



Reports to the 2006 AGM

President's Report - 2005/6



Bob Armstrong

Welcome to the 37th Annual General Meeting of the Glebe Society. A special welcome to Councillor Robyn Kemmis, and to representatives of the Chamber of Commerce and other community groups - Glebe Point Residents' Group, CoGG and BCC (the Chair of FLAG has sent apologies) and members of the local press.

Your presence reinforces that this year has been one of consultation, cooperation and consolidation. We can see this also in the success of what was commenced last year when the Glebe Society took initiating roles in the formation of coalitions of community and business groups within our village and across the City. The robust organisational structure of the Society is at the core of these successful initiatives. Here, I wish to pay tribute to colleagues on the Management Committee and members of its Sub-committees, most especially their convenors, whose excellent work for their committees has spread into broader areas that increasingly face the Society. There are now some ten Sub-committees and detailed reports for these have been provided [as inserts with Bulletins 7/2006 and 8/2006 - Ed]. I will extract a few points from some as I go along, but I will not rehearse their detail as you will have a chance to quiz the convenors later. One or two new or changed titles appear and this reflects our response to new demands. *Glebe against Global Warming* is the name of our newest Sub-committee - newly born but off to a great start with an enthusiastic convenor in Bill McCarthy

setting up some ambitious goals. The preview of Al Gore's film *An Inconvenient Truth* on Tuesday 5 September is an interesting start - I recommend it.

Before proceeding further, I would like to pass on to you all, the good wishes of Liz Simpson-Booker, our Secretary who has been on leave of absence these few months - and so sorely missed. But she will be back in Glebe soon. In her absence, the job has fallen to Anne Fraser. Anne, our deepest appreciation for all you have done as Acting Secretary; and whilst I am speaking of Management - to Bruce Davis, the Treasurer who with my collusion and persuasion has converted the role of Vice-President from sinecure to saviour - my sincere thanks.

Thus during this last year much has been achieved on a broad front for the community, and the future is the clearer for it and looking bright.

The role of the City of Sydney Council has been crucial. Strong support for the community has come in word and deed from the Lord Mayor and Councillors, especially Robyn Kemmis and Verity Firth. The Glebe Society can take comfort in this, the more so for the hard work that went into the Strategic Plan for Glebe and Forest Lodge 2006 to 2011 and Action Plan for 2006. This document not only informed the Council of the aspirations of a broad cross-section of the community, but offered solutions. It has guided the numerous planning and design proposals that Council has put forward lately. I will outline some of these (but see also *Glebe Society Bulletins 6/2006 and 7/2006* - what would we do for communication without the efforts of Ed the Ed and her team?).

Consolidation of CoGG (Coalition of Glebe Groups) over the last twelve months has added to the effectiveness of this process.

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Moving forward with the Business and Resident Communities, CoGG has become a principal point of contact with the Council and its officers. Its monthly meetings are regularly attended by the City's Project Development Officer (Glenn Wallace) and our Place Manager (Baharak Sahebkhitiari). Baharak also attends the monthly meetings of the Glebe Society's Management Committee and in so many ways cements the communications between the Council and the community. CoGG acts as a focus for consultation amongst the community and relevant authorities. With the guidance of the first two Chairs, Anton Crouch and now Bruce Davis, it has spearheaded submissions on the Upgrade of Glebe Point Road and has responded to the recently released Draft 2006 Local Action Plan North West. The LAP has captured much of the views, hopes and concerns of a wide cross section of our community. This is an important document and the Glebe Society is currently formulating a response in the context of its Strategic Plan. In a similar vein, we have been kept busy with other major initiatives of Council - the Draft Glebe Conservation Area Study Report and Glebe and Forest Lodge Urban Design Study - Draft Masterplan Report. These are in the hands of our Planning and the Heritage Sub-committees (see reports).

From its inception, the most recent coalition, BCC (Blackwattle Cove Coalition) has had strong representation from the Glebe Society. It brings together the communities on either side of Blackwattle Bay and Wentworth Park - two areas in high focus for 2006 with promises of remedial action by both Council and the Wentworth Park Sporting Complex Trust. Anne Fraser has done wonders as Convenor, coming to terms with the obstructions that some Government authorities are wont to raise.

But what of the events of 2005/06 seen through the Glebe Society lens?

A survey:

- Realisation of the efforts of some 30 years for Bicentennial Park and the Foreshores/*Bellevue* upgrades when Stage 2, the strip between Johnson's Canal and Northcote Road, was opened in May by the Lord Mayor. The likely completion of the Foreshore as it extends to the Boathouse will be

in late September. Delays to the completion of *Bellevue* have been overcome despite the need to replace much of the slate roofing. A Christmas opening is a strong possibility. If progress seems slow to some, then much of this can be put down to unforeseen problems. This is the case particularly for the Parks and *Bellevue* where deficiencies in work done under a previous council have contributed. A program of three-weekly inspections has proceeded through the year. I have nothing but praise for the cooperation and professional approach of the Council (Robyn Kemmis has been on the job from day one) and its officers.

