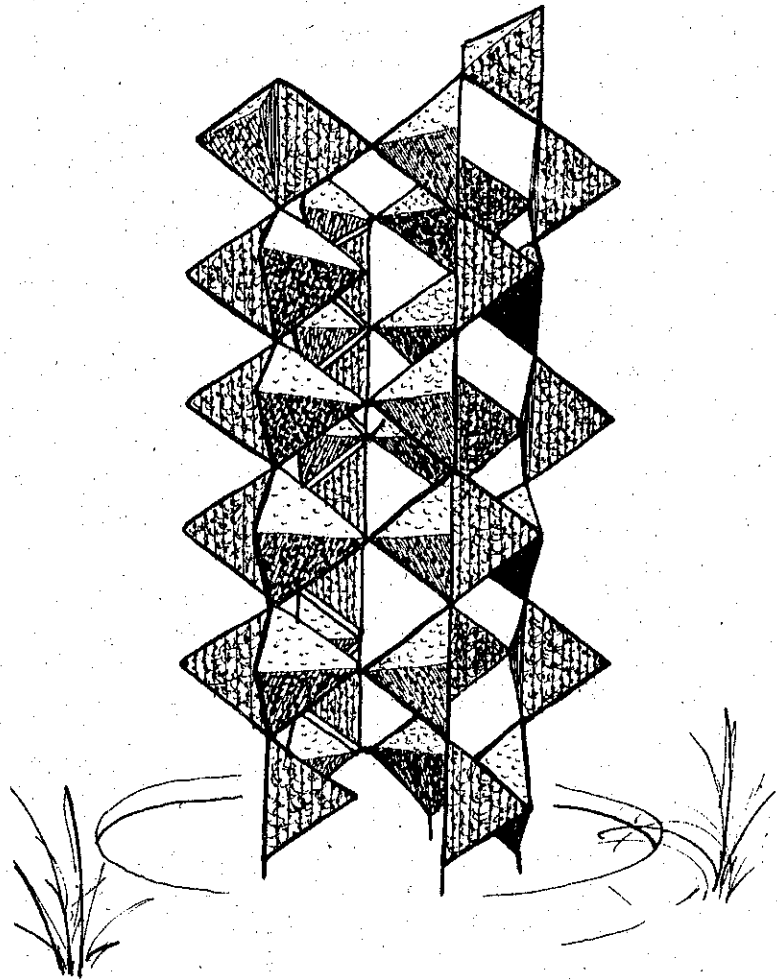
We wish to thank the many residents who donated so generously to our stall for the Willoughby Funfair and later for the garage sale at the School. Although the weather was unkind for the Funfair, the sale at the School was a huge success.

Sue Randle, President

For a relaxed game of bowls in quiet parkland surroundings, all bowlers are welcome at.....

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BIM

It was a question of mending a child's toy: 'Uncle Bim fix'
Lighting in the Theatre, same answer
Plans for a house, building it
Building stone retaining walls or a bush track
Making a fountain to honour Burley Griffin
A mural for St James' church, etcetera

He fixed!

Blossom and Noel Hopkinson

Gregory's

CASTLE DELICATESSEN AND
GOURMET CENTRE

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A penny on the bus to school. Twopence over the bridge. Sitting upstairs with my mother on the 203 looking down on the tidal swamp under the 'suspension bridge' where Northbridge turns into Cammeray.

Going on expeditions with my sister and the Kaye girls to Willis' Castle - a constant mirage alone in the bush, which so overawed us after the long journey in the 207 (later, our bikes) along Eastern Valley Way, leaving civilization at the Castlecove golf links, that we hardly dared approach its reality.

Just before I was to leave the Crag, on my way to the library, meeting Blossom Hopkinson in The Rampart and receiving the very strong impression she was in touch with the Crag's many tutelary spirits (*Ed's note: we hope they are still around and keeping watch on the School*).

