

THE REUSSDALE AFFAIR



Reussdale (Circa 1870)

On Saturday, 27th January, Mr Ross Wilson held a lively party for about 200 friends in Glebe Town Hall to celebrate Australia Day and to draw attention to the architectural and historic importance of the buildings in Glebe designed by Ferdinand Hamilton Reuss, Snr.

Probably the finest of these - and certainly the best known - is Reussdale, 160 Pyrmont Bridge Road (see sketch). For nearly 100 years, until recently, this was the Presbyterian Manse of Glebe. Together with the adjacent church and other buildings it is still owned, but no longer used, by the trustees of the Presbyterian Church of Australia. The Glebe Society Bulletin No.5 of 1971 carried a front page picture of Reussdale and an outline of its history and importance.

In 1971, after the local congregation had moved to other premises, it was learnt that the Church proposed to lease the land to a developer who would raze all of the existing buildings and build a huge lodging house. The application was even passed by the old Council, but fortunately the scheme fell through and was eventually abandoned.

Last year it was reported that the Church trustees had signed an agreement to lease the premises for 60 years to an art director, Mr E.H. Marr. He planned to convert the church building to a cultural centre with a drama theatre, ballet classrooms, art gallery, etc., and to retain Reussdale as a residence. Interested Glebe Society members breathed sighs of relief that here was a viable proposal that would preserve these two valuable buildings.

That was four or five months ago. Leichhardt Council seems sympathetic to the scheme, but approval is apparently bogged down somewhere in the State Planning Authority. This, in itself, may not matter much except that at the time the agreement was signed the local congregational authorities dispensed with the tenants of Reussdale. And since then they have allowed the buildings to deteriorate and become the prey of vandalism.

Fears have been expressed that this is part of a D.M.R. - type plan to let Reussdale decay and then demolish it as too decrepit to be worth saving - there is, after all, a clause in the proposed lease allowing demolition of the buildings if they reach such a state.

But this seems unrealistic - the demolition clause is only what would be expected in normal commercial practice, and anyway, the church trustees have a veto over any such destruction. And they have expressed their hope that the buildings can be retained.

There remains then one crucial question - why are Reussdale and the church building being allowed to be despoiled? Mr Marr apparently has no control until the lease is actually finalised. Property management in the Presbyterian Church is a complex matter, but the responsibility in this case would seem to lie with the local congregation. What is it doing?

Vernon Winley

THE GLEBE SOCIETY
P.O. Box 100, Glebe
Phone 660 3529 or 660 6149
ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION:
ordinary \$2
family \$3
student or pensioner \$0.50c
MEMBERS PLEASE NOTE:
A RED CIRCLE MEANS
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION IS
NOW DUE.

FOR YOUR DIARY

Wednesday, 14th February

Glebe Society Meeting in Glebe Town Hall at 8 pm - Alan Roberts will talk on The Abbey and the other "Witches' Houses" of Annandale. Coffee and biscuits afterwards.

Thursday, 1st March. (and the first Thursday in each month) at 8pm. in the Aldermens' room at Glebe Town Hall - remember that the GLEBE WARD SOCIAL WELFARE COMMITTEE meets. The Glebe Ward Aldermen invite all residents to join this group, set up by Leichhardt Council last year for resident participation in:

- . play centres
- . pensioner bus and car trips
- . adventure playgrounds
- . school for seniors
- . telephone information and referral service.
- . childrens' homework classes
- . Back to Glebe Day
- . community aid services
- . or any of your own issues

Use this committee as a platform to gain support for community projects.

Saturday, 3rd March

COFFEE MORNING at Margaret McArthur's 36 Ferry Road - 10.30 am to 12.30 pm - 20 cent each for refreshments and conversation.

Monday, 12th March

Next meeting of the SOCIAL ACTIVITIES GROUP to be held at Julie McConnochie's, 58 Boyce St. at 8 pm.. New faces and ideas welcome.

Some Sunday in March;

A PICNIC CRICKET MATCH against the Balmain Association at Birchgrove Oval. But we need players. Please contact our Cricket Captain, Ross Tzannes (660 6485..if no one answers 660 3529). And we will need more than just players (e.g. cheer squad etc). It should be a very enjoyable day for any member of the Society. Food too.

Saturday, 31st March:

A HUNTER VALLEY COACH TRIP and WINERY INSPECTION is contemplated - cost will be of the order of \$5 each. People interested, please contact Olga McIntyre (660 2164) or Agnes Dolle (660 4446) who are collecting numbers.

