



## BBQ and celebration under our spreading fig tree

Saturday 16 October provided a perfect opportunity to see Glebe Point looking at its sparkling best between the rain from the previous night and the very cold Sunday that followed.

Eighty people attended the BBQ. The event was well supported by Glebe businesses with donations and assistance. Everyone indulged in gourmet sausages, provided by Glebe Society members Rod and Deborah Blay of Peppercorn Meats. Louis Fruit Market, 337 Glebe Point Road, donated the fruit. The onions were donated by Damian of Frank Galluzzo and Sons, 187 Glebe Point Road. Tim Smith of Glebe Liquor, 375 Glebe Point Road, assisted with storage of drinks and supply of ice. Our appreciation must also be given to Phillip Combe of Barbehire and his competent Chef, Brett for the professional BBQ services

There were the usual accompaniments, bread rolls, sauces and drinks. It was a true community event hosted by the Glebe Society. Invitations were extended to members of the Glebe Chamber of Commerce, Glebe Housing Estate, Glebe Police and other residents.

The purpose of the BBQ was to welcome our 'not so new' Councillors and to celebrate the commencement of the Glebe Foreshore Walk and the acquisition of the Anchorage site. The Lord Mayor, Clover Moore, spoke about the strength of the Glebe community and the importance of the



Jan Wilson, Lord Mayor Clover Moore, Eva Cox & Robyn Kemmis. Photo: Sue Ingram

cooperation between residents, businesses and the City of Sydney Council. The vibrancy of the community underpins the philosophy of Council, that Sydney is a 'city of villages'. Councillors attending included Phillip Black, Verity Firth, Tony Pooley and Robyn Kemmis. Other councillors sent their apologies, as there were concurrent community public meetings on in Sydney.

Only in Glebe would we feed a driver of Sydney Buses, mind a Sydney bus whilst the driver went home for lunch and have a senior member taxied home in a police car. A celebration of this nature provides an opportunity for all to come together, meet and discuss issues very relevant for our community.

In conclusion, our thanks must go to the City of Sydney for the support they have given Glebe to date.

- Jan Wilson

## Macbeth at St Scholastica's

It was like a scene out of Shakespeare's Macbeth .....

On a wet and windy night about 70 people gathered around the cauldron cum slide projector as Max Solling, with assistant warlock Michael Foster, weaved their magic of times past.

Drawings, paintings and maps of very early days, say back to 1850, illustrated how Glebe was populated by the Respectability, who were spread out over 12 estates in about 20 substantial houses.

Then came the beginnings of subdivision. Firstly an area known as Bishopgate, which

extended from Broadway down to the Blackwattle swamp, was developed with small workers' cottages. By 1861, 2000 people lived there, compared with 1000 people in the rest of Glebe. Bishopthorpe was next, being the area further north from Cowper Street to St Johns Road. Here we learned that most houses were built under the owner/builder arrangement, generally in timber. There was much variety here but little of quality. Select Committees in 1860 and 1875 examined the poor drainage and overcrowding in such areas. It is not surprising that most of these early houses were replaced with brick terraces. The last

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# Forest Lodge Public School



Forest Lodge girls gardening in 1903

Forest Lodge Public School (FLPS) will celebrate 125 years of education at the school in 2008. In the lead up to this event the P&C has applied for funding to produce a social history. The Glebe Society has agreed to help the P&C communicate the progress and results of the project, as well as helping on the steering group.

The Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Heritage are offering funding under the Sharing Australia's Stories grants to community, not-for-profit organisations such as schools. As part of the centenary celebrations at FLPS in 1993 a factual history was produced. This publication tells us when buildings were built, how many students attended, and something of the education policies that affected the school. There are acknowledgements of a number of previous students who have contributed to the development of Australia, such as the Antarctic explorer Douglas Mawson, and Agnes Robertson, Commonwealth representative for WA.

This funding proposal aims to capture the stories of the range of students, their families and their teachers. Recently the school has received a letter from a previous student who is in her 90s. What are her recollections of FLPS and what impact has her education at FLPS had on her? Even over the last 90 years there have been so many social changes at FLPS that reflect the changes in society of Australia. This is the main argument we are using in

the proposal. Below is an extract from the funding application:

'The history of FLPS mirrors the dynamic and changing cultural history of Australia. The school was established shortly after compulsory education began in 1880 and its ongoing eclectic student body provides us with many narratives of Australia's earliest immigrants and their continuing cultural presence in Sydney. Also FLPS's location in an inner city suburb means the socio-economic and ethnic background of the school's population has changed dramatically over the last century as the inhabitants of Glebe responded to local changes in technological, residential and work patterns. Over the last 20 years, in particular, the ethnic mix of students has changed dramatically. There are now 40% of students from families of non English speaking background, from a wide range of countries, including Sierra Leone, Fiji, Turkey, as well as Singapore, Taiwan, China and Japan. What are their stories of school in Australia and in the country their parents were born in? A Chinese parent says that now schools in China have 60 to 70 students in a class! The teacher uses a megaphone to be heard and discipline is very strong. The P&C president of 25 years ago can recollect only one aboriginal family at the time of the Centenary. Such a lot has changed in a relatively short time.'

The Centenary publication reports that the parents marched on Parliament House in the 1970s to

demand more funding for the school. The parents were socially aware and demanding, but what role has the P&C really had on the development of the school? This is just one of the many questions that could be covered in this project.

