



Another Conservation Area at Risk

by Ian Stephenson, Planning Convenor



The existing house at 43 Avona St Glebe (left) and the proposed house right (images: Ian Stephenson and Scott Wilson)

On 19 May the Sydney City Council Local Planning Panel approved a development at 43 Avona Ave Glebe. There were 69 objections including one by the Society. Many concerns were raised but, in this article, I will focus on one aspect of the assessment process, the application of the design principles in the Development Control Plan (DCP) in relation to the new building.



Figure 1: Detail from c. 1940 aerial photography by Milton Kent marked up to show No. 43 Avona Ave (source: SLNSW)

Background

Avona Ave was created by the subdivision of the Strathmore Estate in 1894 and 1899 and the Avona Estate in 1899. Avona Ave, and 22 Federation period houses, were built on their gardens. The large

Victorian houses remained on the western side of the street until the 1960s when they were demolished and replaced by home unit blocks.

At this time residents, the Glebe Society and the National Trust worked to provide statutory protection for Glebe's heritage. Three important landmarks were: rezoning by Leichardt Council to stop unit blocks from being built on the ridge lines (a direct result of the Glebe Society and Balmain Association putting forward candidates under the ticket *Campaign for a Better Council* at the 1971 elections); the passage of the NSW Heritage Act in 1977; and the inclusion of Glebe as an Urban Conservation Area in Leichardt Council's 1984 Local Environment Plan (LEP).

Glebe's conservation areas have existed for nearly 40 years. They are the product of a highly developed process of research and analysis. Their objectives are well formulated, the constituent elements logically categorised and the management principles clearly articulated.

The Site

Number 43 Avona Ave is a single storey Federation house built about 1914 on the Avona Estate. It is at the end of a line of 21 Federation houses built as part of

the same subdivision. It is located at the termination of the cul-de-sac on a rock outcrop about 3 metres higher than street level and is oriented perpendicular to its neighbours.

Whilst the footprint and building envelope of 43 Avona Ave have survived intact its detailing has been changed including painting the external walls, altering the windows, enclosing the veranda and removing the chimneys. It is for this reason that it is classified as a Neutral building while the row of 21 more intact houses which adjoin it to the Northeast are Contributory.

The 1960s home unit blocks which adjoin it to the Southwest and Northwest are classified as Detracting.

The Application (43 Avona Ave: D/2020/1453)

The application as approved is to build a house on four levels (a roof terrace, providing a fifth level, has been deleted). The front door, entrance hall, foyer, lift, passage and storage are on the street level of Avona Ave (a little under a metre above this is a large patio and pool). Above the Avona Ave level are three more storeys.

Height

A number of residents queried the height of the building. Measured from Avona Ave it is 14.55 metres which does not comply with the height control as the LEP allows for a height of 12 metres.

Council's report explains that 'the Sydney LEP 2012 defines 'building height' as the vertical distance from ground level (existing) to the highest point of the building. In this instance, ground level relates to the site and not Avona Ave.'

This does seem an odd way of calculating height when the proposed house starts at the street level of Avona Ave and not where the old house starts, which is 2.7 metres higher.

Design

The heritage provisions of the LEP are contained in Section 5.10. They include conserving the heritage significance

of heritage conservation areas, including associated fabric, settings and views and they mandate that the consent authority must, before granting consent consider the effect of the proposed development on the heritage significance of the item or area concerned.

The DCP provides detailed guidance as to how the statutory requirements of the LEP can be effected.

The critical question with this application is what does the DCP say about the design of a new building that involves demolishing a Neutral building which, on one side, adjoins a continuous row of 21 Contributory buildings (whose construction sequence it is part of) and on the other a group of Detracting buildings?

The DCP states that the

demolition of neutral buildings will only be considered where it can be demonstrated that:

(a) restoration of the building is not reasonable; and

(b) the replacement building will not compromise the heritage significance of the heritage conservation area.

If the demolition of the Neutral building is considered acceptable it says:

Development within a heritage conservation area is to ... address the heritage conservation area statement of significance and respond sympathetically to the topography and landscape and the type, siting, form, height, bulk, roofscape, scale, materials and details of adjoining or nearby contributory buildings.

The DCP is also clear about not using Detracting buildings as a precedent for development in a conservation zone when it states that

detracting buildings are buildings that are intrusive to a heritage conservation area because of inappropriate scale, bulk, setbacks, setting, design or materials. They do not represent a key period of significance and detract from the character of a heritage conservation area.

This all seems very sensible. Under certain circumstances you can demolish a Neutral building in a conservation area but only if the replacement building responds sympathetically to the neighbouring Contributory buildings.

The pertinent management principles for the Glebe Point Heritage Conservation Area are that development is to:

(b) Respond to and complement contributory buildings within heritage conservation areas

(c) Maintain the prominence of the ridgeline as the highest point visible from public streets and open spaces to ensure the topography continues to be a major determinant of the local character

(h) Retain and enhance the heritage character of the area.

