



THE GLEBE SOCIETY BULLETIN

Box 100, Glebe 2037

NO 2 OF 1990

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REUSSDALE

For many years members have observed the saddening decline of one of Glebe's finest Victorian Gothic cottages, Reussdale, at 156 Bridge Road. Unfortunately, while the Society has been successful in preventing the demolition of Reussdale and the cottage on the other side of the old Presbyterian Church (now operating as a restaurant), it has not been able to secure its restoration or arrest its decline. This article reviews the reasons for this situation and suggests further action.

The Reuss brothers arrived in Australia in the 1850s after successful careers as architects and engineers in the United States. Ferdinand Reuss, after whom Reuss Street is named, designed and built a number of residences in Bridge Road on adjacent and opposite lots. Five of these survive, in widely differing styles, and remain as the largest collection of works by this distinguished architect in Australia. He appears to have used the opportunity to create designs of great individuality and diversity to demonstrate his powers. Hamilton is a simple single storey structure with bay windows, a device associated with Gothic revivalism. The Hermitage, adjacent to Hamilton, was Reuss's own residence and has been graciously restored. Reussdale itself became the Presbyterian Manse when the Church was moved to Bridge Road from the corner of Broadway and Glebe Point Road in 1927. Many who are still residents of Glebe were married in the Church and the ashes of their loved ones were scattered on the rose garden that once grew in front of Reussdale.

When the Church was sold to the present owners, the entire site was protected. Unfortunately, while the owners undertook to secure the Church against the elements, there was no written agreement to do the same for Hamilton and Reussdale. There is



no doubt that an alternative use had to be found for the Church and although surrounding residents are not very happy about its use as a restaurant, and few members would be pleased by the decoration of the building, it is a tolerable solution.

The owners have, from the beginning, resisted suggestions that they should sell Hamilton and Reussdale as residences, which would be the best solution. Instead they have proposed a series of schemes for the commercial exploitation of the site, usually involving the demolition of Hamilton and alterations to Reussdale that vary in severity. All these schemes have been opposed by local residents because of the noise and traffic they would generate.

The position of the Society is not quite so simple. The Society has to examine each proposal to see if it is possible to secure the restoration of both Hamilton and Reussdale and particularly to prevent the demolition by neglect of Reussdale, which is the more elaborate and visually dominant of the two. The owners continue to stall apparently in the hope that opposition will cease or the buildings collapse. The Heritage Council is inclined to agree to any solution that preserves the front section of Reussdale, no matter what its impact on residents, and is disinclined to prosecute the owners for attempted demolition by neglect. Thus, while the

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Society would like to see both cottages restored, if this goal seems unattainable and the decline of Reussdale threatens its retention, it may be necessary to sacrifice Hamilton, if and only if Reussdale is previously restored.

The development proposed for Hamilton will shortly be before the Land and Environment Court and that for Reussdale has been rejected by Leichhardt Council. While these defensive measure are necessary, they will not secure the two buildings.

The Society has sought and obtained a meeting with the newly appointed Executive Director of the National Trust, Wendy McCarthy, to discuss means of saving all buildings on the site and other heritage matters currently causing problems in Glebe. While the Society appreciates the efforts of local residents, these have been somewhat sporadic. Steady pressure and wide publicity are needed for a successful resolution.

PLANNING REPORT

During February the focus was once again on Wentworth Park and Glebe Point Road. The NSW Government proposes to spend \$3m converting the unfinished upper floors of the big white elephant to offices (see Wentworth Park report). Not only would the cost of the monster blow out to more than \$20m, but the cost of maintenance is also a drain on the resources of the ailing dog racing game.

The Society has consistently taken the view that Wentworth Park belongs to the people of NSW for genuine recreational purposes and that attempts to alienate sections of it or use it for permanent commercial purposes are illegal. While the Society has received some support from politicians for this viewpoint, it should not be assumed that even independents, who normally find it in their interest to support residents, can be relied on. The number of schemes to exploit the Park in various ways should cause us concern, especially as most of them are of little benefit to residents or are remote from the intended purpose of the Park. It seems that the dog track section of the Park is to remain in the hands of the old guard and is to be seen as lost for good. This is certainly unacceptable.