When funding is approved, a project steering group will be established to scope the project. The Glebe Society has been invited to nominate one person to help us determine exactly what is done. We hope that your long interest in the history of Glebe can ensure that a social history is in the appropriate context in the development of Glebe.

The application seeks funding for:

- \* a social historian to research the stories,
- \* an oral historian to record identified stories, and
- \* a person to put the school register on a mailing list, so we can contact previous students and families, and update our mailing list.

Funding for publication of the social history is also requested. We want to pull out stories that can also be used by the teachers in programs such as Human Society in the Environment. Preparation of the application has already generated a lot of interest. The principal has suggested getting funding to refurbish the Girls' Department gate on Pymont Bridge Road. The oral historian has suggested putting digital interviews on the school web site (see [forestlodg-p.school.nsw.edu.au](http://forestlodg-p.school.nsw.edu.au)). The photo of Pet Day with a pony and many chooks has made us wonder what was a day at FLPS like 100 years ago. Do people organise living history days in which current students can experience what a day was like in the history of FLPS? As with many community organisations, ideas are not the limiting factor, it's funding and the time to put ideas into action.

We look forward to getting this proposal funded and having support from the Glebe Society in helping communicate and steer the project.

**- Gabrielle Kay**

For further information contact Gabrielle Kay, Forest Lodge P&C, [gkay@alx.com.au](mailto:gkay@alx.com.au)

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subdivision occurred in 1915, forming Eglinton Street.

Max's magic continued with early photographs showing us the many facets of Glebe's social history, examples being:

- Many of the large houses became institutions eg, to accommodate single mothers and homeless girls, or educational establishments.

- Most of the building work was carried out by just a few local builders. It is interesting to learn that the people who made the money were Estate Agents and financiers!

- Glebe went through many phases accommodating diverse and ever changing socio-economic populations.

Max related the story of one person who first occupied his house as a Convict, and later became a Gentleman. We all live in hope!

- **David Mander Jones**



## Come to The Glebe Society's 2004 Christmas Drinks



at

**The Glebe Rowing Club, Ferry Road**

(next door to the Boathouse Restaurant)

**Friday 3 December from 6.00 to 8.00pm**

Enjoy a fine view over the waters of Blackwattle

Bay as you celebrate with

delicious finger food, wine, sparkling wine, beer, mineral water or juice, Christmas Cake and the Great Glebe Society Raffle.

**Catering by Nags Head Hotel, Glebe.**

A Booking Form is enclosed with this Bulletin. We need to have your acceptance, payment (\$25 per person), completed raffle ticket stubs and unused tickets by Monday 22 November 2004.

For more information ring

Anne 9660 4423, Margaret 9660 4124, Mari-Luise 9660 2211

## Great 2004 Christmas Raffle

This year's Glebe Society Christmas Raffle has some excellent prizes, donated by Society members and by business people in Glebe. They are:

1<sup>st</sup> Prize: Three days in a holiday house at Marlborough Sounds, New Zealand (dates negotiable), value \$300. Donated by Hilary Wise and Steve Stewart.

2<sup>nd</sup> Prize: Two nights for two people at Cowra Motor Inn, including breakfast (dates negotiable), value \$160. Donated by Pam & Geoff Grinter.

3<sup>rd</sup> Prize: Fine Dining Voucher, value \$150, donated by The Boathouse on Blackwattle Bay.

4<sup>th</sup> Prize: Art piece from Glass Artists Gallery, value \$150.

5<sup>th</sup> Prize: Book, *Roberto Burle Marx: the Lyrical Landscape* by Marta Iris Montero, value \$105. Donated by Florilegium Bookshop

6<sup>th</sup> Prize: Dinner for two at Rosso Nero. Donated by Rosso Nero Trattoria.

7<sup>th</sup> Prize: A porcelain clay bowl made by Rosa Chan, value \$65. Donated by the Clayworkers' Gallery.

### How to buy tickets:

\* Tickets cost \$5 each, or a sheet of five tickets for \$20. For your convenience, a gold-coloured sheet of five tickets is included with this Bulletin.

\* Include the payment for Raffle Tickets when you pay for the Christmas Party. Send in the stubs (the left hand side of the page) with your Party Booking form.

\* Buy more tickets from our Stall at the Glebe Street Fair, on Sunday 21 November.

\* Phone Cynthia Jones (9660 2451) or Jeanette Knox (9660 7781) for more tickets. If a message machine answers, please leave your name and phone number.

\* Buy even more tickets at the party on 3 December.

Results will be published in the Sydney Morning Herald Public Notices on Wednesday 8 December.

**Robyn Kemmis has arranged for Council to give us two tickets to the City of Sydney New Year's Eve party. Two lucky people will go home with these tickets after our party.**

# Planning Matters



Things seem to have been pretty quiet while I was in Europe, although Mark Dent has been making excellent progress in negotiating and campaigning over the two major development proposals for Rozelle Bay. If we succeed in reducing the impact of both or either of these it will be mainly owing to his efforts. The City Council has voted to support The Society's campaign, and it appears the support will also be financial.

## Max Factor, 431 Glebe Point Road

It so happened that Bob Armstrong and I returned to Sydney on the same flight, although from different holidays. No sooner had we struggled blearily off the plane than we had to speak at the Council Planning meeting held that same evening dealing with this controversial proposal.