The library at the end of the Community Centre which was also Miss Mason's kindergarten. Helping Mrs Case take down the wooden fronts which covered the bookshelves most of the time.

Bim Hilder, the kindest, wisest, most handsome man I've ever met. And a magician.

More embarrassment. A black tighted, white shirted beach-ball bouncing up and down as Prince Albrecht to Lesley MacKay's annual, impassioned Giselle.

Mrs Buhrich, near the end of my egg-run, charming, a lady architect, with her tiny Fiat cars. One of her god-like twin sons asking me if my eggs were black market. I didn't know what that meant (they were terribly expensive and eggs were hard to get). Last customer, Mrs Kaye, busy and friendly, before I turned my egg-cart for the attempt on The Pinnacle.

A steam-roller 'making' Edinburgh Road, blowing smoke rings out of its chimney. The terrifying steam compressors and their jackhammers and gypsy men.

Mr Deans killing a huge red-bellied black snake in The Citadel. The sharks.

Broadening my horizons along Edinburgh Road into Willoughby, down Eastern Valley Way into Northbridge. The pictures there on a Saturday afternoon. My father rowing my sister, brother and I across from the ferocious Eddy's boatshed to the swimming club at Northbridge Baths. My mother scandalising him by being seen riding my sister's bike to the shops.

I am asked to write an introduction to a school discipline policy. I find myself beginning *The school is a community ...*

The sense of living on an archaeological site, that one day I would find the Griffin so well integrated with the landscape that no-one had noticed it and I would be able to go to it whenever ...

CASTLECRAG LIBRARY

The community Centre, The Rampart

TUESDAYS 3.30 - 4.30PM

THURSDAYS 12.30 - 4PM

SATURDAYS 10AM - NOON

NEW BOOKS LIST:

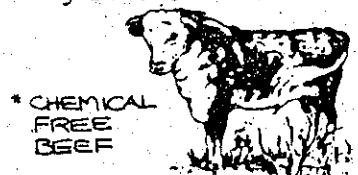
- JOLLY, E *Cabin Fever*
 - GREENE, G *The Last Woru*
 - SILLITOE, A *Last Loves*
 - WAMBAUGH, J *The Golden Orange*
 - DICKENS, M *Closed at Dusk*
 - BROOKNER, A *Brief Lives*
 - ADLER, E *The Property of a Lady*
 - BAR, D *Simone de Beauvoir*
 - IRISH, L *The House of O'Shea*
 - TRYON, T *The Night of the Moonbow*
 - COWIE, V *Face Value*
 - SHELDON, S *Memories of Midnight*
 - WESLEY, M *Harnessing Peacocks*
 - HOSPITAL, J *Isobars*
 - CUSSLER, C *Dragon*
 - ASHLEY, L *A Life by Design*
 - CLEARY, J *Murder Song*
 - CRAIG, T *The Last Raven*
 - VAN LUSTBADER, E *Angel Eyes*
 - CONDON, R *Emperor of Africa*
 - BEAUMAN, S *Dark Angel*
 - DOUGLAS, K *Dance with the Devil*
 - ADAMS, G *Longleg*
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WHAT IS BEING PLANTED IN OUR RESERVES?

The answer is: **Things that shouldn't be.**

The Sydney Region covers an area of some 4000 sq.km, from Broken Bay to the Woronora Plateau and west to the foothills of the Blue Mountains. As the excellent guide *Native Plants of the Sydney Region* by Baker *et al* states, 'the original diversity and distribution of flora was governed by local combinations of geology, landforms, soil and climate'. Some plants have very limited occurrence and distinctive local forms occur in different areas. Some local examples are the golden form of Sunshine Wattle (*Acacia terminalis*) in Mowbray Park; the pink form of *Grevillea linearifolia* and weeping form of *Hakea dactyloides* in Flat Rock Reserve; and 'blue' Kangaroo Grass *Themeda australis* and the large blue form of *Dampiera stricta* in Harold Reid Reserve.

