



## Valé Jack Munday: The Builders Labourers' leader who saved Glebe

by Meredith Bergmann

The true saviour of Glebe and inner-city Sydney, Jack Munday, died on Sunday 10 May, aged 90. We residents owe our pleasant and convenient lifestyle to Jack and the rank and file members of the NSW Builders Labourers' Federation (BLF). Sydney would be a very different place if the BLF had not saved green space, historic buildings and workers' housing by placing world first 'Green Bans' on the shocking overdevelopment being proposed in the early seventies.

Jack came down from North Queensland in the 1950s to play rugby league for Parramatta and, failing to make the cut, ended up on the tools. Confronted with a conservative union leadership, Jack fought hard to democratise and radicalise the union, joining the Communist Party along the way in 1957. He became Secretary of the BLF in 1968. Along with Joe Owens and Bob Pringle he led the union in the famous Green Bans period of the early 1970s.

Having grown up amidst rainforests, Jack was an environmentalist before that term was even used. But what Jack brought to the struggle was his view that workers should campaign around the social responsibility of labour. He believed that workers should think about the sort of work they do and the environment in which they live and work.

The Green Bans were originally just called black bans but were later, in a stroke of brilliance, dubbed 'green' bans by Jack. There were eventually 54 Green Bans and they held up \$5 billion worth of building activity in 1970s' dollar terms.

It was Jack and the BLF who led the fight in the early seventies against the two great expressways that would have trifurcated Glebe – the Western Distributor and the North Western Distributor. They were planned to cut a huge swathe through Glebe as we knew it.

At the behest of the newly formed Glebe Society, the Builders Labourers put what was then a black ban on the project. In fact, this destruction of Glebe would have wiped out the house I was living in and

was one of the major reasons why I first became involved with the Green Bans movement.

Another wonderful aspect to the Glebe Green Ban was that *Lyndhurst*, the beautiful old manor in Darghan St, also had a separate Green Ban imposed on it. It was almost derelict at the time and was being rented by a number of different organizations including the Nazis.



*The Rocks Green Ban with Jack Munday, Meredith Bergmann, Nellie Leonard, Peter Wright, 1973 (photo: courtesy Fairfax, supplied by Meredith Bergmann)*

Remember that, at this time, there were no environmental planning laws at all. There were no heritage laws that would save streetscapes or even important historic buildings. We had to wait until the Wran government, elected in 1976, for the Environment and Planning Act and the Heritage legislation to be enacted.

The other great hero of the struggle to save Glebe, and a great mate of Jack's was Tom Uren. Tom was the minister for Urban and Regional Development under Gough Whitlam and it was on his recommendation that the Whitlam government bought the old Anglican housing estate – the 900 houses – which are now part of the housing department area. This saved the streetscape of Glebe and gave it the character we now delight in.

Apart from this suburb-saving intervention in Glebe, the BLF Green Bans saved the Rocks and Woolloomooloo from being turned into a forest of high rise 'executive suites'; saved Centennial Park from being turned into a giant sporting complex; saved Victoria St Kings Cross from destruction; saved Surry Hills from excessive high rise; saved Ultimo from an expressway and saved the Opera House fig trees from being destroyed for a car park. Individual buildings saved by Green Bans include the State Theatre, the Pitt St Congregational Church, and the Colonial Mutual, National Mutual and ANZ bank buildings in Martin Place.

The late sixties had seen a massive building boom in Sydney caused by unregulated 'hot money' overseas investment and the activities of the corrupt and pro-development Askin government. There were few anti-development voices. The media was openly hostile to the Green Bans (although a lot of rewriting of history has gone on) and the only other professional voices were weak. There was a poorly funded National Trust and an even weaker Royal Australian Planning Institute.

However, the BLF's stand was massively strengthened by the rise of inner-city resident activism. The progressive middle class had started to move into the inner city, which is where most of the pressure from developers was occurring; and these activists were desperate for help in their stark situations.

Resident Action Groups were formed – first in Paddington and Glebe in 1971 (there's a bit of argument over which was first), quickly followed by other suburbs – Woolloomooloo, The Rocks, Surry Hills and the very militant Victoria St which even included squatting (and where I was arrested).

The BLF leadership always insisted that every ban had to occur at the request of the residents and had to have the community involved. This involved endless discussion between the union leadership and the concerned residents. It was what Jack referred to as 'the enlightened middle class and the enlightened working class coming together' to work for a better living environment.

Every proposed ban had to be agreed to by a general meeting of the union. Almost all bans ended up being physically defended and many labourers and residents were arrested and even gaoled for this stoic defence.

Jack always understood that, on the whole, the bans could only halt development in order to allow time for political solutions. He developed excellent working relationships with NSW Premier Neville Wran and with Tom Uren. These friendships particularly helped in the government intervention to save Glebe and Woolloomooloo and the building of Sirius for social housing in the Rocks.

The union's Green Bans quickly became known around the world. 'Green Ban Committees' were formed by unions in Britain. Jack Munday was invited to lecture in Europe and North America and in 1976 he addressed the first United Nations Conference on the Built Environment.

The timelessness and the internationalism of the Green Bans and Jack Munday's leadership at that time has recently been illustrated by the fact that 50 years after the Green Bans, interest from students and international scholars is so high that our book *Green Bans, Red Union: The Saving of a City* has recently been reissued.

After he voluntarily left the union leadership (believing in limited tenure of office) he remained active in environmental and urban planning issues. He was elected to the City of Sydney Council and was briefly Chair of its Planning Committee. He was active in the National Trust and was made a life member of the Australian Conservation Foundation. Bob Carr appointed him Chair of the Historic Houses Trust (now Sydney Living Museums). The National Trust campaigned for Jack Munday Place in the Rocks to be named after him. He was made an AO and was voted one of Australia's National Living Treasures. He was awarded Honorary PhDs from the University of Western Sydney and the University of NSW. He once said to me in mock sympathy 'only one PhD?' He did love to provoke.