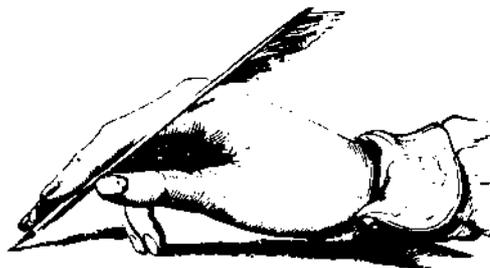
Members who keep a close eye on Glebe Point Road may have noticed a large hole behind two facades at 15-21 and may have assumed a development had been approved. This is not so. It is a familiar story: demolition and excavation took place without Council taking any action to prevent it or requiring consent. Pressure from the Society has finally led to a D.A. being lodged.

A proposal to rezone the University Hall site so it can be partly restored and partly redeveloped as a hotel is now being advertised. The size of the hotel has now been reduced, but the Society's advisers express some scepticism about hotel development at a time when so many similar projects are in financial difficulties. Members are encouraged to comment to Council on the use they would like to see for this very prominent site.

ENVIRONMENT SUB-COMMITTEE FORMED

At the February meeting of the Society's management committee, Fiona Campbell was elected as convener of a new Environment Sub-committee, which will be concerned with environmental issues affecting Glebe including tree planting and preservation, dogs and garbage recycling.

The Society needs additional members to help with the work of this sub-committee and if you are interested please contact Fiona or a member of the management committee.



LETTERS

The Management Committee welcomes comments from members on present and future policies of the Society. Two letters on the subject of heritage conservation appear on the next page. Your interest will enable us to run a regular Letters Column in coming issues of the Bulletin.

WHAT ARE WE CONSERVING IN GLEBE?

Many of us would accept the proposition that Glebe was mostly settled in Victorian and Edwardian times and the LEP20 enshrines Glebe as a 'conservation area' where we should preserve the 'distinctive historic and townscape qualities'.

What is not so quickly agreed upon is what these 'distinctive historic and townscape qualities' are. One point of view could be that this should be the townscape either at the time of gazetting LEP20 or at the date of the classification by the National Trust in 1974. Both definitions lead to a townscape with many 'disruptive elements' present.

The next definition is that 'an historic streetscape' is considered to be older than 30 or 40 years. Alternatively it could be those elements of the streetscape that appeal to the eye of the beholder. Neither definition is very satisfactory as the basis for a clear and consistent policy statement that could be used to make a judgment on development issues. But it is important to have a policy that all would find consistent and clear.

Why do we need a policy? Is not the present system of objecting to Leichhardt Council whenever a travesty is to be perpetrated adequate? No! It is not.

A conservation area requires maintenance and the removal of 'disruptive elements' in order to be a delight to the residents and economic benefit to the owners of individual elements. With no policy people become confused about what restoration and modification can be accommodated within the conservation area. The costs of preparing architectural proposals are high and there may be better opportunities for investment, if the success of a proposal is too uncertain. Thus with no clear policy we run the risk of driving potential improvements away. Even protracted delays, while the merits of a particular proposal are debated, may make a sympathetic restoration uneconomic.

There is almost no other incentive today to maintain and improve the commercial region of the Glebe conservation area than economic return. The Society should prepare a policy on what is to be conserved and that will help achieve its conservation.

Ian S F Jones

Members will have little doubt to which area of Glebe Ian Jones is referring, since he is the Chairman of the Glebe Point Road Project. I confess I share Ian's concern about Glebe Point Road, especially the shops, both as a member of the Society and its Planning Convenor, and as Convenor of the Heritage and Design Task Force of the Glebe Point Road Project.

Both Ian and I were hoping the questions he raises would be answered by Anglin and Associates who received \$12000 for producing a Heritage and Design Study. Unfortunately we were disappointed. The Anglin study contains almost nothing specific to Glebe or its principal thoroughfare, but is concerned with how to implement a Main Street Program, modelled on schemes for reviving local business centres in the United States. The appropriateness of such a scheme for Glebe is debatable, because of the special character of Glebe Point Road.

I believe we need to be very careful not to think about Glebe Point Road in a narrow and rigid way, simply in terms of economic return. Frankly, if this means encouraging large developers with grandiose schemes, we should consciously reject such an approach. We need to examine carefully why the beneficial changes that have transformed the rest of Glebe have been far less noticeable in its main shopping street.

By far the most successful (and profitable) effort to promote Glebe Point Road has been the Glebe Street Fair, which the Society helped to get off the ground. Not only has the Fair brought many thousands of enthusiastic visitors to Glebe: it has made shopkeepers aware that through cooperation a great deal can be done to improve the profitability of their businesses.

