

The Glebe
Society **BULLETIN**

No. 9 of 1976. (Oct)

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HISTORY

THE MUNICIPALITY OF GLEBE OR THE FLAPPING OF JAWS

Glebe was incorporated as a municipality in August 1859. The Council consisted of nine aldermen, elected by ratepayers, three representatives from each of the Glebe wards, Bishopthorpe, Outer and Inner wards. In 1871 when Forest Lodge ward was created, local citizens were represented by twelve councillors. Local government from 1859 was not only a means of realising the limited purposes of the propertied "best people", it was also an expression of the general sense of community identity that tied Glebe's people.

A professional and mercantile elite that controlled the local council throughout the 1860's and 1870's was favoured by a system of municipal franchise, based on property qualifications and was treated with traditional deference in a small but growing neighbourhood that considered "men of substance and good repute" should also have the loudest voice in its affairs. The predominance of the conservative, protestant, professional men and merchants was being challenged in 1878 when George Wigram Allen resigned, after eighteen consecutive terms as Mayor, rather than suffer the indignity of being ousted as Mayor. Timber miller, John Seamer, described as "a man useful in politics, a good citizen and successful in the business in which he engaged" became Mayor in 1878. At this time Glebe was feeling the dramatic transforming impact of rapid population increase and new technology. The growth of local industries was

reflected directly in its social landscape and industry created new opportunities for wealth and business success. Glebe Council had taken on a different tone by 1880 when it passed into the hands of relative newcomers, "the self-made man", a much respected creature of industry. The newfound wealth of the local elected representatives of the 1880's brought with it influence, respectability and, after an interval, a good measure of social recognition. A symbol of the municipal wealth and pride as well as a feeling of local independence was the palatial Glebe Town Hall, opened in May 1880, where fortnightly the aldermen flapped their jaws in earnest.

A member of the first Council was William Elphinstone (1800-1877), a crofter from Leith, Scotland. Forced off their small leasehold due to a consolidation of land holdings, William and Janet Elphinstone arrived in Sydney on the barque Arundel on 5th September, 1832 with their four boys and were living in Glebe about 1842. Here Janet (1809-1865) gave birth to seven more children, five boys and two girls. During the 1840's William operated as a builder on the Bishopgate and St. Phillips Estate in Glebe and from 1856 on the newly subdivided Bishopthorpe Estate. William served as an alderman from 1861-1870 and died on 19th April, 1877, leaving an estate of £3,800. Six of his sons, William, Alexander, James, Balfour, David and Gourley were engaged in the suburban building industry. David Elphinstone, born on 15th January, 1846 at Broughton Street, Glebe, achieved the largest building practice of the family.



David Elphinstone

He is first listed as a builder in Glebe in 1873 and, in terms of aggregate buildings constructed, tender notices and conveyances clearly indicate that David was Glebe's most prolific builder, his most extensive house building programme being in Mitchell, Cowper, Glebe, Campbell and Broughton Streets and St. Johns Road where in the years 1881 and 1882 he built 175 houses.

David Elphinstone was a local alderman from 1881 until 1886, when he left Ramelton House, Derwent Street. He died on 9th May, 1916 at Strathnairn, Gower Street, Summer Hill where he had been living for many years, and was buried in the Presbyterian section, Rookwood Cemetery with his wife, Sarah, who predeceased him on 27th November, 1908.

Max Solling

MEET THE MANAGEMENT

President: Jeanette Knox

There is something sobering about the thought of having to compose an informative yet light-hearted piece of self-advertisement (I think that is the general tenor of our Bulletin Editor's request) - especially when one hopes they have already managed the feat previously - but here's having another go (for the benefit of new members), ignoring any snide comments from certain other respected committee members about impeccable presidential sobriety on festive occasions.

In working hours, I spend my time at the University of Sydney Library endeavouring to keep the fourteen branches of that institution in good running order. Out of working hours, as the result of an unfortunate tendency not to be able to say no to such suggestions, I seem to have become involved, with varying degrees of activity, in numerous committees of worthy kinds, (such as the Glebe Society, naturally). Being not only a voracious reader, but an inveterate buyer of books, one of a librarian's constant worries regularly haunts the Knox household - no more room to shelve the books. The recent alterations to the Knox residence (don't forget to visit us on 4th December for morning coffee) have temporarily eased the situation. Time will tell for how long.

Every now and again (especially when the car is behaving itself) it is nice to escape from town and go bush - or go overseas - but failing that there always seems to be plenty of oxalis to dig out of the garden if any excuse for getting out of doors is needed.

Before becoming President of the Society I was active as secretary and then convenor of Social Activities; was Treasurer of the Anti-Urban Radial Expressway Committee; and am a regular, albeit not star, performer at the Society's play-reading evenings.