After the tragic death of his first wife Stephanie from a cerebral haemorrhage, he married Judy Wilcox in the 1960s. Further tragedy occurred when his son Michael died in a car accident at the age of 22. Judy has been his partner in life and politics for over 50 years. She was an important activist in her own right becoming President of the Communist Party in its important 'independent' years from 1979 to 1982.

Jack Munday and the men and women of the BLF did indeed save a city, as our book points out, and every day all of us benefit from that.

*Meredith Burgmann*

Dr Meredith Burgmann is a long time Glebe resident and a former Green Bans activist. She is the author (with Verity Burgmann) of *Green Bans, Red Union: The Saving of a City* (re-issued 2017)

## **Jack Munday and the Glebe Society**

As alluded to by Meredith in the preceding article, the connection between the Glebe Society and Jack Munday goes back nearly 50 years. Here we highlight some of those connections over that time.

### **Life membership of the Glebe Society in 2019**

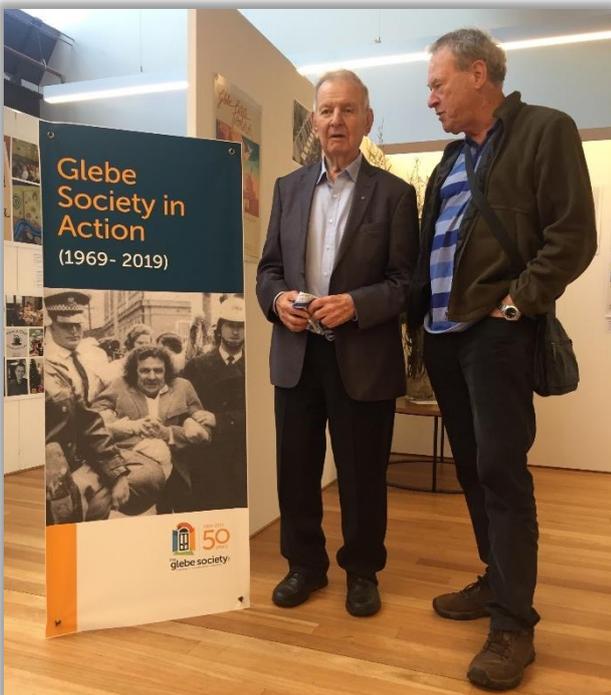
Members will recall that at the 2019 Annual General Meeting, Jack Munday was given Life Membership of the Glebe Society. See [Bulletin 8/2019](#) for the citation which was read by Meredith Burgmann.



*Meredith Bergmann speaks to the nomination of Jack Munday as a Life Member of the Glebe Society (photo: Phil Young)*

### **Jack attends the Glebe Society 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary Community Festival in 2019**

Jack Munday made a surprise – but most welcome – visit to see the exhibition at the Glebe Society 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary Community Festival held at the Tramsheds in June last year. Fortunately, a few moments of this visit were captured on video with Jack talking to the Society's Allan Hogan. It can be viewed on our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/101526083324408/videos/621506165010355/>. This is well worth a look, as it's a beautiful moment.



*Jack Munday and Allan Hogan at the Glebe Society 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary Community Festival in June 2019. Jack stands beside the exhibition banner featuring his removal from a demonstration during the Green Bans. (photo: Jude Paul)*

### **Jack attends the Society's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, 2009**

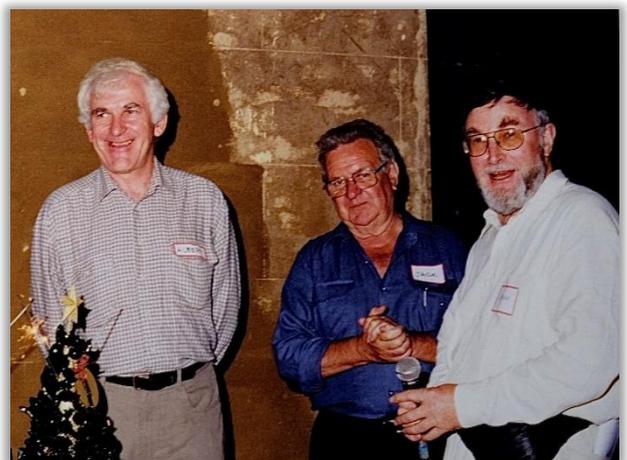
As reported in [Bulletin 5/2009](#), Jack gave the keynote address at a party held at the Woolcock Institute (formerly the Max Factor building) on 19 June 2009, to celebrate its 40th year since it began in 1969. You can listen to a recording of his address on the Glebe Society's YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aYB5t1B6aMA>.



*Robyn Kemmis, John Dengate, Jack Munday and Lesley Lynch at the Glebe Society's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary party in June 2009 (photo: Phil Young)*

### **Jack is keynote speaker at the 1999 Christmas Party**

The year 1999 was the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Glebe Society and this was celebrated in the company of Jack Munday who attended our Christmas Party at Lyndhurst. Jack was then Chair of the Historic Houses Trust of NSW. The location was most fitting, given Jack's key involvement in the saving of Lyndhurst that was slated for demolition for an expressway. Jack addressed the crowd on the evening ([Bulletin 10/1999](#)).



*Jack Munday (middle) with Albert Mispel (left) and Bruce Davis (right) at the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary Christmas Party at Lyndhurst in 1999 (Photo: Phil Vergison)*

# Built Environment 2037

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## Planning scenarios for Blackwattle Bay: revitalisation or overdevelopment?

by Lesley Lynch

Two very significant steps in the redevelopment of the Blackwattle Bay foreshores have been made public in the last two weeks. Firstly, Infrastructure NSW released a glossy brochure, 'Revitalising Blackwattle Bay', setting out its 'Blackwattle Bay Precinct Planning Scenarios'

([http://insw.com/media/2464/bays001-blackwattle-bay-consultation-a4-brochure-may2020\\_fa\\_lr.pdf](http://insw.com/media/2464/bays001-blackwattle-bay-consultation-a4-brochure-may2020_fa_lr.pdf)), as the basis for an intensive period of community 'engagement' on the redevelopment of the Pyrmont foreshores including the current Sydney Fish Market (SFM) site. Secondly, the NSW government announced on Friday 22 May that the new \$749m SFM will be fast tracked as part of its second tranche of accelerated projects to create jobs, boost investment and deliver a public benefit (<https://www.nsw.gov.au/media-releases/more-planning-projects-to-propel-future-of-nsw>).