Saturday, 7th April

Our FOURTH ANNUAL FLOWER SHOW 2 pm - 5 pm at Glebe Primary School - Schedule is enclosed so start selecting those blooms. For further details contact Marie Webb 6606483

MEET MANAGEMENT

Tony Strachan;

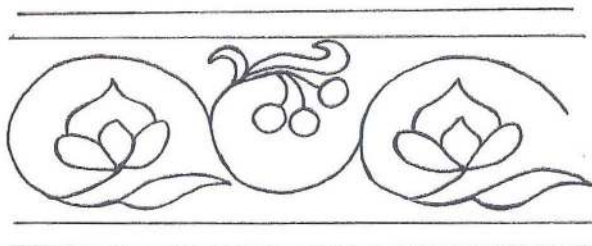
An interest and fondness for old houses generated early in life prompted Tony Strachan to choose The Glebe as a place to live some two years ago.

As luck would have it the "perfect" house of its type was discovered six months later and those who have seen its subsequent restoration would agree with its owner that "fate" had apparently decreed he should have it.

Taking a part-time post graduate degree in planning four years ago to satisfy his curiosity also appears "fateful" as Tony Strachan has now been thoroughly caught up in the civic group and resident action movement.

As convenor of the planning forum of the Glebe Society his concern now is to see Glebe accepted as an historic area and appropriate planning measures formally incorporated in the Leichhardt planning scheme.

Tony Strachan is, or has been, an economist, businessman, bachelor, amateur planner, conservationist, music lover and old car fanatic.



Friday, 11th May:

WINE and CHEESE EVENING at Maureen and Adrian Colman's. More details later

Saturday, 13th Sunday 14th October

Our FIFTH ANNUAL GARDEN COMPETITION - the schedule will be as in 1972 with the added feature of a section for a bed of annuals (either mixed annuals or all of the same variety).

Sunday, 4th November

An all day INSPECTION OF PRIZE-WINNING GARDENS - it is expected that 10 to 12 gardens will be open from 10 am. - 1 pm. and 2 pm - 5pm and the charge of \$1 per head will include afternoon tea. The break between 1 pm. and 2 pm. has been arranged with the suggestion that visitors may like to organise their own picnic lunches in Federal Park.

retrospect:

Contemporary Glebe has inherited the tradition of providing services to those members of society who are not fully able to maintain a satisfactory way of life.

One of these organisations with which the people of Glebe would have been familiar was the Church Rescue Homes. The Church of England Temperance Society was "the Union and Co-operation, on perfectly equal terms, between those who use, and those who abstain from alcoholic drinks, in endeavouring to promote its objects. Its objects were (i) The Reformation of the Intemperate, (ii) The promotion of Temperance (iii) The Removal of the Causes which lead to Intemperance.

There were four large homes in Avona Avenue, Glebe Point, which accommodated about 190 children, girls and women. They were "healthfully situated - not far from the tram terminus." In 1911, a piece of land "going through from our avenue to the main road" was purchased to enable visitors easier access to the homes, rather than driving up the narrow entrance in Avona Ave.

The four homes were "Strathmore", the Rescue Home, "Avona", the Children's Home, "Tress-Manning" (built by the Church), the Training Home, and "Arden", which was the Executive Quarters and the Rescue Home for Boys. It was established in 1920

In nearby Ultimo was another Church of England home called the Church Labour Home at 55 Harris Street. It was founded in 1891, and provided food and shelter for men in need, in return for labour.

The homes for the women and children were known as "The Church Rescue Homes for the Rescue and Reform of Intemperate and Fallen Women and Girls". By 1911 "Avona" and "Strathmore" were almost entirely free of debt.

"Tress-Manning" was built in 1909. The Church Homes were well supported by gifts of money and yearly subscriptions. The women who "have fallen from sobriety and chastity" maintained them to a large extent, by the sale of work they did while inmates. This work included needlework, laundry, chair-caning and curtain framing. Sales of work were held in Record Reign Hall, where the children from the homes gave demonstrations of lace making.

The responsibility of the Homes was to undertake reformative work amongst the women and the work "of saving of the children", many of whom were from the Children's Court.

One writer at the turn of the Century, complained of "the impurity of both sexes" and maintained that the causes of evil were the "uncontrollable passions of the body, excited frequently by drink". Consequently, the Young Men's Institute of St. John's, Bishophorpe, made an attempt in their activities to strengthen the churches influence on a "class difficult to reach".