The management principles recommended in the Glebe Point Conservation Area study say in respect of the Detracting buildings adjoining 43 Avona Ave, 'post-war units have a major impact which needs to be minimised'.

Thus, the DCP and associated studies, provide very clear advice about the design of a new building at 43 Avona Ave. It says the new building must respond sympathetically (in this context, 'sympathetically' means sensitively and appropriately) to the roofscapes, window proportions, form, height, bulk scale and materials of its Contributory neighbours. It does not say that, because the development also adjoins Detracting buildings, it can be like them. This would be a very odd way to manage a heritage conservation area.

Heritage Impact Statements (HIS)

In order to help understand how a development will impact on a heritage conservation area the DCP requires a Heritage Impact Statement to be submitted.

Continued on p. 3

The Toxteth Estate Walk

Sunday 11 July, 10.30 am-12.30 pm

*The Toxteth Estate, Jubilee Park and Orphan School Creek
with Max Solling*

including a special viewing of the interior of Toxteth Park House and archival exhibition, courtesy of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan.

Register through Eventbrite:

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/walk-the-toxteth-estate-with-max-solling-tickets-157578725209>

Members: \$20

Non-members: \$25

Numbers are limited, so book now

See p. 8 for more details about the 2021 Walks program

'Another Conservation Area at Risk' – continued from p. 2

The Heritage Impact Statement is to address:

(a) the contribution which the building makes to the heritage significance of the heritage conservation area;

(b) the options that were considered when arriving at a preferred development and the reasons for choosing the preferred option;

(c) the impact of the proposed development on the heritage conservation area; and the compatibility of the development with conservation policies contained within the Sydney Heritage Inventory Report.

This all seems very logical, there is a set of principles and clear criteria for the design of a new building in a conservation area and an HIS must be prepared which looks at options and impact.

The HIS for 43 Avona Avenue includes an excellent history of the site, and in many ways is ably done, but seems less rigorous when it comes to exploring the options that were considered when arriving at the preferred development, the reasons for choosing this option and the impact of the proposed development on the heritage conservation area. It seeks to turn off the clear directions of the DCP about development responding sympathetically to the type, siting, form, height, bulk, roofscape, scale, materials and details of adjoining contributory buildings by stating that

the single storey houses along Avona Avenue give few clues as to the treatment of a new dwelling and we do not consider it necessary to look to the Federation or Inter War style for the replacement house. This would likely end up a pastiche of the styles and there is no reason not to look to a contemporary form and style for an infill development in the conservation area.

The street of 21 houses built at the same time as 43 Avona Ave offers quite a lot of clues, particularly about roofscape, fenestration, scale and details.

There is a body of literature about how to design a new building in heritage conservation areas.

The publication, [*Design in context: guidelines for infill development in the historic environment*](#) by the NSW Heritage Office and the Royal Australian Institute of Architects NSW, provides excellent examples. It demonstrates that you can echo traditional forms in contemporary design without it being pastiche (i.e., something purely imitative of another period). One of its case studies is a house designed by Ellen Woolley and Peter Tonkin at the corner of Ryan St and Lilyfield Rd Lilyfield.



Tonkin and Woolley House, Lilyfield (source: 'Design in Context', NSW Heritage Office and the Royal Australian Institute of Architects NSW)

This house designed by Woolley and Tonkin in Lilyfield is at the end of a street of mixed character that slopes down the hill. The house utilises the sandstone rock outcrop as a feature. The roof form relates to its neighbours when viewed from the most commonly used vantage point, but from the front view it departs from traditional forms to admit northern light into the house.

The conclusion in the HIS that

the replacement house is a high quality piece of contemporary architecture that responds well to its context with well articulated and well detailed facades and sensible and well considered plan

form to reduce its apparent bulk and scale. The design is a very good response to the site and the local context,

seems to miss the point that the form of the replacement house needs to be sympathetic to its Contributory, rather than its Detracting neighbours.

One of the problems with the process is that the HISs are commissioned by the applicant who may not be seeking a full assessment of the heritage impact of their development but rather a set of reasons as to why it complies with the DCP.

Design excellence

Another section of the LEP (Section 6.21) relates to design excellence. Its provisions require Council to have regard to any heritage issues and streetscape constraints, the bulk, massing and modulation of buildings and the impact on any special character area in determining whether a development exhibits design excellence.

The Architect's view of how the design addresses local character

At the Local Planning Panel meeting Mathew Young, the project architect, was asked to explain how the design related to the local character statement – to explain the design of ‘this particular building and its character in this location’. He said,

we felt that we should take a horizontal approach where we have a contemporary in-situ concrete base that's recessed, then we have a dominant brick volume on level 1 which comes up to the parapet level which was important to reference the surrounding brick architecture. The brick references the surrounding character quite a lot and we are expecting to detail that in a contemporary manner with different articulation around the entry sequence in the courtyard and then we use metal on the top and recessed it back to give it a recessive volume on the top. It also references, some of it obviously not in the immediate area, that kind of Deco brick architecture that you find around in the area with brick masonry volumes and metal detailing.

