



## If it ain't broke don't fix it – Glebe Society opposes amalgamation of City of Sydney into a 'mega-council'

By Neil Macindoe, Glebe Society Planning Convenor



*City of Sydney is 'fit for the future' – why amalgamate?*  
(image: City of Sydney)

Before the last election the incoming government promised there would be no forced amalgamations, but no one seems to believe them. Councils are now required, on a very short timeframe, to undertake a self-analysis entitled 'Fit for the Future'. These documents will be assessed by IPART, the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal, which will make recommendations to the Government. This report draws on a draft of the City's response, which is 87 pages long, as well as the Society's experience. The document can be downloaded from the City of Sydney website: <http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/council/news-and-updates/fit-for-the-future>.

Glebe has experienced a forced amalgamation at first hand, in 2003, when Glebe was transferred from Leichhardt to the City of Sydney. There was considerable division at first in the Society about whether the transfer was desirable, or whether we should fight it. The State Government has a long history of fiddling with the boundaries of the City, and also with its voting rights. This is because of the obvious prestige and importance of the City, and the reluctance of its electors to go along with whichever of the two major parties controls the State.

Historically, in the West, local government is the oldest political institution, and the most representative. It is the closest to the people, and the easiest for them to control. Although its powers

in Australia are quite limited, and they are not dealt with in the Constitution, it is still a battleground where many of the issues of the day are debated. This is especially true of the Inner City councils of Sydney and Melbourne, which show a distinct tendency to be stropky and take independent views.

### The experience of amalgamation

For a time after 2003 the situation was quite rocky. The City also had to absorb South Sydney, and the process of amalgamating the planning controls was not completed until 2012. It took some time for the City to achieve what Glebe people would regard as adequate levels of consultation. The more recent additions to the City had strong traditions of their own, in some cases probably quite superior to the previous City administration. Over time though, the City has developed extensive consultation processes itself.

However, we were fortunate in the quality of the Councillors and their capacity to represent Glebe, and the strength of the City soon began to show. As the City's submission makes clear, it has a very strong rate base and impressive assets. I remember being taken aback when I realised the City's *surplus* for the financial year was equal to the *total income* of Leichhardt.

---

***'We do not support the  
amalgamation of the City of  
Sydney into the mega-council  
proposed by the Government' –***

President, Glebe Society

---

With the passage of time, not only was the City able to undertake a series of major capital works, but it was able to afford to hire very capable and experienced staff. Over the last 12 years the City has steadily built and upgraded throughout the area it controls until most of us believe we are now better off than we could ever have been under the previous regime.

Most strikingly, the City has embraced policies of sustainability that are in advance of those of the State and Federal Governments, and in line with those of the most progressive governments both here and overseas. It has published master plans in areas such as energy efficiency, renewable energy and advanced waste treatment, and I suspect that it is the leadership shown in the face of the challenge of Climate Change that the State Government, and the major parties in NSW, have found most unforgivable. It demonstrates for all to

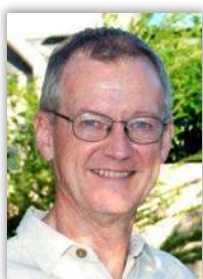
see that they have failed the most important challenge of our time.

I think this is the reason the State Government has tried so hard to remove the present Lord Mayor, and why it is likely to continue to fiddle further with the boundaries and voting rights. Other councils may have their problems, and there may be reasons for change: but the City of Sydney has been, and continues to be, a humiliating success.

*Neil Macindoe*  
Planning Convenor

## President's Column, by Ted McKeown

### Sydney City Council – Fit for the Future



There was an extraordinary meeting of the Council on Thursday 18 June to consider the Council's submission to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) concerning the NSW Government's 'Fit for the Future' local government review process

designed to reduce the number of Councils in NSW. Without any credible rationale, the Government has proposed the creation of a 'mega-council' for the City to include Botany Bay, Randwick, Sydney, Waverley and Woollahra – a local government area with a population of over 500,000 (the same as Tasmania), but with no increased responsibility or authority. Not one of the councils or local communities concerned supports the proposal. The Premier went to the last election promising that there would be no forced amalgamations, but he has refused to be drawn as to whether he intends to keep that promise.

The principal resolution put to the Council was 'that the City of Sydney is "Fit for the Future" and that no major structural change be undertaken to the City's boundaries at this time'. Before voting on the resolution, the Council went into a committee of the whole to enable members of the public to speak.

Most speakers raised all the obvious points; that the public would find it impossible to deal with a Council so large, that it would become the plaything of the major political parties since no independent could afford to mount an effective campaign, that it was yet one more example of the major parties' 'Get Clover' campaign, and so on. I spoke on behalf of the Society, trying to tie the proposal back to our particular area. It is always hard to remember what one said extempore, but I hope the gist of it was as follows:

- ♦ I introduced myself as the current President of the Glebe Society. Ironically, the Society came

into existence in 1969 mainly to oppose some horrendous planning decisions taken by the City Council when Glebe was part of the City up to 1968.

- ♦ I did not purport to represent the views of the residents of Glebe as a whole, but I believed I did reflect the views of at least a substantial majority of the 400-odd members of the Glebe Society.
- ♦ The Glebe Society is non-party-political, but that doesn't stop us criticising any government which is acting in a manner designed purely to pursue its own political ends.
- ♦ And we do not support the amalgamation of the City of Sydney into the mega-council proposed by the Government – for all the reasons canvassed by other speakers.
- ♦ There has been a history of manipulation of local government boundaries so that the party in power in Macquarie St could have power over the City of Sydney.
- ♦ Glebe has form when it comes to amalgamations. In 1969, when there was a State Liberal government, we were hived off from the City to Leichhardt, presumably so that we could be more at home with our trendy lefty mates in Balmain, Lilyfield and Rozelle (who all, apparently, vote Labor). And that seemed to work – the Civic Reform Group took control of the City and retained power for a number of years.
- ♦ Then in 2003, when the ALP was in power, Glebe was shovelled back into the City so that Labor could take over the Town Hall – well, that worked, didn't it!
- ♦ Since 2004, we have enjoyed stable, independent local government, highly

responsive to local concerns. As far as we can tell, the City has achieved an ideal critical mass, and we can see no rational argument for scaling it up in the manner proposed.