Fortunately the Councillors decided not to accept the report, which supported the proposal, and decided to hold an inspection after attending The Glebe Society BBQ on 16 October. A number of residents expressed their views very forcefully at this inspection, attended by four Councillors. The following Monday, 18 October, Council resolved to defer the matter for a month to allow a variety of concerns to be addressed,

specifically the dwelling mix, but also issues of privacy and traffic flow. The retail proposal looks unlikely to proceed. The development will still have a significant impact, but not as great as was proposed.

## Parking Lot, 3 Bridge Road

This site on the corner of Taylor Street, opposite the Senior High School (previously Glebe High) has been an eyesore for many years. The site is zoned Business, and there is now a proposal for a three storey building over excavated parking (entry off the lane), ground floor retail and commercial, first floor commercial and top floor residential.

The area has some heritage buildings and Victorian terraces, and The Society will try to secure a design that blends as much as possible with these buildings, but in most respects having a fairly modest building on the site will be an improvement.

## Weston's Biscuits, 13-17 Pyrmont Bridge Road etc

This large site is not in Glebe, but is in the triangle of industrial land immediately adjacent that includes the Children's Hospital site. Council has approved a Masterplan permitting eight mixed use buildings, between three and eight storeys, on the site. This is a similar density to the Hospital site and a number of

others nearby. It is likely this interesting area will continue to be redeveloped at high density, and this will have the same kind of impact as has the redevelopment of the Hospital.

## The Abbey, 156-160 Bridge Road

The repeal of DCP 49 should be advertised shortly. The developer has lodged an appeal, and objectors will soon be asked to put their grounds in writing.

## Can Council Cope?

As a result of boundary changes the nature of the City has become quite different. We must expect some adverse comment, especially from developers and their mates, as the vastly increased number of residents make their views felt. There will also be tensions within the Council itself as the nature of its task changes.

These are natural adjustments. While not everyone is happy with all decisions so far, relations with both staff and Councillors have been remarkably positive. A resident-friendly Council, need not be, and should not be, paralysed and impotent. Good relations between responsible organizations such as the Society and Councillors and staff are the key to effective action.

- Neil Macindoe

## Hat Making in Australia - a RAHS/ASHET talk

During the 1800s and early 1900s everyone, whether rich or poor, wore hats. They were just part of what one wore, not part of a fashion statement, but they did reflect the social standing and circumstances of the wearer. This meant that the hatmaker was an important tradesman in the community, producing a range of felt hats, caps or elegant top hats for men and riding hats or more fashionable models for women.

As many hats were made from fur based felt, there was a market for pelts from the colony to be sent back to England, so Colonial entrepreneur Simeon Lord added this activity to his trading empire. Then in 1806, Simeon Lord apprenticed 15-year old Reuben Uther, son of John William Uther, a London skin-dresser and seal skin sorter, as a hatter. He then brought Reuben to Australia to establish a local industry in the new colony.

Michelle Patient, a Uther family descendant, will speak of the work of Reuben Uther and the company he established.

Date : Tuesday 30th November 2004

Venue : History House, 133 Macquarie Street, Sydney, 5.30 for 6 pm.

Cost \$7 includes wine and cheese on arrival.

To book, phone RAHS on 9247 8001 or email [history@rahs.org.au](mailto:history@rahs.org.au).

# From the terraces

## The development of terrace gardens

### Georgian

“The first gardens in the colonies were necessarily utilitarian but as the earliest communities ... became more established, gardens based on English prototypes became increasingly sophisticated. Stylistically, the more ornamental gardens show remarkably little variation throughout the Regency, Victorian and Boom styles of the 19th and early-20th centuries, with only subtle differences in size and the introduction of new materials, plants and decorative elements.

### Victorian

“By the 1830s simple layouts for the front gardens of terrace houses were often published in the books and magazines of the influential Scottish gardening writer John Claudius Loudon, and these served as pattern books for Loudon’s British and Australian audiences. Loudon recommended the circle as the simple and most effective shape for garden beds and a centrally placed circular garden bed became a common choice for the confined space of the front gardens of 19<sup>th</sup> century terrace houses. The adventurous chose variations of Loudon’s more sophisticated suggestions, which included locations for urns or fountains. Garden beds were often edged with a low hedge such as box.

### Towards Federation

“During the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the use of decorative brick edge or terracotta garden edging tiles became more fashionable. Back gardens remained essentially utilitarian with space used for hanging washing, the outdoor lavatory and the occasional



fruit tree, usually a lemon. Geraniums grew in pots, or more often, in containers recycled to the garden after their usefulness as teapot, bucket or kerosene tin had ended. If there was room, a chicken coop or a vegetable patch completed the picture. Greater horticultural sophistication was introduced to some back gardens in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the addition of rock gardens, greenhouses, or ferns, commonly the native staghorn and elkhorn which could be elevated on a wall or tree stump.

### Last Century

“Few changes took place in the back garden during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Since then, however, changes in sanitary facilities have [altered] the way garden space is used. As the use of ‘coppers’ for washing clothes declined and were replaced, so did the need to store wood. The lavatory was also moved inside the house. Fruit trees died and were not replaced.

“More recently still, the back garden has continued to evolve as residents place emphasis on the need for outdoor living and dining areas, and more ornamental surroundings.”

### Source:

Howells, T and Morris, C, *Terrace Houses in Australia*, 1999, pp6-10.

Reproduced with permission.