These are inter-related projects: the foreshore redevelopment cannot commence until the SFM has moved to its new site. Thus, the fast-tracking.

### The new Sydney Fish Market

In practical terms, the Government's inclusion of the new SFM in this list ensures it will go ahead.

We note that the development application for the new SFM building has not yet been approved – but the Minister assures us that a decision will be released in four weeks. Not that there is anything for the Government to worry about – the proponent and the approving body are both part of the one Government agency. And beyond that, the Minister has discretionary power of approval anyway.

The Glebe Society is fully supportive of the need for a new SFM but has argued that the chosen site on the head of the Bay (and over the Bay) (<https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/submission/595431>) has major problems to which no solutions are yet evident. We can only hope that the pending approval will include solutions for the identified parking and traffic congestion problems – and perhaps the community might even get a serious Transport Plan for the area.

The increase in the cost of the new SFM construction from the original \$250m to \$749m – largely because of the technical problems associated with the difficult on-water site – will clearly detract from the Government's capacity and willingness to provide for the 'public good' in the flow-on redevelopment of the foreshores. That \$499 million could provide a goodly stock of much needed affordable and social housing in the residential mix as well as more social infrastructure and open foreshore space.

As we have previously noted, the design, scope and extravagant cost of the new SFM have been significantly shaped by the projections of massive numbers of overseas tourists visiting the site (4-6 million p.a. variously cited). These projections post-COVID are now highly uncertain – especially in relation to Chinese tourism.

Fast tracking infrastructure and job creation spending to support the NSW economy in the COVID-19 shutdown-exit phase is a positive Government initiative – but our concerns about the new site have not diminished.

### Blackwattle Bay Precinct Planning Scenarios

#### *Very recent history*

The publicly owned 8.4 hectares of land on Blackwattle Bay is the biggest redevelopment site available in the immediate vicinity of the CBD – and it is on the Sydney Harbour Foreshore. This makes it valuable and all but unique. For years, developers have been pushing unsolicited proposals to develop it and the community (in Glebe as well as Pyrmont/Ultimo) has been fighting to protect the site from profit driven over-development and ensure that the public interest has precedence in its future development.

The very recent background to this scenario is worth recalling.

Since the Premier's furious reaction to the Department of Planning's recommendation against approval of the 66-storey Star Casino Tower last year, there has been a flurry of Government and agency activity to 'revitalise' and 'update' (i.e. loosen up) the planning controls and processes for the Pyrmont area.

The immediate outcome was a super-fast review by the Greater Sydney Commission [GSC] (<https://www.greater.sydney/project/pyrmont-planning-review>) which found: the planning framework 'has failed to deliver on the economic and jobs potential of the area' and recommended a 're-jigged planning process which will provide a fast track to 'revitalising' development focussed on economic activity and jobs '.

The Government accepted the GSC report and this Blackwattle Bay scenario is the first step in that 'revitalisation' of the Pyrmont planning controls.

What has been surprising – and somewhat alarming for the residents of Pyrmont – is that the Blackwattle Bay foreshore scenario has been released in advance of the scenario for the rest of the Pyrmont Precinct. It is highly likely that the zoning controls relating to density and height of buildings set for the

Blackwattle Bay foreshore will also apply on the other side of the western distributor.

The redevelopment of this site cannot commence until the new SFM is completed in 2024-25. So, there was no hurry on that account.

*What is proposed?*

Three scenarios for development are proposed. Most significantly they vary in the mix of housing and commercial/employment related development:

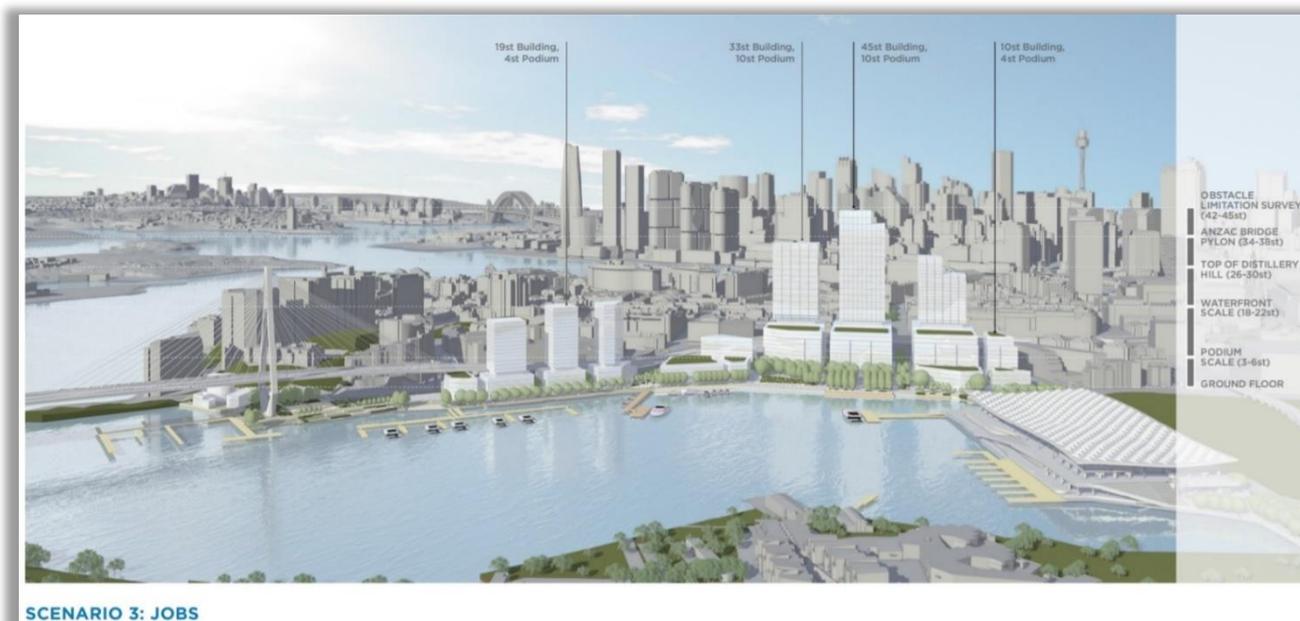
- s1: 4,000 jobs 1,700 homes (58%)
- s2: 5,000 jobs 1,160 homes (44%)
- s3: 7,000 jobs 1,045 homes (34%)

Across these three scenarios housing variously encompasses 58%, 44% and 34% of the development.

