

NEWSLETTER OF THE CASTLECRAG PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

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MAY/JUNE 1991

66 YEARS OF RESOLVE TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF OUR LIVES *

Dear Residents,

Sue Randle 958 6344

Welcome to new residents, do come along to our meetings and take part in our community activities and decisions.

The Progress Association has again been involved in Castlecrag's community events, one profitable and successful example of which was the Garage Sale held at the School on 18th May. These types of events are for good purposes and also have a high social content, and this is what the Castlecrag community is known for. More recently, on 2nd June, our suburb was visited by 80 Friends of the Botanical Gardens and members of the National Trust. They took part in a tour guided by Professor James Weirick, Head of the School of Landscape Architecture of the University of NSW, from the Harold Reid Reserve, to the Sugarloaf Bush Regeneration Project, for lunch. Then they covered the architecture of Walter Burley Griffin including the Ampitheatre, ending with afternoon tea at our Foreshore Cottages. The groups involved in this activity were WEPA, Castlecrag Conservation Society, Walter Burley Griffin Society and the Progress Association. It was a very successful day and the visitors were very impressed with our community and our unique and diversely interesting suburb.

One (of the many) features that impressed our visitors was the number of trees/shrubs residents had in their properties. They were advised that amongst the many ideals of Castlecrag are a belief in the value of trees in keeping away the 'concrete jungle' that has overtaken so many other suburbs.

Another issue in which our Association has a keen interest is that of urban transport and the need to reduce our city's pollution and dependence on cars. A form of light rail could work very well from the city through to the northern beach peninsula, much more efficiently and less expensively than an expressway!!!

The Castlecrag Progress Association has endorsed me as their nominated representative for the Local Government Elections that are being held on 14th September. In July I will be commencing my campaign, and hoping to have the support and votes of the Middle Harbour electorate in the forthcoming election. For the past 14 years I have been involved in a great range of community organisations and events. for example the Willoughby Committee, Early Childhood committees, a Disco Night for the under-18s, the closure of the Castlecrag School, retaining the Foreshore Cottages, and membership and active participation in local community groups. If you would like to pass on information, ideas or assist in any way in the campaign, please contact me on 958 6344 or write to PO Box 6/77 Edinburgh Road, Castlecrag.



Kate Westoby and Sue Randle at the SOS*Crag Garage Sale at the school on 18th May

PROGRESS ASSOCIATION meetings are open to all residents, so come along to our next one on TUESDAY 25th JUNE at the INFANTS SCHOOL, Edinburgh Road, 8pm.

THE CASTLECRAG CONSERVATION SOCIETY will hold its next meeting on Wednesday 10th July 8pm at Castlecrag Infants School. For details ring Harold Spies, President, 958 8569.

David Ireland speaking in A Question of Survival said: We humans are distinguished from all other species by our intelligence; it was our intelligence which allowed us to alter our environment. He then posed the question: Can we use our intelligence to remedy the damage we have done to our environment? That is the big question facing us all. David Suzuki gives a decade of 'breathing' space before major calamity descends on our planet and all its species. While there is increasing public exposure in the media to environmental degradation and the need for action, governments at all levels still think in terms of economic solutions and economic growth instead of questioning the environmental effects of every decision. We individually, collectively and at every level of government should be debating. discussing the way forward for a just world and an ecologically sustainable society.

As a small environmental group the Conservation Society should be more active in promoting environmental caretaking. It is hoped over the next couple of months, after discussion and community input, we can come up with an active 'caretaking' programme for this and the following years.

The Society has continued its support of larger conservation groups, the Australian Conservation Foundation, the Wilderness Society and the Nature Conservation Council of NSW, the Total Environ—ment Centre, and more specific groups—the Sydney Harbour and Foreshores Committee, and CUTS (Coalition for Urban Transport Sanity). Addie Saltis and I were delegates to the NCC's annual conference, Simon Pels our delegate to the Sydney Harbour and Foreshores Committee, while I attended a number of seminars organised by the NCC (on urban bushland), the ACF and the Urban Environment Coalition.

We have continued our support for the retention of the Castlecrag Infants School, and the foreshores cottages which we see as a group heritage of early Castlecrag settlement. Both the school and the cottages are part of an interlocking complex of nature, people and buildings. Along with other Willoughby and Sydney groups we made a submission to the North Castlecrag Escarpment Heritage Study. As a result of numerous submissions, Council decided to retain the cottages and seek an interim conservation order prior to the establishment of a Heritage Waterside Park.

