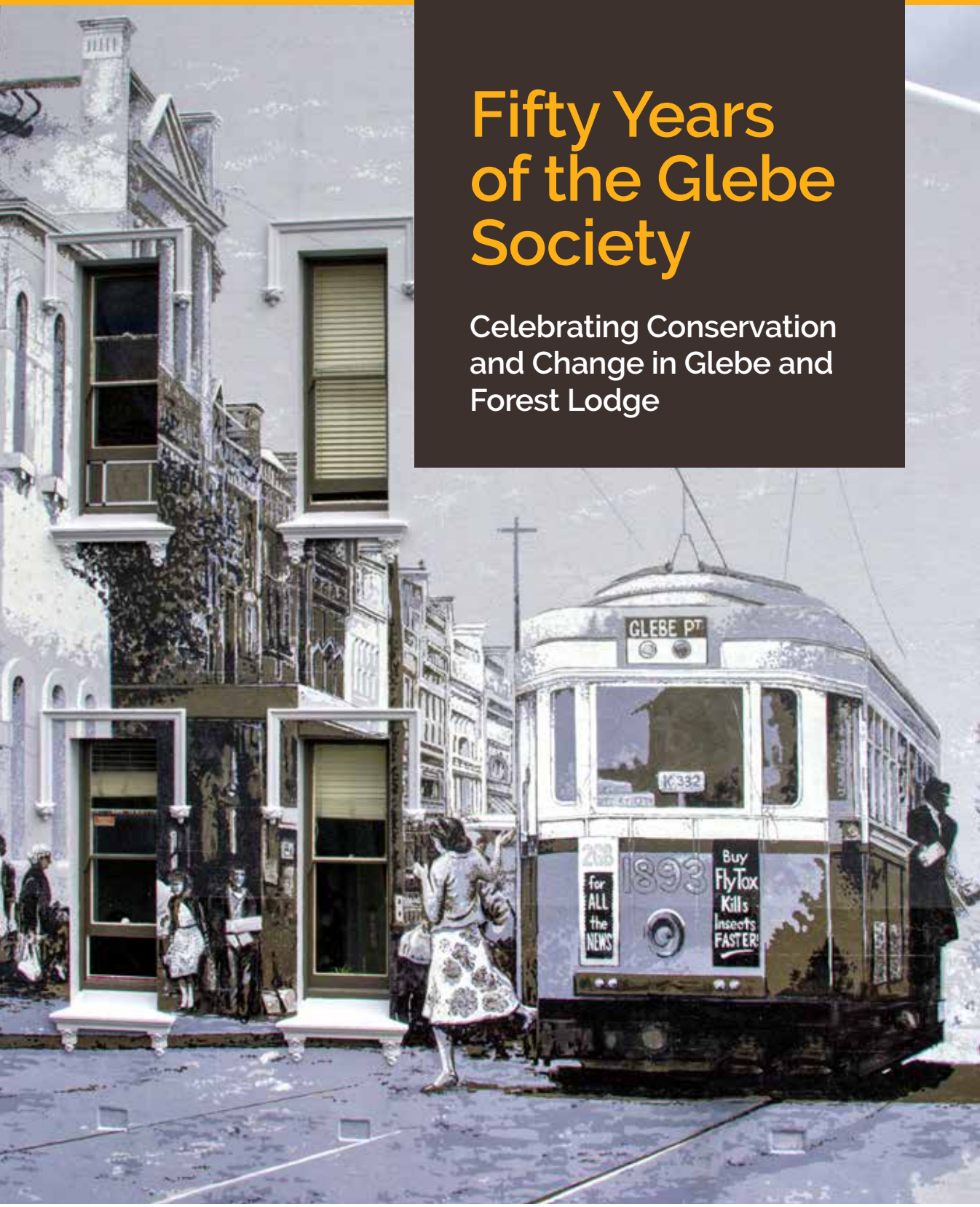
UPDATED EDITION

Fifty Years of the Glebe Society

Celebrating Conservation and Change in Glebe and Forest Lodge



1969-2019

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The Glebe Society was established in 1969

It is one of Sydney's oldest and most active local community groups. This booklet was produced to mark the Society's 50th anniversary, and is an updated version of the 2009 publication entitled *Celebrating Conservation and Change: 40 years of the Glebe Society* which was written for our 40th anniversary. Our aim is again to document the major heritage and conservation battles of the past 50 years, as well as the major successes and positive changes that have occurred in Glebe and Forest Lodge, with an emphasis on the involvement of the Glebe Society. We hope that residents old and new will find much to interest and perhaps surprise them in this record of the changes we have seen and experienced in our suburb.

Authors' Note:

This publication, like its predecessor, was prepared by four members of The Glebe Society: Jeanette Knox, Jan Macindoe, Neil Macindoe and Ted McKeown with the help of Virginia Simpson-Young, Dorothy Davis from the 50th anniversary steering committee and Lyn Milton, Glebe Society Archivist. We gratefully acknowledge the role of all members, past and present, who have contributed to the events and stories described here.

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If you love Glebe . . .

COME ALONG TO THE FIRST GENERAL MEETING

OF

THE GLEBE SOCIETY

at Glebe Town Hall (St. John's Road)
on Thursday, 19th June, 1969
at 8 p.m.

- ***Preserve Our Historic Buildings***
- ***Encourage Parks and Gardens***
- ***Improve Amenities***
- ***Promote Interest in Glebe as a Community***

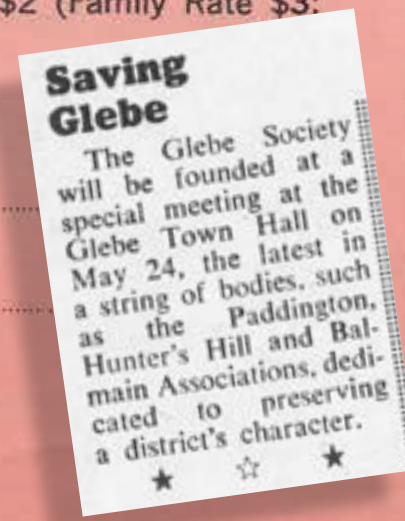
If you want to join the Glebe Society, please complete this form and bring it along with membership fee of $2 (Family Rate $3: Pensioners 50c).

Name: Mr. / Mrs. / Miss .....

Address: .....

Telephone No.: .....

I enclose $.....



Saving Glebe

The Glebe Society will be founded at a special meeting at the Glebe Town Hall on May 24, the latest in a string of bodies, such as the Paddington, Hunter's Hill and Balmain Associations, dedicated to preserving a district's character.

★ ☆ ★

If you can't come along to the meeting, please send your subscription to The Glebe Society, P.O. Box 379, Broadway, 2007.

Foundation of the Glebe Society

1960s

Beginnings

The 1960s saw a reversal of the long-term trend for people to move further and further out to the periphery of large cities such as Sydney. Job opportunities were increasing in the inner city, and suburbs such as Glebe, Paddington and Balmain became attractive as sources of lower cost houses often with heritage features - many in need of renovation. As a result, there was an influx of academic and professional people into the area (Solling, 2007).

For residents new and old, there were more problems than those associated with the renovation of houses. At the time, many financial institutions were not interested in offering mortgages on property in what was considered a rundown suburb. Central planners considered Glebe as a 'slum', ripe for demolition to make way for two expressways and massive re-development with large unit blocks (Macindoe, 2013a).

But not all residents shared this view. An article by Sandra Jobson in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 7 December 1968 reported that 'Things are Humming in Glebe' and that residents new and old were meeting to discuss the future of the suburb.

Opposite: Flyer announcing the first general meeting of the Glebe Society, held on 19 June 1969 at the Glebe Town Hall (image: Glebe Society Archives)

Insert: Sydney Morning Herald *article announcing formation of the Glebe Society, 28 April 1969 (source: Newspapers.com)*

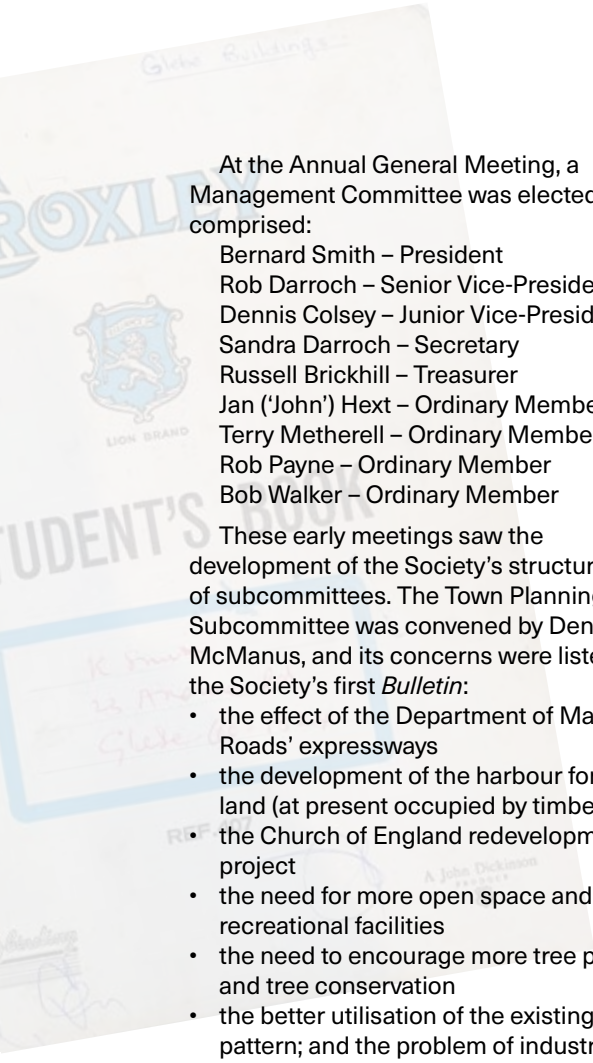
Anecdote has it that in 1968 a small group of people door-knocked houses that showed signs of being renovated, and as a result, a group met at Kate and Bernard Smith's house in February, 1969. Following this 'Glebe Association' meeting and letter-boxing, the inaugural meeting of the Glebe Society was held at Glebe Town Hall on 24 April, and its first general meeting on 19 June 1969. Bernard Smith was elected as the first President.

The Society's first *Bulletin* (1/1969) summarised the Society's approach:

> *The Society will concern itself mainly with the problems threatening Glebe as a pleasant place to live. Our approach will be two-pronged: to ensure that adequate thought and planning goes into projects in the area; and to preserve and conserve what is good in the already existing buildings and places of historic interest.*

At the Society's first Annual General Meeting, held on 4 September 1969 (*Bulletin* 3/1969) at the Glebe Town Hall, the Society's Constitution was formally accepted, and set out its aims as being:

- to promote the general well-being of the citizens of the Glebe area
- to preserve the natural assets of the area
- to stimulate interest in the history and character of the area
- to encourage town planning and good architecture
- and to protect the residents from anything detrimental to the enjoyment of their dwellings.



At the Annual General Meeting, a Management Committee was elected and comprised:

Bernard Smith – President
Rob Darroch – Senior Vice-President
Dennis Colsey – Junior Vice-President
Sandra Darroch – Secretary
Russell Brickhill – Treasurer
Jan ('John') Hext – Ordinary Member
Terry Metherell – Ordinary Member
Rob Payne – Ordinary Member
Bob Walker – Ordinary Member

These early meetings saw the development of the Society's structure of subcommittees. The Town Planning Subcommittee was convened by Dennis McManus, and its concerns were listed in the Society's first *Bulletin*:

- the effect of the Department of Main Roads' expressways
- the development of the harbour foreshore land (at present occupied by timber yards)
- the Church of England redevelopment project
- the need for more open space and recreational facilities
- the need to encourage more tree planting and tree conservation
- the better utilisation of the existing street pattern; and the problem of industrial development.

The History Subcommittee was convened by Max Solling and aimed to "unearth and record the history of Glebe and to participate in a variety of activities – research, excursions, photographic projects, and to try and preserve buildings of particular historical or architectural merit".

The Social Subcommittee was divided into two groups; the Social Group, convened by Kate Smith and the Community Group convened by the Rev. Bill McLeod.

The subcommittee structure has proven to be one of the Society's major strengths, as members were able to concentrate their efforts in specific areas of interest and expertise. Some subcommittees have changed their name, combined or split, reflecting the changing concerns of the times. For example, the Parks and Gardens Group (formed in 1972) was joined by a separate Environment Subcommittee in 1975 (*Bulletins* 8/1972; 1/1978), and the focus of both changed over time. These concerns are currently covered by the Environment, Bays and Foreshores, and Blue Wren Subcommittees. The flexibility of the subcommittee system, with convenors automatically members of the Management Committee, has allowed the Society to respond to contemporary challenges, as well as providing opportunities for many members to be actively involved in the work of the Society.

Bernard and Kate Smith

Bernard and Kate Smith came to Glebe in 1967, following Bernard's appointment as Power Professor of Contemporary Art and Director of the Power Institute of Fine Arts at the University of Sydney. He and Kate Challis were married in 1941, when both were teaching in New South Wales (Palmer, 2016; Smith, 1984; The Glebe Society, 2011a).

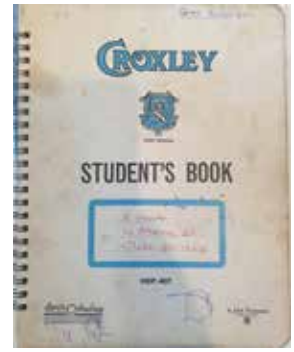
Kate and Bernard shared a strong social consciousness and had complementary skills. While proving a supportive partner to an increasingly public figure, Kate never lost her own identity. In Glebe Society matters, Bernard had the public authority, verbal assurance and writing skills to be a forceful and effective President. Kate, on the other hand, was the grassroots worker. She worked closely with locals, developing

Kate Smith 1915-1989 (source: Knox, Macindoe, Macindoe & McKeown, 2009)

Bernard Smith 1916-2011 (source: Australian Academy of the Humanities)

a social organisation that proved invaluable when occasions called for residents to rally for a protest or a photo.

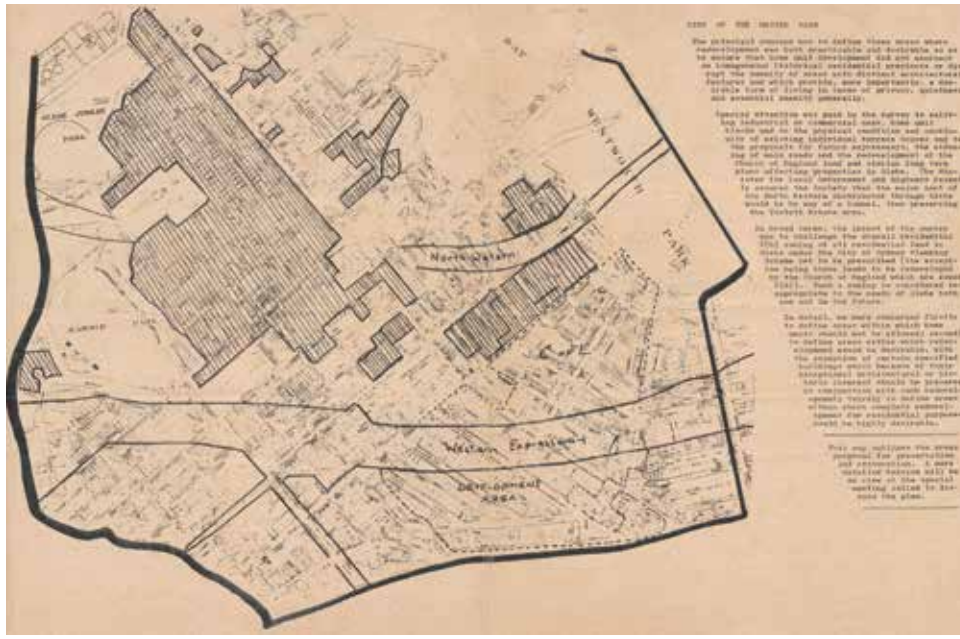
Kate and Bernard collaborated in the research for *The Architectural Character of Glebe* (Smith & Smith, 1973), a key work about the suburb. Bernard also published numerous important works on art history and an autobiography of his early life, *The Boy Adeodatus* (Penguin, 1984).