Baker points out that little of the original flora now remains except in the National Parks. Nevertheless, in some areas around Sydney significant areas of native vegetation remain, although they are increasingly threatened by run-off, enriched soils, weeds, ignorance and *ad hoc* decisions. These natural areas, mostly surrounding the fingers of waterways, are what gives Sydney its unique character. In Willoughby, we are lucky to have considerable areas of bushland, only 8km from the city.

Because of the increasing pressure on urban bushland, it will always need maintenance. If properly carried out, this will ensure the bushland's survival and will be vastly less expensive than the maintenance of formal parks and gardens. It is important that Council and residents recognise that a different type of management is needed.

The bush may appear to be a 'lovely informal garden' but managing it is not gardening. In particular, the desire to plant it like a garden should be resisted. Where weeds have been removed, the bush should be given a chance to regenerate. This may take a little longer than the very quick response we might expect in our artificial gardens. Sandstone-based soils will be slower to respond than shale-based soils; areas with heavy privet infestation will take longer than non-privet areas.

Planting should only be done as a last resort (ie when there is no seed bed in the soil and no possibility of seed from adjoining bushland) and then the selection of plants is critical.

Because the plants in our bushland have evolved according to local conditions it is essential that not only the character but also the **genetic integrity** be maintained by using plants grown from seed or cuttings taken from that particular reserve, or bushland in an adjacent reserve in the same catchment.

The phrase **indigenous plants**, meaning plants native to, or belonging naturally to an area, is now commonly used. For planting in local bushland reserves, or adjacent degraded areas, it is essential that **locally indigenous plants** are used, not plants indigenous to the wider Sydney Region. As well as maintaining character and genetic integrity they are more likely to survive and to attract local fauna.

There is an increasing tendency by Council to plant in reserves. During selection of plants for the WEPA stall at Willoughby Fair, we visited a number of native plant nurseries. Conversation with growers revealed that rather than growing its own plants, Willoughby Council is buying in plants for reserves in much the same way one might choose petunias from a catalogue.

This is an appropriate matter to be taken up by a **Bushland Advisory Committee** to assist Council in proper management practices.

Gay Spies

The logo for MOMO Interiors features the word 'MOMO' in a stylized, outlined font above the word 'Interiors' in a cursive script.

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Our meetings are open to all residents so come along to our next one on **Tuesday 27th November** at the **Infants School, Edinburgh Road, 8pm**, and meet some other members of the Castlecrag community.

The next meeting of the **Castlecrag Conservation Society** will be held on **Friday 16th November 1990** at the **Castlecrag Infants School at 8.00 pm**. For details, ring **Harold Spies, President, 958 8569**.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Richard Wheeler 958 6963

Just a reminder!!!!

General enquiries 958 4887



Here are a few 'dos' to promote the safety of your home.

Do lock up when leaving the house unattended even for a short period.

Do leave one or two lights on if away during the evening.

Do lock the back door if you're going to be out in the front of the house for extended periods; and vice-versa if in the back garden.

Do use the Neighbourhood Watch engraver to identify your property.

Do talk Neighbourhood Watch with your neighbours and arrange your own network for mutual assistance.

Do arrange for a neighbour to collect mail, papers, etc, when you're away on holidays.

Do keep your wire-grille door locked until you are satisfied as to a caller's bonafides.

Do the right thing - join and participate in Neighbourhood Watch!!

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A ring has been found at the Castlecrag shops. Contact the Manager of Jewel Supermarket to claim it.

All teenage ex-students of the Castlecrag Infants' School are invited to a barbecue to be held in the school grounds on Sunday 20th January 1991 from 6pm. Please bring your own sausages, steak, etc. Come to commiserate about HSC results, see old friends, remember the good old days. Ring Kirsten McKillop 958 4516 to help organise this big event !!!!!



The Crag is edited on behalf of the Castlecrag Progress Association by Mary Baker (958 5518) and Kerry McKillop (958 4516). Deliveries: Donna Sife (958 1841).