The Society is also pleased to record Council's decision to abandon the five options to fill Flat Rock Gully. Thanks must go to the fine submissions by the National Trust, the Botanic Gardens and WEPA among others.

The Society is represented on Council's Bushland Review Committee which was formed last year. It is in the process of reviewing Willoughby's Bushland Plan of Management by A. Fox, and is currently inspecting the bushland reserves prior to drawing up a longterm plan of management. Flat Rock Gully, The Waterside Heritage Park and the toilets in the Harold Reid Reserve have also been referred to this Committee.

Our weed stall at the Willoughby Family Fun Fair in September last year was very well received. Thanks to those members who weeded The Citadel Garden and especially to Mark Crew for help in spreading mulch on the Garden.

The Rockley Street car park/play area which was 'reconstituted' by Council is a disgrace and this, together with the non-functioning of the Bim Hilder Memorial Fountain, will be taken up in the near future with Council.

In July we organised with WEPA a successful picnic day through the Valley of the Waterdragon, inspecting WEPA's Sugarloaf Bush Regeneration Project. WEPA and its regeneration team are to be congratulated with the work to date, for obtaining a further grant from Council for maintenance and from the National Estate Grants Programme for primary work around and below the third waterfall.

In conclusion, as usual in most organisations, there is a lot to do with too few active people. It is encouraging that we lifted our membership but we still need to attract more members to our meetings. Thanks are due to the constant support of addie Saltis our secretary, Margaret Chambers our treasurer, and members who constantly attend meetings.



The Children Who Weren't There (A dialogue between the large puppets of Walter and Marion Griffin)

Marion: We are the designers of Castlecrag.

Walter: We laid out the roads and built houses there. Marion: Houses that harmonised with the hillsides:

that grew out of the earth and into the air.

Walter: We built our houses into the landscape,

in sympathy with the rocks and the trees.

Marion: But houses alone are just sticks and stones;

it's the people who make them live and breathe.

Walter: We built a whole suburb for whole people

in a bush setting, on a human scale.

Marion: We built a theatre and a hospital

and a network of community trails.

Walter: A suburb without a community

is like a car without any fuel.

Marion: For it's the people who need the houses,

the theatre, the hospital and the school.

Walter: And the school is the heart of Castlecrag.

That's why Castlecrag needs its school.

The heart was healthy and the pulse was strong

when the Liberals came to rule.

Marion: The Government and the Bureaucracy

told the Castlecrag people a lie:

Walter: "There aren't enough kids in the school", they said

"So the school will have to die".

Marion: "But the school is full!" cried the parents:

"Look! Here are the kids! It's fully enrolled!"

Walter: "We can't see them" said the politicians

as the bureaucrats tightened their blindfolds.

Marion: Their blindness to the facts has been tragic.

They can't see they've made a mistake.

The kids are here, they're not invisible.

Walter: All Metherell saw was real estate.

Marion: Before he left, Metherell was forced

to reverse the order to sell the site

he offerred a park instead of a school,

Marion: But kids need a school; a school is their right.

Marion: The people will stay in occupation

until the government is made aware

that Castlecrag Infants will have to re-open

Together: because the children are actually there!

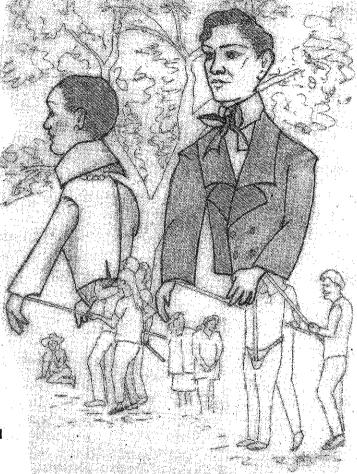
Creative Writing Classes

Where: Castlecrag School

When: Wednesday 17, 24, 31 July

12.00 - 2.30pm

Theme: Writing a Personal History Enquiries: Henrietta 958 7528



HAVEN AMPITHEATRE NEWS

The Haven Ampitheatre is about to commence a restoration program. Thirteen years ago the theatre was rebuilt and resurrected by the community after many years of neglect. Since that time the use of the theatre has gradually increased and its fame has spread as a unique and special performance space. It is now starting to attract performers from many fields of the arts, including the *Red Opal Ballet Company* and *The Ensemble Theatre* who intend to perform a series of plays in the Ampitheatre commencing in September.

To ensure that the theatre is in good working order our restoration program continues, thus enabling us to provide some very special musical and theatrical events right here in Castlecrag. The 530A resident committee which administers the theatre is looking for help from people who have skills in design, printing, sound, lighting, the electrical and building trades, or hopefully anyone who could spare a little time to assist in the presentation of events at the theatre. We would like to hear from you: Howard Rubie 958 1729 or Lisa Purser 958 1503.