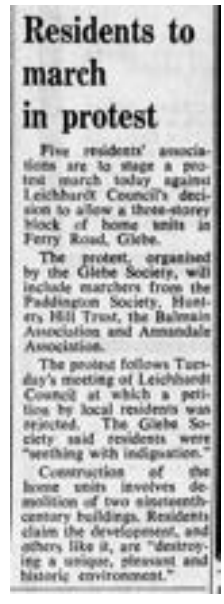
One of Kate Smith's notebooks in which she recorded her research for the book, The Architectural Character of Glebe *(Smith & Smith, 1973)*

Upon Kate's death in 1989, Bernard sold a number of the modern paintings they had acquired over the years in order to establish an award for Indigenous creative artists at The University of Melbourne, an award now known as 'the Kate Challis RAKA Award'. Bernard also edited and published Kate's *Tales from Sydney Cove* (Challis, 2000) an account of relations between the Aboriginal people of the Sydney area and the first British colonists, a book which Bernard saw as contributing to the Reconciliation process.

The Big Issues for Glebe in the Early Days



The Glebe Society's 'Outline Plan for Glebe Residential Development' outlined the areas proposed for preservation and restoration (source: Bulletin *1/1971)*



Residents to march in protest

Five residents' associations are to stage a protest march today against Leichhardt Council's decision to allow a three-storey block of home units in Ferry Road, Glebe.

The protest, organised by the Glebe Society, will include marchers from the Paddington Society, Hunters Hill Trust, the Balmain Association and Annandale Association.

The protest follows Tuesday's meeting of Leichhardt Council at which a petition by local residents was rejected. The Glebe Society said residents were "seething with indignation."

Construction of the home units involves demolition of two nineteenth-century buildings. Residents claim the development, and others like it, are "destroying a unique, pleasant and historic environment."

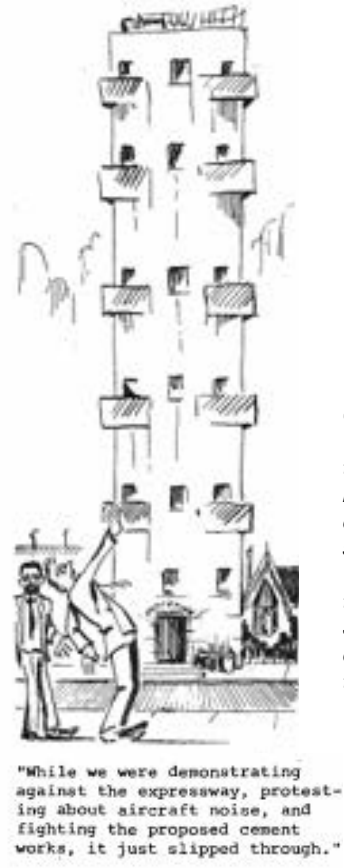
The Sydney Morning Herald *article about the Ferry Road protest, 6 March 1971 (source: Newspapers.com)*

'The red brick terror'

In the Society's first *Bulletin*, the problem of flats development was flagged as a "pressing concern" of the Town Planning Subcommittee's Buildings Group: "Home unit construction is accelerating and is regulated by the least satisfactory building code in perhaps the whole of the Sydney area" (*Bulletin* 1/1969).

"The red brick terror" – home units, often "three-storey walk-ups" – were replacing existing homes at an alarming rate, and the streetscapes of Glebe and Forest Lodge were under threat (*Bulletin* 1/1971). In May 1970, the Society produced an 'Outline Plan' – a framework for a Master Plan which it submitted to Leichhardt Council (*Bulletin*

Newspaper articles about the Ferry Road demonstration (source: Glebe Society Archives)



Cartoon from the Bulletin *expressing the challenge of managing multiple campaigns. Six-storey 'Philistine Towers' "just slipped through" while the Society focused on other threats to Glebe (source:* Bulletin *6/1972)*

1/1971). The Society wanted a Master Plan for Glebe:

(a) to show that Glebe is not a 'blighted' area;

(b) to show that residents, home-owners and tenants alike still care enough about their locality to want a voice in planning their future;

(c) to define those areas of Glebe which should be regarded as vital to its existing social functions as well as to its historic fabric;

(d) to define those areas which could be regarded as properly inviting a change of social function or which already disrupt the community of residents. (*Bulletin* 1/1971 & 2/1971)

The appearance of blocks of flats exemplified inappropriate development and galvanised Glebe Society members to take action. One of the Society's earliest demonstrations was against a planned home unit development at 59-61 Ferry Road. In March 1971, Glebe Society members and other residents marched from Foley Park to the site, led by President Bernard Smith with megaphone in hand. Bernard Smith described it this way:

> *We were not prepared to sit by and do nothing. The Society organised a highly successful demonstration of some 200 people ... It was orderly, colourful, and kept to the footpath. (*Bulletin *3/1971)*

The Ferry Road development was rejected by Leichhardt Council (*Bulletin* 3/1971).

expressways

Map prepared by the City of Sydney Council in December 1970 and published by the State Planning Authority of NSW. The red striped areas indicate the proposed roads from the 1948 Department of Main Roads' "The County of Cumberland planning scheme" (source: www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au)

Expressways

When the Glebe Society was founded in 1969, large sections of the suburb were 'DMR-affected', that is, they were earmarked by the powerful Department of Main Roads (DMR) for purchase and demolition to enable the construction of two expressways – the Western Expressway and the North-Western Expressway (Edwards, 2004; Macindoe, 2013b). Maps in estate agents' offices were dramatically illustrated with the red stripes that showed the route of the freeways.[1]

Cartoon depicting an expressway eating the townscape. The cartoon appeared in the first edition of Albert Mispel's occasional newsletter called 'Living and Moving' (artist unknown)

One of the earliest lobbying letters the Society sent was to Philip ('Pat') Morton, the Minister for Highways, expressing concern that an initial plan to tunnel under Glebe for the North-Western Expressway was to be replaced by a cut and fill process. In the following years the Glebe Society, in alliance with other concerned groups, lobbied, demonstrated, spoke on radio and at meetings, wrote to papers, and issued press releases and publications, such as its first monograph in 1972, *An Alternative to Inner Urban Expressways* by David Potter (Potter, 1972).

Ted McKeown recalls:

> *The anti-freeway campaign had been bubbling along for some time, but it really got going in early 1972, when Albert Mispel and others in the Glebe Society put together an 11-page handwritten foolscap screed outlining why radial freeways were a stupid idea (with special reference to the two freeways proposed for Glebe). These were photocopied and posted … to every Federal and State politician. Only one ever even acknowledged receipt – Tom Uren. He invited Albert and his team to his home (Federal Labor was still in opposition), to discuss the matter. (*Bulletin *1/2015)*

Had the expressways gone ahead, they would have isolated "a very closely knit community into three distinct sections. These sections would not have natural topographical, geographical, sociological or townscape divisions" (*Bulletin* 3/2017). Significant losses would have been Pyrmont Bridge, *Lyndhurst*, part of Wentworth Park open space, the Broughton Street Kindergarten and Toxteth House (St Scholastica's College), as well as a great number of private homes. The two expressways would also have isolated Glebe's two public schools from four-fifths of the suburb.

[1] The Society's first direct action against inappropriate road development occurred not in Glebe but in Paddington when, in August 1969, the Society took to the streets in support of Paddington Society's successful attempt to prevent the widening of Jersey Road and associated demolition of Paddington terraces (*Bulletin* 2/1969). The Society's banner read: "The Glebe Society supports Paddo all the way!"

Opposition to the radial expressways was widespread across the inner suburbs of Sydney. The Glebe Anti-Expressway Action Group, formed by members of the Glebe Society and others (Ball, 1996), joined with other concerned groups to oppose the expressways, including ISRAG (Inner Sydney Resident Action Group) and the Save Public Transport Committee, chaired by Allan Sorrensen. Opposition to the radial expressways was coordinated by the Anti-Urban Radial Expressway Committee, formed in November 1971, which was chaired by the Glebe Society's Allan Sorrensen and sponsored by Leichhardt Council (*Bulletins* 2/1975; 4/1973; Ball, 1996; Burgmann & Burgmann, 1998).

Glebe Society member, Alison McKeown, marks out the route of the North-Western Expressway through Glebe on 12 February 1972 (photo: Ted McKeown)

Adding to the strong opposition from those affected, was the imposition of a 'green ban' by the Builders Labourers Federation under Jack Mundey (Solling, 2007). The green ban proved of particular significance in relation to the major demonstrations at Fig Street Ultimo in September 1974, when the State Government attempted to go ahead with demolitions despite a 1974 Federal Act which provided for federal input in determining the construction of freeways in inner-urban areas.

The Glebe Society's Albert Mispel addressing protesters at the Fig Street demonstration in 1974 (screenshot from the film by Allan Hogan, '50 Years of the Glebe Society: the Bulletin *Editors' View', 2019)*

According to Albert Mispel, who spearheaded the Society's opposition to the expressways and spoke at the Fig Street demonstration, Glebe Society members attended the Fig Street demonstration in credible numbers; no Glebe Society members were arrested. Dennis McManus, former Glebe Society Planning Convenor, recalls parking his car in front of a bulldozer and winding up the windows to prevent the police moving him on (*Bulletin* 3/2019).

Looking back in 2013 (*Bulletin* 4/2013), Albert Mispel recalled that:

> *the Glebe Society ... sat in front of the bulldozers but they didn't go round getting arrested. It was a respectable arm of the protest. It was quite humorous to see. We wore ties to protests – suits and ties! (*Bulletin *4/2013).*

In 1977, the Department of Main Roads formally advised Leichhardt Council that reservations for the Western Expressway were no longer required and the land could be zoned appropriately by Council, thus lifting a 23-year planning blight. Later that year the new State Labor Government announced the abandonment of the North-Western Expressway.

Making the old parts live again

Sydney Morning Herald *article about the planned development of the church lands, 26 May 1973 (source: Newspapers.com)*

Glebe Estate

Saving the Glebe Estate

By the late 1960s the long-term leases on the 19 hectares of church-owned land, the Bishopthorpe and St Phillip's Estates, had expired. The land had been leased, since the mid-19th century, to builder-developers who built housing mainly for rent. On the expiry of the head leases, the Church became responsible for the housing and the resident tenants. By then, the condition of the houses had deteriorated (Painter, 1980).

From July 1969, the Society's Management Committee was having ongoing discussions with the Anglican Church's administrators of the estate, the Glebe Administration Board. Over time, the Society became increasingly concerned that the Anglican Church might decide not to conserve the estate. To try to prevent this, the Management Committee resolved in September 1972 to prepare a brochure on the architectural and historical merits of Bishopthorpe and St Phillip's for distribution at the Anglican Synod (The Glebe Society, 1972). The brochure was also distributed to members of the Society and widely elsewhere (Minutes of Management Committee meeting, October 1972).

When the Anglican Diocesan Synod authorised the sale of some of the Glebe Estate, Vernon Winley wrote:

> *The issues involved are vital to everyone concerned about Glebe – what happens to the church lands affects the appearance, character, community feeling and social cohesion of the whole of Glebe. (*Bulletin *10/1972).*

MODEST START TO $8m PROJECT

Professor R. Smith (left) of Sydney University, a founder member of the Glebe Society, with Mr H. Wardlaw (centre), the project manager, and Mr A. Munday, the construction manager, outside some of the houses to be restored.

FEDERAL MOVE TO REMODEL GLEBE ESTATE

The Sydney Morning Herald *(10 October 1974) reports on the start of 'The Glebe Project' (source: Newspapers.com)*

In January 1973, Management Committee member, Peter Pockley, suggested that the Society write to Tom Uren, Minister for Urban Affairs, drawing attention to the Society's involvement in urban problems and offering assistance. Specific mention was to be made of the church lands, expressways and *Lyndhurst* (minutes of Management Committee meeting, January 1973). At about the same time, Leichhardt Council Mayor Nick Origlass took the Society's 1972 paper on the the preservation of the church lands to Tom Uren.

The Commonwealth Government purchased the Glebe Estate from the Church of England in 1974 and began renovating and restoring housing for the existing tenants (Solling, 2007). Known as 'the Glebe Project', the Commonwealth Department of Housing and Construction envisaged "a unique demonstration of an alternative approach to housing and construction in Australia" (Painter, 1980).

The four major aspects of the project were:

- maintaining housing for low income workers
- preserving the existing social fabric of the neighbourhood
- preserving a hundred-year old townscape substantially intact as part of the national heritage, and
- testing community involvement in determining its own future by direct participation.

Far left: A terrace on Mitchell Street in the early 1970s (source: Bernard Smith Collection)

The same terrace in 2019 (photo: Jan Macindoe)

In its report on the project in 1980, the Department observed:

> *Houses are being rehabilitated to contemporary standards of amenity with minimum disruption to residents … The historic nineteenth century streetscapes are being restored to their original character. Residents have been able to maintain their long-established community links. (Painter, 1980)*

A subsequent change of Federal Government saw changes in policy and a decision to sell the Glebe Estate. At this time, work on the Glebe Estate slowed and houses continued to deteriorate. A *Sydney Morning Herald* editorial in May 1981 painted the Commonwealth takeover and Glebe Project as an expensive failure that could only be remedied by 'market forces'. In response, Tony Larkum, then Glebe Society President, wrote:

> *We have watched with pride and satisfaction over the partial restoration of the estate. And we will continue to back the estate's residents in their demands that it should not be sold off. … the loss will be an irreplaceable piece of our national heritage and much social dislocation … Most residents would go on to the NSW Housing Commission's waiting list. (Larkum, 1981)*

After much negotiation, a transfer to the State Government was agreed in December 1984 and the area was taken over by the NSW Department of Housing (Susskind, 1984; Whitlam, 1985). Today the Glebe Estate remains under the control of the State Government. It is not without problems, but it has an active tenants' group and provides a significant area of public housing within a suburb of increasing real estate values.

The Society has always seen social housing as part of the fabric of Glebe. When a flats development was taking place at Glebe Point in 1976, the Society objected that "no provision is made for low income housing. It is clear that if the unique character of Glebe is to be preserved, the low income earners must not be shouldered out" (*Bulletin* 1/1976).