- Allocation of funds (\$12m) and formulation of plans and timetables for the upgrade of Glebe Point Road. Some heady and imaginative concepts have been put forward by the Glebe Society and CoGG that are currently being digested by Council's Planning team (see *Bulletin 6/2006*). A tussle between imagination and practicality will play out – but let's not miss this great opportunity to help create a stimulating and grand avenue.
- Foley Park – a draft plan has been exhibited, funds have been allocated, comments are being assessed and a commencement date is set for early 2007. High praise to Bobbie Burke and her group who have worked so well with Council officers and consultants.
- Max Factor Building (431 Glebe Point Road) became part of the University of Sydney Campus to accommodate Clinical Research within the Faculty of Medicine - a much happier outcome than the long-threatened overdevelopment that was so successfully opposed by concerted community action.
- A stop to the development of the Tram Sheds - work in progress.
- *The Abbey* - a compromise waiting for a future!
- *Lyndhurst* – a happy resolution, when matched with the purchase of *The Retreat* by a Glebe Soc member.
- Council's land acquisitions in the Orphan School Creek Corridor and bushland regeneration (congratulations FRROGS); and land adjacent to the Light Rail viaduct in Federal Park – in line with our policy for greater access to open space.

- *Art and About* - a great success that brought so many aspects of Glebe together from Broadway Shopping Centre to St Johns Church Chimes. A follow up - *Facing Glebe* is an exciting program that Sue Ingram and her team and Council officers are putting together. It is an outstanding response to the idea of an annual art event in Glebe Point Road that will generate a lively atmosphere and further invigorate Glebe.

There have been many wins – we are well-placed to benefit from the “City of Villages” concept, and reasonably protected in the City of Cities Plan.

What are the challenges for the next few years?

- Overdevelopment in the Bays - facile solutions producing major problems! The Bays & Foreshores Sub-committee is steeled for the next round of negotiations at the SHFA level.
- Bringing together the neighbouring communities – across the Bays, across the parks, across the busy roads. The Glebe Society is strongly represented in BCC which is addressing many of the issues. Concerted opposition to the White Bay Cement Terminal has led to proposals for a 4-Bay Coalition.
- Greater respect for the diversity of our community. Public Housing - its contributions to a whole society – its management – the special nature of the Glebe Estate – as a community and an architectural gem.
- Impact of POPE (Place of Public Entertainment) Licences and new Liquor Laws on community well being.

We look forward to continuing close contact with the City Council in progressing some of the following immediate projects:

- continued support for Centipede and other initiatives designed to help the young people of Glebe to reach their full potential
- development of a community house, associated with Glebe Town Hall
- enlisting the support of the Department of Housing in improving the properties under its control
- improved public transport – Light Rail extension

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What of the way forward for the Society itself – its long-term plans for major achievements? Some of the questions we should be addressing are, how do we -

- celebrate our history? Some excellent work has already been done by the Heritage Committee and plans for our 40th Birthday are in the hands of Mavis McCarthy et al.
- broaden our membership, especially amongst the younger residents – how are we doing here?
- make best use of our Website – provide financial and professional assistance
- lobby effectively all levels of government to ensure the repair and ongoing maintenance of the Glebe Estate.

Many of these questions and more are addressed in the Sub-committee reports and in the Strategic Plan for Glebe and Forest Lodge 2006 to 2011 (Partnerships to a Vibrant Community).

- **Bob Armstrong, President**

The Coalition of Glebe Groups (CoGG)

CoGG was formed as a way to present a united front to the City Council on issues relating to Glebe and Forest Lodge. Despite the inevitable tensions resulting from the different priorities of the various community groups and the Chamber of Commerce it has managed to do this. And if the frequent positive comments on CoGG by the Lord Mayor and other councillors are an indication, it has been quite successful.

The Glebe Society is represented on CoGG by the President, Bob Armstrong, and the Vice-president (me). I succeeded Anton Crouch as chair of CoGG in April. (The chair rotates and we expect a representative of the Chamber of Commerce to take over in the New Year.)

An important aspect of each CoGG meeting is the exchange with Council staff - usually the Neighbourhood Services Centre Manager, Baharak Sahebkhitiari, and Glenn Wallace who is a project officer based in the city - and sometimes councillors. These exchanges give us the



Bruce Davis

opportunity to express a view on what is (or is not) going on, and keep up to date with Council activities.

CoGG also provides a useful forum in which non-Council issues can be discussed – for example the local police area commander and the Central Sydney divisional manager of the Department of Housing have attended meetings.

Some issues we have dealt with in the past year are discussed below.