Howard Rubic for the 530A Committee

The Environment Action Council

The Environment Action Council is a coalition of concerned citizens from the media, government agencies, business and environmental groups.

We aim to create public awareness of environmental issues and to promote the adoption of practical steps which will improve the environment.

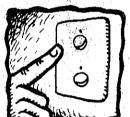
For further information: NSW State Pollution Control Commission (02) 793 0123

Five things you can do



1. Use your car less

Take public transport more often - walk or bicycle if possible - try car pooling.



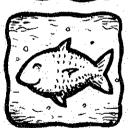
2. Use energy wisely

Turn off unnecessary lights - buy energy efficient appliances and light globes - use curtains and blinds to keep heat out during summer and in during winter - install roof insulation - install a solar hot water service - minimise air-conditioning and heating - draw up an energy saving plan at work.



3. Reduce waste

Sort your garbage for recycling - compost at home or start a community compost - re-use containers - buy goods with less packaging - buy concentrated liquids (eg detergents) - avoid large plastic containers - find an alternative to or use less disposable nappies, tissues, plates, cups, serviettes etc - share newspapers and magazines - contact the **Recycling Hotline 4121388** for waste management ideas.



4. Clean up our waste water

Don't dump coffee grounds, paint, solvents, pesticides, phosphates in washing liquids and fertilisers, cooking oil or toxic chemicals down your sink or toilet - use detergents sparingly stop using your kitchen garbage disposal unit; if you don't have one, don't get one - avoid fertilizers entering waterways and waste water.



5. Reduce water use

Think before turning on the tap and make sure none leak - take shorter showers - plan ways to reduce garden water consumption - use mulch on garden beds to reduce the need for watering - sweep paths and patios rather than hosing them - minimise the number and size of toilet flushes.

mary powell antiques

For antique and estate jewellery, porcelain, silver, furniture etc

Also wishing to buy any of the above items

83 Edinburgh Road Castlecrag NSW 2068 958 7687 I came to Castlecrag in December 1932 when I was sixteen going on seventeen. My parents were overseas and I had spent the year in boarding school in Melbourne so it was a complete change of atmosphere which I happily absorbed. I stayed with my brother Edgar Deans and his wife Cappy in the Griffin house on the corner of Edinburgh Road and The Parapet which they shared with Frank and Anice Duncan and their babies – Ross Duncan and Kaaren Deans. At that time Castlecrag was mostly bush with very few houses and the residents were a very community—conscious group, strongly influenced by the ideals of Marion and Walter Griffin, who lived in The Parapet and were a dynamic source of inspiration.

The Harbour Bridge had been opened that year but there was no Eastern Valley Way and to travel to the city we had to catch a tram from the corner of Frenchs and Willoughby Roads. I think Wally Trinick was the only person who owned a car and there was a small feeder bus from Castlecrag to Frenchs Road but it did not run very often so mostly we walked. Nobody went to town unless they had to and social recreational and cultural activities were developed within the small community.

I spent a year here and then went to live in Newcastle with my parents, but returned frequently on weekend visits and holiday periods. I came back in December 1941, with my husband Bob. After Pearl Harbour many Sydney residents left the waterside suburbs and went inland including the tenants of the Griffin house at 15 The Citadel, and with Rawson and Nancy Deans, Bob and I moved in. The rent was 25 pounds per month. There were more houses by then and a few more cars but still large areas of bushland and a small community. Christmas bells grew in the sandy strip between Edinburgh Road and The Battlement, patches of flannel flowers all over the peninsula and groves of Christmas bush along the northern escarpment (no morning glory or lantana). Marion and Walter were no longer here but their influence was very strong. Building was at a standstill because of the war and it was still a small, compact community. Many of the men were away in the armed services, there was no petrol except for essential services and clothing,

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meat and butter were rationed. I remember old Mrs Medway, who operated the only butchers shop with her son Reg, being very helpful to the young housewives with advice on ekeing out our meat coupons. The area which is now the Cellars was the Air Wardens Post, with sandbags all round and we went there for St John Ambulance classes. We still carried on with our monthly Neighbourhood Circle meetings, either at The Citadel house or at Ruby Beeby's in Edinburgh Road (also a Griffin house) because they were the two largest houses at that time. One very memorable evening we invited a group of black American servicemen who had formed a choir and delighted us with their singing.