The Glebe Society keeps a watching brief on social housing in order to respond to any threats to reduce social housing in Glebe. Over the years, the Society has reacted strongly to state government attempts to reduce the number of public housing premises. In 2014, the Society supported Millers Point public housing residents opposed to the sell-off of their homes (*Bulletin* 2/2014).

The Society has taken every opportunity to push for more social and affordable housing in Glebe and Forest Lodge. The State Government's proposal for public/private partnership resulted in the Cowper Street social housing development. Public land, occupied by public tenants, was cleared, and after several years a proposal with fewer public tenants with reduced facilities and less open space was designed, incorporating substantial private housing. The Society made numerous objections to both the misuse of public land and the poor amenity, but approval was given. At the time of writing, the private apartments are completed and the public ones are nearing completion.

The Framework for Heritage and Renewal

Glebe was one of Sydney's earliest suburbs, its name deriving from the original land grant of 400 acres to Richard Johnson, the first Chaplain of NSW. Following the Second World War, Glebe, like so many inner-city areas, was viewed as a slum. Many people assumed it would be bulldozed and replaced with flats.

Urban Conservation

Glebe did not look then as it does now. Most of its buildings were run down and unpainted, with filled-in verandahs, poor facilities and few trees. The founders of the Glebe Society had the imagination to see that the fabric of Glebe was fundamentally sound but needed to be restored (Strachan, 2009).

By 1972, the convenor of the Society's History Subcommittee, Max Solling, had completed his MA thesis on the history of settlement in Glebe from the original subdivisions to the breakup of the great estates in 1878 and 1884 (Solling, 1972). In 1973, Bernard and Kate Smith published their seminal book, *The Architectural Character of Glebe* (Smith & Smith, 1973), identifying the sequence of architectural styles in a century of continuous development up until the First World War. It was clear that Glebe contained an intact record from colonial times, unfolding from south to north in a series of well-preserved streetscapes.

In August 1973 the Management Committee considered a request from the National Trust (NSW) to provide a list of buildings of architectural and historical merit with a view to the suburb being listed as an Urban Conservation Area. The Committee resolved to also make a submission showing the whole of Glebe, indicating the areas of significance (*Bulletin* 8/1973).

Opposite: A house in Arcadia Road in the early 1970s (source: Bernard Smith Collection)

Above right: The same house in 2019. (photo: Jan Macindoe)

Top: Herberto Terrace, 2 to 18 Boyce Street Glebe, around 1970 (source: Bernard Smith Collection)

The same terrace in 2019 (photo: Jan Macindoe)

Subsequently, a 'Townscape Map: Conservation Area' was prepared by Tony Strachan and other Planning Committee members as part of a submission by the Glebe Society to the National Trust in 1974 (see facing page). This map was based on the 1970 Outline Plan referred to earlier. The Map outlined categories of buildings and streets of different (or unimportant) heritage interest using colour coding. In summary, the Society proposed that Glebe should be looked at as a whole; individual buildings and good streets of genuine townscape are found throughout Glebe. It concluded that the greater part of Glebe should be declared a conservation area (*Bulletin* 6/1974).

As a consequence of this work, in November 1974 the National Trust classified almost the whole of Glebe as an Urban Conservation Area, one of the first to be declared (Solling, 2011). This classification assisted in the campaign against radial expressways and also strengthened the case against demolition and in favour of conservation controls. At the same time the Society identified many of the structures of outstanding historic and architectural interest. These were also classified by the Trust and formed the basis of a Schedule of Items of Environmental Heritage adopted by Council.

In June 1984, Leichhardt Council's new Local Environment Plan (LEP 20) included Glebe as an Urban Conservation Area (NSW Government, 1984), and listed the Schedule of Heritage Items and conservation controls for the LEP and Conservation Area. These provisions now had legal force because of new State legislation – the Heritage Act of 1977 and the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act of 1978.

The work of identifying heritage items was continued by heritage consultant Craig Burton, the *Leichhardt Historical Journal*, the Leichhardt Conservation Study and the Glebe Main Street Study. Individual owners throughout Glebe began to research and restore their houses, and in 2006 City of Sydney Council produced a Heritage Development Control Plan, establishing detailed controls for areas of heritage value within the City, including Glebe. Council's town plan, known as the Sydney Development Control Plan, was adopted in 2012 and updated the heritage items and extended the protections provided through the conservation areas (City of Sydney, 2019a).

Despite these protections, a great deal remains to be done to carry out further research into individual heritage items. Continued preservation and conservation depend on the quality, coverage and detail of our research.

The townscape plan prepared in 1974 for submission to the National Trust that led to the declaration of Glebe as an 'Urban Conservation Area'. (source: Glebe Society archives; photo: Phil Young)

Town Planning

Victorian town planning was different from that of the 20th century. Some of the most attractive features of Glebe, including the grid pattern of streets and the rows of uniform villas and terraces, stem from this period. However, there was no zoning during this early period, and both Glebe and the surrounding areas acquired many industrial sites, some leaving a serious legacy of pollution[2].

Lack of zoning controls also led to a serious shortage of recreational open space, especially on the waterfront, a situation which the Glebe Society has been working to address for all of its 50 year history.

Much of Glebe and Forest Lodge's industry moved further west after the Second World War, leaving unresolved questions about surviving housing, and redevelopment of the defunct industrial sites. The extent and control of redevelopment was a major battleground for the Glebe Society and other resident groups throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

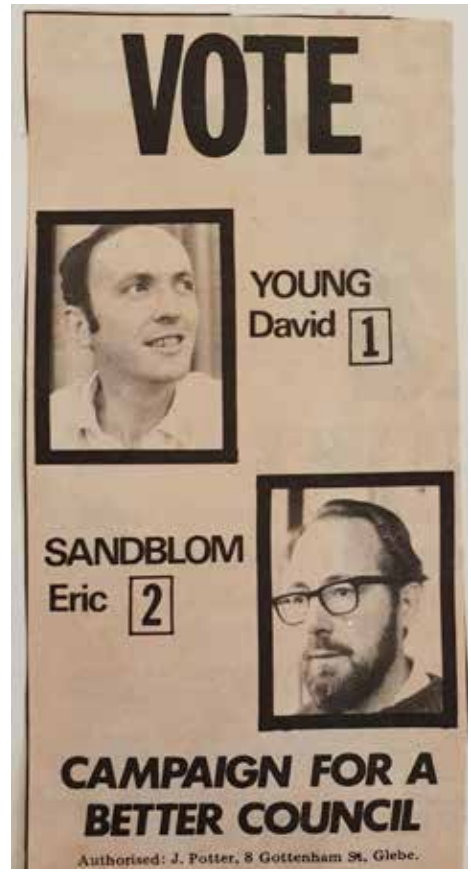
Open Council: the beginnings of good town planning for Glebe

Supported by the Society, in 1971, 'Campaign for a Better Council' (CBC) candidates were elected to Leichhardt Council on a pro-conservation, anti-expressway and open council platform (Hogan, 2004; Solling, 2007). Candidates included Glebe Society members Eric Sandblom, David Young and Dennis McManus.

Tony Strachan recalls:

When the Leichhardt Council was effectively taken over by the Glebe Society and the Balmain Association, everything changed. We broke the mould ... It was such an exciting thing to do, to think that we were creating a future which had relevance from the past but was

[2] The Glebe Society was concerned about pollution from the beginning: holding a public meeting on the subject in November 1969 (*Bulletin* 5/1969).



Campaign leaftlet for "Campaign for a Better Council" (CBC) candidates for the Glebe ward, 1971 (source: The Glebe, unknown date)

looking to the future in a very positive way (Strachan, 2009).

The reforming Council also famously introduced the concept of 'Open Council', whereby virtually all Council meetings were open to members of the public, who were able to address councillors on any item of Council business. Dennis McManus describes Open Council:

If I were to seek a highlight in my somewhat chequered career, it would certainly be the 1971 introduction in Leichhardt of the Open Council Concept, which pointed the way to participatory democracy in its ultimate form: decision-making by the people who would be affected by the decision (McManus, 2019)

Divisions developed between the Council's CBC members and the efficiency of the Open Council process was being questioned, particularly by the *Glebe Weekly* which had formerly championed it. At the 1974 election, the CBC 'lacked the energy they had generated three years earlier' (Solling & Reynolds, 1997), and a more conservative Council took over at the 1974 election. As a result, Leichhardt Council's progressive planning approach was overturned. The Mayor, Les Rodwell, told the National Times in 1976:

We must have progressive development. Pull down all the old houses ... and replace them with commercial and high rise (Solling, 2007, p.260).

Although the new Council was trying to implement their new pro-development agenda, they were frustrated for some years by "public opposition and the State Planning Authority" (Harris, 2007). In 1979, however, the Council published Interim Development Order 27, a plan which permitted high rise and higher densities.

This plan was extremely unpopular. John Hoddinott, Planning Convenor, reported in the *Bulletin* (3/1981):

The Scheme was greeted by massive opposition from many groups and individuals. Almost everyone in Glebe was made aware of the Scheme, and the criticisms of it as seen by the Glebe Society, whose opposition was organised by our Planning Convenor, Alan Robertson; many Society members undertook the job of door knocking and petitioning to record public opposition.

Public opposition – including by the Glebe Society – led to Council appointing a commissioner, Jim Coleman (Harris, 2007). The enquiry reported in 1981 and supported the complaints of the residents, based on 41,316 objections. In his report, Coleman recognised the contribution of submissions such as those offered by the Glebe Society:

*I would stress my view that the value of many of the submissions goes far beyond that of mere 'objections' to a certified planning scheme. [The submissions contain] perceptive criticisms, comments, suggestions and observations and draft policy proposals which in my view will [assist] in future planning efforts. (*Bulletin *3/1981)*

Local Environment Plan No.20

The Council elected in 1980, with the assistance of resident groups, drew up another new plan known as Local Environment Plan (LEP) No. 20, which the State Government finally gazetted in June 1984, and which was the basis of most planning decisions for the next quarter century. It restricted residential development to two storeys over parking (with a room in the roof). This Council also adopted Development Control Plan No. 1, which drew up guidelines for development in Leichhardt Municipality according to the character of each precinct. The plan also included a list of sites to be acquired for open space by Council using contributions from developers. An extensive update of LEP 20 began in 1999 with further community consultation, and the outcome was LEP 2000, which extended conservation areas and introduced further environmental controls.

Glebe became part of the City of Sydney Council area in 2003, and the reconstituted Council began work on a consolidated town plan, again with resident consultation. This, unlike previous plans affecting Glebe, involved considerable research and was empirically based. It gave detailed controls for every part of Glebe in order to maintain its existing character. The new plan updated the list of heritage items and classified every structure as either 'contributory', 'neutral' or 'detracting'.

Glebe Point Road

Glebe's main street is almost two kilometres long. As well as being the oldest and longest street in Glebe, and the main access and transport route, it contains the greatest diversity of architecture and function, and is Glebe's main commercial and service centre.

As noted by Bechervaise & Associates (1991) who wrote the report on the Glebe Point Road Project:

Glebe Point Road survives as one of Sydney's most intact 19th century townscapes with the existence of 1860s commercial and residential development so close to the city. It contains good examples of Victorian row shops and a wide variety of attached and detached housing, some of a very early date. In addition, a number of public and ecclesiastical buildings by distinguished architects also survive. The street is characterised by mature street trees and private garden planning which provide a green and attractive environment.

While the Glebe Society led the way in securing the renovation of housing throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the commercial areas, including the most important in Glebe Point Road, lagged behind. Glebe had been a leading centre for cheap ethnic restaurants during this period, but these have since spread throughout the inner city and Glebe Point Road is no longer unique in this regard.

In June 1988 the Glebe Society applied for, and received, a National Estate Grant to form 'The Glebe Point Road Project' with partner organisations including Leichhardt Council and the newly-formed Chamber of Commerce. (*Bulletin* 5/2001) The aim of the Project was to revitalise Glebe's main street.

In February 1990, the project had completed Stage 1, with the completion of its 'Urban Design Study' (Anglin Associates, 1990). In November 1991, the Project published the Glebe Main Street Study Stage II (Bechervaise & Associates, 1991a & b), in which every building in Glebe Point Road was photographed, described and classified, and recommendations made for the renovation of each building and for the street as a whole. As a result, many of Glebe's oldest and rarest buildings were protected. This list was revised in 2007, and Glebe Point Road became a Heritage Streetscape.

From 1995 to 2001 the Project committee secured a number of improvements, including a plaza at the Broadway end that houses the Jubilee Fountain (commemorating the incorporation of Glebe in 1859), the Boundary Stone of the city of Sydney (from the time of Governor Bourke), the memorial to Indigenous boxer Dave Sands, the renovated University Hall, new street trees, and bench seats with uniquely designed cast bronze arm rests and legs. In August 1999 a time capsule was buried by Lord Mayor Clover Moore at the base of the Fountain – it is due for exhumation in 2109 (The Glebe Society, 2017b)

In 2018, Lindsay Foyle and Ted McKeown took new photos of the same properties photographed in 1991. Peter Thorogood took some additional photos to match the 1991 photos. He used these pairs of photos to create online comparisons which allow viewers to compare how these properties have changed in the intervening 27 years. (Thorogood, 2019).

The Jubilee Fountain and surrounds at the corner of Glebe Point Road and Parramatta Road (photo: Bruce Davis)

The City Council began a complete makeover of Glebe Point Road in 2006, resulting in improvements including new footpaths, the placement underground of overhead wires and 'smart' poles with improved lighting for pedestrian safety. The Council also took the opportunity to renew infrastructure, including new storm water drainage and lowering of sections of the road to conform to the footpaths.

Despite all this effort, Glebe Point Road, like many other main streets in Sydney, lacks the vitality it once had, with many empty shops. Glebe's main street, always a collection of widely-spaced neighbourhood centres concentrated on the eastern side, became vulnerable to competition from large shopping centres such as Broadway Shopping Centre and Tramsheds.

The Glebe Society has renewed its focus on Glebe Point Road in 2019 by establishing a working group to foster its revitalisation. The working group will research main street revitalisation strategies, collect data required to support action, then develop and implement a strategy, in association with other local organisations and Council.

'For lease' signs and empty shop fronts are all too frequent on Glebe Point Road in 2019. (photo: Bruce Davis)

'The Bays Growth Centre' in 2017 (Infrastructure NSW, 2019)

The Bays Precinct

In 2012, the State Government began the process of defining the area of the Bays Precinct, including Rozelle and Blackwattle Bays, Glebe Island, White Bay and the former Rozelle marshalling yards. This area of about 60 hectares covered largely State-owned land, and concept plans were drawn up for its redevelopment.

This process was closely followed by the Glebe Society's Bays and Foreshores Subcommittee. The development of the Bays Precinct Strategy has been slow and community consultation inadequate (*Bulletin* 2/2018). Instead of implementing an overall plan, development has been piecemeal, including dry boat storage in Rozelle Bay, and extension of the super yacht marina, initially a temporary arrangement specifically for the Sydney Olympics in 2000.