## The World of Old Houses

For the past six months I’ve been working on some unusual research. The subject has been concealed ritual objects in old Australian houses and buildings. These have been recorded in many parts of the UK, Europe and North America in a practice which has roots deep in the ancient history of British and European folk magic. The purpose of these objects was to protect houses and their occupants from witches and evil spirits. While visiting England in 2002 colleagues there told me that concealed ritual objects [such as shoes, dried cats and witches’ bottles] had been found in English buildings dating from as late as the early 20th century. This provided me with a Eureka moment.

Realising that there was a good chance that this bizarre practice might have come to Australia with convicts and settlers I began looking for these objects. A small but significant number has now been found at locations in every state and territory except the Northern Territory. One of the interesting aspects of this bizarre custom is that it was carried out in great secrecy. There appears to be nothing about it in the documentary archives. The only evidence is in the artifacts which are carefully concealed in old houses and come to light only when building renovations are taking place. The result is that historians were quite unaware of the fact that many people in Australia during the 18th and 19th centuries had firm beliefs in magic, ritual and witchcraft.

A couple of months ago I worked with a team from ABC-TV’s ‘Rewind’ programme to prepare a story on this strange custom. The result was in the program on Sunday night, 17 October. I hope as a result of the program to hear about further finds. Some information about concealed ritual objects is on my website, together with images of some recent finds. I hope you find this subject as interesting as I do.

- Ian Evans, *World of Old Houses*  
([www.oldhouses.com.au](http://www.oldhouses.com.au))

PO Box 591 Mullumbimby NSW 2482

## Our Environment

### Another view of evolution ...

*I laughed out loud while listening to Radio National's Ockham's Razor on Sunday 17 October.*

*Robyn Williams, the presenter, told us that it was the start of Weedbuster Week. He introduced Professor Julian Cribb, a Science Communicator who lives in Canberra and who explained a conspiracy theory to cap all others.*

*The tongue-in-cheek theory is that instead of humans spreading weeds, all the time weeds have actually been spreading humans. Here is an edited version of the talk ...*

**Julian Cribb:** Albert the archaeology student was in the university library, slumped over an untidy heap of palynological textbooks that traced the emergence of the emmer and the einkorn on the Fertile Crescent some six or seven thousand years ago.

He was dozing gently in the autumn sunshine when a late blowfly droned past, rousing him from his soporific state.

All the textbooks had said the same thing: that humans had, over a few thousand years or so, harvested wild grasses, brought them back to the home shelter, dropping a few seeds around the place which over a longish period, selected themselves into a sort of a crop.

It was the start of agriculture, the start of civilisation, religion, literacy, computers, wars, politics, the cross-your-heart bra, Tupperware, Spandex, the space race, Teletubbies, the whole goddam thing.

And with humans there came weeds. Weeds everywhere. Humans spread weeds like they spread, well, humans. They turned the whole of planetary biology topsy turvy and created a problem they couldn't begin to handle.

But Albert had an eerie sensation he wasn't getting quite the full picture, despite the insistence of the learned

tomes. At the back of his sleepy head a small question popped up. In a squeaky sort of voice, it said, 'I wonder if, instead of humans spreading weeds, all the time weeds have actually been spreading humans?' ...

... It took a long, long time before a misbred chimpanzee stumbled out of the enfolding shelter of the rainforest, scratched himself and took off across the savannah, rock in hand. But the weeds knew a priceless opportunity when they saw one.

It took 'em a while, but in the end they managed to breed a particular sort of chimp, clad in the skins of other animals, who was prone to pick up grains and cart them around with him.

Instead of humans domesticating wheat and barley, the wheat and barley had decided to domesticate humans.

The weedy strategies for doing this were amazing. They lured humans with luscious fruits. They ravished us with head-spinning scents. They wooed us with nectar. They taught male humans to gather the brightly coloured genitals of weeds and present them to their females as a signal of their true intentions.

It wasn't long before weeds began selectively breeding humans on the basis of their ability to transport seeds. They started by developing farmers, an obvious bunch, famous for their ability to cultivate a whole lot of other things by accident besides wheat and barley, but they soon moved on to explorers, merchants, witches and apothecaries ...

... they created a host of clones, hybrids and genetically modified strains.

The Pasture Scientist, for example, cheerfully collects an innocent native grass in Latin America, where it is doing no-one any harm, and promptly infests half the Northern Territory with it. Oops ...

... The television back-yard renovator, can stick more alien species into 20 square metres of dirt in less time than any known animal on earth.

The Home Garden Centre Owner,

ground zero of an ecological holocaust that scatters aesthetic but environmentally disastrous species far and wide across his customer catchment ...

... Humans are the vectors of weeds. It is our failure of stewardship, our failure even to see what is going on before our very eyes that is the cause of the problem.

Take for example the fact that, of the 6,600 plant species which are presently permitted to be imported into Australia, 4,003 are known agricultural or environmental weeds. They include beauties like bridal creeper, Parkinsonia, and, wait for it, no fewer than 690 strains of blackberry! All perfectly legal ...

... The average Aussie does not think weeds are a problem. The very word implies something feeble and inconsiderable. A nuisance, not the Agent Orange of ecosystem obliteration which some of them become.

Yet they are our gravest environmental threat, and we put only a fraction of the effort into controlling them than we do into tackling salinity, a far less widespread problem.

As a science communicator I can only say that if we hope to control the Green Death, the wholesale landscape loss which weeds occasion, we must first muster the Australian people to the cause.

This will require long and extensive dialogue with them of the threat, its nature, its extent and its consequences. Its ultimate costs, financial, social and environmental.

