



## From the President

by Janet Wahlquist

I hope you are all keeping well and safe during our extended lockdown.

We are grateful in these times for parks where we can enjoy our exercise. It is important to remember that the Foreshore Park resulted from continued pressure from the residents of Glebe and, in particular, the Glebe Society, led by John Buckingham.

This pressure took place over many years. We continue to actively advocate for an extension of the foreshore park and walkway to continue around Blackwattle Bay and over a restored Glebe Island Bridge.

While the Blackwattle Bay Precinct Plan allows for a walkway/promenade, it is nowhere near wide enough to accommodate all the likely users. The proposed parkland consists of several small areas that will be overshadowed by the tall buildings for at least half the day. A study prepared by the City of Sydney Council states the sunlight in the proposed parks is less than the City's requirements, and few, if any, streets will have enough sunlight for good tree growth. The study also warns that the number and height of the buildings will result in wind tunnels, making much of the outdoor areas unpleasant to be in.

The Glebe Society has made a submission opposing the Plan which can be viewed on our website at <https://www.glebesociety.org.au/blackwattle-bay-ssp-submission/>. We are also meeting with the Council and other community groups opposing the Plan to make our mutual opposition heard by the State Government.

The Annual General Meeting will be held by Zoom this year due to our inability to meet together. The Society still has to comply with our constitution's requirements which requires us to hold the Annual General Meeting by the end of the year. The details of when this will be and how you can attend by Zoom and nominate for a position appear elsewhere in the *Bulletin*. Please do participate.

Best Wishes,  
Janet

## Blue Wren sighting in Glebe!

by Andrew Wood, Blue Wren Subcommittee Convenor

Judy Christie, a member of the Blue Wren Subcommittee and leader of the Society's annual spring bird survey, reports that

*I have just confirmed with an experienced visiting bird watcher (a member of the birdwatching club in Port Macquarie) that in May this year he saw two Superb Fairywrens on a walk around the Bays from Glebe Point, probably somewhere near the site in front of The Anchorage home units. The nearest other sighting most recently was early this month in Ewerton Park on the western side of the Balmain peninsula. Wrens are also present in Callan Park and Sydney Park. So, it is worth keeping your eyes (and ears) open while exercising in our local parks.*

The last confirmed sightings of wrens in Glebe were in 2016 around St Johns Rd and Jarocin Ave, and they had probably flown from the campus of the University of Sydney.



A Superb Fairy Wren in Boyce St Glebe in 2008  
(photo: Stewart Whittlestone)

Superb Fairywrens like to forage in the understorey, especially in dense shrubs and plenty of insects. Wren-friendly garden plants include tea-trees, prickly grevilleas and even climbing roses and jasmine. These days, however, they are more likely to be found seeking food and shelter in weedy areas with lantana or thick grasses.

Find out more about blue wrens in Glebe and how to attract them here: <https://www.glebesociety.org.au/glebes-blue-wrens/>.

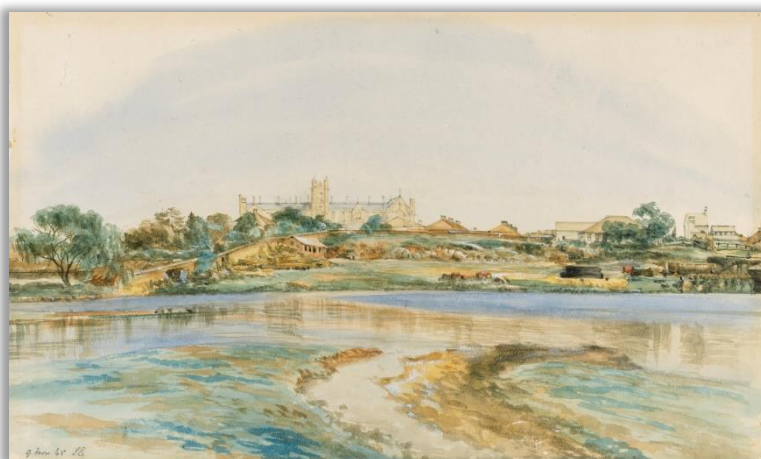
## Blackwattle Bay State Significant Precinct Study

*By Asa Wahlquist, Bays & Foreshores Convenor and Ian Stephenson, Planning Convenor*

Blackwattle Bay is one of the defining features of Glebe. It opens the suburb up to the sky and the water gives the suburb a wonderful aspect and the opportunity for water sports like rowing, dragon boating and canoeing. The incredible popularity of the foreshore walk, particularly in pandemic times, is due to its proximity to the water and the sense of space and relaxation that it brings.

The proposed development should improve our local environment, but it fails on every measure.

Blackwattle Bay once extended almost as far as Broadway, fed by Blackwattle Creek which had tributaries originating in Victoria Park and the University of Sydney. It was a mangrove forest that extended back where Wentworth Park is today. It was a varied environment with rocky ledges, sandy beaches, and sloping foreshores. It was host to a great diversity of fish and marine organisms. Shane Phillips, from the Tribal Warrior moored on the Pyrmont side of Blackwattle Bay, told the gathering at a smoking ceremony for the new Sydney Fish Markets, that the mangrove forest was the fish market in pre-settlement times. This is a critical part of the area's First Nations heritage.



*Samuel Elyard's painting of the University of Sydney in 1865 with Victoria Park in the foreground. Victoria Park is one of the sources of Blackwattle Creek that drains into Blackwattle Bay (source: State Library of NSW)*

But none of this is referenced in the Plan. Redeveloping the current Fish Market site offers an unparalleled opportunity to restore the Bay, to provide access to the community, and to alter the sea walls to increase habitat for marine life. Instead, the northern side of the Bay is banked with marinas, the Bay contained by solid vertical sea walls, the construction of the new Sydney Fish Market further separating the Bay from Wentworth Park. Improvements can be made. Just look around in the next bay, Rozelle Bay, where Sydney Water is rehabilitating Johnstons Creek. It is replacing a walled concrete channel with sloping rock beds, walls of differing heights and creating a range of niches to support and encourage a wider variety of marine and botanic life.

Heritage comes in many forms, including the Glebe Rowing Club, the third oldest rowing club in Australia, founded in 1879. For over 150 years the local water sports clubs have provided the local community with inclusive and affordable access to the Bay. The section of the report dealing with Heritage makes no mention of this. The current water users, which include members of the Glebe Rowing Club, the Sydney University Women's Rowing Club and the Blackwattle Bay Dragon Boat Club, as well as canoers, kayakers, paddle boarders and sailors, access Blackwattle Bay for sport and recreation every day. But instead of giving the community greater access to the waters of Blackwattle Bay, the proposal hands valuable water space to corporate and charter marinas. Large motorised boats could cause problems, stirring up silt and creating navigational challenges for passive water users, like rowers and dragon boaters.

As industry has moved out of Blackwattle Bay the water quality has improved. Over 25 fish species and 50 other organisms, including oysters, shrimp, limpets, sponges and algae have been found in the Bay. Increased numbers and movements of large motor boats and commercial craft have the potential to stir up the sediment, which contains toxins, including the heavy metals mercury, lead, zinc and copper, and other contaminants such as asbestos, arsenic, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and total petroleum hydrocarbon. All these have been found in the sediments at levels that exceed both 'low and high trigger value sediment quality guidelines protective of ecological communities.' (DA for Stage one of the New Sydney Fish Markets: EIS 7.10.3, p. 156).

## The Glebe Society's submission in opposition to the Blackwattle Bay Planning Proposal

The Glebe Society has lodged a detailed submission opposing the Blackwattle Bay Planning Proposal (<https://www.glebesociety.org.au/blackwattle-bay-ssp-submission/>). The Society recommends that the planning of Blackwattle Bay should be based on the preparation of a Master Plan and that the terms of reference of the Master Plan must include the following requirements:

- That the promenade be 30 metres wide and no less than 20 metres
- That the height, bulk and configuration of the built form be able to reconnect Blackwattle Bay to Pyrmont
- That the impact of the Western Distributor be minimised through good design
- That the height controls of the existing LEP be respected
- That the long-standing use of Blackwattle Bay by rowers be protected by controlling other uses

The Master Plan should be placed on public exhibition and the City of Sydney should be the consent authority for the development.

It is imperative that the Bay's marine environment improves and does not deteriorate as the development proceeds.

The Glebe Society is justifiably proud of its role in fighting to create the foreshore walk and associated parklands. We look forward to the day when our foreshore walk is connected with that in Pyrmont, though it will be interrupted by the new Sydney Fish Market. The planned foreshore walk is a bitter disappointment. It is touted as the missing link in the Woolloomooloo to Rozelle Bay walk, but it is too narrow, at only 10 metres wide, to provide for many people who will use it. These will include pedestrians, shoppers and tourists milling about, cyclists, parents pushing strollers, wheelchair users and people walking dogs. If the Glebe foreshore is any indication, the proposed walk will come under heavy pressure.

The Glebe Society also objects to the promenade being a shared path (shared by both pedestrians and bicycles) which has been shown not to work on the Glebe foreshore walk. It needs to be at least 30 metres wide to accommodate so many different users, and to allow for separate paths for pedestrians and cyclists. The path will also be overshadowed by the many crowded buildings of the development and the Anzac Bridge; in winter, it will be late morning before the sun strikes it.

And users will be buffeted by the winds channelled between the towers. The City of Sydney has produced a map indicating 13 places on the proposed Plan that are unsafe, while 27 are not comfortable walking. It also argues that standing and sitting comfort is not considered.

The proponents state that 30 per cent of the site will be open space, but many of the so-called parks are pockets between buildings. As a result, the City of Sydney states the sunlight in the proposed parks is less than the City's requirements and few, if any, streets will have enough sunlight to grow the proposed tree cover. The most recent inner-city foreshore development, Barangaroo, allocated 50 per cent of the area to open space. The Blackwattle Bay development should follow suit and bring an actual benefit to the Glebe Community.

It should also be noted that there are plans to develop the large swathe of State Government-owned land along the adjacent Rozelle, White and Johnstons Bays. While the White Bay plan is in the early stages, the draft strategy includes illustrations of yet more high-density buildings. The Glebe Society fears the Bays could end up ringed with towers, with only our heritage standing between Glebe and overdevelopment.



Black Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) drying its wings at Blackwattle Bay (photo: Harvey Barrison, Flickr)

## The Blackwattle Bay State Significant Project

Infrastructure NSW's proposal for Blackwattle Bay brings to mind the final lines of the poem *Wet Day* by James McAuley: 'I think the world has never been redeemed; at least the marks it bears are mainly of the Beast – the broken trust, the litter and the stink'.