In 2018, a concept plan was developed for the Sydney Fish Market to be relocated to the head of Blackwattle Bay, and the State Government has said that a Development Application would be released in 2019. The Glebe Society Management Committee resolved to strenuously oppose the relocation of the Sydney Fish Market to the proposed site on a number of grounds, including that it would use public foreshore land for commercial purposes, limit public access to the Blackwattle Bay waterfront, create significant traffic congestion and cause environmental damage.

New Life for Old Buildings

restoration

Glebe's early development as a garden suburb saw the building of numerous large and elegant houses. During the early part of the 20th century and particularly following World War II, many of these were demolished and replaced with denser forms of housing to provide moderately-priced accommodation for everyday people. However, a number of early mansions have been preserved. St Scholastica's Convent ensured the survival of Toxteth Park House, but other sites required lengthy struggles to save them.

Lyndhurst

Lyndhurst (57-65 Darghan Street) was built between 1833 and 1837 for surgeon James Bowman to a design by the noted colonial architect John Verge (MacDonnell 1972). After Bowman's death it was bought in 1842 by his brothers-in-law, the Macarthurs, who subsequently sold it to the Church of England in 1846. It operated as St James' College and Seminary until 1849. Purchased by the Catholic Church in 1852, it continued as St Mary's Benedictine Academy until 1877. In 1882 it became a maternity hospital, but from 1890 onwards the condition of the house declined, being variously used as a rooming house, meeting place for the Free Presbyterian Church, ice-cream factory, timber works and printing workshop.

In 1972 the Department of Main Roads purchased *Lyndhurst*, after changing the route of the North Western Expressway to avoid disruption to greyhound racing at Wentworth Park (*Bulletin* 9/1971). *Lyndhurst* became a focus for lobbying by the Glebe Society and other groups against both the freeway and the destruction of a historically significant building.

In mid-1972, Glebe Society president, Bernard Smith, met the Commissioner for Main Roads and put a case for the historical and architectural value of *Lyndhurst*. Around the same time, the Builders Labourers Federation was persuaded by the Glebe Society and allied resident action groups to place a 'green ban' on *Lyndhurst* (*Bulletin* 10/1973).

Glebe Society members at a working bee on 22 June 1980 to clear out Lyndhurst's *cellar. L-R: David Kernohan, Jeanette Knox, Hilary Larkum, Ted McKeown and Peter Stanbury (source: Ted McKeown). (See also* Bulletin *6/1980)*

Opposite top: Lyndhurst *in 2016 (source: Sotheby's sale brochure)*

Opposite bottom: Lyndhurst *in the 1970s (source: Bernard Smith Collection). See also Lucas (1972) for other historical photos and detailed description of Lyndhurst's architecture.*

With the abandonment of freeway plans by the Wran State Government in the late 1970s, the Premier committed to *Lyndhurst's* restoration.

The Society acted to prevent further deterioration of *Lyndhurst*; a number of working bees were held to remove rubbish from the cellar and garden in order to show the Society's commitment to its restoration (*Bulletins* 5/1979 and 10/1979).

Heritage architect Clive Lucas and his 'Save *Lyndhurst* Committee' (MacDonnell 1972) were strong advocates for *Lyndhurst* and welcomed the Society's support. In March 1978, *Lyndhurst* was listed on the Register of the National Estate, and in March 1982 it was listed on the State Heritage Register with a Permanent Conservation Order (OEH, undated-c). The Historic Houses Trust moved into *Lyndhurst* after its restoration in 1983, and used it as its headquarters.

For a number of years in the mid-80s and into the '90s the Glebe Society held its monthly management meetings in one of its rooms. Eventually the Historic Houses Trust outgrew the building, and it was bought in 2004 by a private buyer who completed further restoration work to bring *Lyndhurst* back to life as an elegant private residence. A number of Glebe Society events were held at *Lyndhurst* at this time.

Top: Bellevue *as it once was. (source: Glebe Society Archives)*

Bottom: Bellevue *today. (photo: unknown)*

Bellevue

The house (described originally as a cottage), situated on the waterfront in Glebe Point East, was designed by local architect Ambrose Thorley Jr. and built about 1896 for local publican and Glebe Alderman William Jarrett (OEH, undated-a). For many years it was known as *Venetia*, being confused with the parent house of the same name, long since demolished (The Glebe Society, 2013a).

Parkes Development was building waterfront units in the area during the 1970s and, as a condition of approval for building on the rezoned land, agreed to restore *Bellevue* for community use and to set aside land for a foreshore park. By 1974, meetings between the Society and the developer, Parkes Development, established that *Bellevue* and surrounding land would be handed over to Council (*Bulletin* 6/1974). Despite this, in October 1975, 'accidental'

Lord Mayor Lucy Turnbull with Glebe Society President Andrew Craig in 2003 on an inspection organised by the Glebe Society of the waterfront and the derelict Bellevue*. (source: Bulletin 5/2003)*

illegal demolition of the building was only prevented by prompt action by Glebe Society members (*Bulletin* 9/1975).

The campaign for the protection and restoration of *Bellevue* continued for many years. In 1977, the then Secretary of the Society had 'much discussion' with the Lands Commission about the restoration of Bellevue and surrounding land (*Bulletin* 6/1977). Parkes Development failed to restore the building and Leichhardt Council eventually purchased the foreshore land, including the house, in 1981.

In 1984, *Bellevue* was listed as an item of State significance in the Heritage Register. It was re-roofed by Leichhardt Council with financial assistance from the NSW Heritage Council, but then remained boarded up for the next 20 years.

A turning point came with Glebe's transfer to City of Sydney Council. In 2003, the Society hosted Lord Mayor Lucy Turnbull on a waterfront tour, showing her the derelict state of *Bellevue* and concluded that "the Lord Mayor seemed to be sympathetic to pleas to end the 'demolition by neglect'" (*Bulletin* 5/2003).

The building was restored as part of the Glebe Foreshore Upgrade which began in 2005. *Bellevue* was officially re-opened by Lord Mayor Clover Moore in March 2007. A café and restaurant opened with restrictions placed by Council on operating hours. For several years from around 2015-2017, *Bellevue* was un-tenanted. In 2019, a restaurant is operating in *Bellevue* that is permitted to seat a larger number of diners and operate for longer hours. This change was opposed by many local residents who were concerned about the impact on residents' parking and noise. The Society's Management Committee supported the liberalised conditions to improve the restaurant's viability, thus protecting *Bellevue* from the potential ravages of neglect.

Bidura

The heritage-listed *Bidura*, 357 Glebe Point Road, was designed by architect Edmund Blacket and built about 1858. Blacket lived at *Bidura* for 13 years while overseeing his commission for Sydney University (Smith & Smith, 1973). The home is significant as "a rare example of an early villa which is the last remaining 1850s villa within a garden setting on the eastern side of Glebe Point Road" (OEH, undated-b).

The New South Wales government purchased *Bidura* in about 1920, "to be used as a depot for State Children" – boys up to six years of age and girls up to age 18 (NSW State Archives and Records, n.d.). Children were kept at the *Bidura* 'depot' until their appearance at the Children's Court or until they were moved to foster care or another government institutions (Parry, 2015). *Bidura* ceased functioning as a children's home in February 1977.

Bidura Children's Court & Metropolitan Remand Centre

In the late 1970s, the State Government proposed to build The Bidura Children's Court & Metropolitan Remand Centre within the curtilage of *Bidura*, the villa. The proposal was strongly opposed by local residents and the Glebe Society. Despite this, the Bidura Children's Court & Metropolitan Remand Centre opened in 1983 – some concessions having been won on the scale of the development.

The Children's Court operated on the site until its closure in 2017, but the main building, which had been designed as a remand centre for young offenders, was superseded by more modern solutions almost immediately it was built (*Bulletin* 7/2014).

In 2014, the NSW Government announced the proposed sale of the entire site of *Bidura*, and the new owners planned to demolish the Remand Centre to make way for apartments. The Glebe Society's Management Committee, having vigorously opposed the building of the Remand Centre in the first place, concluded that its demolition "would be no great loss" (*Bulletin* 7/2014). This view was not shared by the entire Glebe Society membership however, as many felt that it should be protected as an important example of brutalist architecture.

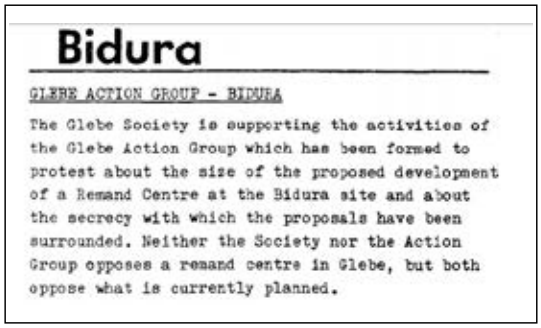
In 2017, the 'Bidura House Group' was listed in the State Heritage Register

> *as a key point in a broader network of places associated with child welfare and juvenile justice in NSW … Bidura House Group is also of state significance aesthetically as a good example of Victorian regency design, and via its strong association with prominent NSW architect Edmund Blacket (OEH, 2017).*

The Bidura Children's Court & Metropolitan Remand Centre appears on the Australian Institute of Architects' register of significant 20th century architecture and the National Trust's heritage list. These listings reflect the building's contribution to 20th century brutalist architecture (Hunn, 2018).

Photo of the proposed development within the curtilage of the heritage-listed villa, Bidura, *from a* Sydney Morning Herald *article, 'Residents petition Wran over 'secret' Glebe project' (6 October 1978; Newspapers.com).*

Opposite: Bidura *in 2019 (photo: Virginia Simpson-Young)*



Bidura

GLEBE ACTION GROUP - BIDURA

The Glebe Society is supporting the activities of the Glebe Action Group which has been formed to protest about the size of the proposed development of a Remand Centre at the Bidura site and about the secrecy with which the proposals have been surrounded. Neither the Society nor the Action Group opposes a remand centre in Glebe, but both oppose what is currently planned.

Article in the Glebe Society Bulletin *(9/1978) opposing the scale and secrecy of the Children's Court development.*

Demolition of the Remand Centre was approved by the NSW Land and Environment Court in 2018 and Council's appeal against this decision rejected, thus clearing the way for the developer to organise a design competition for a residential development, according to guidelines approved by the court.

Benledi

Glebe Library, built around the historic building *Benledi* (186 Glebe Point Road), is an example of the proposition that good things can come out of compromise following rigorous debate (The Glebe Society, 2019a). *Benledi*, built as a private home in the 1880s, became the Glebe Homoeopathic Hospital in 1915. It served as a community hospital until 1989.

The Glebe Society strongly supported the retention of the Glebe Homoeopathic Hospital as a vital piece of local infrastructure, particularly since there had already been a substantial community contribution to its establishment and maintenance. However, in spite of a strong community campaign, it became apparent that the NSW Department of Health was not prepared to retain it on any terms, and it became a derelict building.

In 1994 there was a proposal to establish a transitional centre in Glebe for female prisoners approaching the end of their sentences. This created considerable angst in the community, and even within the membership of the Glebe Society. While the Society had no objection in principle to the establishment of such a centre, some of its members supported an earlier proposal to move the Glebe Library into *Benledi*, the high visibility of which made it suitable as a library site and, for the same reason, inappropriate as a transitional centre.

Ultimately, a deal was struck between the State Government and Leichhardt Council for the sale of the old Glebe Library in Bridge Road, the construction of a new library as an annexe to *Benledi*, and the re-use of *Benledi*, partly as a wing of the Library, partly as a community meeting space, and partly for commercial tenants. The old nurses' quarters at the rear of the property has also been recycled for community purposes as affordable artists' studios.

The new Glebe Library was officially opened on Saturday 19 April 1997; *Benledi* is once again a significant public asset, albeit one very different from that which was originally intended.

Walter Burley Griffin incinerator

In 1932, an incinerator was built close to the Glebe foreshore, designed by Walter Burley Griffin (The Glebe Society, 2019d). Prior to this time, Sydney municipal councils dealt with garbage by dumping it at sea – with disastrous consequences. The Glebe incinerator operated until 1949, and in 1952 its furnace and flue were demolished.

The Glebe incinerator was one of seven designed by Griffin that were built in Sydney, and today the Glebe design is one of just two that survive. The original plan included colonnaded sheds, though only the bones of these have been retained.

Top: Benledi *when it was Sydney Homoeopathic Hospital (source: unknown)*

Bottom: Benledi *today (photo: Virginia Simpson-Young)*

The incinerator was used as a Council depot until the site of the neighbouring John Fletcher Container Terminal was acquired by Australand Holdings Limited. Approval of the Australand residential development was made conditional on developing a heritage restoration plan for the incinerator. The Glebe Society joined forces with the Walter Burley Griffin Society to lobby for a comprehensive approach to restoration, and for a creative approach to its use. The two

Top: Glebe's Walter Burley Griffin Incinerator in 2006. (photo: Adrienne Kabos, courtesy of Walter Burley Griffin Society)

Bottom: The incinerator designed by Walter Burley Griffin located in the Council Depot at the bottom of Forsyth Street in 1937. (source: Municipality of Glebe, Mayor's Report 1935-1937)

societies succeeded in achieving a high standard of restoration and interpretation of the site, which was highly commended by the National Trust in 2007.

In September 2006 the Glebe Society celebrated the rebirth of the incinerator with a picnic ('Phoenix Rising ... from the ashes') and continues to be concerned about its use (*Bulletin* 6/2006).

The building is currently Council property, leased to small not-for-profit organisations.

Restoring the Glebe War Memorials

The Glebe War Memorial in Foley Park was formally opened on Anzac Day 1922 in honour of the 174 local men then known to have lost their lives in World War I. It was designed by local resident and architect, William Martin and funded by the Glebe community (*Bulletin* 1/1991).

By the 1990s, the memorial was in a state of disrepair. The busts of the soldier and sailor had completely disappeared, and the head and wings of the 'recording angel' – as well as the book held – had been broken away. Inside, the marble name plates were covered in graffiti. In January 1991 a number of Glebe Society members, led by Bill Nelson and Max Solling, formed a new subcommittee of the Society for its restoration.

The NSW Heritage Assistance program provided a grant of $20,000, but matching funding had to be raised by the community. An appeal was opened in October 1992 with support from the National Trust (*Bulletin* 8/1992). Donations were received from organisations and individuals, including from street stalls held by the Glebe Society. Restoration of the soldier and sailor, based on photographs from the early 1950s held in the City of Sydney Council archives

Top: The war memorial at the Rozelle Tramway Depot, erected in November 1916 (source: Inner West 15000, n.d.)

Bottom: In 2018, the memorial is in place once again at the Tramsheds (photo: Phil Young)

Opposite: Anzac Day ceremony at the Glebe Diggers Memorial in the Anzac centenary year, 2015 (photo: Phil Young)

(*Bulletin* 1/1992), was achieved in 1995. A second stage of restoration was completed in December 1997, at a total a cost of $42,680.

City of Sydney Council undertook further conservation in time for the Anzac centenary celebrations on 25 April 2015. The work including replacement busts of the soldier, sailor and angel carved from Carrara marble, and a replica of the bronze Victoria Cross at the top of the monument, which had disappeared decades before, was reinstated.