- ♦ Of course, if the Government was really fair dinkum about its 'Fit for the Future' campaign and not just treating the City as its political birthright, it might be possible to mount a reasonable argument for NSW to be divided into say three mega-councils, and to devolve upon them the rights and obligations currently enjoyed and exercised by the State government. But the logical conclusion of that

would be the abolition of the State Government itself. Perhaps that should be the preferred option.

The resolution was passed with the votes of all Councillors, with one exception.

If you feel strongly about this, you can make your own submission to IPART – but not until after 30 June (and before 31 July). Visit [http://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au/Home/Industries/Local Govt/Reviews/Fit for the future](http://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au/Home/Industries/Local_Govt/Reviews/Fit_for_the_future).

---

## Liz Rooney

We were all very sad to hear of Liz's death last month. As you know, the Glebe Society has 'auspiced' the grant received for the *Elsie* wall mural project, and Katharine Vernon had been coordinating the work with Liz and with Aunty Kathy Farrawell. The mural will now be a lasting tribute to Liz.

Liz's sister Brigid and brother Patrick have set up a fund to help support Liz's 12 year old daughter, Lily Henderson, who is now living with her older sister Miranda. It is not a formally constituted trust fund, simply a bank account set up by Brigid and Patrick to help Lily and Miranda in these tragic circumstances. At the time of her death, Liz was owed about \$300 for work done on the mural, and that amount has already been paid into the account.

Probably very few of us in the Society knew Liz except by reputation. In a moving tribute to her, Katharine wrote to Brigid:

*Lizzie's death was so sad; she was such a warm, gentle and creative person. She was so loved by many in the Glebe community. One evening in April, my husband and I were waiting at the bus stop on Glebe Point Rd. Lizzie and Lily were standing outside a café on the other side of the road. A group of young teenage girls ran out of the Youth Centre and spotted Liz on the other side of the road. They rushed over to say hello; Lizzie gave each of them a hug as they stood together and chatted. It is that scene that remains with me whenever I think of her tragic death. I met Liz when we commenced the wall mural project and she was a delight to work with on the project.*

If any member would like to contribute to the account, bank details are as follows:

Account name: BA & PM Rooney ITF Lily Henderson  
Bank: Westpac  
BSB: 732 -062  
Account number: 835971

---

## Our new logo

Early last year, a decision was taken by the Management Committee to review our logo, fondly referred to as 'the Door', partly because, like some members of the Committee themselves, it was looking a bit tired and over-exposed, and partly because it only really referred to one aspect of our activities, namely heritage conservation. It was felt that, over the years, the Society had come to stand for much more than that, and the key words that seemed appropriate were **heritage**, **environment** and **community**.

So in about April last year, we commissioned a local graphic designer, Tarny Burton, to come up with a selection of new designs and colours to reflect, in a contemporary way, what we do and what we stand for. She produced four designs, which were put to you, the members, for your views.

It is probably fair to say that none of the four designs was particularly attractive to many

members, and we received a number of constructive comments and criticisms. These were fed back to Tarny, who came back to us with four new designs, three of which were further explorations of previous designs, and one of which (Design 3) was 'a further exploration of the Glebe Society's existing 'Door' logo'. Tarny went on to say:

*The colours embrace the door, forming a diverse and colourful structure that radiates from the door, but also welcomes the observer to the door. The coloured shapes are contemporary and animated, but their forms are influenced by the shape of the solid door, influenced by the solidity of Glebe's past.*

The colours selected represent earth, water, sky and sandstone.

I circulated these four new designs to the Management Committee and asked for a



consensus decision. But I also included two additional options, namely:

- ♦ the current logo (the Door), and
- ♦ the current logo but with changes.

Overwhelmingly, the preference was for Design 3, the second choice being 'the current logo, but with minimal changes to make it more contemporary'. Since Design 3 really satisfies the second criterion as well, I had no difficulty in declaring Design 3 the winner!

So here it is →



Originally, the Glebe Society had no logo. From time to time, we used sketches of *Bidura* and *Toxteth Park* on various publications, and *Bidura* appeared on the *Bulletin* masthead for a number of years. Then, in 1990, as part of our 21<sup>st</sup> birthday celebrations, we held a design competition which was won by our member Chris Stewart. Thus, the Door was born.

When we decided on the new logo, I phoned Chris with some trepidation, and explained that the Door was no more – but that the new logo certainly made reference to it. I am delighted to say that she expressed herself very happy with the result.

*Ted McKeown*  
President

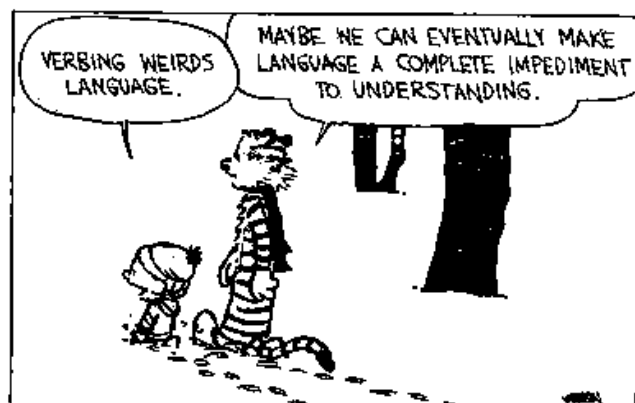
## Letter to the editor

Dear Editor

*The 'verbing' of nouns has been in the public eye this year and I was taken by the Bulletin's effort in the recent mention of the mural in Elsie Walk (4/2015, p.4).*

*'Auspiced'? Ouch! It's not necessary – 'auspicate' has been around since the 17th century and 'auspicated by the Glebe Society' sounds so much better.*

Anton Crouch



(image: <http://www.nyu.edu>)

## Editor's response

Hi Anton,

Thanks for your thoughts on this. I have heard the word 'auspiced' used in the social services sector for many years, but I know some find it jarring and inelegant.