The scheme provides for the redevelopment of the old Fish Market site and adjoining land, including buildings up to 45 storeys high (Fig. 1). It proposes fast-tracking the planning process by making the precinct a State Significant Development. Although a background study identified the need for 'a well-designed fine-grain network comprising streets, laneways and arcades which will enhance the accessibility of the waterfront and permeability of the precinct', the proposal is for 12 buildings as follows:

<b>1 x 45 storey building</b>	<b>156 metres</b>
<b>1 x 32 storey building</b>	<b>120 metres</b>
<b>1 x 30 storey building</b>	<b>110 metres</b>
<b>2 x 25 storey buildings</b>	<b>91.5 metres</b>
<b>1 x 20 storey building</b>	<b>75.5 metres</b>
<b>1 x 19 storey building</b>	<b>72 metres</b>
<b>1 x 17 storey building</b>	<b>65 metres</b>
<b>2 x 10 storey buildings</b>	<b>37.5 metres</b>
<b>2 x 5 storey buildings</b>	<b>21 metres</b>



*Fig. 1: Photo montage, Blackwattle Bay Planning Proposal*

The height controls in the current Sydney City Council LEP provide for a maximum of 33 metres (nine storeys) and relate to nearby buildings. There is no justification for changing this to a maximum height of 156 metres, a height only found in the CBD. The urban form of Pyrmont should step down to the waterfront and not enclose it with a wall of very high buildings.

The apartments in the new buildings will suffer from unacceptable noise and air pollution levels from the Western Distributor and do not meet standards for cross ventilation and will therefore be reliant on mechanical cooling.

Blackwattle Bay is to be a 24-hour activity precinct. This is incompatible with a residential district, and as sound carries across water, the residents of both Pyrmont and Glebe will be affected.

Infrastructure NSW identified Blackwattle Bay as 'an extraordinary opportunity to reconnect the harbour, its surrounding neighbourhoods and the city; to showcase Sydney's living culture and stories of Country; to build an inclusive and iconic waterfront destination that celebrates innovation, diversity and community'. However, the planning fails miserably to do this.

The Western Distributor is currently a shadowy chasm separating Pyrmont from the Bay. It destroys the legibility of Pyrmont as a peninsula, is a gloomy wasteland and feels like an unsafe area to walk in. However, its shortcomings could be ameliorated with clever planning.

The views to the west, with the Harbour in the foreground and Glebe Point in the distance framing the horizon, are picturesque. There is great potential to open up these vistas. It is a distinguished, indeed, a painterly outlook that allows the Distributor, with its vertical stanchions and horizontal roadway, to be read as a frame enclosing a magnificent landscape. The proposal does not take advantage of these opportunities. Apart from a narrow slot of open space to the Bay on the Miller St axis it will make the Distributor's undercroft even more depressing by enclosing it with a wall of buildings.

It is claimed that the public can be confident that the development will be good urban planning because principles of good design will test the detailed designs for the buildings. This is fallacious. The building envelopes in the planning proposal are too dense and too tall. Good design is about considering all the elements, including impact on the neighbouring buildings, ameliorating the gash of the Western Distributor and managing scale, sunlight, amenity, noise and the promenade. This proposal is primarily driven by density. The scheme is fatally flawed because it starts with bad design. It is misleading to claim that a bad plan can be rectified by a design code. It cannot.

One of the objectives allegedly underpinning the proposal is to 'embed and interpret the morphology, heritage and culture of the site to create an authentic and site responsive place'. However, the development is so dense it destroys the form of the place, particularly the relationship of the eastern edge of Blackwattle Bay to the Pyrmont peninsula. The Precinct Study also identifies 'the need to better represent and engage knowledge and values of First Nations' and says the precinct should 'celebrate the cultural importance of Blackwattle Bay to the Wangal

and Gadigal people'. The stories of the traditional owner's connection with the land will be richer if the topography remains legible.

The NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act charges the Government with the responsibility

*to promote the social and economic welfare of the community and a better environment by the proper management, development and conservation of the State's natural and other resources, to facilitate ecologically sustainable development by integrating relevant economic, environmental and social considerations in decision-making about environmental planning and assessment and to promote good design and amenity of the built environment.*

This proposal fails to do those things because it is completely skewed towards the provision of high density so that the State government can sell its land at the highest price. It is devoid of vision both for the present and the future. If it proceeds, it will go down with the Cahill Expressway as one of Sydney's biggest planning blunders.

Of course, Infrastructure NSW paints a different picture. They say its vision is for 'reconnecting the harbour, its surrounding neighbourhoods and the city; showcasing Sydney's living culture and stories of Country; building an inclusive and iconic waterfront destination that celebrates innovation, diversity and community and delivering a green harbourside and a place for people'.

James McAuley's poem *Wet Day* was inspired by another bay, a bay on the Derwent River in Hobart, but his closing lines, *I think the world has never been redeemed; at least the marks it bears are mainly of the Beast – the broken trust, the litter and the stink*, apply equally well to the spin and reality of Infrastructure NSW's Blackwattle Bay Planning Proposal.

## Glebe Society Events

### 2021 Annual General Meeting

For the past few months, Glebe Society monthly Management Committee meetings have been held via Zoom. At our August meeting, the Committee decided to proceed with the AGM at 11 am on 10 October 2021, to ensure the Society complies with its legislative requirements. Unfortunately, this will be a 'Business Only' meeting by Zoom, and with none of the additional features the Society likes to provide for members, including a guest speaker and a chance for members to catch up later over a glass/cup of something. I'm sure members understand that this decision is based on the uncertainty surrounding our ongoing COVID restrictions.

A nomination form for membership of the Management Committee is included with this edition of the *Bulletin*. The form should be returned to the Secretary by 1 October 2021, either to PO Box 100 Glebe 2037 or email to [secretary@glebesociety.org.au](mailto:secretary@glebesociety.org.au). The names and contact details of the current members of the Management Committee are listed at the back of the *Bulletin*. I'm sure any one of these people would be happy to answer questions people may have if they are interested in nominating for a role.

Closer to the meeting date, the President will circulate the relevant papers for this meeting and details of how members can participate by Zoom if they are interested.

Jude Paul  
Secretary

### UPDATE: Meet the Lord Mayor Candidates Forum

By Judy Vergison, Glebe Society Events Convenor

The Forum was planned to be held on 29 August at the Tramsheds with the six candidates for Lord Mayor. Due to the current dynamic COVID situation, this event was cancelled.

You may be aware that the local government elections have been moved to 4 December 2021 by the State Electoral Commission. We will look to deferring the Forum until later in November 2021, subject to suitable alternative COVID-safe arrangements being put in place. Members will be advised of future event dates through our usual communication channels.

Thank you for your support. Stay safe.

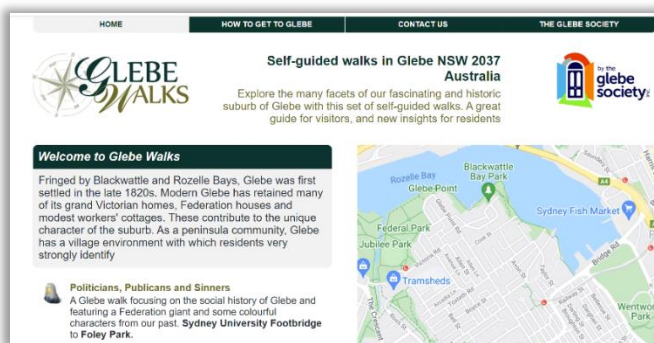


## Things to do in Lockdown – choose one of our self-guided Glebe Walks

As you know, the Society has been forced to postpone our guided Glebe Society walks program. Why not try one of the Glebe Society' self-guided walks? Check them out here:

<https://glebewalks.com.au/>

Each walk is based on one of seven themes: *Politicians, Publicans and Sinners, The Pocket Parks of Glebe, Glebe Waterfront Walk, Early Glebe Architects, Late Victorian Streetscapes, The Rocks of Glebe Point, and Sydney University – the early Science precinct.* The walks can be followed using your mobile phone.



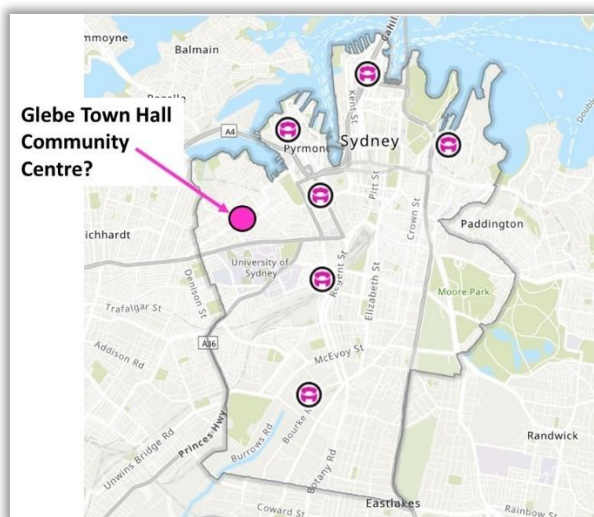
A screenshot from one of the Glebe Walks webpage.

If you do one of these walks, please let us know what you thought of it by emailing [editor@glebesociety.org.au](mailto:editor@glebesociety.org.au).

## Community Matters

### The decline in community services – Council election issue

by Jan Macindoe and Dorothy Davis



The solid pink dot shows where the Glebe Town Hall Community Centre would be located in relation to the City of Sydney's other Community Centres (image: V. Simpson-Young)

It is pleasing to note that one of the candidates in the Mayoral election, Labor candidate Linda Scott, has a policy commitment to 'Re-Establish Community Centres and City of Sydney Town Halls'.

This is directly in line with the Glebe Society's proposal to Council that a staffed community centre be established in Glebe Town Hall. As we have reported previously, although the initial response of Council was positive, because of the pandemic, the proposal became a low priority. We again raised the issue in early 2021 and received a reply from the Mayor in April, indicating that the Manager of Social Programs & Services would contact us about our request. Of course, progress has again been delayed by COVID-19. The situation remains that even St Helen's Community Centre has been closed since early 2020 and Clover Moore's 2021 election policies do not specifically address community services.

Linda Scott's policy can be accessed at <https://www.lindascott.org.au/policy/community-policy> and states:

*City of Sydney Labor will establish a staffed community centre at City of Sydney Town Halls, such as Glebe Town Hall and Redfern Community Centre, to provide support for community building and space for community use with accessible service.*

More broadly, Linda Scott's policy draws attention to the closure of community centres and the privatisation of community spaces.

*The City of Sydney's community spaces and services are under-resourced, under threat, and subject to privatisation by stealth.*

*To add to this, many City of Sydney community venues have had staffing allocations significantly reduced, and, as a result, the strong community connection that existed and the provision of accessible community space is under threat.*

We hope that Linda's stand gives more prominence to this issue, and spurs other Mayoral candidates to commit to restoring community services and spaces. We will be in dire need of opportunities to re-establish community connections when we eventually emerge from the COVID lockdown.



## A man who punched above his weight – John McColl

by Virginia Simpson-Young

The Glebe Society recently received this message on our Facebook page: 'A great man of the area has died recently. You should put something up about John McColl, who ran the Glebe estate boxing gym.'

John McColl, who died on 18 August at the age of 81 years, ran the Glebe Estate Boxing Gym that was once located at 62 Wentworth Park Rd.