Perhaps the Street Fair Committee (soon to become the local Chamber of Commerce) can show its gratitude to and concern for Glebe by helping to fund a study that will identify heritage issues in Glebe Point Road and draw up design guidelines such as Ian suggests and which Anglins failed to produce.

The Heritage Study for Leichhardt Municipality, now reaching its final form, should produce more general guidelines for the residential portion of Glebe, if it is to do its job properly.

Neil Macindoe

29 COOK STREET BOAT REPAIR SHOP AND MARINA
Marianne von Knobelsdorff

A resubmitted DA was up for determination by Leichhardt Council at its meeting on 20 March 1990. This DA was unanimously rejected by Council on the same grounds as the previous one:

- inappropriate access through steep and narrow Cook Street;
- traffic and parking problems;
- generation of noise and pollution by industrial activity in a now densely populated residential area;
- loss of amenity to the Glebe Rowing Club; and
- failure to provide unencumbered access along the waterfront.

The Town Planner's report actually recommended this DA, ignoring concerns of residents and the Rowing Club. The original 23 car spaces had been brought down to 14. The report did not query the need for a 14-berth marina though the previous report had recommended reducing it to 8 berths.

The Town Planner's report does state that the foreshore building line is set approximately 10m from the foreshore and no kind of building, including parking spaces and fencing, is allowed in that area. There might therefore be a possibility of a 10m foreshore walk compared with the very narrow, fenced in and at times locked up 'public access' proposed in this resubmitted DA.

The week before this DA came up at Council's meeting, the developer had put a large advertisement in The Glebe and Western Weekly:

FOR LEASE

WATERFRONT INDUSTRIAL PREMISES
29-31 Cook Street GLEBE POINT

- * Existing approval for heavy mechanical repairs.
 - * Saturday and Sunday working hours permitted.
 - * In ground fuel storage tanks.
 - * Building area approx 1100 sqm PLUS hardstand forecourt approx. 1500sqm.
- Contact: Harbour Group, 62 Clarence Street, SYDNEY 262 2299

During the Council meeting the developers said that, if Council would not approve the boat repair shop and marina, they would lease the premises for other industrial purposes. Legal aspects of the advertisement were queried by Council.

Council concluded that the Residential/Open Space rezoning of this site and the adjacent Fletchers' site should be accelerated.

Some weeks before this Council meeting, the

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developers had appealed to the Land and Environment Court. The Court hearing is scheduled for about the end of May.

THIRD RUNWAY

Alison McKeown

The process of community learning about this proposal and its implications continued on in February:

- the sub-committee had two stalls on Saturdays and plans more;
- Kinhill Engineers (who are carrying out the environmental impact study) brought a Community Access Mobile Display to Glebe;
- the Environment Institute of Australia held a seminar in the NSW Parliament theatre on 21 February on 'Sydney's Third Runway: the role of environmental assessment';
- CRASH set up their action group in Hunters Hill;
- Hunters Hill Municipal Council had its first public meeting on the proposal;
- Leichhardt Municipal Council's public meeting was held on 5 February just after a weekend of torrential rain that washed out the letterbox advertising;
- RRAC action group is under way in Lane Cove.

The Second Sydney Airport Coalition (SSAC) has responded to Kinhill's invitation to submit additional information for display in the Community Access Centre. SSAC points out in clear terms that the proposal is not just a runway but a proposal that will have a very significant effect on Sydney. For example, 70 suburbs are listed as affected, Glebe being one of these.

The community access centre nearest Glebe is located in King Street, Newtown, on the city side of the Missenden Road intersection. It is open Thursdays 4-8pm; Fridays 1-6pm; and Saturdays 11am-4pm until May. When you visit to look at the information on display, do write your views, criticisms, concerns and comments on the paper supplied. Kinhill can then record these as another response from the community and as an indication of community concern.

Flights over Glebe are now sporadic, occurring sometimes around 9 to 9.30am, 6pm and around 11am on Saturdays. These observations do not include helicopter flights or aircraft take-offs and landings on the Leichhardt/Annandale flight path.

SSAC is organising a fund raising dinner on Saturday 7 April 1990 at 7pm in the Annandale Neighbourhood Centre, 79 Johnston Street, Annandale. The guest speaker will

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be Milo Dunphy and the cost \$20 per head (concessions available). Bookings please: call Margaret 569 0605, Jane 569 0585 or Alison 660 3917

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

On Sunday 3 December 1989, on the occasion of the judging of the Glebe Point Road Project's Art Competition at Darling Mills Restaurant, the President of the Glebe Society, Andrew Wood, spoke to introduce the competition judge, Bernard Smith, EA, PhD, FSA, FAHA, Hon LittD (Melb), Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres.