It will involve engaging their enthusiasm and interest. It will require their willing participation, their sense of ownership of the issue ...

... Arousing the Australian people and their governments to the immensity and magnitude of the weed threat is our most pressing ecological task ...

... Let there be a war, not so much on Terror, as on Weeds.

*Hear or read the full text of this talk on the Ockham's Razor website. Or I can send you a copy.*

-Edwina Doe

# The Story Behind the Park

*The text of a talk on Madame Helene Kirsova given by John Hood at the AGM of the Glebe Society on 19 September 2004.*

Kirsova Park in Wigram Lane, behind Benledi, is one of a series of playgrounds endowed by Helene Kirsova from the profits of the Kirsova Ballet. I had never heard of Kirsova until eight years ago, when I began writing a biography of Peggy Sager, Australia's finest classical ballerina of the 1940s and 1950s. Peggy made her ballet debut in the Kirsova Ballet.

During my research for my book I interviewed former dancers from the Kirsova Ballet and spent three full days in Canberra exploring the extensive Kirsova Archive in the Research Library of the National Gallery of Australia. I uncovered material about Kirsova not mentioned in any other book.

Kirsova was born in Denmark in 1910. Little is known of her early years. However we do know that she was a very popular ballerina in Denmark as a teenager, and in subsequent years she always wore a diamond-studded, crown shaped gold brooch that the King of Denmark presented to her in recognition of her dancing. She trained under Lubov Egorova and Olga Preobajenska at their studios in Paris. These were the greatest ballet teachers of their time, and had taught at the Imperial Ballet Academy in St Petersburg and the Maryinsky (Kirov) Ballet.

Kirsova was the star of the De Basil Ballet Russe in its 1936-1937 Australian tour. After the tour she returned to Europe to finalise her divorce to a Mr Westrup. (In his book *The Story of the Theatre Royal*, Ian Bevan stated that Westrup had 'trained Kirsova like a racehorse'). Kirsova then returned to Australia and married Dr Erik Fischer, the Danish Vice-Consul. They lived at Clifton Gardens and had one son called Olle.

With the threat of war in Europe,



Madame Kirsova in *Carnaval* in the 1937 tour of the De Basil Ballet Russe.

Photo, in the Kirsova Archive at the Research Library of the National Gallery, by Jack Cato.

other dancers had stayed in Australia, including Edouard Borovansky, who opened a ballet school in Melbourne.

In 1940, Kirsova opened a ballet school in Macquarie Place, near Circular Quay. The building now houses the Marriott Hotel. It was a palatial studio, with a grand piano in the corner for classes and rehearsals. Prue Page, a member of the Glebe Society, was a pupil at Kirsova's Ballet School when she was seven years old.

In 1941 Kirsova opened a ballet company. She enrolled all her dancers in Actors Equity, paid their subscriptions and then paid them a wage when they were performing. This was Australia's first professional ballet company.

She worked her dancers hard. If she recognised dancers with special talent who were prepared to work hard, she spent extra time with them and worked them extra hard.

There were 14 ballets in the Company's repertoire. Kirsova choreographed all these ballets except for *Les Sylphides* and *Swan Lake*. It was original, innovative choreography.

She loved modern art and contemporary music, interests she shared with one of her supporters, Peter Bellew, Editor of a Fairfax magazine, *Art in*

*Australia*, and President of the Contemporary Art Society of Australia.

She encouraged her dancers to study modern art. She brought books on modern art from her home for them to read. If they understood modern art, they could understand what she was trying to get at with her choreography.

She considered ballet should be a balanced combination of décor, music and dancing.

She welcomed members of all branches of the fine arts to visit her studio. It became a meeting place where they shared ideas, stimulating their creativity. Young artists drew sketches of the dancers in class and in rehearsals. They handed the unsigned sketches to the dancers after rehearsals. These unknown artists included Sali Hermann, Arthur Boyd, William Dobell, Amy Kingston and others. She commissioned the visiting artists to design scenery and costumes.

She wrote two major full-length ballets, commissioning Henry Krips to write the scores. The first of these was *Faust*, based on a poem by the 17<sup>th</sup> century German poet Heinrich Heine.

Six dancers were the mainstay of her company in its early days. These were four colleagues from the Ballet Russe who had stayed in Australia, also Henry Legerton, an Australian who had trained in England, and whom she considered had the potential to become Australia's greatest dancer, and her Baby Ballerina, 14 year old Strelsa Heckelman.

These six dancers danced the leading roles in *Faust*. It premiered at the Minerva Theatre at Kings Cross and was an outstanding success. It ran for six weeks with 25 consecutive performances. Kirsova claimed this was a world record. Two other teenage dancers had joined the company at this stage, Rachel Cameron, a Queenslander, and Peggy Sager, who had come from New Zealand.

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The company then went to Melbourne for a successful season at His Majesty's Theatre. Kirsova hired the theatre from J C Williamsons, who owned most of the theatres in Australia and New Zealand. Part of the packaged deal included the use of a J C Williamson orchestra. Kirsova believed that two excellent duo pianists on grand pianos were better than a mediocre orchestra. She paid the orchestra's wages but did not use them. She used duo pianists for all her ballets.

Following a disagreement with Kirsova, three of the Ballet Russe dancers left the company after the Melbourne season. All her male dancers were conscripted into the army. Kirsova therefore did not have enough principal dancers or male dancers for another season. She spent the next 12 months training new dancers. Paul Hammond joined the company after he left school. He had talent and was prepared to work hard. Kirsova therefore choreographed all her male parts for him.