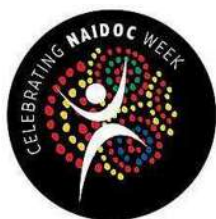
The Australian National Dictionary Centre at ANU says that 'auspicing' is a verbing of the phrase 'under the auspices of'.<sup>1</sup> The latter phrase is four words and 'auspicing' is one word – I like neologisms if they simplify and clarify meaning.

As a linguist told Column 8 in 2011<sup>2</sup>, 'auspiced' does sound barbarous when one first hears it, but it doesn't worry me. It fills a gap". I agree.

Virginia

References: 1. *Ozwords* (Vol 9, no. 1, June 2002), The Australian National Dictionary Centre, a Joint Venture Between The Australian National University & Oxford University Press.; 2. Column 8, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 November 2011

## Community matters



### NAIDOC Week Glebe Family Day

A family fun day is being held at Glebe Public School on Sunday 12 July from 11am to 4pm to celebrate NAIDOC Week 2015.

The Day will be a celebration for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Glebe and across the country. There will be loads of exciting cultural activities, music and food.

NAIDOC stands for *National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee*. Its origins can be traced to the emergence of Aboriginal groups in the 1920s which sought to increase awareness in the wider community of the status and treatment of Indigenous Australians.

NAIDOC Week is held in the first full week of July. It is a time to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander history, culture and achievements and is an opportunity to recognise the contributions that Indigenous Australians make to our country and our society.

City of Sydney is recognising NAIDOC Week with a large number of events. See the website for details: <https://whatson.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/major-events/naidoc-week>.

## Glebites make honours list once again

Once again, Glebe Society members and other Glebites are represented among the Queen's Birthday 2015 honours list.



Glebe Society member David Fraser was made a Member in the General Division of the Order of Australia (AM) for 'significant service to tertiary science education, as an academic and researcher, and to the study of human disease and domestic animal production'. David is

currently Emeritus Professor of Animal Science, University of Sydney and was formerly Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Science; he has authored over 90 papers on topics including the physiology of Vitamin D status in various population groups and contributing factors, and the relationship of milk consumption and bone health.

Another Glebite to be honoured this Queen's Birthday is Maureen Cahill, from the Glass Artists' Gallery on Glebe Point Rd, who was also made a

member in the General Division of the Order of Australia. The citation reads: 'For significant service to the visual arts, as a leading practitioner and promoter of contemporary glass art, and as an educator and mentor'.

Maureen's gallery is holding an interesting exhibition from 23 June to 5 July:



Congratulations also to Simon Burke, son of Glebe Society member, Bobbie Burke. Simon received an Officer of the Order of Australia award.

## Welcome New Members

Anne Britt, Carol Olafson, Anthony Hayment, Colin Ritchie, Faye Williams, Edward Hanna and Jean Hanna, we hope to see you at the New Members Night on 22 July. More details on page 12.

## Glebe, naturally

### News from the Blue Wren subcommittee

Twenty four Society members and friends attended a lecture (Thursday 7 May in the downstairs meeting room at *Benledi*) given by Dr Holly Parsons entitled 'Little birds in a big city – the lives and times of Superb Fairy-wrens'. The President introduced Dr Parsons, who is the Program Manager for *Birds in Backyards*, and Andrew Wood thanked her for a wonderfully informative talk. As far as the possibility of reintroducing blue wrens to Glebe is concerned, Dr Parsons advised that this could be difficult as the birds are not an endangered species and, as we know, they are present locally at sites on the campus of the University of Sydney and also on the harbour foreshore at Pyrmont. Thus the return of wrens to Glebe, including John Street Reserve, is

dependent upon the establishment of habitat-corridors linking our suburb to the adjacent populations. For example, in December last year wrens were observed in Jarocin Ave, Glebe and we assume that they had flown from the University of Sydney. So, sites such as the Glebe Town Hall gardens are especially important as, with the planting of suitable native flora, they can form part of a corridor enabling the University's wren population to expand to Jarocin Ave and eventually John Street and Paddy Gray Reserves. In addition to predation from larger birds, another issue raised by Dr Parsons in re-establishing a small bird population in Glebe was the killing of native animals by domestic cats and the need to keep these pets indoors at all times. The work of

Professor Chris Dickman at the University of Sydney has shown that up to 80% of urban domestic cats hunt the local native animals (most commonly birds, including blue wrens).



Dr Holly Parsons with Norma Hawkins after Holly's lecture to the Society about the lives and times of Superb Fairy-wrens. (image: Tony Tan).

A Regional Landcare Bushcare Forum, attended by three members of the Subcommittee, was held by the NSW Government's Greater Sydney Local Land Services at the Royal Botanic Garden on Friday 15 May. The keynote speaker was Sean Dooley, Editor of *Birdlife Australia*, who emphasised the need to maintain and re-establish habitats for birds especially the endangered species. Sophie Golding (Urban Ecology Coordinator, City of Sydney) presented the results of spring bird surveys in the local government area in 2014. The Society's surveys over the past two years were mentioned in detail as in 2013 we were the first community group to conduct such a survey in Sydney.

Thirty volunteers attended the City of Sydney's planting day on 18 April in Orphan School Creek and about 200 native tube stocks were planted on the banks at the northern entrance to the park. Members of the Orphan School Creek Bushcare Group had letterboxed invitations to local residents and the City provided morning tea. A working bee was held in the park from 9am on Sunday 10 May; it was attended by 10 people including the City of Sydney's Councillor Robyn Kemmis. The next working bee is on Sunday 21 June commencing at 9am – please contact Judy Christie (0437 693 372) if you would like to attend.

A childcare centre is to be constructed on the site of the Rozelle Bay Community Native Nursery in Chapman Rd. The Subcommittee will draft a letter to the City of Sydney to be signed by the President

requesting that the City provide the nursery with alternative accommodation.

In *John Street Reserve* the *Murrayas* have been hedged and some have been removed as recommended in the City's Work Plan. We spoke with Nick Criniti (Contract Coordinator Parks, City of Sydney) about the maintenance of *Paddy Gray Reserve* – the City's contractors are using a bushcare trained team for maintenance of the Reserve and future plantings of native flora are planned.