Bernard Smith is a distinguished Australian. You have only to read the jacket of his book *The Architectural Character of Glebe* to learn of his outstanding academic career and of his prolific writings.

In 1967 Bernard Smith took up an important new appointment at the University of Sydney as Power Professor of Contemporary Art and Director of the Power Institute of Fine Arts. Fortunately for us all here tonight, he and his family decided to live in Glebe.

On Thursday 19 June 1969 the first general meeting of the Glebe Society was held in the Glebe Town Hall. Depending on which report you read, somewhere between 90 and 200 people attended the meeting. The Deputy Mayor of Leichhardt Municipal Council, who spoke at the meeting, said 'Glebe has got a soul, there is something different about it'. The representative from the National Trust said that the Trust 'would support the Society in every way, except in the horrible matter of money'.

Bernard Smith was elected as the first President of the Society. He was quickly engulfed by the problems facing the suburb. The plans for the western distributor from the city had been announced and the State Government amongst other things was proposing a tunnel under Glebe. To save money it had been decided that the tunnel should be constructed by an open-cut method, destroying multiple houses in the process. In a letter to *The Sydney Morning Herald*, the new President of the Society stated that 'there would be nothing left of this historic old area and the character would be gone forever'.

Other issues facing the Society included Wentworth Park, Lyndhurst, and the continued zoning of the suburb's foreshore land for industrial purposes.

From reading the Society's press clippings, I suspect that it was probably the issue of home unit developments that gave him most concern. A development application was received by Leichhardt Municipal Council to knock down two houses in Ferry Road and to erect a block of 20 home units. The Society lodged an objection and a petition against the development was delivered to the Council.

The Council informed the Society that the petition was out of time and invalid. So the Society collected the petition from the Council and delivered it instead to the State Government. Then the president led a protest march of 200 residents from Foley Park to Ferry Road.

A Glebe alderman claimed it was an 'illegal demonstration', accused the President of the Society of intimidation, and said the Glebe Society was a political group set up to overthrow the Council. In reply a certain Alderman Issy Wyner said, 'How dare he condemn them. These people care enough about their environment that they want to protect it'. Much to the Society's delight the Council opposed the development application and the Ferry Road houses were saved.

From the start the Society also realised the importance of social gatherings at which members could meet each other and learn more about their suburb. The first recorded social event was a walk, led by Max Solling and Kate and Bernard Smith, around the historic streets and buildings of Glebe.

The inaugural Glebe Society Flower Show was held in the Town Hall.

The first birthday of the Society, which then had 200 members, was celebrated at Bernard and Kate Smith's house in Avenue Road. Members were able to admire the new fountain the Smiths had installed in their garden. Kate was reported as saying, 'It was a case of the bathroom versus the fountain. The fountain won of course!'

Unfortunately the battle to save Glebe continues. What amazes me, as I am sure it does all members of the Society, is how so many of our elected representatives, at both local and State levels, take no heed of residents' wishes. We need to remind ourselves of the marvellous work that people like Bernard Smith have done for Glebe, so that we can be inspired to continue to ensure that our suburb is preserved.

On 27 November 1989 the Council of the City of Sydney obtained formal consent of Leichhardt and South Sydney Councils to become trustees of the open space areas of Wentworth Park. Council undertook to -

- discuss transitional arrangements with the WP Greyhound Racing Trust;
- prepare a plan of management for the Park;
- convene a steering committee of Council representatives, architects and landscape architects;
- convene a Residents Advisory Committee.

A new Wentworth Park (Greyhound Racing Complex) Trust was appointed on 19 February 1990. It includes representatives of the greyhound racing fraternity (including two former Trust members, Les Rodwell (Chairman) and Peter Thom), but also a member of the Sydney City Council, Alderman Frank Sartor.