Marketing of Glebe

Although this is a Chamber of Commerce project, various aspects have been mulled over in CoGG. The Chamber received a grant from the City Council for the development by consultants of a marketing strategy which aims to promote Glebe as both a shopping and tourist destination. Results include the *Glebe Village 2006 Visitors Guide and Map*. CoGG will continue to take an interest as we seek to capitalise on the gains we expect to flow from the Glebe Point Road upgrade.

Interpretive signs

CoGG wrote to the Lord Mayor in June suggesting that explanatory signs or plaques be installed in places of interest or of historic significance. A program covering the whole of the Council's area is now being developed and the Glebe community will be consulted about what should be done here.

Art and About and Public Art in Glebe

CoGG has been a useful forum for Sue Ingram and Glenn Wallace in developing and coordinating and these projects.

Glebe Point Road upgrade

The preparation of a response to Council's initial concept for the upgrade of Glebe Point Road was a major challenge for CoGG, both because of the timeframe in which the response had to be prepared and the complex issues involved.

CoGG took the view that, while much of what the council's officers proposed was welcome, the proposal failed to take advantage of a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to bring about significant change. CoGG believed we should aim for a much more pedestrian friendly street in which people will take priority over cars. While its submission suggested possible means of achieving this objective, it was not intended to present a final solution. CoGG's submission is essentially a visionary document that aims to get pedestrian friendly Glebe Point Road on the political agenda. CoGG was aware that there many practical and technical difficulties, but decided that these should not deter it from pursuing such an exciting goal.

Local Action Plan North-west

While the draft LAP was not tabled until the 2006-07 financial year, readers may be interested to know that CoGG generally endorses the plan and will present a detailed response on behalf of its members, including the Society. As part of its analysis of the draft LAP, CoGG reviewed progress to wards achieving the "wish list" it presented to Council in April last year. As I pointed out in Bulletin 7/2006 (p6), it is very satisfying to see how many items on the list have been achieved or are well under way.

- **Bruce Davis, Chair, CoGG**

An earlier report from the BCC was accidentally published last month. Here is the latest report - Ed

Blackwattle Cove Coalition and Wentworth Park

The Blackwattle Cove Coalition was formed in January of this year. It is a coalition of Pyrmont, Ultimo and Glebe representatives from many community groups. Blackwattle Cove is an important area of overlap of these three inner city suburbs.

Stage 1

Since we began we have completed Stage 1.

1. We have formulated:

- clear documentation of who, what and why we are.
- a matrix identifying all the main areas in which we wish to see improvements and the authorities responsible for each. These are also prioritised.
- a Constructive Dreaming, written by Bruce, which is a very positive word picture of everyday living around Blackwattle Cove some time in the future.

2. With the help of Susie Cleary and Bruce Davis we have made contact with NSW Maritime, City of Sydney Council, Sydney Harbour Foreshore, Sandra Nori, and the Fish Markets. They are aware of our existence and our concerns and there is some form of communication established.

City of Sydney Council has been the most responsive to our concerns. They have agreed to meet Wentworth Park Trust half way with the cost of replacing the perimeter fence with see-through fencing around the Sporting Complex, and in so doing to increase the parking space within the complex and remove all car parking from the grassed surfaces. They are also committed to creating a new playground area and many other useful maintenance projects to try to upgrade Wentworth Park in the short term. A feedback link between council and Roger Mackell, who walks through the park daily, has been established to communicate everyday maintenance concerns that have plagued the park for years.

4. We have studied the NSW Maritime Master Plan and expressed our concern over the continuity of the foreshore walk and how to marry a working harbour with increased resident access. Together we hope to work towards a satisfactory conclusion to this dilemma.

5. Another big concern at present is the coal bunker site and the messy corner of harbour that joins the bunker site to the Fish markets.

Stage 2

Where to from here? As Expressions of Interest are soon to be sought for some of the foreshore sites along Blackwattle Bay it is vital that the community have some influence. How to maintain the communication lines with the authorities and the BCC and how to get all the authorities responsible for this area to work together to formulate some over all holistic approach to this very important and much neglected area are the questions. These are the next tasks to be addressed.

- Anne Fraser, Convenor, Blackwattle Bay Coalition

The Glebe Society Archives

Regrettably only a small quantity of work has been achieved in the past year (despite resolutions to change!). Some work has proceeded on the index to the Glebe Society Bulletin which assists with swift dating of events in relation to inquiries. The initial work on this commenced some years ago but I have revisited the project based on the types of inquiries I am receiving.

The Archivist has also attended to requests for information by the members.

I am grateful to Forest Lodge School who make suitable premises available for housing the collection, to Andrew Wood for his assistance in collecting and delivering records and to all members who appreciate the importance of the Archives.

- Lyn Milton, Archivist

Disclaimer

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