*The Palmerston Ave and Surrounds Landcare Group* met on 7 May and its members have been appointed as coordinators for the seven parks/sites in the area (Upper Palmerston, Lower Palmerston, Sarah Peninton Reserve, Light Rail Area, William Carlton Gardens, Ernest Pederson Reserve and Quarry St Steps).

Andrew Wood  
Convenor, Blue Wrens

## New Members Night 2015

Don't forget join your fellow Glebe Society members for a mid-winter drink to warmly welcome new members and reconnect with old members.

There will be entertainment as well as plenty of time to talk to others, and enjoy a drink and some food.

*When?* Wednesday 22 July; 6.30 - 8.30pm.

*Where?* Harold Park Hotel.

*Cost?* \$38 per head includes a selection of finger food, wine, beer and soft drinks. No charge for new members who have joined since July 2014.

To book, please use the enclosed form or book online at <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/d/australia-sydney/glebe-society/>

## Sands Directory online at Glebe Library: book now!

Bookings are now open for *Sands Directory: Getting to Know Your Way Around* at Glebe Library, 5-6pm on Tuesday 28 July. Find information on the City of Sydney website under: Explore/Libraries/Programs and Events. Click on the date and follow the link to Eventbrite, where you can book. Or just ask at the library!



## ***Bidura, a house with a future – a special Bulletin lift-out***

---



*The graceful lines of the Victorian Regency house Edmund Blacket designed for his family at 357 Glebe Point Rd are a gracious remnant of The Glebe of 150 years ago. The low building to the right is a ballroom added by a later owner – both buildings are currently used as offices. (image: Peter Thorogood)*

Late in 2014 the NSW Government quietly added one of Glebe's best known historic houses to its For Sale list of publicly owned properties.

*Bidura*, 357 Glebe Pt Rd, was for sale by tender; November was the deadline for bids and in February this year the identity of the new owners was disclosed.

*Bidura* had been sold to ACC Development, owned by Lina Jin and Yuelai Zhou, through a sequence of businesses including Gold Land Investment Corporation, based in Pyrmont. The winning tender was just over \$33 million.

Coming hard on the heels of the uproar caused by the sale of publicly owned housing in Millers Point, Glebe residents were understandably concerned about the future of *Bidura*.

It was difficult not to feel pessimistic.

To understand why the future of *Bidura* matters – not just to Glebe residents, but to everyone interested in how Sydney's past has shaped Sydney's present, and hopefully will influence its future – we should turn to the house and the family that first called it home.

The house was designed and built more than 140 years ago by Edmund Blacket who, with his young wife Sarah, sailed from England in June 1842, directly after their marriage on May 27.

The Blackets arrived in Sydney on 4 November, after a patience-testing six-month journey that Edmund describes with humour in his diary, excerpts of which appear in the book *'My Name is Blacket'*, by Nick Vine Hall, a direct descendant.

Within three months of their arrival Blacket was making steady progress as an architect. His letters

of introduction had included one to the Anglican Bishop, William Grant Broughton, and in January 1843 Blacket completed the designs of his first church, at Patrick Plains, now Singleton.

He became Diocesan Architect for the Church of England in 1847, while continuing with his private practice. During his working life Edmund Blacket designed or was associated with the design of over 80 churches, one of the most notable being St Andrews Cathedral in Sydney.

In 1849 Blacket was appointed Colonial Architect, a post he held until 1854, when he resigned to concentrate on perhaps the most important and challenging job of his career – the design of Sydney University's first buildings.

Blacket's powers of persuasion convinced the Building Committee that the university deserved far more ambitious designs than they had envisaged. A 'Grand Hall' was added to the main building and tower and it was agreed to build in Pyrmont sandstone rather than the brick originally specified.

Costs rose, critics were vocal – but in 1857 the first ceremony was held in the still unfinished Great Hall and criticism turned to praise and pride. Sydney now had a tertiary institution in the grand Gothic style of many of England's traditional universities.

The Blackets and their four young children had moved to Glebe in 1852, and in 1857 Blacket bought the land on which he built the house we know now as *Bidura*.

There he lived with Sarah and their eight children – the youngest was born in 1860 – and Blacket's practice continued designing houses, churches, banks, schools, shops and offices.

But in 1869 the life of the Blacket family changed dramatically – after a period of recurring ill-health Sarah died in that September. The following year the house he had built with the woman with whom he had travelled to the other side of the world was sold. Edmund and his children moved to Balmain.

Blacket had served on the Glebe Borough Council since it was established in 1859 – at his retirement in 1870 it was resolved ‘That this Council desire to express their deep regret at the resignation of Mr. E. T. Blacket ... and to record their high sense of the valuable services he has rendered to the borough during the eleven years he has held a seat on the Council’.

Edmund Blacket died 1883 and was buried with Sarah in Balmain. When the Balmain church was demolished the ashes of their remains were placed in St Andrews Cathedral and their tombstone moved to St Stephen’s, Newtown, one of the more than 80 churches he had designed.

Six successive owners are recorded as living in ‘Mr. Blacket’s house’, as it had always been known – the name *Bidura* was most likely bestowed on it during the 30 year period the Perks family lived there – until in 1920 the property was bought by the New South Wales Government for use as a residence for State wards.

An excellent précis of all the owners of *Bidura* and their time in the house can be found in the two articles written by Glebe Society historian Lyn Collingwood for the Glebe Society *Bulletins* from October/November (8/2009) and November/December (10/2009), available on the Glebe Society website.

An unarguably important period of the property’s history is that during which State wards lived there.

Comments by former residents can be found at <http://www.glebesociety.org.au/wordpress/?building=s=bidura>. Scroll down to the Comments section, where many former State wards have left remarks. Some are happy, the majority are not; but together they form an integral part of the social history that *Bidura* represents.

... and *Bidura*’s future?