The Society is involved in ceremonies for Anzac Day and Remembrance Day each year at the Diggers' Memorial in Foley Park. These ceremonies are organised by local historian, Max Solling, and officials include the Glebe Society President and a minister or priest from a local Church.

An even earlier memorial, commissioned by Sydney tram workers to honour their colleagues killed at Gallipoli and on the Western Front, was erected in November 1916. The statue of a World War I digger was located in the gardens of the Rozelle Tram Depot adjacent to the Harold Park Trotting Track. At least 150 tram workers left to fight in Europe, and 34 of them never returned. When the Tram Depot was closed in 1954 the memorial was moved to the STA Bus Depot in Leichhardt. With the development of Harold Park as a residential area and the re-use of the Tramsheds, the Glebe Society and the RSL lobbied Council to return the memorial to its original site. Council undertook conservation work before the re-dedication in November 2018.

The Valhalla

The Art Deco cinema and shops at 166 Glebe Point Road, first known as the *Astor*, was designed by architectural firm Kaberry & Chard, who were responsible for the design of many cinemas across Australia. It opened in 1938 and remained a part of Glebe's cultural life until 2005 (Stojanovic-Hill, 2017). This included a period when innovative shows such as the Rocky Horror Show and the Elocution of Benjamin Franklin were staged, and a long period as an arts repertory cinema run by Chris Keily.

Like most suburban cinemas the *Valhalla* eventually fell victim to the rapid expansion of digital home entertainment and the spread of multiplex cinemas. Its careful adaptation as offices preserved most of its street facade and the Art Deco foyer, which contains mementos of its former use. The Glebe Society advocated for its retention and organised a tour of the readapted building when it was completed.

Harold Park and Tramsheds

From 1890, the area of Harold Park operated as sports and racing grounds in various guises. It was named Harold Park in 1929 and from then until 2010 was largely used for harness racing (trotting). After the NSW Harness Racing Club decided to relocate to Menangle, the site was purchased by property developer Mirvac in 2010.

The Glebe Society held public meetings to focus community priorities for the re-development of Harold Park. Glebe and Forest Lodge were fortunate that the City Council, rather than State Government, retained control of the development, and key conditions they imposed reflected community priorities, especially the inclusion of one third of the site as open space, and renovation of the Tramsheds (formerly the Rozelle Tram Depot), including provision of community space.

The Tram Depot, to the north of Harold Park, was built in two stages in 1904 and 1907 (The Glebe Society, 2019c). A large workforce maintained up to 200 tramcars at a time, but with the winding down and eventual closure of the tram system, the Depot closed in 1958. NSW Harness Racing acquired the Tramsheds in 2002, but they were never utilised by the Club. The Tramsheds became a mecca for photographers and videographers who took advantage of the extensive graffiti and decaying trams.

Top: The Tramsheds today (photo: Flickr user TCL 1961)

Left: The Tramsheds when derelict (photo: unknown)

Opposite top: The Valhalla cinema in 1991 (Bechervaise & Associates, 1991a)

Opposite bottom: The Valhalla today (photo: Virginia Simpson-Young)

Mirvac undertook extensive renovation for adaptive re-use of the Tramsheds as home to 12 restaurants and cafés and seven community-based retailers. A mezzanine level includes the Harold Park Community Hall, 500 sq m of community space managed by Council. The renovated Tramsheds opened in September 2016, and received a National Trust Heritage Award for Adaptive Re-use in 2017 (National Trust NSW, 2017).

The iconic water tank that provided water to the tram depot is still to be restored and reinstated by Mirvac.

Open Spaces, Parks and the Greening of Glebe

Waterfront Parks

Since its inception, the Glebe Society has sought to increase the very low percentage of the suburb's parkland. In 1969 the only public access to the waterfront was at the end of Glebe Point Road, known as Marine Reserve (later changed to Pope Paul VI Reserve, after the Pope who disembarked there on his way to the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children). The park contained two large Moreton Bay Fig trees that still survive. The waterfront comprised a mere 80 metres of public foreshore access. The Society identified suitable sites – mainly derelict factories along the bays, foreshores and adjacent water courses – and succeeded in having them included in the acquisition plans of Council.

In March 1979 the Society released a report detailing action required by Council, the state government and other actors to realise the Society's vision for an open foreshore from Johnstons Creek to Blackwattle Bay (The Glebe Society, 1979). The proposal was made available to relevant organisations and formed the blueprint for creating the Waterfront Walk.

Residents tried to stake a claim to some of these waterfront sites by planting trees and turning them into makeshift parks. In June 1978, the Society held a working bee during which BBQs were built, grass cut and rubbish removed (*Bulletin* 8/1978) and the following November, the Society arranged a Guy Fawkes celebration at Blackwattle Bay attended by 700 people (*Bulletin* 9/1978).

The Society lobbied the State Government to hand over some of its waterfront land, and to require developers to hand over the waterfront sections of the sites they had acquired. In 1979 the Society achieved a major victory when, following intense lobbying in conjunction with the Sydney Harbour Foreshores Committee, Parkes Development handed over Blackwattle Bay Park to Leichhardt Council. In Blackwattle Bay Park near the end of Leichhardt Street is a plaque commemorating the efforts of the Glebe Society, unions and resident groups towards its creation. It remains the only official recognition of the epic achievement of gaining complete foreshore access as far as the western side of Blackwattle Bay at Wentworth Park.


SPECIAL ISSUE – THE SOCIETY'S WATERFRONT PROPOSAL
THE GLEBE SOCIETY
WATERFRONT PARKS FOR GLEBE

A special issue of the Bulletin *in 1979 featured details from the Waterfront proposal (*Bulletin *5/1979)*

Opposite: View of Blackwattle Bay and the Anzac Bridge from beneath the viaduct in Wentworth Park – a glimpse of what is possible if the waterfront is returned to the public (photo: Virginia Simpson-Young).

open spaces

In 1984 the Society succeeded in having the foreshore of Rozelle Bay placed top of the list for acquisition as a park to mark the Australian Bicentenary (Buckingham, 2013). After four more years of pressure, the State and Federal Governments cooperated in the creation of the Bicentennial Park in 1988. This huge area not only multiplied public access to the foreshore but also linked all the surrounding parks together. Annandale groups gained the area west of Johnstons Creek shortly afterwards.

When Glebe was incorporated into the City of Sydney Council area, the Society made certain the new Council knew what was needed to link Jubilee Park to Blackwattle Bay Park along the foreshore. As a result of this campaign, Council acquired the Anchorage site, and the Waterfront Walk was officially opened in November 2006. The stretch around Blackwattle Bay beside Sydney Secondary College was negotiated with the Department of Education and opened in 2014. Ultimately this has resulted in a total of about 20 hectares of waterfront open space and about 2.5 kilometres of waterfront access.

The Society is now working towards extending the Waterfront Walk along the front of Wentworth Park at the head of Blackwattle Bay. If this is achieved, 100 percent of Glebe and Forest Lodge's foreshores will be publicly accessible and available for all to enjoy.

Extending Harbour parkland

SIR. Your editorial, Harbour Park(April 28),included a timely statement on the need to preserve the foreshores in the upper Harbour reaches, but sounded a caution on the expense and difficulty of achieving this end.

The Glebe Society has recently lodged a proposal with the Minister for Public Works and Ports, the Minister for Planning and Environment and the Municipality of Leichhardt dealing with the acquisition of significant areas of waterfront parkland and linking walkways in Glebe. These parks would be not only for the 14,000 residents of Glebe who now have less than 80 metres of waterfront access, but would have regional significance for the surrounding landlocked suburbs.

Contrary to expectations, this proposal can be implemented at virtually no cash cost and with a negligible impact on port facilities and local employment.

ALAN ROBERTSON,
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The Glebe Society,
Hereford Street,
Forest Lodge.

April 30

Letter to the Editor of The Sydney Morning Herald *from Alan Robertson about the waterfront proposal, 10 May 1979 (source: Newspapers.com)*

Top: Part of Foreshore walk in 2010 (photo: Bruce Davis)

Top insert: Foreshore walk under construction (photo: Bruce Davis)

Centre: View from Oxley Street towards Glebe Point and Blackwattle Bay showing waterfront buildings and moorings in the 1970s. (source: Bernard Smith Collection)

Bottom: A similar view taken in 2019 (photo: Jan Macindoe)

Orphan School Creek and Johnstons Creek

Orphan School Creek rises in the University of Sydney, and for many years there has been a Water Board easement where the Creek flows in an underground pipe along the border of Glebe and Camperdown and into Johnstons Creek Canal at Wigram Road (Macindoe, 2017).

The Society identified suitable land to expand this corridor and in 1984 Leichhardt Council began negotiations to acquire large additional parcels of land from the Children's Hospital, which had expanded its holdings into Forest Lodge before its move to Westmead in 1995. The group FRROGs (Friends/Resident/Ratepayers of the Orphan School Creek Gully) which formally affiliated with the Glebe Society as a subcommittee in 1996, lobbied effectively for regeneration of the area as bushland (*Bulletins* 7/1996 & 6/2006).

The negotiations dragged on for a very long time, but in the end, residents and the National Trust drew up a plan for the regeneration of the entire corridor as native bushland, the largest such scheme in inner Sydney. The park was opened in 2009.

The stretch of Johnstons Creek from Wigram Rd to Rozelle Bay was converted to a concrete lined channel in the late nineteenth century. It is now in need of major repair, and in line with current practices Sydney Water is planning a naturalisation project which will involve removing the old concrete walls and replacing them with stabilised banks of native plants, trees and rocks. Construction is proposed for 2019.

Top: Bush regeneration by members of the Blue Wren Subcommittee and others in Orphan School Creek, April 2018 (photo: Judy Christie)

Centre: The over-sized grandstand at Wentworth Park (photo: Virginia Simpson-Young)

Bottom: The 'Mongrel Cup' at the Wentworth Park Community Games in 2008 (photo: Phil Young)

Wentworth Park

Wentworth Park was created when, during the 1870s, Blackwattle Swamp was filled-in as far as the causeway already built connecting Pyrmont and Glebe, now Bridge Road. At this time, Blackwattle Creek, which reached Blackwattle Bay via what is now Lake Northam in Victoria Park, was placed underground (Solling, 2008).

Long before the foundation of the Glebe Society, Wentworth Park had deteriorated from the gracious Victorian park which it had been in its early years, following its dedication in 1885 'as a park or place of recreation' in perpetuity.

In the late 1970s the Glebe Society wrote letters and reports, collected signatures for a petition and held community stalls to oppose the further alienation of the park by the building of the oversized grandstand which, despite our efforts, was approved in 1980.

There were further setbacks in the early 1990s when, despite creation of a separate Trust to administer the open space area of the park and the development of a landscape plan, the State Government opposed landscaping because it would interfere with use of the park for car parking during greyhound race meetings.

A major breakthrough was the formation in 2006 of the Blackwattle Cove Coalition (BCC) community groups from Glebe (including the Glebe Society as a founding member), Ultimo and Pyrmont. This group organised three Wentworth Park Community Games from 2007-2009, opening up Wentworth Park to the public and drawing attention to the under-utilised area of open space and the need for improvements to the site.

Stop Wentworth Park being used as a carpark, demand residents

By TRACEY ROBIN, Civic Reporter

Inner-city residents have called on the State Government to reopen Wentworth Park as a recreational area, rather than allow it to be used as a carpark by visitors to Darling Harbour.

The park has increasingly been used for parking, particularly during public transport strikes.

Now the 500 members of the Glebe Society — a residents' action group interested in local history — fear the State Government is planning to allow Darling Harbour visitors to leave their cars in Wentworth Park until its own carparks are completed.

The 1,500 parking spaces in the casino proposal the State Government is still considering will not be finished in 1988.

A spokesman for the Minister for Public Works, Mr Brereton, said that Wentworth Park would only be used for parking on special occasions. This would include weekends, particularly when the First Fleet re-enactment ships and the Tall Ships came to the harbour.

By 1988 there would be 3,000 parking spaces in Darling Harbour, Mr Brereton said, and there would only rarely need to be supplemented by places such as Wentworth Park.

But residents say enough is enough, and that it is time the park was returned to the people.

The president of the Glebe Society, Ms Edwina Dee, said the Government was focusing all its attention on Darling Harbour and ignoring other potentially beautiful parks.

Over the past 50 years, the park had increasingly been used for "vested interests" which showed little concern for the local community.

In 1980, this paper described the park as "the most attractive and beautiful of our recreation projects, second only to the Botanic Gardens".

But then came the encroachments — greyhound racing began at Wentworth Park in 1939.

Ms Dee said letters had already been written to the State Government, but if had not progressed to have the park given. She said residents would begin collecting signatures for a petition.

Glebe Society draws attention to Wentworth Park being used as a carpark (source: Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 May 1987 in Newspapers.com)*

The BCC succeeded in getting support from both City of Sydney Council and Wentworth Park Sporting Complex Trust, resulting in opening up the site in 2008 by removing parts of the wall, opening up views of the greyhound track, and upgrading the park with landscaping, play equipment, lighting and new paths.

The State Government's proposed relocation of the Sydney Fish Market to the foreshore of Wentworth Park will have a serious detrimental impact on Wentworth Park. The concept plan states: "The delivery of the new market will improve visual and physical connections from Wentworth Park to the waters of Blackwattle Bay." It is unclear how this can be achieved when that connection is interrupted by a large building.

The Glebe Society second annual flower show (source: newspaper cutting contained in the Glebe Society Archives)

In 1991, in response to the Draft Plan of Management for Wentworth Park, the Glebe Society stated:

> *We re-affirm our strong support for the eventual removal of the industrial buildings along the Blackwattle Bay foreshore.* ***This will give water views from the Park and provide a further section of the Foreshore Walkway*** *proposed in the City West Urban Strategy Plan that will eventually link the Opera House and Glebe (*Bulletin *1/1991; emphasis added).*

In 2019, the Society holds true to that 1991 affirmation; we envisage a waterfront with sightlines between Blackwattle Bay and Wentworth Park and direct physical access, unencumbered by an over-sized structure such as that proposed for the Sydney Fish Market. The concept plan states that "a new section of the Blackwattle Bay foreshore promenade will also be completed returning the foreshore to the public". The current concept plan depicts a promenade requiring a deviation from the existing shoreline and passing through commercial areas.

Harold Park

The opening of the park, picnic area and children's playground in Harold Park in October 2018 provided a green connection between the existing foreshore parks and Wigram Road (City of Sydney, 2018). Further enhancement of the foreshore and waterways open space is expected with the creation of new parkland along the Crescent in the next few years.

The Greening of Glebe

In the 1960s Glebe was very much an urban and industrial landscape, with little attention to trees, parks or gardens. In the Society's first year, a garden competition was held (*Bulletin* 2/1970) and due to its success, a flower show was added the following year (*Bulletin* 8/1972). These events continued until 1974. A Parks and Gardens Subcommittee was formed in 1972, convened by Marie Webb (*Bulletin* 1/1983). Following a 1970 survey of trees in Glebe by botanist Tony Rodd, the subcommittee also made recommendations to Leichhardt Council about tree planting, which were accepted in 1973.