They also have different mixes of internal ‘movement’ options (walking, cycling, public/private vehicles) and differing design styles and themes. All have 30.000 m<sup>2</sup> open space.

The community is invited to give their views on these three options – and people will have a range of views on the relative positives and negatives of each. However, the three scenarios have more in common than in differences – see below for the artists’ impressions taken from the brochure.





*SCENARIO 3: JOBS*  
 The three scenarios are a great deal more similar than they are different – the illusion of choice? (source: [http://insw.com/media/2464/bays001-blackwattle-bay-consultation-a4-brochure-may2020\\_fa\\_lr.pdf](http://insw.com/media/2464/bays001-blackwattle-bay-consultation-a4-brochure-may2020_fa_lr.pdf))

The critical parameters are the density of development (c. 250,000 m<sup>2</sup> of Gross Floor Area [GFA]) and the height of buildings (3-45 storeys) which apply to all options. All three scenario options will likely generate a similar population density, whether residents or workers. This common GFA requirement appears to be non-negotiable as does the range in height of the buildings.

The Glebe Society is not opposed to high rise development but the proposal for 45-6 storeys has shocked many residents. A 45-storey building has a height of 156m, considerably taller than the pylons of the Anzac Bridge which are 120m. It is way beyond proposals that have been previously considered viable for the site or the area – and breaches the planning regulations for the area.

Some protections are promised: design and placement will ensure that Wentworth Park and the Glebe foreshore are not overshadowed between 9am and 3pm in winter and buildings closer to the heritage listed Anzac Bridge pylon will have lower heights so the Bridge remains a landmark feature in the urban landscape. These are important but very limited protections.

In justifying this radical loosening of the zoning rules Infrastructure NSW offers this explanation:

*After careful consideration, and a foundation of evidence-based technical studies and key requirements, we have concluded that Blackwattle Bay could accommodate up to approximately 250,000m<sup>2</sup> of Gross Floor Area which would support between 1000 to 1700 homes and 4000 to 7000 jobs. We envisage the site could accommodate a range of building heights from low scale 3 to 45 storeys high. (p.2)*

We have formally sought copies of the ‘evidence-based technical studies’ to give us some tangible understanding of the basis for these new density and height parameters which we think are excessive for this site.

**Affordable housing:** There is a passing reference in the glossy brochure to the possible provision of a small quantum (5-10%) of affordable housing (p.23). If residential development is to be a major element in this redevelopment the Government needs to provide for a much larger proportion of affordable and social housing. The 5-10% formula is old thinking and will not come anywhere near addressing the current, and likely increasing, crisis in access to housing for people on low incomes. This is especially so in the inner-city areas.

A new funding and provision model must be developed by the NSW Government to ensure that all housing developments on publicly owned land deliver a significant proportion of affordable housing – closer to 50% than 5%. It would be shameful if the suggestion made recently by an official that significant affordable housing (i.e. homes for the non-affluent) is not likely to be approved on a harbour foreshore site.

**Positive elements:** There are significant positive aspects to the scenarios presented. The Blackwattle Bays foreshore walk is a major feature though there are concerns as to the mixed use by pedestrians, cyclists and skaters. The improved linkages to the surrounding area will help cope with easier access to the city and surrounds. The mix of development and the internal travel options – from no vehicles to various mixes – will generate a variety of reactions, but it is good to see the options up for community discussion.

### Unanswered issues and next steps

There is still no transport / traffic plan for the area and the problems that will emerge still look insoluble to many of us. There is minimal reference to social infrastructure needs that will be generated by this new residential and working population.

The Glebe Society will be examining this proposal in detail and in discussion with other resident groups as the basis for our formal response to Infrastructure NSW which is due by 5pm on 19 June.

We will be making regular comment on the Glebe Society's Facebook page:  
<https://www.facebook.com/TheGlebeSociety/>.

### What you can do

- ✓ Read the brochure (access from <http://www.infrastructure.nsw.gov.au/projects-nsw/blackwattle-bay/>).
- ✓ Walk along the foreshore and consider the proposals.
- ✓ Participate in the webinars.
- ✓ Make a formal submission to Infrastructure NSW (by 5 pm, 19 June).
- ✓ Share your ideas with us.

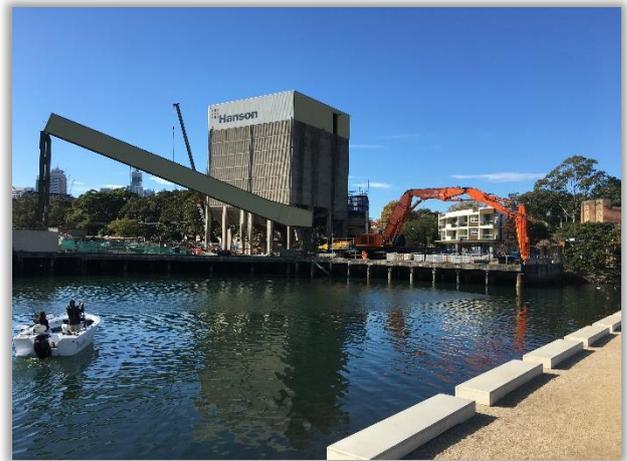
*Lesley Lynch*  
Bays and Foreshores Convenor