Some comfort came from the *Sydney Morning Herald*’s February 15 report of the sale, quoting one of the new owners, Lina Jin:

*‘We want to keep the front two buildings but demolish the office building, which is old and very solid. It is not very appealing and we plan to build a more modern, nicer block of apartments for the area. We are locals too, and I want to make sure we build something respectful to the area.’*

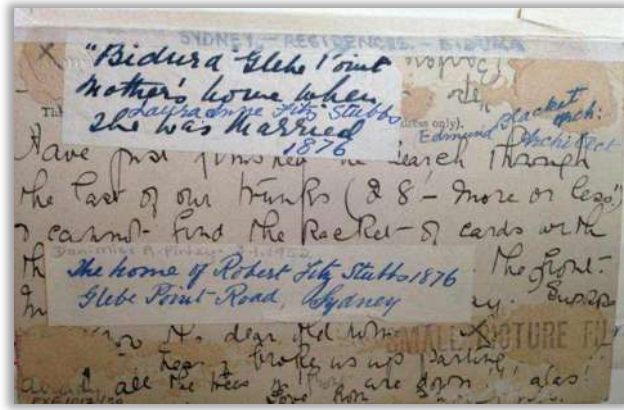


*Built in the 20<sup>th</sup> century’s ‘Concrete Brutalist’ style of architecture, the Children’s Court and Remand Centre stretches from close behind Bidura to the property’s boundary at Avon St. (images: Erica Robinson).*

These are encouraging words for the Glebe Society which, in the ’80s, had protested – unsuccessfully – against the construction of the Concrete Brutalist multi-storey Remand Centre and Children’s Court on the land behind the house. That building went ahead – a jarring contrast to the graceful Victorian Regency design of *Bidura* itself, with its wide front garden, shady trees and low picket fence fronting Glebe Point Rd. The news that the life of what locals refer to as ‘The Bunker’ is near an end is tempered only by concern for what might replace it.

The new owners have a background of extensive property development in China and have been residents in Australia since 2004, becoming citizens in 2009. To find out more about their plans for *Bidura* the Heritage Subcommittee hand-delivered a letter to Golden Land Investment Corporation’s Pyrmont office – by a stroke of luck into the hands of Ms Jin herself – requesting the opportunity to view *Bidura* and find out more about the plans for both the house and the 1980s building behind it.





Top left: The rear of Bidura shows how the slope of the block allowed a service area to be sited on a third, lower level not visible from Glebe Point Rd.  
(image: Mitchell Library)

Top right: The hand-written description on the reverse by a granddaughter of Bidura's second owner, Robert Fitz Stubbs, has a date of 1876, but the photograph clearly shows the adjacent ballroom, linked to the house by a covered way. This was generally thought to have been built by Bidura's third owner, Frederick Perks.

Left: A current photograph shows the similarities. Perhaps a Glebe Society member can solve the mystery?  
(image: Erica Robinson)

Within days we were contacted by Nigel Fox, Development Director for Gold Land, with an invitation to visit the site and find out more about the firm's plans for the site as a whole and for *Bidura* in particular.

Alterations due to modern workplace regulations sit oddly on a building designed for life in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century (see photos on page 10). Wear and tear, plus early and unsympathetic alterations, hide much of the charm hinted at from *Bidura*'s street view. The 'bones' of the building are intact, but not even heritage paint colours and the survival of many original internal features can disguise the fact that for almost 100 years the building has been used first as an institution and currently as offices.

The new owners have engaged the architectural firm of Graham Brooks & Associates as heritage consultants for the project, and hope to consult with Council within the next month.

Initial indications are that the house and separate ballroom, listed by City of Sydney Council as a Local Heritage Item and protected by LEP 2012, classified by The National Trust and listed by the State Government, will be restored (following

Heritage guidelines) with a view to commercial or professional use of the main building, while some type of hospitality use could be chosen for the adjacent ballroom.

The Glebe Society will of course be following all developments with interest – and trusting that what was a disturbing start to *Bidura*'s next chapter becomes a positive future of which both the community and owners can be proud.

Erica Robinson  
TGSI Heritage Subcommittee

**References:** *Australian Dictionary of Biography*; Lyn Collingwood *The Glebe Society Inc. Bulletin*, Aug/Sept and Oct/Nov 2009; Nick Vine Hall *My Name is Blacket*; Morton Herman, *The Blackets*; Freda MacDonnell, *The Glebe: Portraits and Places*; Max Solling, *Grandeur & Grit, A History of Glebe*; National Trust of Australia (NSW); *Sands directories*; State Library of NSW, Mitchell library; *The Sydney Morning Herald*: <http://news.domain.com.au/domain/real-estate-news/nsw-government-reveals-33-million-bidura-buyer-after-months-of-secrecy-20150213-13dlx4.html>; Trove: <http://trove.nla.gov.au/>; NSW State Government Office of Environment & Heritage; City of Sydney Council LEP 2012

*Continued next page*



*Some of the original interior features of Bidura, now used as offices that have to meet current workplace requirements, have survived the 190 years since the house was built – in the dining room a marble fireplace; French windows and shutters leading from the 'downstairs' service rooms to the garden; some stair balusters and the handrail, lustrous with years of use; one of the arches that divide the reception area from the dance floor with its elaborate ceiling in the ballroom; a roofed walkway still links Bidura to the ballroom, but direct access has been fenced off, the steps removed. (images: Erica Robinson)*



## History & heritage

### Who lived in your street? Andrew McGovisk (1837 - 92), by Lyn Collingwood



The former Bridge Hotel, built by Andrew McGovisk (Image: Phil Young)

Andrew McGovisk built the Bridge Hotel on the corner of Pymont Bridge Rd and Junction St with a shop on either side. Rooftop plaques commemorate the completion of his adjacent terraces *Avoca* (1877) and *Auburn* (1883) on Junction St and *Magnolia Terrace* (1879) on Pymont Bridge Rd. McGovisk lived in number 130 where space over a carriageway was utilised for an extra room. Numbers 132-8 had seven main rooms plus the standard bathroom, scullery, wash-house, balcony and verandah. There was also a three-storey factory at the rear of *Magnolia Terrace*.