Under the control of the City of Sydney Council, major advances have been made with over 13,000 street trees planted throughout the City since the mid-2000s. Council has both a street tree master plan and urban forest strategy (City of Sydney, 2019b). The Glebe Society has welcomed the opportunity to provide feedback and suggestions on the development of such plans by, for example, holding a public meeting to discuss Leichhardt Council's Glebe Point Road Street Tree Strategy in 1994 (*Bulletin* 1/1994).

The Society has frequently expressed concern about the severity of tree-lopping methods used to protect overhead powerlines in Glebe and Forest Lodge. In 1978, a proposal to remove Glebe Point Road's poplar trees provoked resident

protests; but ill-health necessitated the trees' removal some time later. In their place, a different species of poplar was planted which had a less invasive root system.

All in all, there are many more trees in Glebe than there were in 1969 as a result of plantings both in private gardens and in the new areas of parkland which have been established. One unanticipated side effect, however, has been a reduction in the shrubby vegetation which was home to small birds, such as blue wrens and silver-eyes, while the tall trees have encouraged larger birds, many of whom prey on the smaller ones.

With the assistance of a City of Sydney Environmental Grant, the Blue Wren Subcommittee conducted a program to raise awareness about the Superb Fairy-wren and its conservation in Glebe and Forest Lodge. The resulting report by ecologist Sue Stevens outlined the results of a survey of the Superb Fairy-wren, their habitat requirements, and offered recommendations and a conservation plan (Stevens, 2008). As a result, several hundred shrubs were planted and wren-friendly plants were distributed for use in gardens and some local schools. In 2016 a demonstration habitat garden was established in John Street Reserve. The Society continues to encourage Council and other land managers such as the University of Sydney and Light Rail to consider the needs of smaller birds when landscaping their grounds. Six bushcare groups operate in Glebe and Forest Lodge, under the umbrella of the Blue Wren Subcommittee.

Community gardens provide another opportunity for residents to garden together. The long-standing community garden in St Johns Road moved to the grounds of St Johns church in 2018. A new community garden opened in 2014 alongside St Helens Community Centre, as the result of a long lobbying effort by local residents with support from the Glebe Society. Membership is open to all and planting, maintaining and harvesting are all undertaken on a shared basis.

Top: Row of terrace houses on Cliff Terrace overlooking Minogue Crescent around 1970 (source: Bernard Smith Collection)

Centre: The same view in 2019 – a great deal more green (photo: Jan Macindoe)

Bottom: John Street Reserve – a habitat garden for small birds (photo: Andrew Wood)

Transport & Residents' Wellbeing

From Goods Line to Light Rail

The Glebe Society has always taken the view that the abandonment of Sydney's extensive tramway network in the 1950s was a planning and environmental disaster (The Glebe Society, 2017a).

In 1974 the Glebe Society published *Glebe Society Monograph No. 2*, *A Northwestern Railway instead of the Expressway* proposing the reintroduction of trams using the disused freight railway written by members John Gerofi and Jim Coombs (Gerofi & Coombs, 1974). This monograph advocated the re-use of the existing heavy rail loop from Central to Dulwich Hill and beyond. This was originally built to service the goods yards at Darling Harbour and Rozelle Bay and the wharf terminals at Darling Harbour and Pyrmont, the closure of which had heralded the beginning of the end of Sydney as a working harbour. The monograph also proposed the reintroduction of an extensive light rail network to serve a growing Sydney in the 21st century and beyond.

Govt considers inner-city goods line for passengers

The Government will consider running passenger trains on an inner-city goods line from Lewisham to Ultimo via Lilyfield and Pyrmont.

The NSW Minister for Transport, Mr Cox, said yesterday that the Government's priority was to improve existing services.

But he added, "I wouldn't rule out the scheme provided an investigation found that such a railway would be practical."

Under the $45 million program put to the State Government by the Glebe Society, the goods line would be upgraded to carry passengers.

To promote the scheme the society hired a train and carried several hundred people along the line on Saturday.

The secretary, Mr Jim Coombs, said yesterday that he envisaged stations at Leichhardt, Lilyfield, North Annandale, Ultimo, an underground station at Glebe and possibly a station at Wentworth Park.

At Pyrmont, the dual track railway would branch off from the existing line, pass over Darling Harbour and connect with Town Hall station through a tunnel.

With feeder bus services from Drummoyne and Balmain, up to 70,000 people could be expected to use the line each day to reach the city, Mr Coombs said.

As few as six goods trains used the line each day.

Mr Cox said: "The immediate need of public transport is to replace buses and trains which are obsolete."

The Government would have to see what demand there was and assess the costs of stations, electrification and tracks.

"Railway programs starting out at $50-million over 10 years often end up costing $500 million," he said.

Top: The Glebe's Society's light rail proposal received significant press. This article appeared in The Sydney Morning Herald *on 26 July 1976 (source: Newspapers.com)*

Right: A picture included in a 30 November 1980 Sydney Morning Herald *report on the Glebe Society's 1980 'Great Train Ride'. (source: Newspapers.com)*

To publicise its cause, in 1976 the Glebe Society organised the Great Train Ride, a round trip from Redfern to Redfern through Glebe. Locals were invited to check out the route in a train hauled by a steam engine. The Christmas *Bulletin* that year reported:

> *The Great Train Ride perhaps typified the Society's capacity to combine concern over civic and planning issues with sociability – not to mention attracting favourable and extensive media attention.* (Bulletin *10/1976)*

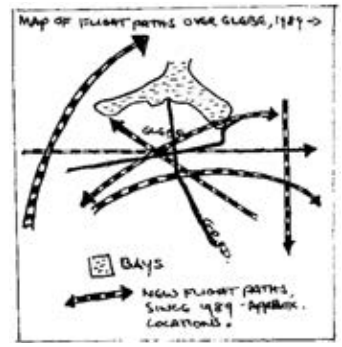
Later trips started from the old Mortuary Station at Central, running through Pyrmont, Ultimo, Glebe and Annandale and thence to Dulwich Hill. Most people who enjoyed those trips were amazed that the goods line existed, and had no idea of its potential for passenger traffic.

Eventually, in 1997, the old goods line was reopened for state-of-the-art trams running from Central to Wentworth Park, and it was extended to Lilyfield in 2000 and Dulwich Hill in 2014. A second line, the CBD and South East Light Rail, is under construction and is scheduled to be completed in 2020.

The Third Runway

Another threat to residents' quiet enjoyment of Glebe and Forest Lodge came from the air. The building of the 'Third Runway' (a second North-South runway) at Kingsford Smith Airport had the potential for unacceptable aircraft noise – and other problems – given that Glebe and Forest Lodge are not far away from the airport and the impact of the existing flight path on Leichhardt was already concerning.

Alison McKeown was convenor of the Kingsford Smith Airport and Glebe Sub-committee (1989-1993) that was renamed Aircraft and Glebe Subcommittee in



The Society opposed the third runway because of the potential for noise pollution resulting from planes flying over Glebe and Forest Lodge. This figure from Bulletin *(6/1990) shows new flight paths since the previous year.*

1993-1999. In 1990, Society volunteers divided up chapters of the enormous Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the third runway (Kinhill Engineers, 1990) and worked together to make a 37-page submission to the Commonwealth (*Bulletin* 1/1991). A number of information stalls were held at Glebe Post Office in early 1990 (*Bulletin* 1/1990).

Buried deep within the EIS was information that cancer and heart disease in people under flight paths were worse than in the population away from the flight paths, and serious air pollution was a problem in suburbs near the airport. The Third Runway would lead to only a relatively small increase in capacity and was hugely expensive considering this limitation. The Society felt, as did many other groups, that the time had come to build a second airport at Badgerys Creek.

Glebe and Forest Lodge were expected to be adversely affected by increased aviation activity with the building of the Third Runway. Living conditions were already stressful for suburbs north of the airport

including Stanmore and Leichhardt because of aircraft activity, and Annandale was likely to be the next suburb affected.

The Society, in support of its neighbouring suburbs and because of the potential threat to Glebe and Forest Lodge, supported the 'No Third Runway' campaign and joined the Second Sydney Airport Coalition. The campaign in suburbs north, south, west and east of the airport was strongest in 1990 and 1991 and moved into the last stages in 1992. Despite a great deal of public opposition and inadequate planning procedures, the Third Runway opened in 1994.

Ironically, the northern flight paths were modified so as to limit their impact on the then Prime Minister's electorate of Bennelong, and this effectively minimised the impact on Glebe and Forest Lodge.

Until the Children's Hospital moved from Camperdown to Westmead in 1995, it operated helicopters at all hours of the day and night. In the same year, the Society campaigned against a proposed 'heliport' in Pyrmont.

Above: The anti-WestConnex poster displayed by some Glebe Society members to encourage opposition to the roadway (photo: Virginia Simpson-Young)

WestConnex

Infrastructure NSW's (2012) *State Infrastructure Strategy* identified "the $10 billion 'WestConnex' motorway as the highest priority project to be completed in the first 10 years" of their 20-year planning timeframe. Details were vague and two years later, the impact on Glebe and Forest Lodge remained unclear. Murray Jewell, the Society's Transport and Traffic Convenor wrote that a 2014 "report on WestConnex referred to the possibility of a road tunnel connection between the motorway and the City West Link that appears to impinge on Glebe. The Glebe Society will monitor this situation." (*Bulletin* 7/2014). The Society's clear position was that it opposed the:

opposition

*construction of further motorways as a solution to Sydney's transport needs. Our view is that more investment should be made in Sydney's Public Transport Infrastructure, including in an extension to the light rail network (*Bulletin *1/2015).*

In mid-2016 WestConnex released its plans for the Glebe section of the WestConnex project which involved road tunnels running underneath Glebe and 'spaghetti junction' interchanges centred around the Rozelle goods yards and on Parramatta Road near Missenden Road in Camperdown (*Bulletin* 3/2016). Members were encouraged to attend public meetings held in Rozelle and Balmain.

The implications for heritage listed properties in nearby suburbs were a concern for then Heritage Convenor, Liz Simpson-Booker:

The National Trust NSW has documented the heritage impacts of WestConnex on the World's First Garden Suburb, Haberfield: There are 20 listed Heritage items to be demolished ... and there are a total of 53 houses in the Haberfield Conservation Area which are slated for demolition ... This catalogue of destruction does not even begin to address the established gardens and mature trees which will go under the bulldozer; nor does it address the dislocation and alienation to be suffered by both individuals and the community generally when their suburb is permanently chopped up by expressways.

Decades ago, Glebe came within a whisker of being trisected by arterial freeways. ... As ... WestConnex edges closer to us and our neighbouring suburbs, please bear in mind that heritage listings, conservation area status, our parklands and our village life are not seen as impediments by the WestConnex bulldozer – it is capable of rampaging over it all. Back to the barricades! (Bulletin *5/2016).*

A submission on the Environmental Impact Statement for the M4-M5 Link was made by the Glebe Society (Jewell, 2017). Amongst the Society's objections to WestConnex was the proposal for a portal near Parramatta Road that would have had major impact on the heritage listed sandstone retaining wall, and considerable flow on effects for traffic congestion. Also of concern was the potential placement of ventilation smokestacks in tunnels in the Rozelle Bay area. That proposal was abandoned.

With 'No WestConnex Glebe and Forest Lodge', convened by Glebe Society member Jan Wilson, the Society organised public meetings in opposition to the project, and Murray Jewell met with the WestConnex Project Manager to voice the Society's concerns (*Bulletin* 7/2017).

In late 2018, Murray Jewell conceded that WestConnex was a fait accompli but that Glebe and Forest Lodge had "gotten off relatively lightly" (*Bulletin* 8/2018):

There are no construction or property acquisitions proposed in our suburbs. The M3 motorway tunnels will run well to our west, around the junction of Pyrmont Bridge Rd and Parramatta Rd. The impact of the completed WestConnex motorways will however be an increase in traffic on the approaches to Glebe and Forest Lodge, on Victoria Rd, the Anzac Bridge, City West Link and the Crescent, and more vehicles rat running through our suburb.

Community Engagement

people

Ultimately, conservation of the built environment is for the benefit of those living in it, and since its inception, the Glebe Society has focused attention on improving the quality of life for the people of Glebe and Forest Lodge – the local community. This is reflected in the Society's motto: 'Community, Environment, Heritage'.

In the late '60s and early '70s as gentrification took hold, the local community was changing; long-term residents – many of them working class, were being joined by the gentrifiers – generally of a higher social demographic (Solling, 2007).

There is little argument that the Glebe Society was established by the gentrifiers and its membership remains predominantly middle class. In the late '60s and early '70s, the Society worked to protect the Glebe Estate because of both its architectural and social value – recognising the importance of the longstanding social networks that supported its residents. The Society continues to value the diversity of the Glebe community.

Various community activities undertaken by the Society are intended to contribute to a better quality of life for residents, particularly those who are disadvantaged.

Opposite: The 2017 'Friends of Centipede' event. The gathering is listening to Tanya Plibersek, who has the microphone.

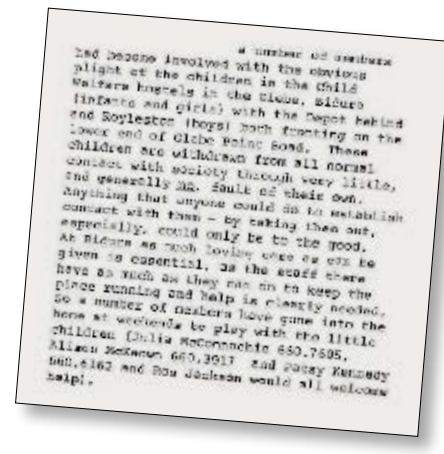
Right: A call out to members to support the children detained at Royleston *and* Bidura *(*Bulletin *8/1974)*

The Glebe Society's early 'social welfare' activities

In 1974, the Society was five years old and had begun to reflect on its purpose. An editorial comment in the *Bulletin* (8/1974) under the heading, "Social Club or Social Conscience?", stated:

> *In the last year the question of our social role, and our commitment to the overall well-being of the people of the Glebe has been an issue that has exercised the minds of our Management Committee.*

Around this time, the Society hosted a Community Services Forum to discuss the Society's role in 'social welfare' (*Bulletin* 10/1973) and a submission was written to the state government about *Bidura*, *Royleston* and the Metropolitan Girls Shelter, (*Bulletin* 4/1975). For a number of years, the Society organised an annual ferry trip and picnic, and as early as 1969, children from the Children's Homes of *Bidura* and *Roylston* were brought along by members (*Bulletin* 5/1969; 10/1972).



connecting

A Social Welfare group or committee was in place to coordinate these activities for some time (*Bulletin* 9/1974), but in his President's Report to the AGM in 1975 (*Bulletin* 6/1975), Bernard Smith said:

> *The Society has given careful consideration to its role in social welfare activities. A Directory of welfare organisations was published in the February* Bulletin*. It was resolved that in view of the large number of welfare bodies active in Glebe the Society should not set up its own welfare committee but co-operate with existing bodies where help was sought and needed. Members of the Society have been active during the year in the Glebe Community Care Centre, the Australian Assistance Plan, the Elsie Women's Refuge Centre, the Good Neighbour Council and other community projects.*

Education

The Glebe Society has a continuing involvement with Glebe Public School. In 2008 the school celebrated its 150 year anniversary, and the Glebe Society partnered with the school to organise a commemorative event, as well as donating resources.