John McColl was originally from Yallourn in Victoria where he took up boxing, a sport that eventually led him to settle in Glebe, where he trained with Tom Laming Snr at Glebe's Laming's Gym. John had a successful amateur boxing career and was crowned both the Victorian and NSW Light Heavyweight champion and Golden Gloves champion. According to his brother, Winton McColl, John was 'just pipped out of Olympic representation in 1964'.<sup>1</sup> A man of many talents, according to his family, John McColl had also been the Victorian Jitterbug champion.<sup>2</sup>

Historian and founding Glebe Society member, Max Solling, knew 'Johnny' McColl when they were both young boxers. Max boxed for the University of Sydney, and he and his fellow university club members often competed against boxers from local clubs. 'When we were preparing for

intervarsity boxing competitions, we'd go to the various Police Boys Clubs in the inner city and inner west. We'd go in then they'd weigh us in; if there was another boxer there of comparable weight, we'd fight them. It wasn't always fair – even though the weight was right, boxers might have different amounts of experience.'<sup>3</sup>

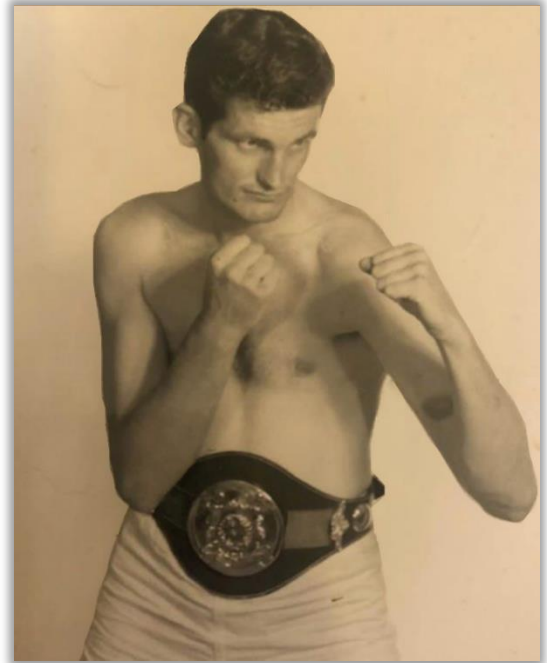
After retiring from boxing, John McColl set up the Glebe Estate Boxing Gym at 62 Wentworth Park Rd Glebe, opposite Wentworth Park. The building, part of the Glebe Estate, was owned by the NSW government and, according to his brother Winton, John was able to use it 'for a peppercorn rent'.<sup>4</sup> The building was a disused factory originally constructed for ERL Pty Ltd in 1937 and is listed as a heritage item on the 2012 City of Sydney LEP. The Statement of Significance describes it as 'a finely detailed brick industrial building from the Inter-War period exhibiting features of the Federation Beaux Art as well as Art Deco styles'.<sup>5</sup> The building was often referred to as the 'Brelco building'.

John McColl was a successful trainer, training 'many State and national champions, both amateur and professional boxers, even a couple to world title bouts'.<sup>6</sup> But the Glebe Estate Boxing Gym was more than a boxing gym. It was, in effect, an out of school hours care facility for kids from the Glebe Estate, sometimes having up to 50 to -60 kids there.<sup>7</sup> A boxing friend of McColl's reminisced in a Facebook post that the 'gym was free of charge for kids to drop in, hit the bag, play basketball and table tennis and just hang around.' John's brother reported that John would host a boxing exhibition at the gym each year, 'sometimes including the then World Light Heavyweight Champion, Jeff Harding'. The funds raised went towards 'the big Christmas Bash that John would put on for the kids'.<sup>8</sup>

The boxing gym's benefit to the local community was widely recognised. When the gym was threatened with closure in the early 1990s, community support was widespread. The Glebe Society lobbied the building's owner, the NSW government, to permit the Glebe Estate gym to stay on as a tenant.<sup>9</sup> And in 2000, with the gym still under threat, The Glebe Society continued to argue for its retention:

*The discipline and training McColl offers his young charges, together with the confidence skill brings, plus the need to blow off surplus energy and aggression, outweigh possible disadvantages from taking [boxing] up as a career. There has been a broad consensus for many years that McColl's Gym fulfils a useful, even an irreplaceable, social role, and should be retained.*<sup>10</sup>

Sadly, the gym closed in the early 2000s. As the photo below from 2005 attests, in the 2000s, the building was looking in need of a little TLC prompting the Glebe Society's Planning Convenor, Neil Macindoe, to describe it in 2000 as a 'rather dilapidated, dirty and forbidding three-storey brick factory'.<sup>11</sup> The building has since been renovated and converted to modern apartments.



John McColl ([www.mytributes.com.au](http://www.mytributes.com.au))





The Brelco building on Wentworth Park Rd in January 2005 (photo: City of Sydney Archives)



The Brelco building today (image: Google Street view)

John McColl was a much-loved trainer and community member. His loss is indicated by the many people passing on their condolences to his family on social media; here are the words of one: *I understand that we cannot pay our respects in person but will take a moment to reflect how much you did for the Glebe community, fighters and boxing in general. RIP John.*

- 1.. <http://www.virtualyallourn.com/stories/amateur-boxing-john-mccoll-john-backman>; 2. <https://www.mytributes.com.au/notice/death-notice/mccoll-john/5767574/>; 3. Personal communication; 4. <http://www.virtualyallourn.com/stories/amateur-boxing-john-mccoll-john-backman>; 5. <https://www.glebesociety.org.au/wp-content/uploads/to-CoS-re-48-62-Wentworth-Park-Rd-Glebe-21-January-2021.pdf>; 6. <http://www.virtualyallourn.com/stories/amateur-boxing-john-mccoll-john-backman>; 7. *ibid*; 8. *ibid*; 9. [https://www.glebesociety.org.au/wp-content/uploads/bulletins/1992\\_10.pdf](https://www.glebesociety.org.au/wp-content/uploads/bulletins/1992_10.pdf); 10. [https://www.glebesociety.org.au/wp-content/uploads/bulletins/2000\\_08.pdf](https://www.glebesociety.org.au/wp-content/uploads/bulletins/2000_08.pdf); 11. *Ibid*.







Inspirational artwork from the students of Glebe Public School (photos: Phil Vergison)

## Glebe, Naturally

### Protecting our environment

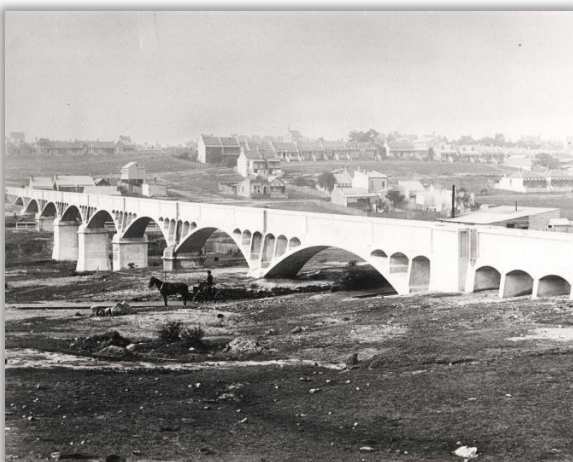
by Rodney Hammett

There was a recent discussion on ABC 702 regarding sewage pumping stations. This mentioned that they are numbered in the order they have been constructed and that No 1 (SPS 1) is located near the Ian Thorpe swimming pool and another is near the Fish Markets. This article arose from a question from Edwina Doe – where is this pumping station near the Fish Markets?

First some background. Before pumping stations were constructed, most of Sydney's sewage was drained into 'common drains', which flowed both sewage and stormwater. Originally these would have been creeks, and over time they were channelled, then piped, all leading to the harbour. With the community anger over the stench and depleted environment along these creeks and at the downstream discharge points, and of course the appalling public health impacts, governments had to act.



1943 Aerial photo of the Glebe & Forest area, showing sewage pumping stations



Sewer Aqueduct over Johnston Creek in about 1898, Looking towards Annandale. (source: <http://localnotes.net.au/?p=1235>)

In the case of the Glebe and Forest Lodge area, previous articles in the *Bulletin* (by Asa Wahlquist, *Bulletin* 10/2019 and by Sybil Jack, *Bulletin* 3/2020) describe the historical dreadful conditions along Blackwattle Creek, which discharges near the Fish Markets, and Johnston Creek/Orphan School Creek which discharges into Rozelle Bay. Today most residents would have seen the current 'naturalising' of the latter through the Bicentennial Park.

To overcome this pollution and improve public health, sewers were constructed to collect the sewage and separate it from stormwater. Where combined sewers existed, there was a program to separate sewage and stormwater into separate pipelines over many decades. At the lowest points of these catchments, sewage pumping stations were constructed. These pumped sewage to higher points in the gravity system that eventually drains to the Bondi sewage treatment plant. Parts of this gravity system are visible as an aqueduct over Johnston Creek between Glebe and Annandale.



SPS 1 is just outside our area, but three sewage pumping stations near Glebe and Forest Lodge collect sewage from a large catchment area beyond our municipal boundaries: SPS 2 near the Fish Markets (corner of Wattle St and Bridge Rd), SPS 3 near the intersection of Wigram Rd and Booth St, and SPS 4 beside The Crescent, near Tramsheds.



Sewage Pumping Station no 2 (Photo: Sydney Water)



Sewage Pumping Station no 3 at 165 Booth St Annandale, 2038 (photo: Collywolly, Flickr)



Sewage Pumping Station no 4 at 166 Rose St Annandale in year 2000 (Photo: Sydney Water)

## Brush turkey alert

Edwina Doe: *I've just seen a brush turkey crossing Ross St between Bridge Rd and Hereford St. Good that my garden is brick paved!*

## Oh, the springtime it brings on the jasmine!



From Rodney Hammett: *'I captured this in a back lane in Glebe, and it's one of those typical images that remind me of the jasmine season.'*



And more Jasmine – on the corner of Ross St and Hereford St, Forest Lodge (photo: V. Simpson-Young)

## History & Heritage

### An unsuccessful proposal for the development of part of Glebe

by Sybil Jack

After fifty years of settlement in Australia in 1842, a Constitution was established that gave local residents some government input. A council was also established for the city of Sydney with boundaries that excluded Glebe. General rules for municipalities under acts passed in the British parliament for the responsibilities of councils were being established. These included such things as markets being regulated, and slaughterhouses being moved out of cities and towns.



The new and poorly-managed Sydney Council looked for a site as close to the city as possible, and their eyes were drawn to Grose Farm. It appears that a proposal was developed to divide Grose Farm, taking approximately a quarter to create a cattle market and an abattoir. In September 1846, just after Sir Charles Augustus FitzRoy (1796-1858) had become the Governor-General, one Glebe resident was moved to adverse comment in the *Spectator*.