After the War, building started up again, and the community grew at first slowly but very rapidly after Edinburgh Road became a concrete highway instead of a dirt road from Sunnyside Crescent and Linden Way was opened up. There were also many more young children and we needed a kindergarten. Phyl Stoker operated a small one from her home and we formed a Mothers' Committee to help her, but with the 'baby boom' we needed something more and the Willoughby Co-operative Castlecrag and East Society Ltd was formed. Frank Duncan was the first president and I was the secretary. Frank had had experience with co-operative societies in England and it was his idea that such a society was the best way to achieve our aims. Walter Griffin had allocated the area on which the Community Centre now stands 'to be used for community purposes' as part of his dream and Frank and I with the help of Joe Bales, who was a solicitor and an alderman of Willoughby Council (he was later Mayor and then MP for Willoughby) negotiated the transfer of this land to the co-op. society. Then the hard work began to raise the money. Willoughby Council had agreed to match us pound for pound. We held fairs on the area on which the Quadrangle now stands, and every resident contributed something. We sewed, knitted, baked, made toys, potted plants, ran a chocolate wheel (Vince Chivers was always in charge of that). In between we had other fund-raising activities one of which was an afternoon tea stall at the top of The Pinnacle. In those far-off days residents of Willoughby used to 'walk' to Castlecrag for a pleasant Sunday afternoon outing in the bush (over)



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[Roman and Balloon Shades] [Bedspreads and Curtains] and we sold cups of tea and a scone or cake to help them on their way. Butter was still rationed and margarine wasn't on the market, so that wasn't easy. My speciality was rock cakes made with clarified dripping.

Eventually we reached our target of 1,000 pounds. Willoughby Council matched it and work began Architect Eric Nicholls, who had been in partnership with Walter Griffin, donated his services and much of the labouring work was done by residents. We still kept raising money to buy extra materials for the kindergarten and to furnish the hall and this is still going on.

The next project was the Community Library and this remains today as a monument to those early residents, many of whom are no longer with us Greta Stratton, Manfred Souhami, Ernestine

Claridge, Pat Case, Roma and Bim Hilder, Kit and Warwick Parkes, and Heidi Speigal.

And then the Infants School It took years of petitions, deputations and agitating to get the school established and then several decades of committed parents and teachers to equip it and maintain it to the standard of excellence it achieved. We oldies feel very angry and bitter about the closure of the school which our children, and in some cases our grandchildren, attended and should still be attending, but we are heartened by the response of the community and the continued effort to get the school reopened.

Castlecrag is still a unique suburb and I feel confident that the spirit of the old inhabitants, along with Marion and Walter, will hover around for many vears to come.

CASTLECRAG LIBRARY

The Community Centre, The Rampart

TUESDAYS 3.30 - 4.30pm

THURSDAYS 1-5pm

SATURDAYS 10am - Noon

NEW BOOKS LIST:

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The Eagle Has Flown HIGGINS, J

LLEWELLYN, K Dear You

STEEL, D LEVIN, I

Heartbeat Silver

GROSS, M

The Red Defector

KORDA, M

Certain

PLAIN, D

Harvest

PUZO, M

The Fourth K

ESSEX, P

Black Wind Blowing

PHELAN, L

The Romantic Lives of Louise

GREGORY, P

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NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Richard Wheeler 958 6963



Recession? There's no recession in the 'crime business'. No way! But there is a way for you to help prevent the 'crime business' from affecting you - join Neighbourhood Watch. The trifling joining fee of \$2 gives you the opportunity to stand up and be counted as a citizen interested in maintaining the lifestyle of our community. And what do you have to do as a member? Simply be a 'good neighbour' - take an interest in your neighbours' wellbeing. If you see a stranger looking around your absent neighbour's premises, a friendly "Can I help

you?" causes no offence yet will deter a possible wrong-doer. Charles Reyolds 958 5945 will be pleased to hear from you and arrange a meeting with a co-ordinator at your convenience.

The Crag is edited on behalf of the Castlecrag Progress Association (PO Box 6/77, Castlecrag) by Judy Stone - Herbert 958 7961 and Kerry McKillop 958 4516 Deliveries: Donna Sife 958 1841

It was about 1952 when a group including Jean Colville, Val McKenzie and Kit Parkes conceived the idea of forming a playreading group in the fast—developing suburb of Castlecrag, and decided to launch it with a professionally produced play performed at the Community Centre. Robert Levis was selected as the producer, and I'm told it was a great success.

Following this event, the community was invited to join a playreading group, and the response was immediate; the Castlecrag Playreaders were formalised and had the first meeting in 1953 — the first production being *Press Cuttings* (Shaw), which was held at the home of Roy and Jean Colville.