Bearing in mind the basis of the Temperance Society, one is left to ponder the "perfectly equal terms" on which this "class difficult to reach" would have met its reformers, should it have joined the Society.

Dorothy Perkins

MONOGRAPH No:1

The Glebe Society's Monograph No.1 "An Alternative To Inner Urban Expressways" by David Potter has now been printed and is about to be released. A copy will be distributed to each member with the next issue of the Bulletin.

MEMBERSHIP

WELCOME TO THE FOLLOWING
NEW MEMBERS:

Laurence Halloran
St. Scholastica's
David and Sue Ellyard
Edna and Charles Willder

historical journal

Issue No.2 of the Leichhardt Historical Journal is now available for 50 cents - contact co-editor Max Solling (660 1160) for your copy which includes several special articles about Lyndhurst. No. 3 will be out shortly.

THEATRE PARTIES

Last year an informal group began running a monthly theatre party. This year Albert Renshaw has offered to organise the first one and would like to collect names of people interested in being advised of theatre plans. Generally the party would be held in the third week of each month.

If you would like to be on the list, contact Albert by phone (259 0454 - at work), or through P.O. Box 100, Glebe, or at Unit 14, "Ellangowan" Mary St., Glebe. The first night will be during the third week in March - everyone who is on the list will be contacted individually each month.

MISCELLANY

If the proliferation of heavy trucking in our cities disturbs you, note a recent admission by the Queensland Minister for Main Roads Mr Camm, that Brisbane's radial freeway system was being built to accommodate the increase in heavy trucking caused by the building of container wharves near the city. There seems to be a like situation in Sydney (though we have smarter politicians who don't admit such things). It seems that the freight transport industry is to be the most subsidised in Australia. They are even being relieved of some of the taxes to help pay for these massive road proposals. What really hurts is that there is virtually no reason for container wharves to be so close to the city.

Leichhardt Council has prepared a leaflet on "The Care of Street Trees", a copy of which is enclosed for the information of those with trees in their street - and those who are hoping to get some soon -.

The Glebe Playgroup has opened again for 1973. Pre-school children and parent(s) are invited to attend, from 9.30 am. to 11 am. every Tuesday and Thursday at Mission Hall, St. Johns Rd Glebe. The Playgroup Association is a very important movement and your support not only provides hours of fun and constructive play for your children, but contributes towards a better deal for all pre-school children.

Where circumstances have allowed a few Glebe families have taken down their side back fences and created communal back yards. This has worked particularly well in thin long yards which have served as little more than paths to the back gate.

Perhaps Leichhardt Council's Tree Planting and Preservation Committee could save a lot of time, space and ink by leaving out the words "and Preservation". It seems fair enough when council approves alterations to a house that involves cutting down a small hibiscus, provided two new trees are planted in the same garden. Nevertheless, a few eyebrows must be raised when it approves the removal of a well-developed street tree just because it is in front of where a new garage wants to put one of its several vehicle entrances. And even more so, when council lets off another developer with a gentle reprimand when he has blatantly disobeyed a council promise to not cut down certain trees. But when it blithely approves the removal of a huge, magnificent, historic Norfolk Island pine, in good condition, from one of the highest points in Glebe - a landmark for miles around - surely that is the end! Just what sort of fabulous tree would they consider worthy of preservation?

I was told by a chap from Rozelle (who emitted a rather strange smell), "It's pollution, you see, from a local factory. But we all smell the same and can't tell."

In a nation-wide poll recently, The United States' largest pro-car lobby, the Highway Users Federation, showed 57% of its members were in favour of restrictions on private vehicles in cities.

The Glebe Society would like to express, publically, its thanks to Pat and Kemp Fowler for the use of their house and garden as the venue for 1972's very pleasant and sparkling Christmas Party.

HELP FOR GARDENERS:

Marie Webb suggests that if you are troubled with bugs, pests, diseases, weeds, mildew, rot or general decay you should ring the Department of Agriculture on 2 0536 and ask for Home Gardens Enquiries. A friendly man will give you clear advice on how to deal with the trouble.

GEORGE ALLEN GIVES UP SNUFF



From the George Allen Diaries;
20th May 1831 determination on the part of Dr Ross, Mr Mansfield and myself to give up snuff-taking and which promise ratified by casting our three snuff boxes in the fire and also all the snuff we had in the house - it will certainly be a great thing done if such inveterate slaves to that practice are able to overcome it.