The Glebe Society, through its Community Development Subcommittee helped to establish Friends of Centipede in 2011 which raises funds for Centipede Before and After School Care at Glebe Public School. The Society organises the fundraiser, Sunset Soirée, held annually at the Glebe Rowing Club with the help of the school, Centipede staff and the community.

Glebe lacked a high school and the Society strongly supported the Department of Education's plan to build Glebe High School on the Hudson's timber yard site acquired by the Department in 1974 for this purpose (Solling, 2007). Progress towards the school was slow, and the Society maintained pressure on the Department until the School opened in 1979 (*Bulletin* 6/1975). The school is now Sydney Secondary College Blackwattle Bay campus.

Tertiary education was also a concern of the Society, with working bees held at Tranby to improve the environment for students of the Tranby Aboriginal Training College.

Addressing social disadvantage

The Glebe Society works with many other local community organisations including FLAG (Forest Lodge & Glebe Groups), COGG (Coalition of Glebe Groups) and the Glebe Community Development Project at University of Sydney. The Society is also involved in a number of initiatives to improve community wellbeing including *GlebeConnected* which was established in 2016 and whose motto is "working towards a socially sustainable Glebe". *GlebeConnected* is a collaboration between a number of community agencies, schools, universities and community members. Its focus is on life transitions: early childhood, primary to high school, and ageing.

Australia's first women's refuge, *Elsie*, was established in 1974 and the Society has engaged with *Elsie* since that time. After a visit from Bessie Guthrie, the Society's 'Monday Group' (also known as the 'Crochet Group') began making blankets for *Elsie's* women and children (*Bulletin* 6/1974).

Top left: Elsie Walk Mural.
(photo: Phil Young)

Top right: The 'Love Your Park' project in action in 2012 at M.J. Dougherty Reserve in Mitchell Street.
(photo: City of Sydney Council)

Bottom: Kitchen Starter Pack.
(photo: Diane Hutchinson)

In recent years, the Glebe Society Community Development Subcommittee has collected Christmas gifts for the women and children living at *Elsie* and in other supported accommodation facilities in Glebe. The Community Development Subcommittee has built on these links with a Kitchen Starter Pack project which provides essential cooking and eating equipment to residents of these facilities when they leave for private accommodation (*Bulletin* 1/2018). Most of the equipment is pre-loved items donated by members of the Society and the wider community, thus encouraging recycling as well. Glebe Society members also meet regularly at the Glebe Town Hall to sew bags for the Asylum Seeker Centre in Newtown to enable a weekly shop at Foodbank.

Community art works

Decorating the M.J. Dougherty Reserve during 2010 and 2011 on Mitchell Street was an initiative of the Glebe Community Action Group co-sponsored by the City Council and the Glebe Society. Local residents of all ages and cultural backgrounds made clay tiles, then designed, decorated and attached them to the Reserve's concrete walls, creating a work of art for themselves in their own environment. A second project in 2012 was painting a mural on a bare wall that bordered the small park on the corner of Mitchell and Glebe Streets, one which colourfully illustrated the birds and animals of Australia. A community artist was selected to work with and guide the local youth, who were the artists. These 'Love your Park' projects were aimed at involving local residents in a community arts event.

Yet another project of the Glebe Community Action Group together with the Glebe Society was the Elsie Walk mural in a small laneway between Derwent Street and Derwent Lane bordering the Glebe Primary School. The mural was painted in 2018 by two local artists, Auntie Kath Farrawell and the late Elizabeth Rooney. At each end of the wall are the black and white silhouettes of sheltered mothers and children. In the centre is a brilliantly coloured fantasy space, featuring grass, water, a distant shore and a rainbow of hope.

community

Top: Save Glebe Post Office rally (photo: Phil Young)

Bottom: WWI exhibition 'Sacrifice, Struggle & Sorrow' held in 2015 (photo: Phil Young)

Preserving social infrastructure

A sense of community is enhanced when people are able to live, shop and – perhaps – work locally. The Glebe Society has fought to protect existing social infrastructure (such as the Glebe Post Office) and worked to improve existing infrastructure (such as Glebe Library).

On Sunday 19 December 2010 the *Sunday Telegraph* reported the intended closure of Glebe Post Office. In conjunction with other concerned locals, the Society organised a rally for 20 January 2011 to Save Glebe Post Office. Speakers included the State Member Verity Firth, Lord Mayor Clover Moore, resident Meredith Burgmann, President of the Glebe Chamber of Commerce, Sofi Lidgren, and Federal Member Tanya Plibersek. Despite almost universal opposition, the closure went ahead the following month (The Glebe Society, 2011b).

Celebrating Glebe's people

WWI exhibition 'Sacrifice, Struggle & Sorrow'

To mark the Anzac Centenary in 2015, the Society mounted an exhibition called *Sacrifice, Struggle and Sorrow: Glebe's Great War 1914-1918*, with the help of a $28,796 grant from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The exhibition examined the impact of the First World War and its immediate aftermath on the Glebe community. The Society put a call out in the *Bulletin* for donations of relevant material, and organiser

Neil Macindoe reported after the event that "the response to the Society's appeal was quite overwhelming, and it is my greatest disappointment that we were able to include only a fraction of the memorabilia" (*Bulletin* 9/2015). Hand knitted red poppies, each representing one of the 201 Glebe men who died in WWI, were made by Glebe Society members for the exhibition.

To accompany Glebe's Anzac Centenary celebrations, the Society hosted a public lecture by Professor Paul Ashton from University of Technology Sydney entitled: *And never to return: The War Memorial Movement* which focused on the social and cultural context of the memorials (Ashton, 2015).

Laneways

Since 2012, four lanes or walkways in Glebe have been formally named after prominent local community members, recognising the contribution each has made to the community: *Elsie Walk* (2012) commemorating the establishment in 1974 of Australia's first women's refuge, *Melina Lane* (2013) remembering Melina Galluzzo, from the local fruiterer family, *Dave Sands Lane* (2015), acknowledging Dave's achievements as a successful Aboriginal boxer, and *Bernard Lane* (2013) to commemorate our first President, Bernard Smith. The Glebe Society was particularly involved in the project to honour the contribution of Bernard and Kate Smith as founders of the Glebe Society; its members would have liked to include Kate in the name of the Lane but official place-naming protocols meant this was not agreed to by the City of Sydney Council. The Lord Mayor Clover Moore officially opened *Bernard Lane* and *Elsie Walk*, and the Deputy Lord Mayor, Robyn Kemmis opened *Melina Lane* and *Dave Sands Lane*.

The opening of 'Bernard Lane' in 2013 in recognition of Bernard (and Kate) Smith (L to R) Don Heathcote (son-in-law), Kate Challis (grand-daughter), Elizabeth Heathcote (daughter), Clover Moore (Lord Mayor), at rear are Jasper Hollo (great grandson), Andrew Hollo (Kate's husband), Sarah Smith (grand-daughter), and Robyn Kemmis (Deputy Lord Mayor). (photo: Phil Young).

Top: Launch of the tram mural on 8 March 2017. Included in this photo are Max Solling, Lord Mayor Clover Moore, Janice Challinor and the artist, Kelly Wallwork (photo: Phil Young)

Bottom: 'Meet the Candidates' event for the NSW State election on 12 March 2019. (photo: Phil Young)

Tram mural

The Tram mural on the corner of Glebe Point Road and Hereford Street was conceived as a Community Project to commemorate Glebe's transport heritage and complement the preserved tram tracks in Glebe Point Road, to create an artwork for public enjoyment, and to engage older local residents in their recollection of stories related to tram travel.

The Glebe Society received a grant from City of Sydney Council to finance the project. People who contributed included Janice Challinor, convenor of the Glebe Society Community Development Subcommittee, muralist Kelly Wallwork and a number of older people whose memories were recorded: Sadie King, the late Ruth Russell, Steven Perry, Barbara Brilley, Michael Kelly, Kay White and Max Solling.

Lord Mayor Clove Moore attended the mural's unveiling on 8 March 2017. The large mural on the side wall of a corner terrace house attracts much attention from locals and visitors to Glebe.

Heritage Plaques

More than 100 plaques have been uncovered in Glebe and Forest Lodge as part of a City of Sydney project initiated in 2010. The Glebe Society undertook to identify all the plaques installed in publicly available sites in postcode 2037. For 15 months over 2010 and 2011, Glebe Society member Peter Robinson walked every street, road, lane and avenue of Glebe and Forest Lodge, identifying, photographing, measuring, transcribing and recording the condition of around 115 plaques in 57 plaque locations – a huge job!

The plaques are found in parks and paths, and on houses, hotels, public buildings, schools, churches, grandstands and shops and are a reminder to the community of its local history. The Glebe Society Plaques Database lists the majority of the identified plaques and includes a map of plaque locations (The Glebe Society 2014).

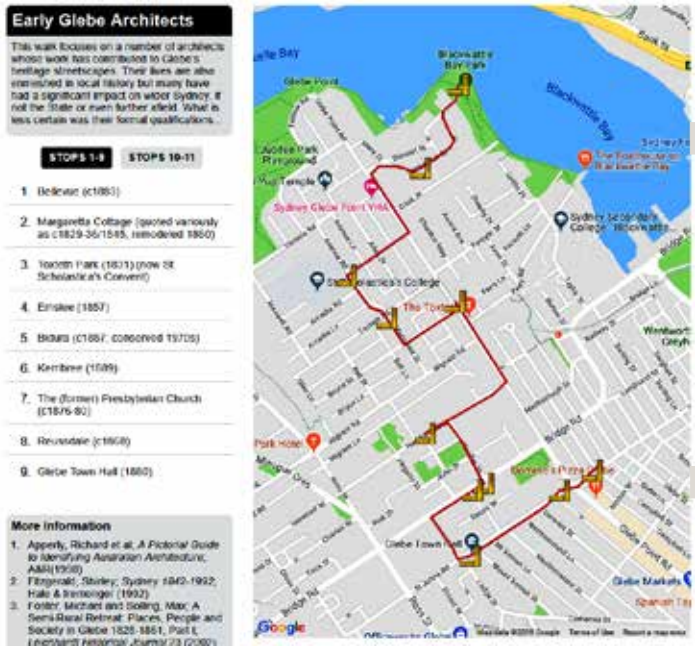
In Nelson Lane near the west end of the footbridge across Johnstons Creek is a 'Green Ban' plaque with the inscription:

> *In the early 1970s resident groups, including the Glebe Society, joined with the Builders Labourers Federation, led by Jack Mundey, to impose a Green Ban on expressways planned to carve through Glebe, Annandale and Lilyfield.*
>
> *This plaque commemorates all the men and women who fought this battle. Leichhardt Council working with the community.*

Engaging decision-makers

'Meet the Candidates' events have been organised by The Glebe Society since 1987. Candidates for more than 20 local, state, and federal elections have met with Glebe Society members and local residents in a public venue in Glebe, in recent years at the Glebe Town Hall, to outline their policies and answer questions. This is a non-partisan event and all nominated candidates are invited to participate.

involve



The route for the Glebe Society's 'Early Glebe Architects' Walk (The Glebe Society, 2019b)

Engagement with members and the wider community

A different kind of social connection has been built through the expansion of the Society's online presence. The website, Facebook page and Twitter feed enable a broader range of community links to be built around shared interest in our suburb's history, quirky byways and daily life.

Communication with – and between – Glebe Society members in 1969 was face-to-face, word-of-mouth, and used telephone trees, letters and *Bulletins* through the letterbox. In 1971, a Publications Subcommittee was established to give members a 'better and brighter *Bulletin*' (*Bulletin* 8/1971), and the Society's communications have been looked after by various subcommittees ever since.

The *Bulletin* continues to be main way the Society communicates with its members. Over the last 50 years, around 500 *Bulletins* have been produced – all can be viewed on the Glebe Society website. One thing that has changed little in the last 50 years is that the *Bulletin* is largely distributed by volunteers who deliver to members in their area. Increasingly, members are opting to receive the *Bulletin* by email.

Every edition of the *Bulletin* is held at the National Library of Australia and the State Library of NSW (under the provisions of the Copyright Act), the Glebe Library and in the Society's archives.

In 2001, the Society's website came online (*Bulletin* 6/2001) and has been joined by separate websites for 'Glebe Walks' and the Glebe Island Bridge. The website is a storehouse of historical information about Glebe and Forest Lodge; the most frequently accessed page is about Sir Edmund Barton (The Glebe Society, 2013c), Australia's first prime minister, who was born in Glebe in 1849. The Society was instrumental in having a plaque to Sir Edmund Barton installed on one of the pillars adjacent to the footbridge crossing Parramatta Road to the University in 2009.

The Society's next foray into the digital world was in 2012 when it created a Facebook page which engages with hundreds of 'followers', many of whom are not Society members. Twitter was next when in 2014 the Society began tweeting (*Bulletin* 7/2015); and in 2016 a YouTube channel was established.

Social Activities and the Arts

The raison d'être of the Glebe Society is resident action, but since its inception it has always had a significant program of social activities. These functions provide enjoyable opportunities for members to get to know each other, to learn more about Glebe, and to develop networks that can be called upon when urgent action is required.

Social Activities

The Glebe Society's first social event was held in July 1969, a history walk led by Max Solling. Early on, the Society began the custom of monthly coffee mornings at various members' houses, on Saturday mornings, later on Sundays, when people met together informally. These were later replaced by evening drinks at the Glebe Rowing Club and then at the Haven Inn. Later still, members met for a monthly lunch at different Glebe restaurants or cafes. Currently the casual drop-in activity is "Thirsty Thursday"– dinner on the first Thursday of each month, held since 2003 again at different restaurants, and the annual Christmas Party is a major event.

Various excursions were arranged, particularly by the Garden Group and the Monday Group, to places such as the Katandra Bushland Sanctuary and Mt Wilson. And there were other, less regular events – talks, history walks, theatre parties and play readings, music recitals, wine bottlings, the Great Train Rides, a pub crawl, a night at the Trots, an Asian evening, and a memorably wet barbecue (sizzling sausages under an umbrella) one Guy Fawkes' night to publicise the need for a foreshore park.

Opposite: One of the installations for Glebe Kite Kaleidoscope *in Broadway Shopping Centre. The creator is Peter Travis who is second from the left (photo: Susan Ingram)*

★ ★ ★

A PLEASANT WAY to spend a Saturday afternoon was to take a walk around the historic buildings of Glebe yesterday.

It was the first event organised by the social committee of the Glebe Society, and the "walkers" set off from St. Scholastica's Convent and visited Camden College, the Presbyterian manse in Bridge Road, St. John's Church and two historic houses which have been restored at Glebe Point.

The first social activity of the Glebe Society was a walk with an historical focus (The Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 July 1969)*

Annual Garden competition. Great success last year. Enter all types of gardens from the smallest pot plant garden to the full sized garden.

Annual ferry trip to Clark Island. All members are asked to "adopt" a child from the Bidura Girls Home or a boy from Royleston Boys Home for the day so they can enjoy a family outing. Nov. 1969.

Special Christmas cards depicting A Glebe scene. "We feel they will make people all over Australia, and overseas, aware that Glebe has something unique and worthwhile preserving." Nov. 1969.