His approach was to ridicule the location as an extraordinary way to provide a suitable entrance – the only land entrance – to the city by comparing an abattoir to the grandeur of entries to great European cities. The area which was otherwise being beautified would be doomed. He went on,

*then I looked at those beautiful places that had been created in the very vicinity of this contemplated Charnel House. I thought of the residence of the late Mayor [presumably George Allen and Toxteth Park], of Hereford House, of Lyndhurst, (henceforward the nursery for the Church), of Johnstone of Annandale, of Garryowen, and of various other valuable properties in the immediate neighbourhood of this projected pest, as well as of the deterioration of all that was in course of completion around the doomed spot.*

The letter envisaged the smell that would spread throughout the area and into Sydney itself and consider the alternative idea of developing a new promenade in a park to add to Hyde Park, the Domain, and the Botanical Gardens. Some thought this proposal would find the value of Grose Farm an obstacle which the writer dismissed.

Neither idea, if indeed they were ever serious, eventuated.



*Grose Farm from Toll Gate, ca. 1862-1869, a watercolour by F.C. Terry (source: SLANSW)*

## **Who lived in your street? Robert Fitzgerald Nichols (1838-72)**

*By Lyn Collingwood*

When Robert Fitzgerald Nichols (aka George Robert Nichols) was hanged for murder, details about his parents, spouse and children were not publicly divulged, and there was gossip about his paternity. Some supposed he was the adopted natural son of a man named Bobby Fitzgerald. But his respectable relatives knew who Nichols was and were desperate to distance themselves. Notices appeared in the Press, denying that he was a son of deceased master mariner Isaac David Nichols 'and has never been recognised as such by any members of that gentleman's family'.

The truth was that the killer was Isaac David Nichols' illegitimate son and a descendant of two convicts who prospered. The first Isaac Nichols (1770-1819) was Robert Fitzgerald Nichols' grandfather and the colony's first Postmaster General. This Isaac Nichols married the daughter of Esther Abrahams, Rosanna Abrahams. Esther Abrahams married Lieutenant George Johnston of Annandale fame.

During the 1860s, Robert Fitzgerald Nichols, his father Isaac, and his paternal uncle Charles Hamilton Nichols lived on Glebe Point Rd.

Robert Fitzgerald Nichols was born in London on 28 August 1838, four months after his mother Catherine Adelaide McCrone had embarked from Sydney on the *Achilles* with Isaac David Nichols. In October 1839, Isaac Nichols returned to Australia as master on the maiden voyage of the *Australasian Packet*, an English clipper converted to a coastal steamer. The cabin passengers included French missionaries bound for New Zealand. It is likely that Catherine McCrone and the baby were also on board. The boy was baptised at St James on 13 January 1841. He was brought up by his father and attended Sydney College, Hyde Park. The fate of his mother, Catherine McCrone, is unknown.

Although a shrewd businessman, Isaac Nichols had been sentenced in 1836 for conspiracy to defraud creditors. He was released from Newcastle Gaol a year later, after which he formed a relationship with Catherine McCrone. With his legal wife Sarah née Hutchinson, he already had three children: William Charles (baptised 1830, died of delirium tremens in 1857), Sarah Martha (baptised 1832, died 1941) and George Robert, who was baptised in 1836 but whose fate is unknown. Sarah Nichols left her husband for Joseph Yeomans, an articled clerk to Isaac's younger brother George Robert Nichols. (George Robert Nichols had two sons called George Robert Nichols; one died as a toddler in 1832, and the second died as an infant in 1838).



Robert Fitzgerald Nichols' gaol photograph, September 1871 (Image: NSW State Archives & Records)

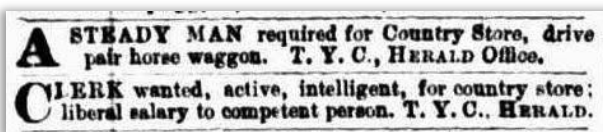
Robert Fitzgerald Nichols was first in trouble with the law at age 16 after returning to Sydney from a stint at sea. In court, he presented well, pleaded guilty to a charge of forgery and spent a few days in gaol. He was apprenticed to a butcher at Windsor but soon returned to shipboard life. He worked in a Custom House at Cadiz, was gaoled in London for obtaining money under false pretences, and in 1861 was back in Sydney. Although well-educated and fluent in several languages, he failed at one enterprise after another: shipbroker, commission agent, gold digger, illicit distiller, fisherman, ship lumper and railway porter.

Using his birth name (Nichols), he married Sarah Sophia Clarke (1837-99) at St Stephen's Newtown in 1863. He gave his occupation as shipbroker when registering the birth of their first child, Robert Henry Nichols (1864-1914). The birth took place at *Burton Cottage*, Glebe Rd and was certified by Dr John Foulis. For the birth of Florence Eva (1866-1930), Robert gave his occupation as master mariner. The birth was certified by Dr Renwick. In reality, Robert Fitzgerald Nichols was out of work for long periods during which his father supported him.

The death of Isaac David Nichols in August 1867 brought this security to an end. Neither uncle filled the financial gap. When George Robert Nichols (MLA and a member of the colony's first ministry) died a decade earlier, a testimonial was raised to support his widow; and the family of Charles Hamilton Nichols (*Bell's Life in Sydney* newspaper owner) was poorly provided for when he passed away in 1869. For some reason, Robert Fitzgerald Nichols began calling himself George Robert Nichols, and it was by that name, he was found guilty in May 1870 of stealing wearing apparel

and forging a receipt. Awaiting sentencing, he absconded and hid in the Botany Swamps before taking off for Wollongong. He changed his appearance, got some work as a groom and a clerk, forged a receipt and, with the money, travelled as far as Tasmania where he was arrested. (By now, he had added a string of aliases: Alexander Cameron, Walter Davidson, William Henry Mitchell, Robert Nelson.) In Darlinghurst Gaol he became friendly with Alfred Lyster *alias* James Froud, a white-collar criminal also serving two years' hard labour.

Meanwhile, his wife, Sarah Nichols, supported her family by sewing, using a machine bought with a subscription raised by a local clergyman. Persuaded that her husband was reformed, he found post-prison employment for Nichols and Lyster with the Sydney Meat Preserving Company at Millers Point. The two men spent hours in each other's company working out ways to make money.



Nichols' and Lyster's unsuspecting victims responded to these ads placed in the Sydney Morning Herald on 4 March 1872



Inspired by stories of a Frenchman who killed young women and sold their clothing, they advertised for workers for a country store. Fortunate were those with few possessions whose applications were unsuccessful. Unfortunate were two new arrivals in the colony: Peter Bridger, a 25-year-old steward from HMS *Rosario*, and lay preacher William Percy Walker. On two consecutive days, Nichols and Lyster hired a boat from King St wharf and told each victim he was to meet his prospective employer in a house on the Parramatta River and leave his boxed belongings behind to be picked up later.

Bridger's body was subsequently found in the river near Ryde with a fractured skull and legs bound with a rope attached to a stone. That of Walker was discovered, similarly weighted, in Hen and Chicken Bay. 'The Parramatta River Murders' caused a sensation.

Lyster (a defence counsel was Edmund Barton) and Nichols (his life-size figure was displayed in the Royal Waxworks Exhibition) were soon apprehended and found guilty. Nichols' wife visited him in Darlinghurst Gaol, but his children were denied admission. A bizarre episode followed the men's execution, witnessed by a crowd of onlookers, on 18 June 1872. The coffins were surreptitiously removed by the undertaker and taken to his Waterloo pub, where the lids were prised open and, for a fee, the contents viewed by drunken customers. Police raided the *Morning Star*, and the bodies were interred at Haslem's Creek, now part of Rookwood Cemetery.

**Sources:** *Australian Dictionary of Biography* George Robert Nichols (1809-57) entry; Concord Heritage Society; T D Mutch index; *NSW Police Gazette* 27.3.1872, 10.4.1872; NSW registry of births, deaths, marriages; NSW State Archives & Records; *Sands Directories*; Trove website.

## Mystery photo competition

### Last month's mystery photo



Michael Collins identified the location as on St Johns Rd near the Town Hall.

The recent photo shows a wonderfully preserved 'Ghost Sign' on what was an external wall of 93 St Johns Rd, the site of John George Purves' steam bakery.

Purves, after whom a nearby street is named, was President of the Master Bakers' Association and six of his sons became bread makers.

His story was told in *Bulletin* 7/2016.

### This month's mystery photo

Any idea which pub this is, and what's happening? Please send your suggestions to

[history@glebesociety.org.au](mailto:history@glebesociety.org.au)

(Image: National Library of Australia)

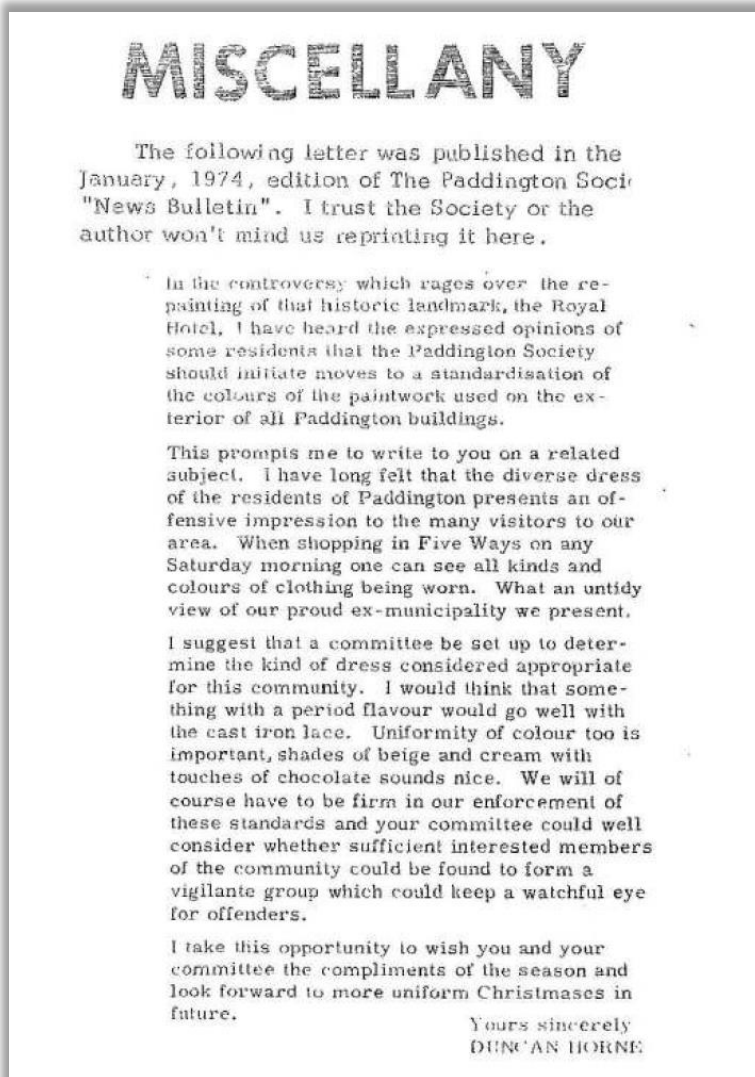


## Getting the balance right

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From Lyn Milton, Glebe Society Archivist

I am keeping myself busy by revisiting the first volume of Glebe Society *Bulletin* index. This afternoon I came across this reprint from the Paddington Society News Bulletin – a very poor copy from our *Bulletin* 2/1974. I thought members might find it amusing, particularly as people's states of dress during Zoom meetings is questionable!