First we sat and simply read the parts (standing only when your character had something to say), but this soon became boring and we took to the boards with great gusto and gave each performance everything we could by way of sets, props, wardrobe and a producer, the latter job being rotated among volunteers. We still read our parts, but the audience didn't seem to notice. Our meetings were held monthly in private homes, of which there would have been upwards of two dozen offered. The devotees gathered to applaud the finished effort, the result of two rehearsals and an enormous amount of typing, as we could only afford a producer's copy of the manuscript. Scripts came by way of The British Drama League and Will Andrade.

The quantity and diversity of talent was quite astonishing. Who, having witnessed, could possibly forget Blossom Hopkinson and Maitland Buckeridge in Chekov's *The Proposal*, Merle O'Loughlin and Pat Campbell in *A Phoenix Too Frequent* (Fry), Ern Claridge as *The Man Who Came to Dinner* (Kaufman and Hart), Ted St John and Jennifer Constable in *Pygmalion* (Shaw)? Others will have other memories of great performances, but all must agree these were memorable.

The group became keen enough to ask a WEA Lecturer, Geoffrey Thomas, to give us some talks about acting skills (at four pounds per night), and resulting from this Geoffrey made us ourselves produce Major Barbara, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, and View from the Bridge. GT was impressed!

Our ventures into revue were spectacular. Barbara Hourez produced the first as a Christmas breakup in 1962. It was held at Madge and Neville Milston's home and had people hanging from the chandeliers, so to speak. Three people actually stood on a ladder in an adjoining room so that they could get a glimpse! There were so many in the audience that the following year we moved to the Community Centre to accommodate the numbers, and that too was a roaring success (The St Trinian girls would ring bells!).

From its inception Madge Milston permanently took on the duties of treasurer and I was secretary for most of the life of the group. In the late sixties when TV had made severe inroads into our audience numbers, the group wound up. The presidency was generally shared amongst the men. Within the last ten years I have tried to revive interest in the group, but an advertisement placed in The Crag newsletter failed to find any response.

Never mind – they were wonderful days and I wouldn't have missed them for worlds. I think the activities of the playreaders were an important social function of the times.

Following is a selection from memory, of some of the highlights of our 15 year existence:

The Man Who Came to Dinner The One Day of the Year The Cocktail Party The Deep Blue Sea The Browning Version A Phoenix Too Frequent Bell, Book and Candle Look Back in Anger All Things Bright and Beautiful French Without Tears Battle of a Simple Man Nude With Violin View from the Bridge Cat on a Hot Tin Roof Arsenic and Old Lace

The Winslow Boy
The Wild Duck
The Same Sky
Major Barbara
The Little Hut
I am a Camera
Dear Charles
The Proposal
Billy Liar
Fumed Oak
Pygmalion
Ghosts
Gaslight
Blithe Spirit

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HELP!!!

The Editors of *The Crag* are undergoing a crisis of confidence and request your opinion on the newsletter and suggestions for future articles which would be enjoyed by the community:

1	Does your Crag get lost in the junk mail in your letterbox?
•	
	YES / NO Comment
2.	Did you prefer the newsletter when printed on the former bright yellow paper (it is now printed on
	recycled paper)? YES / NO Comment
3.	How many members of your household read The Crag?
4.	What articles in recent issues have been of the most interest to you? (Can you name 2-3 items)
5.	Have there been any items which you feel could be dropped? (List)
6.	Do you enjoy articles recalling the past activities of Castlecrag residents? YES / NO
	Comment
7.	Do you enjoy articles which attempt to look at the future character of our suburb and the issues which affect this? YES / NO
	Comment
8.	Do you like to read articles which describe Walter and Marion Griffin's influence on the character of
	Castlecrag? YES / NO
	Comment
9.	Do you know whether your friends and neighbours read the newsletter? YES / No
٠	Comment
10.	Would you like to contribute to The Crag? (Your letters and views are welcome on any subject)
	YES / NO Comment
By our	e Crag is a unique community journal recording the living history of the people and events of Castlecrag replying to the survey you will be contributing to the future directions of the newsletter and encouraging community to use this forum. Thank you for your assistance. (This is our first attempt at market earch!!) Please send your replies to the Secretary, Progress Association, PO Box 6/77, Castlecrag
I/w	we wish to become members of/renew our membership of/ the Castlecrag Progress Association, for which we enclose subscription and/or donation (membership fees are renewable from 1st February each year) mily \$10; Single \$5; Fixed income/student/concession \$3.
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ΑD	DRESS:

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