## The demise of the Hanson batching plant, May 2020

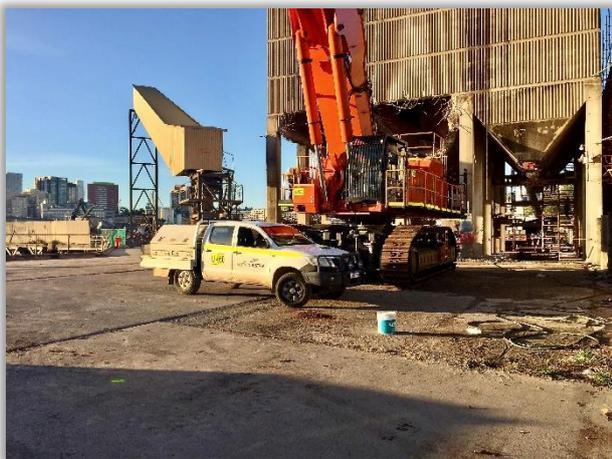
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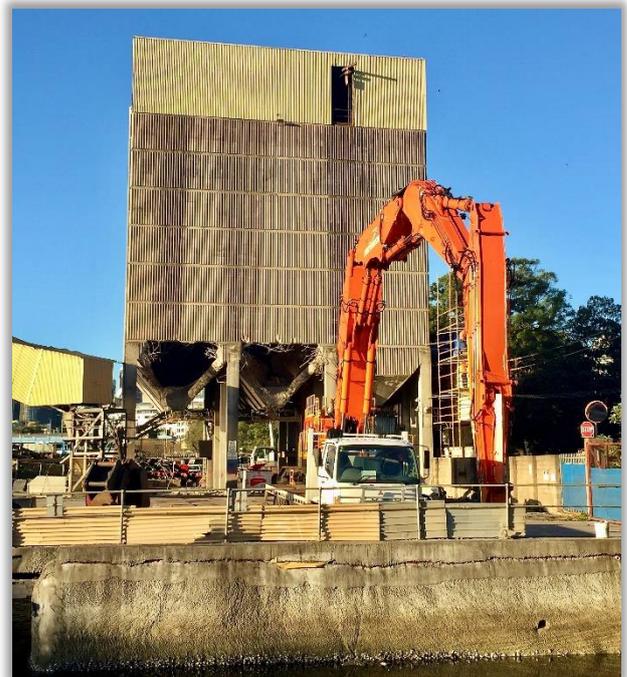
(photo: Phil Vergison)



(photo: Andrew Wood)



(photo: Phil Vergison)



(photo: Phil Vergison)

## Active Transport during COVID-19

The advent of the COVID-19 crisis has seen a marked increase in active transport. By this I mean walking and cycling. This has seen Inner West Mayors telling residents to avoid walking and cycling in places such as the Bay Run in Leichhardt/Drummoyne. It has seen crowded scenes on our own Foreshore Walk. It has highlighted the need for more places to walk and more cycling paths.

Now that the community is returning to work the government is encouraging people to walk or cycle to work. Living in Glebe, if you work in the city this is a healthy and realistic option albeit the footpaths and paths are far from ideal.

Two positive changes for this option have been introduced.

### Automated Pedestrian Buttons

The City of Sydney / Transport NSW introduced automated pedestrian buttons in central parts of Sydney so that buttons did not need to be touched. The positive consequence of this is that the traffic lights automatically have a green walk light in every phase. Missing pressing the button and having to wait a whole new light phasing (a pedestrian's nightmare) is alleviated. The Glebe Society has written to both City of Sydney and the Minister for Transport requesting that this initiative be extended to Glebe.

We have received a positive response from the Council which has a policy seeking automated pedestrian buttons throughout City of Sydney. We await a response from Transport NSW.

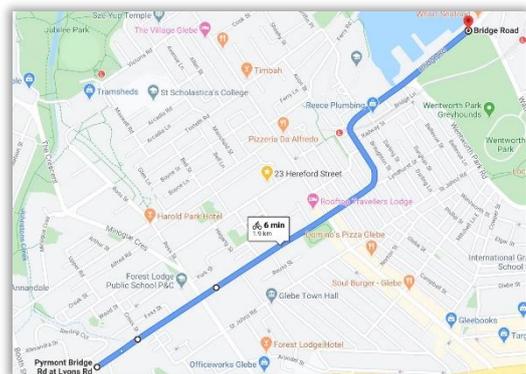
Read the Society's letters to the Lord Mayor and Transport NSW, as well as the Lord Mayor's response here:

<https://www.glebesociety.org.au/active-transport-during-covid-19/>.



### Pop Up Bicycle Lanes

A joint announcement from City of Sydney and Transport NSW has said that there will be bicycle lanes (possibly temporary) on either side of Pyrmont Bridge Rd from Booth St down as far as the Fish Markets. This will result in motor vehicle traffic having one lane each way as opposed to two in some locations.



Janet Wahlquist  
Transport and Traffic Representative

## Report of community action on WestConnex, by Jan Wilson

Since 2015, members of the local community and the Glebe Society have been actively involved in fighting WestConnex construction issues that affect our community. It is always very difficult to have wins with State Significant Infrastructure (SSI) sites. The WestConnex plan has moved from its original plan of tunnelling under Glebe/Forest Lodge (University of Sydney and RPA Hospital) to our neighbouring suburbs.

The community has continued its activism by:

- holding information meetings
- letterboxing and emailing about current issues
- attending anti-WestConnex rallies
- meeting with and writing to politicians

- reading and interpreting NSW Department of Planning, Industry, and Environment's (DPIE) lengthy Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) documents
- writing submissions to the NSW Parliamentary Enquiry, Impact of the WestConnex Project
- making submissions to the DPIE
- attending WestConnex information sessions
- writing letters to newspapers
- organising campaign meetings
- holding street stalls
- working collaboratively with other community groups

Throughout this, we have had the support of the City of Sydney. As time passed, we have moved our focus from 'STOP' WestConnex to ameliorating some decisions that impact on our community. The last chance to have our 'say' was the release of the WestConnex M4-M5 Link's: 'MOD 2 – Crescent overpass and active transport links' in August 2019 (<https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/project/16516>).