A speculative builder, McGovisk sold or rented each building as soon as it was finished then applied to the bank for a new mortgage. Among the properties he dispensed with were three houses in Irving St Chippendale. At the time of his death McGovisk's assets included the Forest Lodge properties plus real estate in Surry Hills: the Cleveland Hotel on the corner of Buckingham and Belvoir Sts and four neighbouring houses. His executor was his solicitor, Thomas Michael Slattery, a prominent Irish-born Catholic who became a barrister and politician.

McGovisk was also Irish Catholic, born in Dublin on 30 November 1837. In 1885 he was in the crowd which greeted Sydney's archbishop Moran on his return from Rome after being appointed the colony's first cardinal. A worshipper at St Benedict's Broadway, McGovisk paid the £1200 building and installation costs of that church's new organ but died on 24 April 1892, six months before its inaugural recital by City of Sydney organist Auguste Wiegand.

McGovisk appears to have died unmarried and without family. What his relationship was with 'his loving friend' Priscilla White who placed newspaper memorial notices until 1896 is unknown. Priscilla lived at Forest Lodge. She may have been related to fuel merchant John White of 1 Cross St.

After the Bridge Hotel ceased trading in 1955 it became a cheap and cheerful *trattoria* (the *Aurora*, later *Aniello's*) at a time when dining out in Glebe meant choosing from a handful of Chinese eateries.

#### Postscript

1. The street numbering has changed since McGovisk's time. His terraces featured in Liz Simpson-Booker's article on Glebe's surviving carriageways in *Bulletin* 5/2014.

2. Thanks to Professor Ivan Barko of Annandale for his correction to my article on *Edsburg* in the May 2015 *Bulletin*. Madame Boivin, teacher of French, was in all likelihood the daughter-in-law of milliner Madame Clémence Boivin née Bercher. Both women were living in Sydney by 1886, but the milliner and the teacher were not the same person.

Lyn Collingwood

**Sources:** 1891 census collectors' books; *Evening News* 25.11.1892; NSW cemetery records; Sands *Directories*; Solling, Max *Grandeur & Grit: a history of Glebe*; *Sydney Morning Herald* 24.4.1893, 24.4.1895, 24.4.1896; Sydney telephone directories 1955-60.



Avoca Terrace in the 1970s (Image: Bernard Smith Collection)



---

## Writing the Past workshop

Learn to write a recognisable past and conduct historical research at the *Writing the Past* workshop on Friday 14 and Saturday 15 August in Crows Nest. You will be taught by a cultural historian who is also a successful novelist. The course includes practical exercises and a trip to explore the archives at the Mitchell Library (State Library of NSW) followed by online coaching to workshop your writing.

The tutor, Hsu-Ming Teo, is both a novelist and a historian teaching European and Cultural history at Macquarie University. Her publications include *Cultural History in Australia* and novels *Love and Vertigo* (which won the Australian/Vogel Award and was also short-listed for the inaugural Tasmania Pacific Region Literary Prize and the Dobbie Award for women's fiction) and *Behind the Moon* (shortlisted for one of the New South Wales Premier's Literary Awards in 2006.) Both novels drew heavily on South-east Asian and Australian history in the second half of the twentieth century.

Hsu-Ming judged the 2007 NSW Premier's Literary Awards, the 2010 Man Asian Literary Prize, and the 2013 NSW Premier's History Awards.

For full information and booking details go to

[http://faberwritingacademy.com.au/writing\\_the\\_past.html#.VYekNPmqgkp](http://faberwritingacademy.com.au/writing_the_past.html#.VYekNPmqgkp)



## 'Call for Great Ideas' on the future of the Bays Precinct

Don't forget to submit your 'great idea/s' for the Bays Precinct to UrbanGrowth by 20 July.

Submissions may be made via:

<http://www.thebayssydney.com.au/get-involved/call-for-great-ideas.aspx>

---

## Glebe Society events

### Discovering the Chippendale Creative Precinct

What an interesting afternoon it was for 14 of us who joined the Glebe Society's leisurely stroll through the Chippendale Creative Precinct on Thursday 11 June. After a delicious lunch of home-made dumplings and really special teas at the White Rabbit Gallery we were taken on a guided tour of the current exhibition at this world-renowned gallery. Our guide was thoroughly engaging and knowledgeable about the artworks. The current exhibition explores play in all its aspects starting on the ground floor with a scene in which each of us was asked to re-imagine ourself as a five year old child at the beach surrounded by sand buckets and crabs. As we moved up through the gallery we were guided from childhood games through the wild antics of adolescence to darker adult games of risk, deception and ambiguity. It is such an interesting collection, with some installations being so large that they straddled two floors of the gallery.

Armed with a map showing us the walking route and accompanying notes we then visited a number of galleries in the same precinct. The range of artwork was amazing – we had been promised diversity and, indeed, that is what we found. At the Harrington Street Artists' Co-operative Gallery the artists selected two of their artworks to discuss, whilst at other galleries including Spot81, Galerie PomPom, and MOP, the gallery owners discussed their current exhibitions. We took a quick peek inside Zigi's Art Wine and Cheese Bar where the

enterprising owners had set up a wine bar, cooking school and art gallery all located in a tiny two-storey terrace house.

We visited the NG Gallery where Nicky Ginsberg, the gallery owner, provided us with an insight into the development of Chippendale as a flourishing and growing creative space for artists. We soon realised that there were a lot more galleries to visit in the same precinct, which is now an emerging and vibrant arts community, just on the doorstep of Glebe. I can thoroughly recommend a visit to the White Rabbit Gallery and a stroll around the many art galleries located in the streets surrounding Central Park.

Katharine Vernon



Glebe Society members attending the Chippendale Creative Precinct event. (Image: Katharine Vernon)

---

## Thirsty Thursdays

Glebe Society members and friends are invited to meet in restaurants in and around Glebe, usually on the first Thursday of each month, to eat and talk with other people who live in Glebe.