## House history workshop

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City of Sydney is providing this workshop free of charge via Zoom.

When: Saturday 11 September from 1pm to 3pm

Cost: Free

Details and booking: <https://whatson.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/events/citizen-history-house-history-research-workshop>

## Discover your Sydney-based ancestors in the City Archives

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Another free workshop from the City of Sydney via Zoom

When: Wednesday 22 September from 1pm to 2pm

Cost: Free

Details and booking: <https://whatson.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/events/discover-your-sydney-based-ancestors-in-the-city-archives>



# Creative Glebe and Forest Lodge

## Vale Janet Venn-Brown

By Virginia Simpson-Young

Artist Janet Venn-Brown died on 6 August, aged 96. Janet had a long association with Glebe and the Glebe Society, so with great sadness, we learnt of her death.



Until quite recently, Janet lived in Glebe, at St Johns Village, from where she moved to Rushcutters Bay. Janet attended many Glebe Society events including Thirsty Thursdays. The Society was always happy to advise members of her upcoming art exhibitions (*Bulletins* 1/2012; 9/2011; 10/2011; 1/2012; 10/2012).

It would be an understatement to say that Janet had lived an extraordinary life. The National Library of Australia provides a brief bio:

*Janet Venn-Brown was born in Sydney in 1924, grew up in Drummoyne and went to school at Presbyterian Ladies College, Croydon. She undertook secretarial studies working at Angus and Robertson bookshop and Ure Smith Publishers, and studied painting in evening classes with Guiseppe Bisietta. She stopped in Italy on her way to England in 1952, returned there and remained for 44 years living in Rome. Her work has been exhibited in Naples, Rome, London, Amman, Baghdad and Sydney, where she returned to live in 2008.*

*Janet Venn-Brown edited *Per un Palestinese* (Milan, Mazotta Editore, 1979) as a memorial to her partner, the exiled Palestinian intellectual Wael Zuaiter, killed by Israeli security forces on 16 October 1972 in retaliation for the massacre of Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympic Games. An English translation, *For a Palestinian: a memorial to Wael Zuaiter* was published by Kegan Paul International in 1984. (<https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-346516058/findingaid>)*

Even as her health started to let her down, Janet remained passionately committed to her art – always on the look out for an opportunity to paint a Glebe interior. Jude Paul, Glebe Society Secretary and Jane Gatwood, Glebe Society Treasurer, have two watercolours of their house, which Janet painted in 2013. Jude explains:

*I so enjoyed her time at 294. ... I'd collect her from St Johns and bring her here. ... She would quietly sit and paint for a couple of hours, eat the sandwiches we'd made for her lunch, nod off for about 20 minutes or so and then paint again for another couple of hours. Her two paintings of 294 took several months to complete, but no-one was in any hurry.*



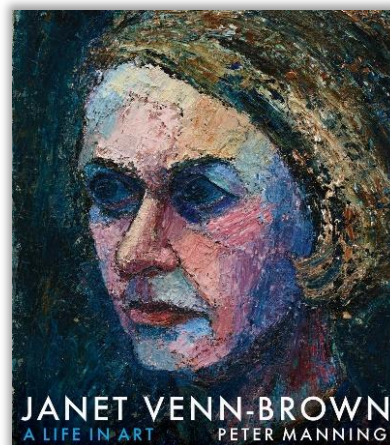
(left) One of Janet Venn-Brown's watercolours of Jude and Jane's lounge room. (right) the painting can be seen on the far wall; the chair in the painting is in the foreground. (photos: Jude Paul)

One of these watercolours appears in Peter Manning's book about Janet's life and art, *Janet Venn-Brown: A Life in Art* (NewSouth Publishing, 2016). The author, Peter Manning, explained the book to our members in *Bulletin* 9/2016 (p. 6):

*Many members will know of Janet Venn-Brown who has come to Glebe Society meetings and also offered to paint interiors of Glebe houses. At 91, she is still painting after 45 years in Italy and the Middle East. She was part of the art circle in Rome and Tuscany that included Jeffrey Smart and Justin O'Brien and many others. Now well-known journalist Peter Manning, for many years a Glebe resident himself, has written a full biography of Janet's extraordinary life from the time she left Sydney in the early 1960s to when she returned in 2008. It includes the shocking assassination of her Palestinian partner, Wael Zuaiter, in Rome in 1972 by Israel's Mossad for allegedly being involved in terrorism at the Munich Olympics. It was later admitted he was innocent of the charge. The book includes 93 of Janet's paintings throughout her life – abstract, landscapes and interiors – all in high-resolution colour.*

Janet Venn-Brown has made a substantial contribution to Australian art and to Glebe. Glebe featured strongly in the art of her later years and her international reputation has, by association, elevated ours.

**Note:** Read more about Janet Venn-Brown in the following editions of the *Bulletin*: 5/2009 (p. 10), 8/2013 (p. 14), 4/2015 (p. 11)



The book about Janet and her art by Peter Manning (image: <https://www.newsouthbooks.com.au/books/janet-venn-brown/>)

## Subcommittee Annual Reports for 2020-2021

Subcommittee annual reports not included in this *Bulletin* will appear in the October *Bulletin*.

### Community Development Subcommittee Annual Report 2020-2021

by Jan Macindoe and Dorothy Davis, on behalf of the Community Development Subcommittee

The Community Development Subcommittee maintained a range of activities in collaboration with other community groups during the year, despite restrictions related to COVID-19. The main loss was the Sunset Soiree, normally held annually to support Centipede Before and After School Care.

#### 1. Collaborative projects

Our major collaborative projects were driven by individual members of the Subcommittee.

##### Christmas donations

Janice Challinor managed the very successful Christmas donations by soliciting donations both from Glebe Society members and the staff of the Chris O'Brien Lifehouse. Janice also sought input from the six facilities providing supported accommodation in Glebe to ensure that the gifts matched the requirements of recipients.

The outcome was that several gifts were delivered to each of the 81 children and parents of the following facilities: Elsie Women and Children's Refuge, Rainbow Lodge, Detour House and Girls' Refuge, Katherine York and the children engaged in Glebe PCYC development programs. There were also many donations of personal care items and small luxuries for the 25 adults living at the facilities. Furthermore, a

large box of educational games, books and stationery items were delivered to Centipede at Glebe Public School when school term commenced.



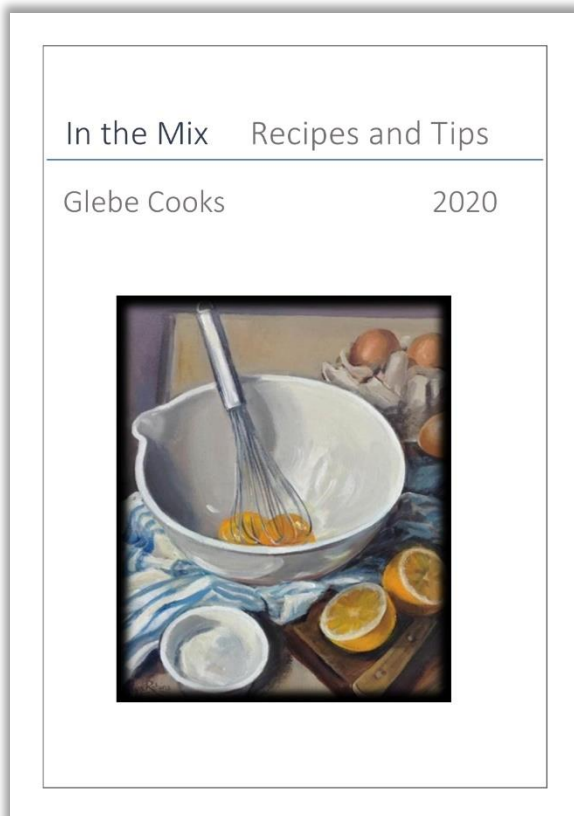
Chris O'Brien Lighthouse Christmas gifts (photo: Chris O'Brien Lifehouse)

#### Community support during COVID-19

Individual members of the Society were involved in providing support to our Glebe and Forest Lodge residents during the dark and uncertain days of the first COVID wave in 2020 in several ways: a weekly



drop-off of boxes of food, especially fresh vegetables and fruit, organised and packed by the Glebe Youth Service, for those unable to shop; regular phone calls to check on our neighbours' well-being; provision of information on local services offering financial help, health and welfare support; and food and emergency relief. A recipe booklet, 'In the Mix', was put together by local residents to share cooking ideas and to indicate the pleasure experienced in unpacking the donated food deliveries.



Several community picnics, supported by grants from the City of Sydney and the Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion, University of Technology Sydney, and local well-wishers, were held in Glebe pocket parks in December to celebrate our initial freedom from lockdown and in anticipation of Christmas. The picnics focused on community, togetherness and resilience through a difficult time, with the caption 'We are Glebe'. Photography, by professional photographer and Glebe local Tom Psomotragos, captured the spirit of the picnics and was on display mid-year in various locations around Glebe.

These initiatives expressed caring and hope, with new friendships formed and relationships developed with local support agencies such as the Glebe Youth Service, Common Ground Camperdown, Glebe Assistance Partnership Program and Mission Australia's Tenant Participation and Community Engagement.

## 2. Kitchen Pack Project

Diane Hutchinson was the driver of the Kitchen Pack Project, which ran from 2017 to June 2021.

The aim of the Kitchen Starter Pack Project was to provide a socially beneficial recycling outlet for used kitchenware by refurbishing members' donated items and assembling packs of essentials for those moving from supported accommodation to their own homes. In the course of the project, a total of 80 packs were delivered to Elsie Women's Refuge and Rainbow Lodge for their clients who move into social or community housing. Elsie and Rainbow Lodge staff and clients have expressed their gratitude to the Glebe Society.

The project's success relied on the generous support of many, especially the Glebe Society members and members of the broader community who donated used kitchenware, the Pyrmont, Ultimo and Glebe (PUG) Men's Shed for custom-made cutting boards, and Sewing for Good for handmade tea towels. The project also needed funds to purchase new jugs and toasters and other items for which we expected occasional shortfalls in recycled donations. These were provided by an initial start-up grant from the City of Sydney and then by personal donations from members, supplemented by the proceeds from a raffle and cake stall. In 2020-21, the Management Committee guaranteed to cover any shortfall in donations up to a total project budget of \$1000.

The project was closed in June 2021. There were several reasons, including loss of access to a storage area at St Helen's Community Centre, as the venue did not meet COVID safe conditions. But fundamentally, the project had to be closed as donations of kitchenware diminished. This should be considered a success of the project, whose aim always included the opportunity to recycle used kitchenware. It was inevitable that our members would eventually clear out all their unwanted items!

The project would never have been possible without the dedication and hard work of Diane Hutchinson, assisted by other supporters. However, Diane undertook most of the effort of cleaning, sorting and packing the Kitchen Packs, and storing items in her home for the most part.