We have achieved some positive changes. The original proposal required navigating *four* sets of traffic lights to get from Glebe to the Rozelle side of Johnston St; this has now been changed to one. Another positive change is to the bicycle/pedestrian path over City West Link; while still a shared path, it will be widened and lined with greenery. The community is still pressing for separated cycleways.

We can expect that the intersection of City West Link, The Crescent and Victoria Rd will remain a construction zone for several years. If you wish to keep up to date, refer to DPIE's website

(<https://Westconnex.com.au/projects/m4-m5-link-rozelle-interchange>;  
<https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/project/16516>)

The only remaining land that is administered by the City of Sydney is Bicentennial Park. The City has no control over main roads and Transport for NSW (formerly the RMS) has the powers of acquisition for the use of local roads if required.

Three Glebe representatives have been attending the WestConnex Community Reference Group meetings for the past two years, and we will continue to do so in the interest of keeping up to date with the project and fighting for improvements where we can.

Thank you for your support and keep up to date via WestConnex information sheets and the DPIE website.

*Jan Wilson*

on behalf of the Glebe/Forest Lodge community



Digital image of the Rozelle interchange (source: <https://westconnex.com.au/projects/m4-m5-link-rozelle-interchange>)

## **Glebe Island Bridge – Demolition by Neglect**

*by Janet Wahlquist*

The old Glebe Island Bridge sits at the entrance to Blackwattle Bay, permanently open and looking neglected, with grass growing through the cracks, peeling paint and rotting wood – ignored in the Blackwattle Bay Revitalisation Plan.

The Glebe Island Bridge was built in 1903 and is regarded as a twin to Pyrmont Bridge which has been fully restored and has enormous community use as a pedestrian and cycleway across Darling Harbour. The Glebe Society has long advocated for its restoration. In 2013 the Glebe Society advocated for the bridge being added to the State Heritage Register and was successful in late 2013. Since then both City of Sydney Council and Leichhardt Council (now Inner West Council) have advocated for it to become a pedestrian and bicycle way. There

have also been suggestions of its being used for light rail. It could be an attractive walkway or cycleway for the community to travel between Balmain/Rozelle and Pyrmont and much needed open space for the community.

It is now permanently open for boats going in and out of Blackwattle Bay. At times in the past it had been closed for walking/running events but the cost of maintaining the machinery to be able to continue doing this has been seen as too expensive. With the building of a marina under the Anzac Bridge, unless the bridge can be opened and closed it will not be able to be used as a thoroughfare. Little if any consideration seems to have been given to the bridge and its community use when the Marina was approved.

An extravagant plan has been laid out for Blackwattle Bay and the only mention of the Glebe Island Bridge is the suggestion that the pedestrian walkway would lead to light rail running across Glebe Island Bridge. There is no inclusion in the plan for Glebe Island Bridge to be renovated and used in the way suggested nor are there plans anywhere else for this to occur. There have been suggestions that the Bridge could house light rail but nothing more. The statement in the Blackwattle Bay Plan seems there to make the plans look more attractive. Without a commitment by the Government to save Glebe Island Bridge it will fall further into neglect with fewer opportunities for it to be used for community benefit.

See the Glebe Society's website [www.glebeislandbridge.com](http://www.glebeislandbridge.com) or on our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/GlebeIslandBridge](https://www.facebook.com/GlebeIslandBridge)

Janet Wahlquist, Transport & Traffic Convenor



*Glebe Island Bridge – note the yellow buoys placed to protect the crumbling timber from further damage (photo: V. Simpson-Young)*

## History & Heritage

### Who lived in your street? John Tawell (1784-1845), by Lyn Collingwood



*John Tawell on trial, sketched by a court artist (source unknown)*

A plaque in Foley Park lists John Tawell as one of the occupants of *Hereford House* which stood on the site from 1829 until its demolition in the 1930s. Tawell is recorded as having lived there during the years 1831-5. (Druggist Ambrose Foss purchased *Hereford House* in 1833.) An ex-convict who 'made good', John Tawell came to a bad end.

A member of the Quaker community, Tawell was transported to Australia for 14 years for forging a Bank of England note. Punishable by death, the offence had been commuted after the bankers (who were Quakers) declined to prosecute. Leaving behind his wife Mary (née Freeman) and two sons, Tawell arrived in the colony in 1815 on the *Marquis of Wellington*. In England he had been a commercial traveller for a wholesale druggist and in Sydney he was not assigned to a settler but worked in the 'Rum Hospital'. In 1820 he was emancipated and was granted a certificate of qualification by the Medical Board. Tawell set up as an apothecary in Hunter St before moving to bigger premises in Pitt St where he sold drugs with a sideline in groceries. He did well.

In 1822 Tawell applied to have his family brought out from London and Mary and her sons arrived in March 1823 aboard the *Lord Sidmouth*. The boys were educated at Dr Halloran's Sydney Grammar School; in 1824 William Henry won a book prize and John Downing a silver medal for Latin. The Pitt St

building, the family home until at least 1825, was gradually converted from timber to stone. In 1828 Ambrose Foss bought the business and by the time of that year's census 'retired apothecary' John Tawell was living in Castlereagh St with his wife and their 17-year-old younger son William. John jnr was in England studying medicine.



*Hereford House 1930, where Tawell lived from 1831 to 1835 (image: University of Sydney Archives)*

As well as retailing and moneylending, Tawell speculated in oil and whaling, as a spinoff sending whalebone to London where it was fashioned into combs. He was granted 42 acres at Hunters Hill; other property included land at Camden, Bathurst, Berrima, Maitland, Goulburn and the *Seven Stars Hotel* and an adjoining building in King St in the city. By 1831 he had accumulated at least £35 000 and began advertising his services as an import/export agent. After arriving in London with a consignment of wool he was soon back on board a ship with return cargo for Sydney.