We try to choose restaurants where we can share dishes, and have six to eight people at each table. Put these details in your diary now:

- ♦ On Thursday 2 July at 7pm we will go to *Na Zdrowie* Polish Restaurant, 161 Glebe Point Rd.
- ♦ On Thursday 6 August at 7pm we will go to *Aghora* Greek Restaurant, 94 Glebe Point Rd.
- ♦ And on Thursday 3 September at 7pm we will go to *Almustafa* Lebanese Restaurant, 23 Glebe Point Rd.

Please email [thirstythursday@glebesociety.org.au](mailto:thirstythursday@glebesociety.org.au) or ring me on 9660 7066 by the Wednesday before the dinner to let me know if you are coming, or if you are likely to be late.

*Edwina Doe*

---

## Creative Glebe

### **Little Sydney Lives Competition 2015**

The City of Sydney is inviting budding photographers aged three to 11 years to submit their best snaps of Sydney for the annual *Little Sydney Lives* competition.

As part of Art & About Sydney, *Little Sydney Lives* encourages junior photographers to give us their unique take on our city, with 20 finalist images blown up and showcased in an outdoor exhibition in Hyde Park from 18 September to 11 October.

The competition is calling for entrants in two age categories – three to seven and eight to 11. The winner of each category receives a gift to the value of \$500 and will be announced at the opening night of the exhibition.

Entries are open from 1 June and close 5pm on 17 July 2015. For more information:

<http://www.artandabout.com.au/little-sydney-lives-competition-2015>

---

## Winter Warmers Storytime & Craft

It's cold outside, but the libraries are warm and cosy. Come along to our snowflakes, snowmen and ice themed special story times and share stories, songs and craft. Suitable for 3-8 year olds. When? Tuesday, 30 June from 11am to 12.30 pm. Where: Glebe Library. Cost: free.

---

## *Glebe Voices* – pencil in the date

At the time of going to press we had not received a confirmation from our speaker BUT we are hoping to have a *Glebe Voices* talk on the evening of Tuesday July 21.



Please pencil in the date and watch for a membership update by email if this event is confirmed.

*Carole Herriman*

---

## Players in the Pub

Next in our popular series of playreadings at the Roxbury Hotel, St Johns Rd/Forest St Forest Lodge:



The premiere of a new Australian play by AWGIE award winner Gina Schien:

### **The Ivy Lock**

directed by Nicholas Gledhill

Monday 20 July at 7pm. The kitchen is open for orders from 5pm. Please order early – we always start on time!

*Lyn Collingwood*



A treehouse by Jonathan Jones, a finalist in the Age 8-11 category in the *Little Sydney Lives* Competition 2104.  
(image: City of Sydney)

## The Dirty Red Digger. Music, Film, Football and Aussie History during the Great War

This show by the Griffyn Ensemble offers a 'unique perspective on the First World War, by combining such unlikely bedfellows as music, football, history, and social politics. *The Dirty Red Digger* is a potent and cohesive narrative told through music, spoken text and film that highlights the social pressures and challenges that faced Australians both then and now.'



The 'Dirty Reds' referred to in the title of the show are our very own Glebe Dirty Reds!

This event will be held Glebe Town Hall on Saturday 4 July at 7.30pm.

To book, go to:

<http://www.griffynensemble.com/nsw-tour-the-dirty-red-digger/>

## Common eclectic: Glebe Town Hall

Combining traditional French gypsy songs with swinging originals Spyglass Gypsies bring the bygone days of bohemian Paris into the present with the lyrical sounds of accordion, clarinet and the percussive '*la pompe*' of gypsy guitars. Energetic and playful, these musicians are sure to set feet tapping, legs dancing and faces smiling on all those who hear them.



When? Sunday 19 July – Doors open from 2.30pm for the 3pm performance

Where? Glebe Town Hall

More information and to book:

<http://commoneclectic.com/2015/01/04/spyglass-gypsies/>

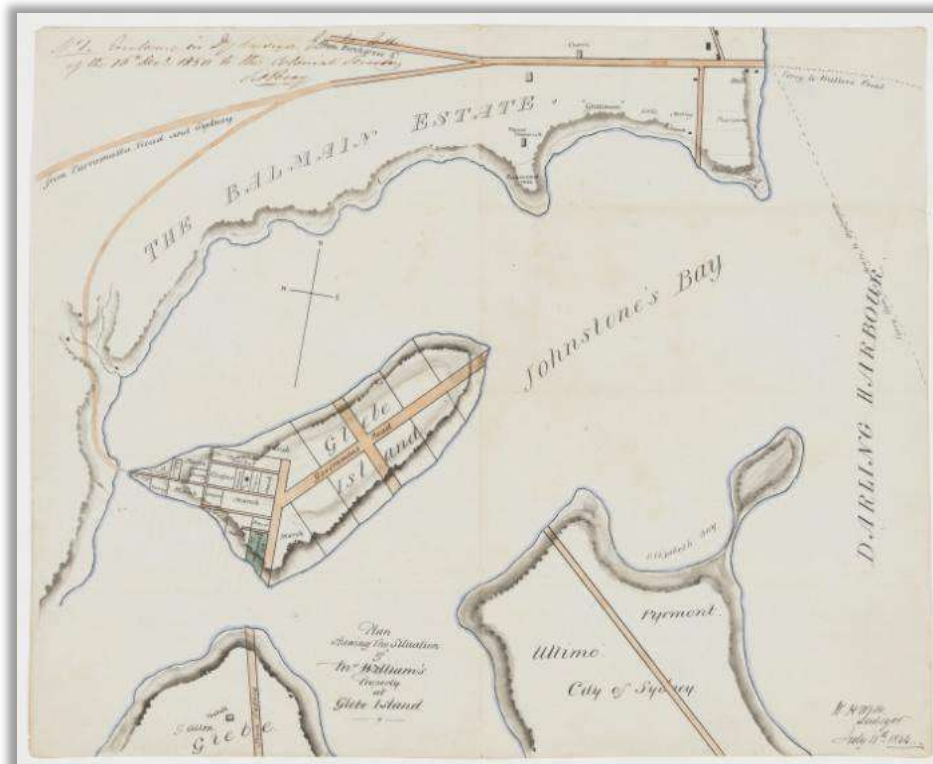


Image: State Library of New South Wales Dixon Map Collection

A very early map (1844) of Johnstone's Bay, which shows Glebe Island before it was connected with Pyrmont by bridge. The map, by W.H. Wells, shows a planned subdivision at the Balmain end of the island which was never built.