I appreciate the persuasive oratory of other members of the Management Committee without emulating it, trusting in my own capacity for regular and persistent nagging as a suitable complementary quality for keeping matters of concern in view. The principal one is, of course, the all embracing task of doing what we can to maintain or improve those qualities of Glebe which make it a pleasant and interesting place in which to live, and get rid of less agreeable factors (e.g. containers). Not least of the qualities of Glebe is its friendliness. I hope this will continue; and that the Glebe Society will foster friendship among both old and new residents of this suburb.

GLEBE MOTORISTS

Members of the Society who have the misfortune to own a motor car will probably also be members of the N.R.M.A. This organisation is campaigning through "OPEN ROAD" to have the radial expressways built i.e. through Glebe!! Recent issues of this advertising throw-away have argued from "Surveys" that these freeways are needed.

Members of both the Society and N.R.M.A. are urged to write to the Association (N.R.M.A. - Clarence Street, Sydney) saying that -

1. We disapprove of our money being used to put the case for expressways through our area.
2. These expressways aren't needed to serve the city or the suburbs.
3. Money spent on expressways in the inner city would be better spent on improved public transport.

Write now. Moves to change the N.R.M.A. will be afoot again. Watch for developments.

FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday, 6th November. Morning Coffee from 10.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. with Dick and Merle Larcombe, 14 Toxteth Road. All members welcome.

G.C.C. Fair in Foley Park at which we will have a stall. NO SECOND HAND GOODS. Ring Jim Coombs (660.0026) if you would like to help man this stall.

Saturday, 6th November, 1.30 p.m. Glebe Society History Walk with Max Solling. New and old members please gather outside the main gates of St. Scholastica's College, 2 Avenue Road. The walk will also take in St. John's Church, Record Reign Hall (where Max will give a brief talk on Glebe, illustrated by slides) and houses on the old church lands. After the walk, wine, dip and cheese will be served on the spacious lawn of 6 Leichhardt Street, the home of Dr. Vincent Sheppard. New members especially shouldn't miss this outing. All welcome.

Tuesday, 9th November. Social Activities Group meets at 8.00 p.m. at the home of Jean and Theo Ahlston, 58 Toxteth Road.

Saturday, 20th November. Ferry Trip. Book your tickets by phoning Dorothy Perkins (660.7623) after 7.30 p.m. Tickets will be on sale at the morning coffee and at our stall in Foley Park on the 6th. The ferry will leave from the Glebe Rowing Club Wharf at approximately 10.30 a.m. Calls will be made at beaches for swimming and at an island for lunch. Don't forget to bring your own rations!

Sunday, 21st November: Gardening Group visit to Katandra Bushland Sanctuary. For further details see elsewhere in Bulletin.

Tuesday, 23rd November. Playreading at 8.00 p.m. at the home of Gwen and Jeannette Knox, 26 Victoria Road. This will probably be the last playreading for 1976, so we shall have a celebration for more reasons than one!

Saturday, 4th December. Morning Coffee - 10.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. at Gwen and Jeannette Knox's home.

Saturday, 11th December. Christmas Party at 8.00 p.m. at the home of Dagmar and Peru Perumal, 12 Lodge Street. Cost of tickets for this will be \$2.00.

GARDENING

A visit is being arranged to the Katandra Bushland Sanctuary on Sunday, 21st November. The area comprises about 24 acres of virgin bush in which there is a fine display of native wildflowers. A well defined track provides a walk of 45 to 60 minutes in which may be seen flannel flowers, boronias, grevilleas, bottlebrushes, golden guinea flowers, wild iris, rock lilies and many others. Of trees there are turpentine, angophoras, bloodwoods, blueberry ashes, stringy barks, lillypillies, ironbarks, forest oaks, Port Jackson figs, Australian hollies and many wattles.

The journey by car from Glebe takes about an hour and arrival there by about noon would give time for a walk in the bush and a leisurely lunch.

Given a fine day the visit should be most enjoyable and further particulars as to the exact location of the sanctuary could be obtained from Theo Ahlston, 58 Toxteth Road. 660.1083.

MISCELLANY

Our council watchdog has reported that E.M.I. have abandoned their plans to purchase the Presbyterian Church in Bridge Road. What will its fate be now?

The Adventure Playground at Glebe Infants' School was officially opened on October 21st. Work was not quite completed due to the wet weather, but by now it should be in working order and the infants excitement realised.

BULLETIN

Thanks to the assistance of Bulletin readers, a few missing copies of the Bulletin have come to light. In order to make the full sets we still require the following issues for set 2:-

All issues for 1969 and 1970
No. 6 of 1971
Nos. 1-5 and 8-10 of 1972
No. 5 of 1975.

Please phone Joey Rowden (660.5704) to arrange collection.