NOT JUST CAMPAIGNS

... but "other good things"

(Max Solling, Sept, 1979)

Glebe Society activities in the 1970s

Coffee mornings "at home"
Glebe Flower Show
Crochet group
Play readings
Afternoon teas
Wine and cheese evening
Musicals and play readings
Drinks at the Rowing Club
Book fairs
Gardening group
Progressive dinners
Wine bottling at the Larkum's
Pakistani-Australian night
Tree surveys (footpaths)
Clean-up at Blackwattle Bay
Chess, tennis and cricket clubs
House and garden inspections
History walks
Social welfare forums
Ferry trips
Picnics
Theatre parties
Lyndhurst working party
Christmas parties
...and more!

Second Annual Flower Show: competitors. This event involves more non-members than any other activity of the Society. March, 1971

This year the Society has had the great good fortune to have gained the full support of the Pakistani community of Sydney. Members of the Pakistani community are presenting a full program of entertainments and a large supper of authentic Pakistani food.

Pakistani-Australia Night. Held 17th June 1978, at Glebe Town Hall.

Market day Street Stall "...in aid of Glebe Community Care Centre. The Glebe Society will run a street stall... Please give this your support as the community at large will benefit..." July, 1975.

A night at the trots. "Come and join the party for this typical Glebian activity. If you have never been before, this is the time for a new experience." Feb. 1972.

First birthday party of Glebe Society will be held at Bernard and Kate's home. Dress Code: Come dressed in clothes worn at the time your house was built. Best present you can give is a new member, so bring one with you.1st July, 1969.

An illustrated lecture, "The Glebe Environment" by Mr Duek-Cohen, Department of Architecture UNSW. Glebe Town Hall, March, 1970.

Monday Crochet Group. "Originally the group began meeting in 1974 and was named the "Crochet Group" under the direction of Kate Smith." "Bessie Guthrie, the founder (of Elsie Women's Refuge) met with the Crochet Group to speak of the home's need for blankets".

Christmas Party – 1971's party was held at Margaretta cottage and drew a crowd of 120 people. Dec. 1971.

Sporting Activities were regularly held. Cricket matches between the Balmain (residents) Association were held and tennis was a regular activity.

Bidura and Royleston – Children's Homes in Glebe. "Can you include a boy or girl in your social outings? The Dept. of Youth & Community Services is eager to recruit reliable people, especially married couples who can spend some time with children on a regular basis. If you could take a child out at the weekend, ring and make arrangements with the homes." June, 1976.

Recording Glebe's Townscape – Members participated in a range of surveys – street trees, detailed inventory of housing etc which were used by the Society as a basis for submissions and planning issues.

Notes and photos drawn from the Glebe Society Bulletins, Glebe Society Archives and private photos.

Above: Collage by Dorothy Davis and Katharine Vernon highlighting some of the Society's social and community activities in the 1970s. Designed by 32phillip for the Glebe Society Community Festival in 2019.

Opposite top: Skippedy Skip *by Nuha Saad (photo: Bruce Davis)*

Opposite bottom: Josie and the Emeralds performing at the Glebe Music Festival (source: https://josieandtheemeralds.com)

In recent times, local guided walks (history, art galleries, environment and others) continue to attract members, as well as information events and practical workshops including using a mobile phone and renovating your heritage house.

Since 2011, 'Glebe Voices', at which local residents talk about their specialist interests, has covered subjects as varied as artificial intelligence, wild horses in Kosciuszko National Park, and Bob Connelly's reflections on his career in documentary film-making. 'Our House', an invitation to members to gather socially at homes that show a wide variety of architectural styles, has also been popular.

40th anniversary

The 40th anniversary of the Glebe Society in June 2009 was celebrated with a party on the top floor of the Woolcock Institute of Medical Research in Glebe Point Road attended by 150 Glebe Society members and invited community guests, and by a gathering at *Margaretta Cottage* in Leichhardt Street for former Presidents of the Glebe Society and members of the Management Committee. Guests of honour at *Margaretta Cottage* were Tom Uren and Jack Mundey.

The Arts

A subcommittee for arts and media was active from 2004 to 2011, convened by local artist, Susan Ingram. In 2005, the Glebe Society organised the Art & About project in Glebe, *Glebe Kite Kaleidoscope*, on behalf of City of Sydney Council – a particularly memorable event featuring displays of spectacular kites by local artist (and inventor of the budgie smuggler!) Peter Travis at Broadway Shopping Centre and St Johns Church. Facing Glebe – photographs of local people displayed on the sides of buildings and shop-front displays of art by local school children – was organised by the Society for Art & About in 2006.

The subcommittee was also involved with the City Council project to sponsor three public art works for Glebe Point Road. The first of these to be completed was the artwork *Skippedy Skip* (2007), the colourful fence and bus shelter at Glebe Public School, designed by artist Nuha Saad. Later 'Art and About' projects in Glebe were 'Living in Harmony Mural' in Peter Forsyth Auditorium in 2010 and 'Earth vs Sky' by Allan Giddy in 2012.

In 2013 the Glebe Society sponsored the inaugural Character of Glebe prize at the Glebe Art Show and the prize has been awarded every year since.

The longest continuous cultural event is the Glebe Music Festival, organised and sponsored by David McIntosh with support from the Glebe Society, which has been held is various venues around Glebe since 1990 and features many artists with a Glebe connection (McIntosh, 2012).

Smoking ceremony, presided over by Uncle Les (right), held before the Glebe Aboriginal Cultural Bus Tour, part of the Glebe Society Community Festival 2019. In the background, on the left, is Chernai Smith, tour organiser and guide (photo: Virginia Simpson-Young)

Visitors to the Glebe Society Community Festival viewing the Villas of Glebe and Forest Lodge pre-1870 *display. (photo: Bruce Davis)*

The Glebe Society Today

50 years

Celebrating 50 years: The Glebe Society Community Festival

The 50th anniversary of the founding of the Glebe Society was an opportunity to celebrate the Society's achievements and share them with the wider community of Glebe and Forest Lodge.

At the beginning of 2017, the Heritage Subcommittee began working on a major exhibition on the villas of Glebe and Forest Lodge pre-1870, pulling together 50 years of research on these homes and the people who lived in them. Later that year a working group was formed to organise the celebrations and to seek support from City of Sydney Council. The Festival Steering Committee of Judy Vergison, Dorothy Davis and Virginia Simpson-Young took on responsibility for the overall organisation, promotion, program planning and installation. The eight-day Glebe Society Community Festival was held from 23 to 30 June 2019 at the Harold Park Community Hall at the Tramsheds, Forest Lodge.

The Festival, comprising an exhibition of 13 displays and 16 events throughout the week, began with a Launch Party attended by the Lord Mayor.

The Exhibition highlight was the Villas display curated by the Heritage Subcommittee, particularly Robert Hannan and Peter Crawshaw. It included hundreds of photos, paintings, books, historic records and maps depicting the grand homes in Glebe and Forest Lodge pre-1870, many of which no longer exist, and images of the landscapes of this period.

Other displays included:

- The Glebe Society in Action 1969–2019: a snapshot of the campaigns and activities of the Glebe Society on heritage, environment and community issues over the past 50 years illustrated through photos and posters
- The Glebe Society Timeline which presented the events chronologically over 50 years
- Aboriginal Land: Glebe and Forest Lodge
- Environment, bush care and biodiversity
- My 2037: Photo competition for school students from the six primary and high schools in Glebe and Forest Lodge
- 'Community connections' including a listing and contact addresses of all community organisations in Glebe and Forest Lodge with displays of the Glebe Society projects, Kitchen Starter Pack and Sewing for Good
- Photographic display of Glebe people by well-known local photographer Tom Psomotragos
- Audiovisual display comprising eight features including interviews with Jack Mundey and Tom Uren, contemporary artists of Glebe, a film on the history of the Glebe Society from the perspective of the *Bulletin* editors, and several historical photo collections.

The events during the week were just as varied: from walks by Max Solling through Glebe and Forest Lodge, to panels on the founding women of the Glebe Society, on radical Glebe and Future Glebe. Also included were performances by Glebe Society member Lyn Collingwood's group of actors, choral concerts, a high school band, the launch of 'Glasgow to Glebe', history talks and the Blue Wren's annual Biodiversity Lecture, and more. In association with the local Aboriginal community and Glebe NAIDOC, a Glebe Aboriginal Cultural Bus Tour was organised to point out the places in Glebe that are part of the rich Aboriginal history and culture of the area.

Bulletin (5/2019) includes a comprehensive report on the Festival. Materials from the Festival are archived on the Glebe Society website (https://glebesociety.org.au/50th_anniversary_festival/).

In addition to this booklet, a number of publications were produced for the Society's 50th year. To accompany the *Villas* exhibition, Lyn Collingwood, Robert Hannan and Peter Crawshaw produced an elegant catalogue (Collingwood et al., 2019). This beautiful booklet includes colour images of some of Glebe and Forest Lodge's most elegant villas, along with detailed historical information about the houses and their occupants.

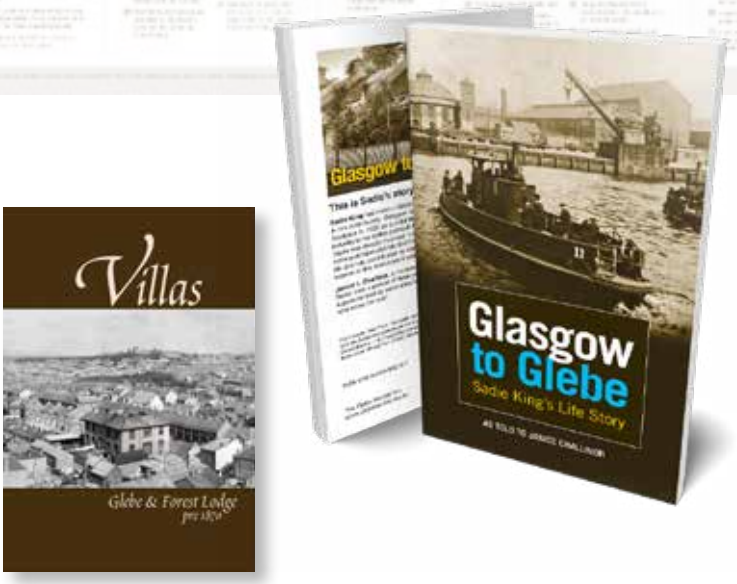
Glebe resident Sadie King is the subject of a short biography written by the Society's Janice Challinor. *Glasgow to Glebe* (Challinor, 2019) traces Sadie's life after emigrating from Scotland in 1926 as a child through the war years working in the defence industry to her active political life in the Labor Party and the union movement. The booklet was launched by John Faulkner at a Festival event along with the panel session *Personal Perspectives*. The event drew the biggest crowd of the Festival – other than the Launch Party – and the first print run of the book sold out on the night.

Another legacy of the 50th year is the documentary produced by the Society's Allan Hogan that presents the Society's 50 year history through the eyes of many of its *Bulletin* editors (Hogan, 2019). The film, shown for the first time at the Festival, triggered an impassioned discussion about a number of key threats to Glebe and Forest Lodge: the relocation of the Sydney Fish Market to the Blackwattle Bay foreshore at Wentworth Park and the revitalisation of Glebe Point Road among them.

Other resources prepared for the Festival include a Guide to the Posters displayed in *Glebe Society in Action: 1969 – 2019*, a collection of interesting letters, press clippings and other documents from the archives, and a directory, *Glebe in Print and Film*.

Over 70 Glebe Society members volunteered at the Festival, and financial and in-kind assistance was provided by City of Sydney Council through a Festival and Events Grant as well as by numerous local businesses and Glebe Society members. Over 2,500 people came through the doors and over 1000 attended events over the week. The Society saw a large spike in the number of new member applications.

The Festival was of a high professional standard, though organised completely by volunteers. It was a testament to the commitment of Glebe Society members to documenting the history of the Society, involving our whole community in the celebrations, and in profiling Glebe and Forest Lodge as a great place to live.



A timeline of the history of the Glebe Society was created for the Society's 50th anniversary. Here the timeline is being mounted for the Glebe Society Community Festival in 2019 (photo: Virginia Simpson-Young)

The Future of the Glebe Society

Although we no longer face the big battles that marked the early years of the Glebe Society, the pressures facing Glebe as an inner-city suburb continue to generate the need for both vigilance and innovation. In the last five years, Glebe's population has increased markedly[3] and this appears likely to continue (ABS, 2016; ABS, 2018). The demands of an ever-growing population and the environmental advantages of housing people close to their workplaces pose the challenge of how to balance an increased population with maintenance of the qualities that make Glebe an attractive place to live.

Glebe's position close to the central business district means that many major changes affecting the broader City have an impact on our suburb. Although WestConnex will not run through Glebe, construction in Camperdown will involve greatly increased truck movement through Glebe and Forest Lodge. At the same time, construction of the new Sydney Fish Market – wherever its eventual location – will also be a major disruption.

Although the suburb now enjoys enviable heritage protection, there is a surprising amount still to be researched and celebrated about both the social heritage and built heritage of the suburb, especially in relation to its more modest buildings and working-class history. And although heritage protection covers most of the suburb, and most of the former industrial areas have now been converted to residential or open space, it remains possible that some sites on the edges of the suburb offer development opportunities that will need to be considered carefully.

The Future of Glebe panel at the Glebe Society Community Festival made a number of interesting observations on the immediate issues facing Glebe and possible creative solutions:

Glebe Point Road: a creative strategy is required if Glebe Point Road is to be revitalised. Some suggestions that arose

[3] Glebe's population has been higher in the past. In 1911, the population was almost 22,000; in 1947 it was 20,510 and reduced by 1996 to 13,601 (Solling, 2007).

A selection of popular businesses on Glebe Point Road (photos: Bruce Davis)

from the 'Future Glebe' session at the Glebe Society Community Festival were:

- traditional retail properties could be mixed with residential and offices/studios to ensure viability
- Victorian shop sizes are not large enough to support a business in the 21st century; what is needed is greater flexibility in planning laws to allow expansion or consolidation of existing small holdings
- Encourage development of small/creative businesses above shops
- Look at increased density through different models of inter-generational occupancy.

Options such as these may achieve their aim in revitalising the main street, but their higher density may have a negative impact on residents' quality of life.

The second challenge, brought to the forefront by the Glebe Society Community Festival, is the responsibility of the Society to embrace all of Glebe and to recognise that there are social conditions and equity issues that need advocacy by those in the community who have a louder voice and more privileged position.

The Glebe Society in 2019 has around 450 members. It has constantly sought to attract more members, especially younger ones, to ensure the continuation of the Society. Increased numbers and more involvement appear to be correlated with the magnitude of the issues facing Glebe: flat development, high rise development, loss of heritage buildings and open space, foreshore encroachment. There are many challenges ahead for Glebe and the need for vigilance and campaigning should galvanise the membership. We need strategies to inform and engage all: calls to action may be through digital platforms rather than carrying banners!

The Glebe Society has expanded its digital presence in recent years. Its website, Facebook page and Twitter presence means that its influence extends well beyond its formal membership. Together with the links established with other community groups and neighbouring suburbs, these networks within our diverse community will enable us to face future challenges and work together for our common benefit.

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