By 1943, Kirsova's dancers were trained well enough to do justice to her innovative choreography. She resumed performances with short seasons at the Conservatorium every few months. These played to packed houses. One of the new ballets was *Revolution of the Umbrellas*, a full length major work. Henry Krips wrote the score. He was influenced by the music of Stravinsky. Henry Krips and teenage prodigy Richard Farrell played the pianos.

Kirsova choreographed a short ballet, *Jeunesse*, based on the Trio for Piano, Oboe and Bassoon by contemporary French composer Francis Poulenc. The atonal music interacted with the choreography to create visual poetry. She showed that atonal music could be romantic.

Her masterpiece was *Harlequin*, based on Ravel's Rhapsody Espagnol. She told Paul Hammond to study Picasso's paintings of the Pink and Blue period so that he could understand what she wanted from her choreography.

J C Williamsons sponsored a five month tour of Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Brisbane. Every performance was booked out. Kirsova and the critics agreed that three of her dancers, Peggy Sager, Strelsa Heckelman and Rachel Cameron, were world class. At the end of the tour she remarked to Rachel Cameron "If only I could take the company overseas at this stage, it would scoop the pool".

J C Williamsons offered her a salaried position to run her company for them. She and all her dancers would be on a regular salary. However she would have to present the popular ballets from the Ballet Russe instead of her new ballets. She would also have to use J C Williamsons' orchestras, their costume department and their scenery.

She refused the offer. All she wanted was the use of their theatres. They made the same offer to Borovansky. He accepted. As they could only use one ballet company, J C Williamsons had no further use for Kirsova.

J C Williamsons controlled most of the theatres, which were all in use. As she could not book consecutive theatres, she could not organise a tour. She could not offer her dancers regular work. She therefore gave permission for them to accept an offer from Borovansky to join his company. Her principal dancers had faith in her and remained with her.

In 1945 she booked the Brisbane City Hall for a two week season in October. They had rehearsed a set of new ballets and were ready to go. The mayor stepped in and cancelled the booking. The City Hall was used every night for a dance for servicemen and he was not going to deprive them of that.

Kirsova accepted the inevitable and closed the company. At this stage her marriage to Erik Fischer was over.

Peter Bellow wrote a book, *Pioneering Ballet in Australia*, telling the story of the Kirsova Ballet.

Kirsova had commissioned the score for a new ballet, *Waltzing Matilda*, from a teenager, Charles (now Sir

Charles) Mackerras. She had only choreographed one scene when she closed her company. Charles was left with the score for a ballet that would never be performed. He re-arranged it as an orchestral suite which was performed by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and broadcast by the ABC.

In 1957, when he was resident conductor of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, Henry Krips re-arranged his score of *Revolution of the Umbrellas* as a symphonic suite. The ABC broadcast this and released it on an ABC microgroove record. I have now obtained a copy of this wonderful recording from the National Archives of Australia. I am trying to get the ABC to re-issue it on CD. It would be a best seller.

Kirsova was a woman of independent means. She had donated the profits from the Company's earliest performances to the Red Cross. She then dedicated the profits from the remaining performances to establish a chain of playgrounds in Sydney's inner suburbs. She purchased two blocks of land in Erskineville and built two playgrounds. At the opening of the second playground, she announced her intention to open more playgrounds in Glebe. However this was after the final performance of her Company, and no-one was aware of any more playgrounds being built.

Early last year I visited Erskineville to see if her playgrounds still existed. I found her second playground in George Street. It was run down and there was no plaque or sign mentioning Kirsova. I contacted South Sydney Council. Tony Pooley, the Mayor, organised the renovation of the playground and on 14 February 2004, there was a gala re-dedication of the playground, and the unveiling of a plaque honouring Kirsova. Five of Kirsova's former dancers attended, coming from as far as Queensland and Cootamundra.

Late last year, while exploring the internet, I found two reports on the Glebe Society website about Kirsova Playground No.3 in Wigram Lane, and how Society members were

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looking after it. I will mention this in the material I am sending to the Curator of Dance at the National Library in Canberra, who is in charge of all their dance archives.

After closing her Company, Kirsova married Peter Bellew. They moved to Paris where he had a job with UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation). In January 1952, Kirsova and Peter returned to Australia with their two sons to visit Peter's parents in Melbourne. At a stopover at Sydney airport, Kirsova told reporters of her intention to re-open her Ballet Company. However conditions had not changed. The Borovansky Ballet was having a record breaking tour of all Australian States and New Zealand, under the sponsorship of J C Williamsons. They were playing to packed houses every night. Kirsova therefore abandoned her plans for a comeback.

Kirsova died in a London Clinic in 1962.

When I began research for my biography of Peggy Sager, I interviewed Helene France, who danced with Peggy in the Kirsova, Borovansky and Metropolitan Ballet Companies. She said 'Please include a lot about Kirsova. No-one knows about her. Everyone thinks that ballet in Australia began with Borovansky'. I think I did her justice. My chapter on Kirsova and her company is the largest chapter in my book. It also contains information about her which is not in any other book.

- John Hood

[www.bookfinder.com](http://www.bookfinder.com) lists second-hand copies of *Pioneering Ballet in Australia* as currently being available from De Capo Music at 112a Glebe Point Road and from Louella Kerr Books at 139 St Johns Road. *Peggy Sager, Prima Ballerina* is available from Gleebooks, 49 Glebe Point Road.