By 1836 Tawell was presenting himself as a member of both the Royal College of Surgeons and the Society of Apothecaries. He built a chapel for the Society of Friends in Macquarie St and made an official request for a Quaker burial ground. In his distinctive Quaker garments, Tawell was a model of philanthropic respectability. His reputation for probity was enhanced when he threw a large consignment of rum into the harbour. Viewed with dismay by those who would have drunk it, others were fulsome in their praise of the advocate of temperance.

Tawell made several trips back and forth to London. In March 1829 he embarked with his wife and William on the *Henry Wellesley*. A fortnight later John jnr turned up in Sydney from England to find the family gone. He immediately booked a return passage on the *Australia*. This illustrates the tyranny of distance. Before the arrival of the telegraph, news to the antipodes took months to travel by letter.

Tawell sailed with his wife from London to Sydney on the *Caroline* on 11 July 1834 after which the couple seem to have done no more travelling until their final departure in March 1838 on the *Charles Kerr*. A wealthy merchant with 'Esq' after his name, Tawell in 1836 was living with his wife in Macquarie St, a fashionable address.

Settled back in England, Tawell sought reacceptance into the Society of Friends, wearing their dress, attending their meetings and subscribing to their schools. But the Quakers had long memories and kept him at arm's length. They remembered his crime and his shotgun marriage to a housemaid six years his junior, hastily arranged while he was courting a young woman from a respectable Quaker family.

Predeceased by her sons, Mary Tawell died from tuberculosis in England and in 1841 her widower

married Sarah Cutforth, a well-to-do Quaker widow with a seven-year-old daughter. An inconvenient problem was his mistress Sarah Hart, who had nursed his dying wife and by whom he had two children. Tawell paid her an allowance and kept her in seclusion at Salt Hill near Slough. Fearful of detection and in financial difficulties, after one unsuccessful effort with morphia he poisoned her with prussic acid. Called by a neighbour, a doctor found Sarah Hart dead and followed Tawell to Slough railway station where he saw him board a train. He convinced the reluctant stationmaster to make use of the newly installed needle telegraph to wire ahead to Paddington. (As the needles could not transcribe the letter 'Q', Tawell was described as a 'kwaker'.) When he alighted Tawell was recognised by his distinctive dress and arrested.

Tawell's case was the first time the telegraph system was used to catch a criminal. Hanged in March 1845, he left considerable property in New South Wales. It was forfeited to the Crown. As was customary, the wrongdoer's crime and punishment was the subject of at least one broadside ballad:

*John Tawell is my name it is true.  
In wealth and splendour once I've dwelt,  
A hypocrite I've always been,  
Nor meek-ey'd mercy never felt.  
My first crime was Forgery,  
A convict was to Sidney sent,  
I riches gain'd oh! Misery,  
My stubborn heart did not relent...*

Lyn Collingwood  
Local Historian

Sources: murderpedia.org; NSW 1828 Census; NSW State Records; Trove website; Wikipedia: John Tawell; [www.btp.police.uk](http://www.btp.police.uk); [www.oldpolicemuseums.org.uk](http://www.oldpolicemuseums.org.uk)

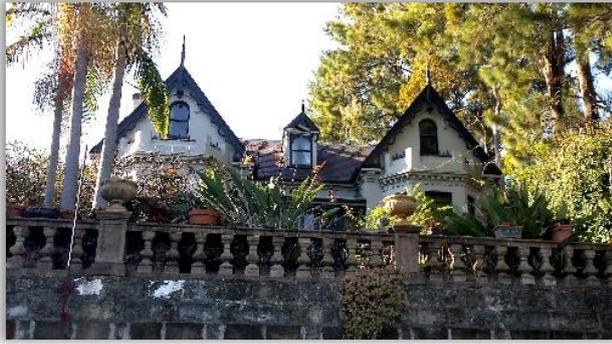
## Mystery Photo



### Last month's mystery photo

Rolf Petherbridge and Rodney Hammett recognised Stride's shipbreaking yard on the Rozelle Bay waterfront, photographed from Glebe Island. The jumble of industrial buildings belonged to timber merchants Vanderfield and Reid. Ted McKeown provided extra information.

Rolf recalls the reconstruction c.1988 of the split house, *Florence Villa*, built by Ambrose Thornley jnr, the architect of Glebe Town Hall. Renamed *Borneholme*, the Victorian villa was acquired in 1925 by Jim Stride who demolished a third of it to create a driveway for vehicles to access the waterfront where old ferries were broken up and sold as scrap.



Stride's Yard, with its buildings *Florence Villa*, *Drayton Lodge* and *The Retreat*, was purchased by the Department of Environment and Planning in 1985. The expense and labour involved in restoring *Florence Villa* to its original design is a rare example of uncompromising respect for a heritage building.

Left: *Florence Villa* today. (Photo: Ted McKeown)

### This month's mystery photo

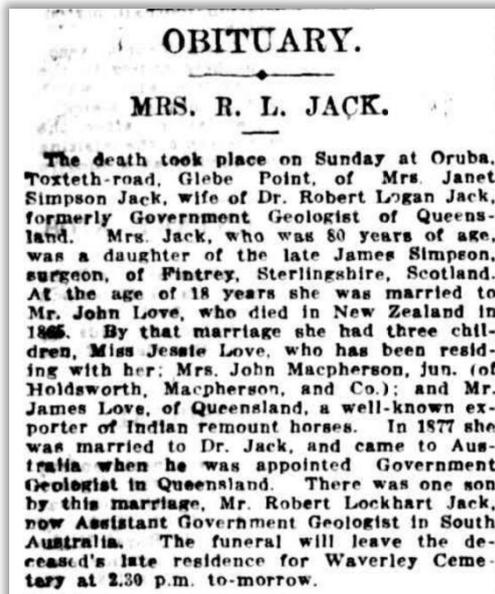
Where was Glebe Library before it moved to its current location?