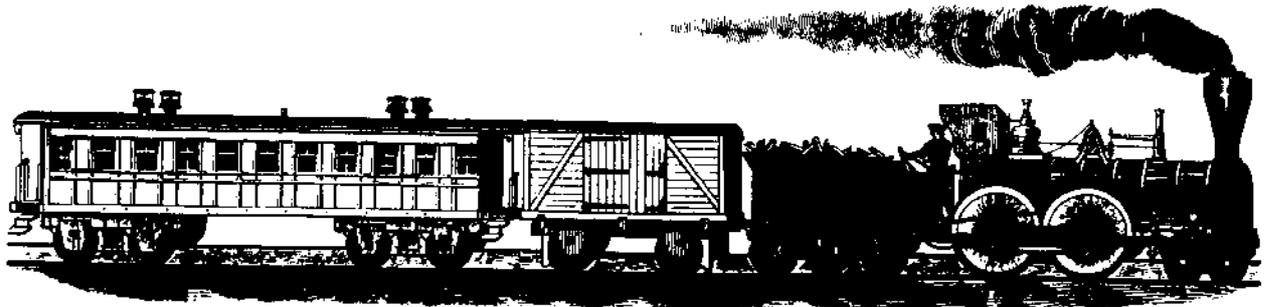
Christine Stewart (Wentworth Park convenor) attended a meeting at the dog racing stand to discuss an application for Bungy Jumping from the roof of the stand. The Glebe Society has written to Leichhardt Council opposing the application on the grounds that it is a spectacle likely to attract large numbers of people and cars and increase pressure for parking on the grassed areas of the Park. This letter was delivered to Council before its meeting on 27 February.

Leichhardt Council also received an application for offices for the Department of Sport and Recreation to be built in the top two floors of the Complex. The Society has written opposing this on the grounds that it is against the Public Open Space zoning and would add further to the cost of the Stand and increase pressure on car parking space in the area. The Society's view is that the stand should ultimately be removed and that further large expenditures on it only make this less likely. We argued that the Government should accept the stand should never have been built on a public Park and that the Complex should be moved to a more suitable site like Homebush Bay.

The proposed Residents Advisory Committee would include:

- 4 members from Leichhardt Municipality;
- 3 from the City of Sydney living near the Park;
- 1 from South Sydney living near the Broadway end of the Park; and
- 1 from Wentworth Park Child Care Centre.

We shall write to Leichhardt Council asking that a public meeting be convened to elect representatives from the Glebe area. Any residents who are interested please contact Chris Stewart on 660 8324.



The Society responded to Leichhardt Council's recent traffic study of the Glebe area with the following submission to the Town Clerk:

GLEBE LOCAL AREA TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT STUDY REPORT

Among the objects of the Glebe Society are promotion of the well-being and interests of citizens of the Glebe area and the preservation and enhancement of the natural and architectural character of the area. In pursuit of these objectives, the Society views the suburb as being substantially residential, with commercial activities essentially on a relatively small scale. The goals of traffic management, therefore, should be, ideally, to preserve the amenity of residents by minimising through traffic unrelated to the area's residential needs, avoiding development that radically changes the historical character of Glebe and encouraging access to commercial areas with minimal traffic impact.

The Society welcomes the recommendations of the Traffic Management Study Report to the extent to which they conduce to the above aims. The Society would also like to see combined town and traffic planning of a kind that looks at zoning and/or rezoning land for residential and/or light industrial and commercial uses so that, in the longer term, it would be feasible to ban heavy vehicles from practically all roads in Glebe. Encouragement of enterprises such as Fletchers to relocate would simplify the implementation of measures such as the diagonal road closure proposed at Ferry Road.

The Society suggests that planning and traffic management in Glebe north of Wigram Road be directed towards retaining and developing this as primarily residential, apart from the existing businesses on Glebe Point Road, and that, in addition to the Report's recommendations for speed limits, partial road closures, and right hand turn limitations, Council consider further use of thresholds to emphasize the residential nature of this part of Glebe (as is proposed in the Estate area also). Possible sites might be at the Wigram Road/Crescent junction and on Glebe Point Road itself, south of Wigram Road.

The Society is also interested in any possibilities that might be considered for the open space at the corner of Wigram and Glebe Point Roads. Has or could thought be given to the opportunity for developing this as a village square or mall? This could be done by constricting Wigram Road to half its present width on the approach to Glebe Point Road (eastward). Any traffic travelling north on Glebe Point Road and wishing to use Wigram Road for westward travel would be channelled via the beginning of Hereford Street and a one way single carriageway along the back of the Homeopathic Hospital building.

Combined with a threshold deterrent and the Ferry Road closure, such measures would render Wigram Road far less attractive as a through road for those with no residential or business reason for using it.