## 3. Social housing

The Community Development Subcommittee has provided input to various submissions made by the Glebe Society on planning and heritage issues to ensure that the social housing perspective is always included. The group has been vigilant in arguing for preserving or increasing social housing provision whenever a new development has been put forward and is aware of the constant threat to social housing residents as redevelopment in our area takes hold. The importance of low-rise housing and amenities, including outdoor space and gardens, has also been constantly stressed in our submissions.

## 4. Community Centre for Glebe

The Community Development Subcommittee's campaign to promote greater opportunities for community activities to be held in City of Sydney

venues began in 2019. In early 2020 we made a submission to the Lord Mayor and Council in support of a staffed community centre in the Glebe Town Hall. The initial response of Council was positive, with a unanimous motion to 'Investigate how services in Glebe might be consolidated and made more accessible to a wider range of constituents, particularly focusing on the needs of older residents', including 'Solicit input from Glebe community organisations like the Glebe Society'.

Unfortunately, responses to the pandemic inevitably led to the proposal becoming a low priority. In early 2021, to re-focus attention on the proposal for a staffed community centre in Glebe, the Community Development Subcommittee wrote again to the Lord Mayor and received a reply in April, indicating that the

Manager Social Programs & Services would contact us about our request. Of course, progress has again been delayed by COVID-19 restrictions.

Apart from the delays caused by the pandemic, we are concerned by evidence of a decrease in the Council's commitment to ensuring that community activities are available at Council facilities. St Helen's Community Centre has been closed and unstaffed since early 2020, and all the City's venues are listed on the Council's website as 'venues for hire'.

We expect this to be an on-going campaign, to ensure that Glebe residents again have access to community-based activities, to support physical and mental well-being, and provide opportunities to connect with others.

## Blue Wren Subcommittee Annual Report 2020-2021

By Andrew Wood, Convenor

### Introduction

The Subcommittee has 13 members and met on eight occasions during the year. At present, there are four landcare/bushcare volunteer groups in Glebe who are involved in the care and maintenance of our suburb's parks: the Friends of Orphan School Creek Bushcare Group, the Friends of John St Reserve, Paddy Gray Reserve Landcare Group and the Glebe Palmerston and Surrounds Landcare Group. Many hours of volunteer work occurred as the Groups organised purchases of native flora, and planting and weeding working bees, as well as liaising with the City of Sydney Council about site work plans and upgrades.

We were delighted to receive generous donations from Norma Hawkins and Mary Holt during the year, which provided continuing financial support for the Subcommittee's work.

### Upgrades to parks

During the year, following extensive community consultation, the City undertook much-appreciated upgrades of Ernest Pedersen Reserve in Ferry Rd, and Palmerston Ave and Surrounds Park.

### Craney Grants

Three Craney Small Grants totalling \$4,550.00 were awarded to support biodiversity teaching and learning projects in our local preschools and schools (*Native plant vertical garden* - SDN Preschool Glebe; *Connecting Country through classroom ecosystems* - Explore and Develop, Preschool, Annandale; *Glebe Public School environment project* - Glebe Public School). On completing their project, each applicant will write a report which will be suitable for publication in the Society's *Bulletin* and website.

### Biodiversity lecture

The Society's 6th Annual Biodiversity Lecture was given by John Turnbull, a Research Fellow from the School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences at the University of NSW, on Tuesday 1 June 2021 at *Benledi House*, Glebe Library. His talk was entitled *Biodiversity on our blue doorstep – fascinating creatures in Sydney Harbour and coastline* and under COVID - safe rules was attended by 40 Society members and friends.



*A photo of a weedy sea-dragon in Sydney Harbour. The photo was taken by John Turnbull who delivered this year's biodiversity lecture.*

John is one of Australia's leading experts in Sydney's marine wildlife and conducts large surveys with the help of passionate local divers and citizen scientists. Sydney Harbour has over 600 endemic species of marine wildlife, and John pointed out that the number of fish species in our Harbour alone compares to the entire coastline of the UK. He explained that ocean currents, like the Eastern Australian Current (famously depicted in the movie *Finding Nemo*), make it difficult for marine wildlife to migrate away from the region, resulting in the local animals evolving in isolation. The wildlife in Sydney's ocean is as unique as Australia's wildlife on land.



## **Meeting with City regarding Bushcare Volunteer Guidelines**

In November 2020, the Subcommittee met with Jenny Kent, the City's Community Garden and Volunteer Coordinator, City Greening & Leisure and Aimee Freimanis, Ecohort Pty Ltd, the consultant developing the City's Bushcare Volunteer Guidelines. The City needs to have a public-facing document to assist in recruiting and managing bushcare volunteers working in its parks and reserves. The aim is to produce a simple, instructive document that finds a balance between freedom and control, which will help both the City and volunteers, and become a model for new volunteers into the future. There was extensive discussion of the proposed contents of the guidelines especially concerning:

- insurance cover for the volunteers; other local governments provide full cover for volunteers from 18 to 90 years of age,
- the need for regular meetings between the City and the leaders of its voluntary bushcare groups,
- the need for site work plans for each of Glebe's parks and reserves, including the maintenance of a database and map of works required at each site, and
- the provision (and onsite storage) of tools to be used by the bushcare volunteers.

In a recent email, Jenny Kent reported that 'Unfortunately, there has been a significant delay with the development of the guidelines as Aimee had to withdraw from the project. I am getting back on to finalising a draft and will send it out for review when it's available.'

## **City of Sydney's crown lands plans of management**

In December last year, the Subcommittee prepared the Society's submission to the City, which addressed questions related to nine crown lands sites in Glebe. Also, members of the Subcommittee attended Zoom workshops and pop-up information sessions as part of the City's community consultation process.

Important issues raised in the Society's submission included:

- The remnants and reconstructed landscapes of rare green open space in Glebe provide opportunities for a renewed commitment to Indigenous sustainable management principles of 'Caring for Country'. These management practices should support the health and well-being of the land ('Country'). In recognising Aboriginal custodianship of these lands, local Aboriginal expertise should be sought where possible. The planting and maintenance of diverse native plant species to provide shade and habitat, a mix of native grasses, shrubs, small

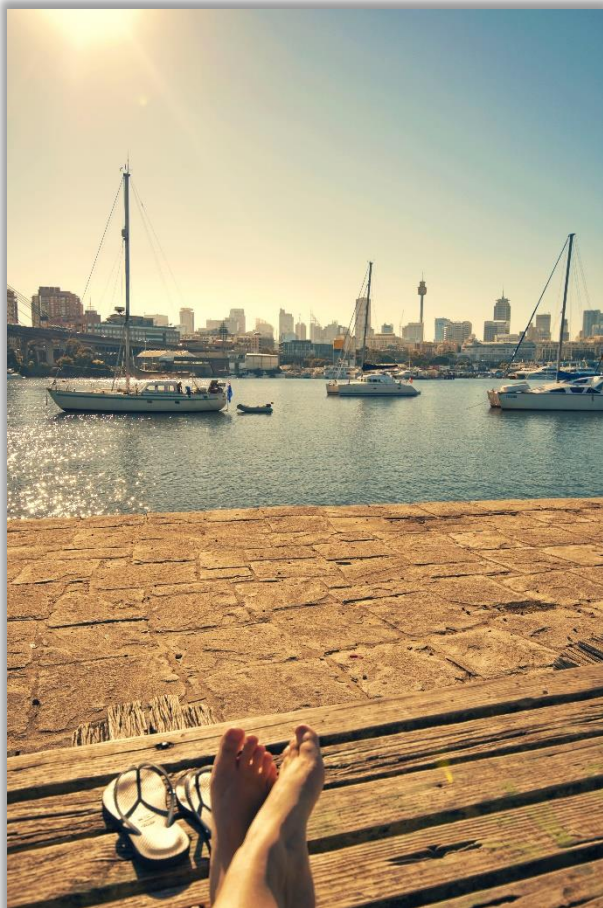
trees, 'native meadows', dense small bird habitat and re-establishment of original vegetation should be encouraged to promote biodiversity, environmental awareness, and a sense of continuity with Sydney's pre-1788 history.



*Photo. Upper Palmerston Avenue Park following the City's recent upgrade showing new drainage, terracing, seating and native flora; the large Moreton Bay Fig was retained (photo Jim Phillips).*

- Since 1938 the central portion of Wentworth Park (the 'sporting complex') has been more or less the exclusive preserve of the greyhound racing industry, originally the National Coursing Association (NCA), and now the Greyhound Breeders Owners and Trainers Association (GBOTA). In 1985 the NCA built a massive grandstand, which now stands almost empty on racing nights, and which is effectively an office building in a public park. When the GBOTA licence expires in 2027, or before that, when greyhound racing ceases at Wentworth Park and the commercial leases in the grandstand come to an end, the whole of the park, including the sporting complex, should once again be accessible to everyone.
- Parks must be large enough to provide open spaces where people can be undisturbed and quietly enjoy passive activities such as sitting and reading a book. It will be necessary to actively manage the parks for their different uses so that peaceful, quiet zones are created in locations of natural ecosystems – all aimed at improving mental health and a connection with the local environment. Such sites should be free from lively activities and dogs.
- Sporting activities should be confined to those open spaces where they currently take place.

The one exception to this suggested limitation is that when the greyhounds depart from Wentworth Park, the greyhound track should become a public oval. Every open space should have clearly delineated, separate areas where dogs are not permitted as well as those where dogs should be leashed and where dogs should be permitted to run freely.



*Morning Sunlight at Blackwattle Bay (image: Tina Reynolds)*

- 'The Hill' on the northern side of the Tramsheds shopping centre should be retained as a dedicated urban wildlife habitat refuge. Due to its contaminated land, 'The Hill' is currently fenced off from the surrounding area and cannot be used as a park open space. Its position, fencing and vegetation can provide an environment for abundant wildlife, including birds, lizards, bees and small mammals, to shelter and flourish. In the Society's bird surveys, raptors, crested pigeons, brush turkeys and other birds have been identified on this site. Such a wild habitat refuge would be unique in the local government area and could also provide a safe site for the translocation of bird species, including the blue wren, which are no longer found in Glebe.

### **Federal inquiry into the problem of feral and domestic cats in Australia**

The Subcommittee also prepared the Society's submission to the Federal Government's Standing

Committee on the Environment and Energy inquiry into feral and domestic cats in Australia. Whilst it has been estimated that feral cats kill more than three billion animals per year, pet cat studies have shown that each roaming pet cat is responsible for killing 186 reptiles, birds and mammals per year. Thus, in urban settings such as Glebe, the problem of native wildlife destruction due to pet cats needs particular attention; per square kilometre per year, pet cats kill 30-50 times more animals than feral cats in the bush.

The Society has made the following recommendations to the inquiry:

- a national education campaign be launched to promote the protection of Australia's unique native birds and animals and 'To Make Every Cat an Indoor Cat'.
- Commonwealth funds be provided to all Local Councils to promote education campaigns specifically targeted to their local areas, 'To Make Every Cat an Indoor Cat', to encourage cat curfews and to enforce more responsible companion animal ownership.
- a National Competition be organised to encourage Australian artists and schoolchildren to create artworks illustrating the impact cats have on our native wildlife, with a view to the development of a nationally consistent Logo to 'Make Every Cat an Indoor Cat'.