## GLEBE & THE ARTS

### The 15th Annual Glebe Music Festival, 7 to 28 November 2004

We have more details now about the Music Festival concerts. These are shown on the pink booking form enclosed with this *Bulletin*.

If you have already booked or do not intend booking, would you please give the Booking Form to someone else who may be interested in coming to the Glebe Music Festival.

Volunteers are still needed to serve afternoon tea on Sunday 7 November at the 2.30pm concert at the Great Hall in exchange for a free ticket. Please contact Ted McIntosh on 9746 7738 if you can help.

### Hunter Baillie Spring Festival of Music

Hunter Baillie Memorial Presbyterian Church, Annandale, proudly presents its eleventh Spring Festival of Music season, with proceeds going to the restoration of its historic 1890 organ.

**Sunday, 14 November at 3.00 pm**

**The Song Company directed by Roland Peelman**

Unreserved seats \$25.00. Concession \$20.00.

Please see the website for further details:

<http://www.users.bigpond.com/hunterbaillie/2004%20Season.htm>

### Welcome to new members

The following people were accepted at the October Management Committee meetings. We look forward to seeing them at future Glebe Society functions.

- Robert Baker
- Rhonda House
- Luke McDermott
- Anne-Marie Swan
- Susan West

### Volunteers needed for the Glebe Street Fair - Sunday 21 November

Can you spare an hour or two to help on our stall? We will be selling Raffle Tickets and Hessian Bags, and encouraging people to become Society members. Ring Liz on 9518 6186 to volunteer.



### Environmentally friendly Glebe Point Road hessian bags

The Glebe Society Hessian bags are now on sale. They cost \$8.50 each if you buy one or two, and \$8 each if you buy three or more (give them to your friends).

Bags are available at all Glebe Society functions and from the Society's Stall at the Glebe Street Fair. But don't wait until then - ring Fay Mander Jones on 9552 4172 straight away with your order.



### Letter to the Society

... from our latest Life Membership and Society Commendation recipients ...

Ted and I thank the Glebe Society for the awards we received. It is an honour for us both. The Glebe Society has enriched our lives. We are fortunate that the Society has helped shape Glebe and make it a better place than it otherwise would have been.

- Alison McKeown

# News and Notes

## Thirsty Thursdays

All members are invited to meet for dinner in Glebe on the first Thursday of each month, to meet and eat with other people who live in Glebe.

The next 'Thirsty Thursday' dinner is on 4 November at The Nags Head, in St Johns Road. No bookings are needed – just turn up at 7pm. We pay for our own meals and there is no BYOG.

We will have a break in December and January. We will meet again at the Nags Head on Thursday 3 February.

## Finalists for the Glebe City of Sydney Business Award:

- \* Ancient Britain Hotel (Bar)
- \* Phoenix Rising Books (Book & Newsagent)
- \* Cafe Fish (Cafe)
- \* Mags of Glebe (Fashion Store)
- \* Urban Steel (Fashion Store)
- \* F Galluzzo & Sons (Fresh Food)
- \* Glebe Quality Meats (Fresh Food)
- \* Stephen Baker - Fine Patisserie (Fresh Food)
- \* The Life & Balance Centre (Health & Fitness Centre)
- \* Aviweb Printers (Marketing Services)
- \* Sonic Promotions Pty Ltd (Marketing Services)
- \* Raine & Horne Glebe (Service Business)

The Awards are being presented on Monday 1 Nov 2004. We will let you know who the winners are.

## Who Lived in Your Street?

The winning entry will be announced at our Christmas Party on Friday 3 December.

## Historic Houses Trust leaves Lyndhurst

The Historic Houses Trust has moved to the Mint, 10 Macquarie Street, Sydney. Their phone number is 8239 2288.

## Shopping Trolleys

We have some narrow lanes in Glebe and they seem to be a popular deposit area for supermarket trolleys.

Use the nation-wide trolley tracker number on the back of the Bulletin (1800 641 497) to report the whereabouts of trolleys belonging to most major stores, including Big W, Coles, K-Mart, Target and Woolworths. Ring Bi-Lo at Broadway on 9281 4511 about their trolleys.

## Sydney Open 2004

The Historic Houses Trust presents for the fifth time Sydney Open, an amazing day of architectural adventure to be held on **Sunday 7th November 2004**.

This one-day walking adventure is ideal for those interested in discovering Sydney and its architecture. A Sydney Open 2004 general pass gives you access to 43 unique buildings.

More info: [www.hht.net.au](http://www.hht.net.au)

Box office: 1300 885 014 (during business hours)

## Problems with Parking or Traffic?

The contact person at the City of Sydney for matters relating to the placement of parking meters is Lynsey Green. Her phone number is 9265 9175 and her email address is [lgreen@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au](mailto:lgreen@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au).

If you have any other questions or problems relating to traffic or parking, contact Colin Warne on 9265 9362 or at [cwarne@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au](mailto:cwarne@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au):

## City of Sydney Councillors

### Lord Mayor

Clover MOORE MLA

### Councillors

Philip BLACK

Verity FIRTH

Chris HARRIS

Marcelle HOFF

Robyn KEMMIS

Michael LEE

Shayne MALLARD

John MCINERNEY

Tony POOLEY

Phone the Town Hall, 1300 651 301, for contact details.

**DA Watch:** Go to the homepage of the City of Sydney, [www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au](http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au). Then look at Development in the City to see a list of ALL current DAs on display.