Please send your suggestions to [history@glebesociety.org.au](mailto:history@glebesociety.org.au)

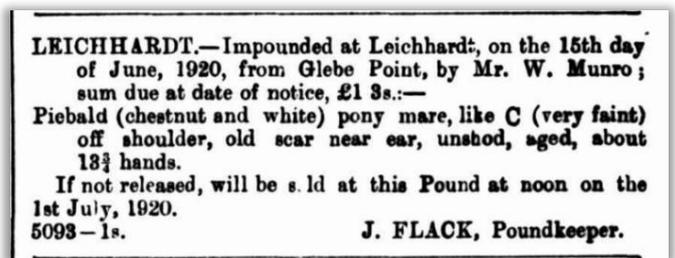


## 100 years ago in Glebe & Forest Lodge – this month: June 1920

Prepared by Rodney Hammett



### Stray horse at Glebe Point



*NSW Government Gazette; Fri 25 Jun 1920 [Issue No 119], p.3767*

*Sydney Morning Herald, Tuesday 1 June 1920, p.8.*

Oruba is No 17 Toxteth Rd, most likely constructed in 1888-89 by builder James Howard Brown<sup>1</sup> who purchased the lot in August 1898. Robert Logan Jack became the owner of the house in April 1909<sup>2</sup>. At the age of 76 he died at No 17 on 6 November 1921.

<sup>1</sup> See details of James Brown in *Bulletin 10/2019*, p.16

<sup>2</sup> Certificate of Title 1311-228

# Glebe, Naturally

## Progress on the Johnstons Creek Naturalisation Project



Johnstons Creek, May (photo: Phil Vergison)



Johnstons Creek, May (photo: Phil Vergison)



Johnstons Creek works, May (photo: Phil Vergison)



The mouth of Johnstons Creek (photo: V. Simpson-Young)

## Another fox sighting in Glebe



There are occasional reports of foxes being sighted in Sydney, including Glebe. I recently sighted a fox literally in our back yard in Allen St, Glebe. It was 7am two weeks ago (May 2020) when I opened the back door and noticed an animal running

from the backyard down our narrow lane. It was light brown and light ginger in colour, and had the very distinctive large bushy tail. Other fox sightings have been at St Scholastica's in 2018, and also in Wigram Rd near Booth St, and previously around the Oxley, Mary and Leichhardt St areas.

Phil Young

## E-waste collections now kerbside

I phoned City of Sydney (9265 9333) about E-waste collections and discovered that you can order a pick-up from your footpath in Glebe - much easier than going to Alexandria. Booking is also pretty simple via the website:

<https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/live/waste-and-recycling/book-a-pick-up>. The website says that this is what can be picked up in the new e-waste collection:

- **Electronics:** TVs, computers and laptops, monitors, lamps, stereos, printers, gaming consoles, DVD players and video recorders.
- **Small household appliances:** vacuum cleaners, toasters, mixers, blenders, kettles, heaters, irons, coffee machines, ironing boards and pedestal fans.

Edwina Doe

## Update on new plans for Ernest Pedersen Reserve

The City exhibited its revised plans for Ernest Pedersen Reserve in Ferry Rd, which incorporated elements from the original design as the front garden of the adjacent house, *Rothwell Lodge*. The community feedback to the City was enthusiastic as the overall design was much improved on last year's proposals.

There was, however, concern about the possible removal of the existing lights in the Reserve and the Society wrote to the Lord Mayor, Clover Moore, asking that a similar level of lighting should remain

in the restored park. In reply the Lord Mayor said that the City will not be removing the lights as part of the park upgrade. See our letter and the Lord Mayor's response here:

<https://www.glebesociety.org.au/update-on-new-plans-for-ernest-pedersen-reserve/>

At the final detail design phase, new heritage lights may be recommended that reflect the history of the Reserve.

*Andrew Wood, Blue Wrens Convenor*

## Community Matters

### COVID-19 Recovery Plan

The City of Sydney is working on a community and economic recovery plan for COVID-19. They want to hear from the communities, businesses and organisations in the area. The survey is open until midnight Wednesday 3 June.

For more information, see the City of Sydney's website: <https://tinyurl.com/ybpkoltu>. To go straight to the consultation survey: <https://tinyurl.com/y7lszsec>

### GlebeConnected connects Glebe



GlebeConnected is a collaboration between a number of community agencies, schools, universities, and community members. The focus of GlebeConnected are life transitions, namely, early childhood, primary to high school and ageing. Additionally, we also look at housing, health and diversity in the Glebe community. A number of Glebe Society members have been involved with GlebeConnected for some time. The GlebeConnected website has a wealth of information and resources that will be useful during the pandemic. It is well worth a look. Go to <https://www.glebeconnected.com.au/>. You may also wish to sign up to receive their newsletter.

### Glebe Art Show

The Glebe Society has been informed that the Glebe Art Show committee has made the difficult decision to cancel this year's Glebe Art Show.



Fiona Verge, Secretary, said they made this decision because, due to COVID-19, the organisers could not be certain that public gatherings will be allowed later in the year. She said that the Glebe Art Show will definitely return in 2021.

### Membership Renewals

Memberships of the Glebe Society are due on 30 June each year. Normally we would send out Membership Renewal notices by mail, all folded, enveloped and addressed by our monthly *Bulletin* Mailout Group. However, they haven't been able to meet this year over the usual dining table, so both the *Bulletin* and our annual Membership Renewals are being sent by email to all members in the next few days. We thank you for your support during the past 12 months, especially during our 50th anniversary celebrations, and we look forward to another year of good work for the community.



## Images of Chaos: Westconnex at the Crescent

(photos: Janet Wahlquist)



# For Your Calendar

As you can imagine, many events have been cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic. ☹️ These, however, are still on – at this stage.

Wednesday 10 June, 7pm. Glebe Society Management Committee Meeting (by Zoom).  
Sunday 20 September, 10.30am-2.30pm Glebe Society AGM, Glebe Town Hall.  
1 to 22 November, 31st Annual Glebe Music Festival. [www.glebemusicfestival.com](http://www.glebemusicfestival.com)

## Glebe Society Inc. Established 1969

### Management Committee

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PO Box 100 GLEBE NSW 2037

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## 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)



Glebe Island Bridge 1915, postcard (source: <https://archives.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/>)