### **Annual Spring Bird Survey**

The Society's 8th bird survey was held on Sunday 1 November 2020; 16 people signed on at 6.45 am in Paddy Gray Reserve in Hereford St and were allocated to 10 survey sites across Glebe and Forest Lodge, including streets, parks and along waterways – participants spent 20 to 45 minutes surveying the birdlife at each site.

The survey results in 2020 were consistent with the 2019 survey regarding the number of species (26) and total individual birds (623). The two most common birds again were the native Noisy Miner and the Rainbow Lorikeet. Other native species becoming more common are the Australian Magpie and Australasian Figbird with Grey Butcherbird and Laughing Kookaburra also in the mix. Unfortunately, feral species such as Pigeons, Spotted Doves and Common Mynas are increasing in number. Species that we missed this year included cormorants, herons and other ducks. This could be attributed to the very high tide conditions and the ongoing disturbance in Johnstons Creek due to the creek naturalisation works.

However, there were more breeding records this year. This year, Tree Martins were observed using air vents in a building on the corner of Ross St and St Johns Rd, Forest Lodge. The Forest Lodge survey team were able to identify up to 10 birds flying in and out of the vents and reported chattering of baby birds as adults flew in and out. Although Tree Martins typically



nest in natural tree hollows, they are also known to nest in artificial crevices, such as in buildings. The two Figbird nests were in *Casuarina glauca* in branches overhanging the pedestrian bridge and road into the Tramsheds precinct. One nest contained a sitting adult bird and in the other a juvenile bird, not yet fledged. Figbirds are likely to breed successfully in Glebe and Forest Lodge with street and park plantings of fleshy fruited trees such as Figs and especially the now widely street-planted Tuckeroo (*Cupaniopsis anacardiodes*) as well as the continued presence of weedy species such as the Privet and Celtis.

While there were no surprises in this year's survey, it was good to see one small species - a Willie Wagtail in the vicinity of Federal Park calling loudly, suggesting there might have been a mate somewhere nearby.

### **Proposals for wildlife corridors in the Bays West Place Strategy**

In May, the Subcommittee (together with President and Convenor of the Bays and Foreshores Subcommittee) met with Keith Stallard, a Balmain resident and Society member, to discuss his proposals to have wildlife corridors included in State Government's *Bays West Place Strategy*. Keith demonstrated that an eco-corridor should be an

important and essential part of the Strategy with links to similar corridors in Glebe and Annandale and Callan Park, and the Greenway. Keith's objective is to get eco-corridors, as a non-negotiable objective of the *Bays West Place Strategy* as this document will set the parameters for development of the Bays West precinct over coming decades. The meeting supported Keith's proposals.



*Proposed wildlife eco-corridor (image: Keith Stallard)*

## **Heritage Subcommittee Annual Report 2020-2021**

*By Brian Fuller, Convenor*

### **Membership**

Members of the Heritage Subcommittee are: Lydia Bushell, Margaret Cody, Lyn Collingwood, Peter Crawshaw, Rodney Hammett, Robert Hannan, Allan Hogan, Joseph King, Ted McKeown, Jude Paul, Margaret Sankey and myself. We still have room for more.

We continued to meet monthly (other than January) at a range of venues that included Rothwell Lodge, The Toxteth (Christmas), St Johns House and of course Zoom.

Thank you to all members for their continued dedication in working towards the preservation and enhancement of Glebe and Forest Lodge for the benefit of our community.

### **Terms Of Reference**

This year, we refreshed our Terms of Reference to ensure it has relevance to the current and imminent issues facing our community while adhering to the Society's constitution.

For the benefit of new members to the Society and aspiring subcommittee members, the refresh was designed to give:

- A broader look at our activities and responsibilities, with a particular emphasis on the fostering of awareness and appreciation in the value of preserving sustainable heritage
- A focused approach to maintaining the unique and intact heritage character of Glebe and Forest Lodge
- An appreciation of the need for maintaining relationships with Government, the City of Sydney and other Heritage groups

The Terms of Reference can be read here [https://www.glebesociety.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Terms\\_of\\_Reference\\_Heritage\\_Subcommittee\\_Jan\\_2021.pdf](https://www.glebesociety.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Terms_of_Reference_Heritage_Subcommittee_Jan_2021.pdf)

Many thanks to Ted McKeown for lending us his legal skills in drafting the new document.

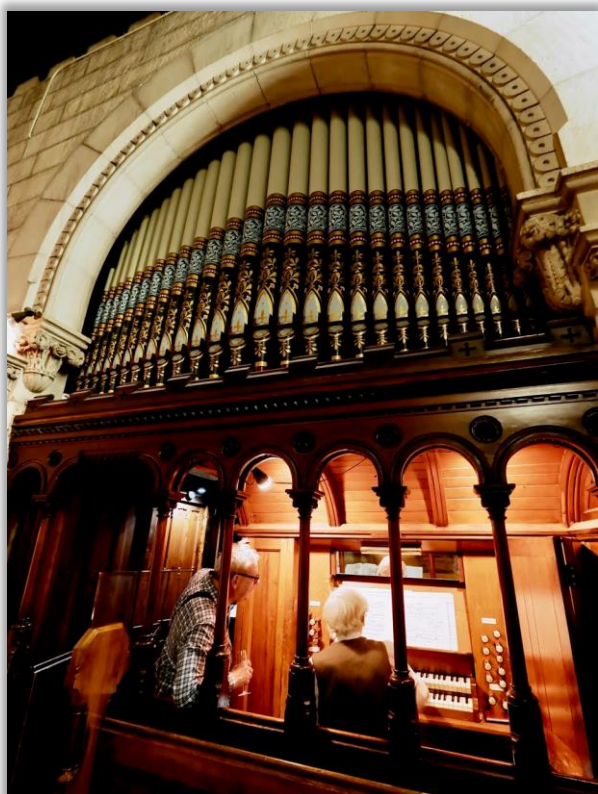
### **Community Engagement**

On behalf of the Subcommittee, Lyn Collingwood and Rodney Hammett continue to work with a community that looks to the Society for historical information about Glebe and Forest Lodge. Over the past 12 months, Rodney and Lyn have processed 78 enquiries with their typical vigour and enthusiasm. In

addition, Rodney and Lyn have written 14 articles on local personalities and items of historical interest for the *Bulletin*, such that those articles become a permanent record for future generations. For each *Bulletin*, Lyn has contributed a 'Who lived in your street' article and a Mystery Photo for readers to identify. If you come across a photo of an earlier time in Glebe or Forest Lodge, please forward it to [history@glebesociety.org.au](mailto:history@glebesociety.org.au).

We have a growing list of people wanting to participate in a 'How to Research your Home' session. COVID-19 has meant we have had to delay the sessions for the time being.

The Subcommittee is hugely indebted to Lyn and Rodney for the volume of work that they undertake.



*Playing the organ during the Glebe Society 2020 Christmas Party held at St John's Church (photo: Phil Vergison)*

## **Exhibitions**

The 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St Johns Church was celebrated with a five-day public exhibition supported by the Glebe Society and wonderfully managed and curated by a team led by Robert Hannan and Peter Crawshaw. The exhibition included rarely seen photographs and plans of the beautiful Romanesque style Church. Naturally, it explored the work of its celebrated Sydney Architect, Edmund Blacket, whose work on another Glebe landmark is well documented, that being his home in Glebe, *Bidura*. The exhibition preceded the Society's Christmas Party held inside the Church on Friday 11 Dec 2020. We also record our appreciation to Rev Mark Wormell and his team for working collaboratively with Society members on

both the anniversary exhibition and the Christmas Party.

## **Awards**

The Heritage Subcommittee, on behalf of the Society, lodged an entry relating to the Glebe Society's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations to the National Trust Heritage Awards 2020. These awards recognise events of the previous year, and one of the categories is Heritage Events, Exhibitions and Tours. We were more than delighted that the entry was 'highly commended' by the judges. It is a tribute to all Society Members who worked so hard in making the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary such a success. Thank you to Jude Paul for coordinating the 'highly commendable' entry.

## **Representations to Government**

It is vital that we nurture and maintain a healthy relationship with governments at both State and local levels. The ability of the State Government to categorise development proposals as 'State Significant Developments' (SSD) to bypass well enacted Planning and Heritage legislation or controls is becoming a far too regular occurrence. The relocation of the Powerhouse Museum, the new Sydney Fish Market, and the proposed revitalisation of Blackwattle Bay have each been, or will be, controversial, to say the least.

Within our own 2037 borders, the proposed spot rezoning of low rise residential property within our Heritage Conservation Areas to construct high rise residential towers is gaining alarming traction. The Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC) owns approximately 11 low rise housing estates in 2037, along with most of the heritage terraces in the Glebe Estate. It has already lodged a DA for the demolition of low rise housing at 17-31 Cowper St and 2A/2D Wentworth Park Rd Glebe. Its replacement with high rise housing is entirely out of scale and context Heritage Conservation Area in which it is located. Similarly, LAHC has declared its intention to undertake a massive high rise development on its existing low rise housing facility fronting Bay, Franklin and Glebe Streets Glebe.

## ***The Honourable Melinda Pavey MP – Minister for Housing***

Planning Convenor Ian Stephenson and I met with the Minister to voice the Society's extreme concern at these developments and the threat of more to come. Simultaneously we expressed that same level of concern over the current state of the Government's plans for the heritage terraces and residents of the Glebe Estate. No assurances were given (nor expected) at the meeting, and we still await a response to that meeting. Nonetheless, she knows who we are, and we will be seeking further dialogue with her. Our thanks to Councillor Linda Scott who facilitated the introduction and attended the meeting with us.



## *The City of Sydney*

Ian Stephenson (Planning), Allan Hogan, Ted McKeown and I (all Heritage) firstly appeared before the Transport, Heritage and Planning Committee, and secondly the full meeting of Council to argue the case against the LAHC proposals for 17-31 Cowper St and 2A/2D Wentworth Park Rd Glebe. The proposal simply does not conform to the City's Planning Controls, does not meet the character statement of the Heritage Conservation Area and creates a precedent for imposing additional high rise development in the Conservation Area.

The City maintains it is effectively powerless to stop the State Government from proceeding with these developments, categorised as SSD. Our appearance before Council did us no harm; if anything, it improved our standing with Council as a community voice as we continue to fight against this inappropriate intrusion and destruction of the Heritage Conservation Areas.



*The revitalisation of Glebe Point Rd – some businesses are buzzing, but too many shops are empty (photos: Bruce Davis)*

President Janet Wahlquist, Ian Stephenson and I met with Deputy Lord Mayor Jess Scully and Councillor Philip Thallis to pursue progress by Council on matters that have been outstanding far too long. Those matters, in addition to the LAHC development proposals, included:

- Traction on the revitalisation of Glebe Point Rd as a dynamic retail precinct
- The City's commitment to making a submission to the review of the Heritage Act 1977
- Additional powers to Council to prevent 'demolition by neglect' of character heritage buildings in Glebe and Forest Lodge
- Further development of heritage education programs for local owners of character heritage buildings
- Refining the City's website to assist in researching heritage information resources
- The local listing of the World War 1 digger statue outside the Tramsheds.