## Forest Lodge Public School

*Home of The Glebe Society Archives*

Principal: Mrs Elva Salter Phone 9660 3530



# For your diary ...

**Tuesday 2 November**, 6pm+ - Glebe Night. Call Glebe Chamber of Commerce, 9552 1546, for details

**Wednesday 3 November**, 7pm, Glebe Point Residents' Meeting, Benledi.

**Thursday 4 November**, 7pm - 'Thirsty Thursday' - Dinner at the Nags Head Hotel, St Johns Road.

**7 - 28 November**, 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Glebe Music Festival. See page 3 and pink booking form.

**Wednesday 10 November**, 7.30pm - Glebe Society Management Committee Meeting, The Old Fire Station, 115 Mitchell Street. Note change of address. All members welcome.

**Sunday 21 November** - Glebe Street Fair. Volunteers needed for Glebe Society Stall.

**Wednesday 24 November**, 7pm - Eastern Precinct Residents' Group - Old Fire Station, 115 Mitchell Street.

**Friday 3 December**, 6 - 8pm - Glebe Society's Christmas Drinks - Glebe Rowing Club, Ferry Road. See page 9 and green booking form.

**Tuesday 7 December**, 6pm+ - Glebe Night. Call Glebe Chamber of Commerce, 9552 1546, for details.

**Wednesday 18 December**, 7.30pm - Glebe Society Management Committee Meeting, The Old Fire Station, 115 Mitchell Street. All members welcome.

## Contacting The Glebe Society

### Mail

All correspondence should be addressed to:

The Glebe Society Inc  
PO Box 100, Glebe NSW 2037

### Website

The Society has a growing website ([www.glebesociety.org.au](http://www.glebesociety.org.au)) for the information of members and anyone with an interest in Glebe.

The website will only flourish if members use the site. Send contributions or comments to [webmaster@glebesociety.org.au](mailto:webmaster@glebesociety.org.au)

### The Bulletin

We are glad to publish letters or articles on any matters of interest to Glebe, any topic raised in the *Bulletin*, or any issues relating to the Glebe Society. Write to the address above or email [editor@glebesociety.org.au](mailto:editor@glebesociety.org.au)

### Disclaimer

Views expressed in this *Bulletin* are not necessarily those of the Glebe Society Inc.

### Bulletin Deadline

The next edition of the Bulletin will be published early in December. The deadline for contributions is **Saturday 4 December**.

## The Glebe Society Inc Established 1969

### Management Committee:

President (Acting)	Andrew Craig	95661746
Vice President	Bob Armstrong	96604189
Immediate Past President		
Secretary	Liz Simpson-Booker	95186186
Treasurer (Acting)	Andrew Wood	

### Committee Members:

John Buckingham	96607780	Sue Ingram	96928534
Tony Larkum	96607030	David Mander-Jones	95524172
Hilary Wise	96605848		

### Sub-committee Convenors:

All sub-committee convenors are *ex officio* members of the Management Committee

Arts, Culture and Media	Sue Ingram	96928534
Bays and Foreshores	Mark Dent	95662511
Environment	Andrew Wood	
Glebe Point Road Revitalisation	Jan Wilson	96602698
Heritage	David Mander Jones	95524172
Infrastructure Defect Reporting	Margaret Sheppard	96604121
Membership	Kevin Treloar	96606720
Parks & Open Spaces		
Planning	Neil Macindoe	96600208
Transport and Traffic	Chris Hallam	96603670

**Adopt-a-Park Contacts:** *Foley Park* - Bobbie Burke (9692 0343)

*Kirsova* - Fay & David Mander Jones

### Other Contacts:

Archivist	Lyn Milton	96607930
Bulletin Editor	Edwina Doe	96607066
Historian	Max Solling	96601160
History of the Glebe Society	Jeanette Knox	96607781
Liaison with CityRags	Bob Armstrong	96604189
Liaison with FLAGG	Jan Wilson	96602698
Publicity	Sue Ingram	96928534
Social events	Jeanette Knox	96607781
Website	Cynthia Jones	96602451

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The GLEBE SOCIETY Inc  
PO Box 100 Glebe 2037



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## MEMBERSHIP OF THE GLEBE SOCIETY

<b>Individual member</b>	<b>\$45</b>
<b>Joint</b> (2 people, one address)	<b>\$55</b>
<b>Household</b> (more than 2 adults and/or children, one address)	<b>\$60</b>
<b>Concession</b> (student or pensioner)	<b>\$20</b>
<b>Business or institution</b>	<b>\$110</b>

Write to PO Box 100, Glebe, 2037 or phone the Secretary, Liz Simpson-Booker, on 9518 6186.

If you have a matter that you would like to discuss with the Management Committee, please phone the Secretary.

## COMMUNITY CONTACTS

**Place Manager, Glebe, Forest Lodge & Camperdown:**  
Jenny Underwood, 9298 3191 (direct), or 0414 617 048.

**email:** [junderwood@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au](mailto:junderwood@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au)

**Glebe Town Hall Office:** 9298 3190, 8am-6pm Mon-Fri

**Sydney City Council Customer Service**

**Telephone (24 hours):** 1300 651 301

**email:** [council@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au)

**website:** [www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au](http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au)

**Dumped Shopping trolleys:** Bi-Lo - 9281 4511. Most other major stores - 1800 641 497.

**Aircraft noise:** 1800 802 584