While wishing to discourage through traffic, particularly in residential streets, the Society recognizes the needs of business on Glebe Point Road for ready access by their clientele, both local and from outside the suburb. Positive steps to facilitate access to shops and restaurants are seen as being

- a) provision of peripheral parking areas (e.g. at White Bay, the Grace Bros. redevelopment plans), combined with
- b) improved public transport access, such as
 - i) light rail from White Bay and through Glebe
 - ii) provision of a minibus service along Glebe Point Road
 - iii) ferry services
- c) discouragement of full day on street parking by city commuters.

Any local traffic management practices are likely to be palliative only until the city-west link road is completed. The Society consequently would strongly support Council's own lobbying efforts with the State Government to expedite the completion of these works. Additionally, the Society believes Council should actively encourage present moves for a light rail route to the city via Glebe.

Finally, since so much commuter traffic is generated by corporate cars, the Society believes Council's lobbying might also extend to the Federal Government, drawing attention to the consequences for traffic generation of the provision by business enterprises of cars for employees, and proposing greater tax disincentives when cars are not essential for job performance.

MONDAY GROUP

The Monday Group will continue to meet on the third Monday of each month this year. In April, however, this falls on Easter Monday so the meeting will instead be on 23 April.

The next meeting will be on 19 March at 12 noon at the home of Katherine Buck, 9 Alexandra Road, Glebe Point.

For inquiries please ring Sally Nelson.

DINING OUT

Dining out nights are usually held on a Tuesday or Wednesday towards the end of the month. The Laurece Brasserie is our choice as the place to start the year's meals but it does not open Tuesday nights for dinner and there are other problems with Wednesdays this month, hence the move to Thursday night this time. Come along and bring suggestions for future venues.

GLEBE POINT ROAD PROJECT REPRESENTATIVES

Ian Jones - 660 2451
Sobbie Burke
Peter Strickland

CONVENORS OF SUB-COMMITTEES

All Convenors are ex-officio members of the Management Committee

BICENTENNIAL PARK

John Buckingham - 660 7780

PLANNING

Neil Macindoe - 660 0208

TRAFFIC

Jeanette Knox - 660 7781

BLACKWATTLE BAY PARK

Bob Armstrong - 660 4189

HAROLD PARK

Gideon Rutherford - 692 0239

JUBILEE PARK

Tony Larkum - 660 7030

WENTWORTH PARK

Christine Stewart - 660 8324

LIGHT RAIL

John Hoddinott - 692 0071

KINGSFORD-SMITH AIRPORT AND GLEBE

Alison McKeown - 660 3917

ENVIRONMENT

Fiona Campbell - 821 6269 (W)
660 0185 (H)

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Contact a Committee Member

CONTACT THE PEOPLE LISTED ABOVE IF YOU WANT TO OBTAIN OR GIVE INFORMATION.

FOR YOUR DIARY

Wednesday 21 March - 7.30pm - Committee Meeting - Lyndhurst, Darghan Street

Monday 26 March - 7.30pm - Airport Subcommittee meeting - 397 Glebe Point Road

Thursday 29 March - 6.30pm - Dining Out - Laurece Brasserie, cnr Ross Street & St John's Road, licensed or BYO.

Saturday 7 April - 7pm - SSAC Fund Raising Dinner - 79 Johnston Street, Annandale

Sunday 8 April - 11am - Happy Hour - 397 Glebe Point Road. (Alison & Ted McKeown's new home).

HAPPY HOUR

Would you be prepared to hold a Happy Hour at your home? These gatherings are normally held on the first Sunday of each month. Please contact Jeanette Knox on 660 7781 for information.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT: Andrew Wood 660 2194 (H)
692 2451 (W)

VICE PRESIDENT: Marianne von Knobelsdorff 692-0916 (H)

IMM. PAST PRES: Peter Strickland 660 7624 (H)
964 1729 (W)

SECRETARY: Cynthia Jones 660 2451 (H)

TREASURER: Ann Disher 552 2061 (H)

COMMITTEE: Robbie Burke 692 0343 (H)
Edwina Doe 660 7066 (H)
955 9848 (W)
Jeanette Knox 660 7781 (H)

Bulletin Editor: Jeremy Long 692 8742
Membership List: Andrew Wood 660 2194
New Members Rep: Sue Littleton 660 5610
Monday Group: Sally Nelson 660 6138

MEMBERSHIP OF THE GLEBE SOCIETY COSTS:
Household \$15, Individual \$12, Student or Pensioner \$5. Write to P.O. Box 100, Glebe 2037 or ring Sue Littleton on 660 5610 for information.