Many of these items, including a commitment by Councillor Thallis to address the community on his vision for Glebe, have been delayed due to COVID concerns. However, it was very pleasing to note that due to these representations, the Lord Mayor tabled a Mayoral minute to Council on 17 May 2021 asking Council to expand its heritage conservation efforts, addressing many of the above matters. This particular extract from the Lord Mayoral Minute is significant and is etched in our minds for future reference:

*The City is committed to conserving its local heritage items and conservation areas as their historical origins and relationships to places contribute to the local character and strengthen each community's sense of place.*

## **Bidura**

By far, the most significant DA over the past year in terms of a private large scale apartment development was in respect of the demolition of the Metropolitan Remand Centre (MRC) at the rear of the State and Locally listed heritage home, *Bidura*. Strongly resisted by the City of Sydney and the local community over many years, the fate of the MRC was eventually determined by the Land and Environment Court.

The Society made a detailed submission that called upon Council to require the protection of historic *Bidura House* both now and beyond the construction works behind it, and that the importance and relevance of *Bidura House* and its appropriately scaled setting is not further disrupted by inappropriate landscaping and contextual elements that may occur adjacent to *Bidura House*. The Society's submission can be read here:

<https://www.glebesociety.org.au/bidura-da-submission-6-aug-2021/>

## **Review of the Heritage Act 1977**

What should be a time for optimism has been replaced with a sense of scepticism. On the one hand, the review of the Act was initially welcome. However, the Discussion Paper has given cause for alarm that the State Government seeks to weaken the application of the Act to all but a very few iconic heritage assets to remove hurdles to its development programs. The Glebe Society is not alone in this view. There were 295 submissions by interested parties (including the International Council on Monuments and Sites [ICOMOS] Australia and the National Trust) with a common thread of fear of weakening heritage protection in NSW. Common comments in many submissions included:

- An independent Heritage Council
- An appropriately qualified Heritage Council
- Indigenous heritage
- Funding and incentives
- Bypassing the planning system/State Significant Development/intersection with the EPA Act
- Local protection - demolition by neglect

- The proposed category system
- Compliance and enforcement
- Streamlined processes

Some organisations have been invited to appear before the Parliamentary Committee overseeing the review. The following link will provide access to all submissions, and the webcast of the hearing held on 2 August 2021:

<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/committees/inquiries/Pages/inquiry-details.aspx?pk=2814>. We are led to believe more hearings will occur.

### **Looking Ahead**

We remain committed to actively pursuing the preservation of our heritage assets and Heritage Conservation Areas.

Against a backdrop of a State Government seeking to weaken the Heritage Act, a State Government owner of a substantial number of heritage-listed assets, a State Government with monopoly ownership of the

Glebe Estate with a poor record of repair and maintenance, and a State Government that seeks to exempt itself of planning legislation and controls, the community faces many threats and issues.

COVID-19 has caused many of us to recalibrate our priorities on local values, community engagement, sustainable practices and maintaining or renovating our homes as we spend more time confined to them.

The Subcommittee has found itself engaging in conversations comparing pragmatism with idealism as a potential road map towards meeting these challenges more effectively whilst maintaining core values.

The comments of the Society's broader membership are always welcome, so please feel free to email us at [heritage@glebesociety.org.au](mailto:heritage@glebesociety.org.au) on these or other heritage-related matters that are important to you.

## **Report on Traffic and Transport matters for 2020-2021**

*By Jude Paul and Michael Morrison*

The position of Convenor of the Transport and Traffic Subcommittee has been vacant throughout 2020 - 2021. The Society would welcome any member's interest to take on this role. Nonetheless, members have raised the following issues in the last 12 months:

### **Impact of the development of the new Fish Market site**

The main works have commenced with some tree removal and preliminary road works along Bridge Rd. This has resulted in temporary lane closures for part of the day and a huge increase in the presence of heavy vehicle traffic. Before the current lockdown, it was already evident that this created bottlenecks along the road itself and a spill-over into the surrounding streets.



*Traffic congestion due to the construction of the new Sydney Fish Market has already started. Imagine what it will be like when construction is in full swing.*

Once the lockdown is lifted, the site will be 'home' to hundreds of tradespeople for the next few years. No provision has been made for parking for these people or any shuttle service to the site, which is currently

poorly serviced by public transport. It is simply inevitable that the majority of workers will travel by their car, especially as many tradespeople provide their own tools of trade and require their tools on-hand to perform their work. One tradesperson often equals one large ute/van.

The built environment in the area immediately adjacent to the new site is primarily residential and largely retains the character of its late 19<sup>th</sup> century – early 20<sup>th</sup> terrace house architecture, narrow streets and laneways. The design and purpose of the area were never envisaged to provide a huge parking lot for the hundreds of workers who will need daily access to the site, let alone the predicted millions of new visitors expected to visit the new Fish Markets on an annual basis. (Final parking capacity at the new Fish Markets site has not been increased from the current availability.) The Society will raise this issue in relevant forums, especially the Fish Markets Stage 2 Community Consultative Committee.

The Society would welcome the input of any member(s) with expertise to advise and assist in addressing this issue.

### **The Bridge Rd cycleway**

The Bridge Rd cycleway was installed in the kerb-side lanes on both sides of Bridge Rd in July 2020. This cycleway is one of six proposed by the City of Sydney under the Environmental Planning & Assessment Amendment (COVID-19 Development – Temporary Cycleways) Order 2020 and managed in conjunction with Transport for NSW. The relevant legislation expired in March 2021 but has since been extended.



Bridge Rd lost 83 parking spaces. None of these were dedicated 'Resident Only' spaces. The road has long, long been shared by all its users, residents and vehicular traffic alike. Previously, at a meeting with residents, Andrew Constance, the Minister for Transport for NSW, described Bridge Rd as the wrong road for cyclists.

The local community has never been consulted about this decision by the City of Sydney. The only community consultation about the Bridge Rd cycleway was conducted in late March 2021 by Transport for NSW. This took the form of a flyer that directed people to an online survey to 'Have Your Say'. The flyer was not widely distributed to residents of Glebe or Forest Lodge and contained misinformation about the popularity of the cycleway (see below). The survey predominantly sought to identify if the respondent was a cyclist and what improvements they would like to see. The closing date for responses was 29 March 2021, and to date, no survey results have been made publicly available.



*The narrowing of Bridge Rd has made waste collection tricky (image: YouTube)*

Many sections of Bridge Rd are residential. The dedication of kerbside lanes on both sides of this road for cyclists has created major problems for these residents and all other road users. There is now nowhere for any vehicle to pull over or stop at any

time of day; rubbish removal services, delivery services, tradespeople, house removalists, taxis, health service providers among them.

Transport for NSW's flyer mentioned above stated that more than 3,000 cycle trips each week were made on the cycleway since its completion. Figures available on Transport for NSW's website contradict this. Between October 2020 and March 2021, the average weekly usage was approximately 2,300 trips. This equals 335 trips per day, compared to the estimated vehicular use of well in excess 20,000 trips. These figures also show that the average weekly usage was variable but did not show an increase in popularity over time.

The flyer stated that 92% of cycleway users feel safer on the dedicated cycleway than previously on the shared roadway. The source of this data is unknown, as are the method of obtaining it and the number of people involved in the sample. The figure itself is contrary to comments made to a group of local residents collecting signatures for a petition opposing the cycleway. More than 500 people have signed this petition and a number of signatories said they were cyclists themselves but would not use this cycleway for fears for their safety – 'pinch' points in the cycleway where cyclists are required to either merge with the traffic or mount the footpath to continue their journey and blind spots where drivers making their way across the cycleway onto Bridge Rd from a side street have no clear visibility of cyclists using the cycleway. Residents have witnessed incidents between cyclists and vehicles and/or pedestrians that have required medical attendance.

To date, the cycleway retains its temporary status. Members can provide feedback to Transport for NSW, raising either support or concerns at [www.transport.nsw.gov.au](http://www.transport.nsw.gov.au) or search for *Make a complaint or provide feedback* to the City of Sydney at [www.cityofsydney.gov.au](http://www.cityofsydney.gov.au).



*The Glebe Rowing Club, Blackwattle Bay (photo: Phil Vergison)*

## For Your Calendar

Saturday 11 September, 1-3 pm *City of Sydney's House History Workshop*, online

Wed 22 September, 1-2 pm, *City of Sydney's Discover your Sydney-based ancestors in the City Archives*, online

Saturday 10 October, 11 am *Glebe Society Annual General Meeting* via Zoom

Sunday 7 November, 6.45 am, *Spring Bird Survey*, Paddy Gray Reserve, contact Judy Christie on 0437 693 372.

November. *Meet the Lord Mayor Candidates Forum*, details TBC

### Glebe Society Inc. Established 1969

#### Management Committee

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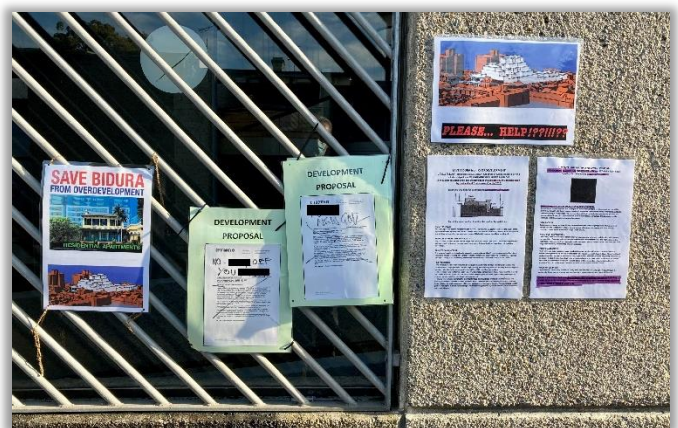
PO Box 100 GLEBE NSW 2037 | No. 7 of 2021 (September 2021)

### 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
- Additional donation welcome

### 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)



*Opponents of the Metropolitan Remand Centre site redevelopment make their position quite clear (photo: Phil Vergison)*

## NOMINATION FOR MEMBERSHIP OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

[Nomination forms must be received by the Society at the above address or by email to [secretary@glebesociety.org.au](mailto:secretary@glebesociety.org.au) no later than Friday 1 October 2021]

### PROPOSER

I \_\_\_\_\_

(full name of proposer)

a member of The Glebe Society Inc, nominate

\_\_\_\_\_

(full name of candidate)

who is a member of The Glebe Society Inc as a candidate for election as (delete as appropriate)

President

Vice President

Secretary

Treasurer

Ordinary Member of the Management Committee [4 positions]

at the Annual General Meeting to be held on Sunday 10 October 2021

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of proposer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### SECONDER

I \_\_\_\_\_

(full name of seconder)

a member of The Glebe Society Inc, second the above nomination

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of seconder

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### CANDIDATE

I hereby consent to the above nomination

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of candidate

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date