At about the time this map was created, a causeway was constructed to link Glebe Island to the Balmain peninsula. Prior to that, the island was only accessible from the Balmain shoreline at low tide.

The first bridge to connect Glebe Island to Pyrmont was a private toll-bridge completed in 1862. The second Glebe Island Bridge, which was built in 1903, still stands. It was a world first, state of the art engineering feat when it was built. Indeed it was world famous, featuring in a 1904 supplement to *The Scientific American*. With the redevelopment of the Bay's Area, the bridge could have a second life, as a pedestrian and cycle link between Rozelle and Pyrmont, and a vital part of the proposed new waterside walkway.

Sources: <http://www.glebeislandbridge.com/>; Dictionary of Sydney; NSW Office of Environment and Heritage.



## For Your Calendar

Thurs 2 July, 7pm. *Thirsty Thursday*, Na Zdrowie Polish Restaurant, 161 Glebe Point Rd.  
 Weds 8 July, 7pm. *Management Committee meeting*, Glebe Town Hall.  
 Sat 11 July, 2 pm. talk by Emeritus Professor Don Napper on James Barnet, SMSA, 280 Pitt St.  
 Tues 21 July, *Glebe Voices* (tentative)  
 Wed 22 July, 6.30-8.30pm. *New Members Night*, Harold Park Hotel.  
 Tues 28 July 5-6pm. *Sands Directory Online*, Glebe Library.  
 Weds 12 August, 7pm. *Management Committee meeting*, Glebe Town Hall.  
 Sun 30 August, 2pm. *Glebe Society AGM*, Glebe Town Hall.  
 Weds 9 September, 7pm. *Management Committee meeting*, Glebe Town Hall.  
 Fri 9 October, 7pm, *Centipede Soiree*, Glebe Rowing Club.  
 5 - 25 October. WW1 exhibition & talks, Glebe Town Hall.  
 Wed morns, 8.30am. *Glebe Bushcare Group* meets nr Jubilee Park. Contact Sue Copeland: 9692 9161

Book for Glebe Society Events on the Society's Eventbrite page:  
<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/d/australia--sydney/glebe-society/>



## The Glebe Society Inc Established 1969

### Management Committee

President	Ted McKeown	02 9660 3917	president@glebesociety.org.au
Vice President	Murray Jewell	0405 921 945	vicepresident@glebesociety.org.au
Past President	John Gray	02 9518 7253	pastpresident@glebesociety.org.au
Secretary	Carole Herriman	02 9571 9092	secretary@glebesociety.org.au
Minutes Secretary	Rosalind Hecker	02 9660 7056	minutes@glebesociety.org.au
Treasurer	Jeannie Foyle		treasurer@glebesociety.org.au
	Lorel Adams	02 9571 1113	lorel@glebesociety.org.au
	Chris Blair	0414 550 382	chris@glebesociety.org.au
	Jock Keene	02 9571 4078	jock@glebesociety.org.au
	Meg Wallace	0414 695 623	meg@glebesociety.org.au
Bays	Lesley Lynch	02 9660 5084	bays@glebesociety.org.au
Blue Wrens	Andrew Wood	02 9660 6104	bluewrens@glebesociety.org.au
Communications	Bill Simpson-Young	0411 871 214	bill@glebesociety.org.au
Community	Janice Challinor	0401 505 657	community@glebesociety.org.au
Environment	Jan Macindoe	02 9660 0208	environment@glebesociety.org.au
Heritage	Liz Simpson-Booker	02 9518 6186	heritage@glebesociety.org.au
Planning	Neil Macindoe	02 9660 0208	planning@glebesociety.org.au
Transport & Traffic	Murray Jewell	0405 921 945	transport@glebesociety.org.au

### Working Groups & Contacts

Archivist	Lyn Milton	02 9660 7930	milton.lyn@gmail.com
Bulletin Editor	Virginia Simpson-Young	0402 153 074	editor@glebesociety.org.au
Events	Lorel Adams	0458 365 456	events@glebesociety.org.au
History	Lyn Collingwood	02 9660 5817	lyncol1@optusnet.com.au
History of Glebe	Max Solling	02 9660 1160	
Website	Phil Young	02 9692 9583	webmaster@glebesociety.org.au
Chief Tweeter	Scott Calvert		twitter@glebesociety.org.au

## Highlights this issue

If It Ain't Broke Don't Fix It – Glebe Society opposes 'Mega-Council' .....	1
President's Column, by Ted McKeown .....	2
Letter to the editor .....	4
Naidoc Week Glebe Family Day.....	4
Glebites Make Honours List Once Again .....	5
News From The Blue Wren Subcommittee.....	5
New Members' Night 2015 .....	6
<i>Bidura</i> , House With a Future.....	7
Who lived in your street? Andrew McGovisk (1837 - 92).....	11
Glebe Society Events.....	12
Creative Glebe.....	13



PO Box 100  
Glebe NSW 2037

No.5 of 2015 (July)

### Membership of the Glebe Society

- ♦ Individual member: \$45
- ♦ Joint (2 people, one address): \$55
- ♦ Household: \$60
- ♦ Concession (student or pensioner): \$20
- ♦ Institution or corporate: \$110

### How to join

- ♦ Join online: complete the Membership Application on our website under 'Membership'
- ♦ Download a membership form from [www.glebesociety.org.au](http://www.glebesociety.org.au); or
- ♦ Write to the Secretary at PO Box 100
- ♦ Glebe 2037; or
- ♦ Email [secretary@glebesociety.org.au](mailto:secretary@glebesociety.org.au)

*Right: Cnr Forsyth & Avon Sts in the 1970s. The shop was built in 1885-86 and has a sweet Juliet balcony. These days, the building is partially decorated with black and white dots. (image: Bernard Smith, sourced from the Society's Archives)*