Heritage conservation areas are about conserving significant heritage. This is identified by studies and reflected in the character statements and principles in the DCP. In the case of 43 Avona Ave the significant heritage is the 21 Contributory Federation houses it adjoins and the design should in some way echo elements of these. It does not. It has a flat roof not a pitched one, long horizontal windows, not vertical ones and large areas of glass and looks bulky. The middle storey is thrust forward and it alludes to Art Deco design, although no such buildings exist in the street, Art Deco is not part of Avona Ave's heritage.

Council's Recommendation

Council staff made the following recommendations to the panel:

(A) The proposal is generally consistent with the relevant objectives and controls of the Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012 and Sydney Development Control Plan 2012.

(B) The proposal exhibits a suitable built form, design and materiality in the context of the heritage conservation area and is appropriate within the streetscape.

In their report they noted that:

The new development responds positively to the character of nearby dwellings and residential flat buildings, striking a balance of bulk and scale as the streetscape transitions from 4 storeys to single storey dwellings. The form of the infill development appropriately complies with the relevant LEP controls, including height of buildings and FSR.

The proposal relates appropriately to the existing apartment buildings to the north and west and provides a 3-storey presentation within the Avona Avenue streetscape, creating a transition to the low-scale terraces. The proposal will not detract from the heritage conservation area and satisfies the objectives and provisions of the DCP with regard to height, bulk and scale.

The proposed development satisfies the [good design] requirements of Clause 6.21(4) of the Sydney LEP 2012.

The proposal presents an acceptable built form that is not out of character with the existing streetscape in so far that it is consistent with the scale of adjoining flat buildings with the same height and FSR controls, and as it is elevated above lower level terrace housing.

The Local Planning Panel

The discussion by the Local Planning Panel (the webcast can be heard at [City of Sydney Local Planning Panel - 19 May 2021](#)) seemed to imply that because the height control was different for 43 Avona Ave (twelve metres) compared to Numbers 1 to 41 Avona Ave (nine metres) this turned off the DCP and therefore the requirement that the design of the new building echo the roofscapes, window proportions, form, scale and materials of its Contributory neighbours did not apply.

This is not logical, there is no reason why a 12-metre-high contemporary building cannot reflect traditional elements in its neighbours as Tonkin and Woolley's Lilyfield house (Fig. 2) does.

Mr Steve Kennedy of the panel reflecting on the special design requirements for this site which is at the interface of the post-war units and the Contributory buildings said of the proposal:

It's actually an 'in your face' building. It's not a building which says I am at the interface and I will keep quiet about this out of respect ... I'm not sure that was what was intended with all the controls about Glebe. I think if it was in the [Land and Environment] Court there would be whole lot of negotiations to reach an outcome.

Mr Kennedy voted against Council's recommendation which was carried 3 to 1.

Conclusion

The result is unfortunate and the process frustrating. The Glebe Conservation Areas have well developed principles that where a Neutral building is replaced its successor must relate to its Contributory neighbours and the impact of Detracting buildings should be minimised.

The DCP provides some clear suggestions as to how a contemporary building can reflect traditional aspects of its Contributory neighbours and there is a body of literature about designing infill in historic environments.

The 12-metre height limit has been used to justify why the building does not need to be better mannered in terms of its Contributory neighbours but there is no reason why a 12-metre-high building cannot be

designed in a more sympathetic, and to quote Mr Kennedy, less 'in your face' way.

What is going wrong? Are the requirements of the heritage conservation zones being properly explained to applicants at pre-DA meetings? Do we need a process of commissioning HISs which is at arms-length from the applicant? Do the HISs need to be more rigorously critiqued? Is there a lack of heritage expertise on Local Planning Panels? Do Local Planning Panels need to be more courageous?

I hope, as we head to the September Council elections, our elected representatives will give some thought to these important questions.

Glebe's conservation zones were hard won – this remarkable place warrants them. Don't let them be eroded away bit by bit.

Glebe Society goes in to bat for the Bay

by Asa Wahlquist, Glebe Society President

The Community Consultative Committee for the current works on the new Sydney Fish Market has been expanded by one, to enable The Glebe Society to be a community representative.

Initially, the Society was overlooked and not appointed to the Committee. But after a letter to the Minister for Planning, Rob Stokes, pointing out the size of the Glebe Society, its history in leading the fight for the foreshore walk, and its effective representation of its members, the minister's office sent a letter stating the Department had endorsed Asa Wahlquist, from the Society, as a stakeholder representative.

The Committee meets monthly to discuss issues arising out of the current works on the new Fishmarket site. It has stakeholder reps from Sydney Secondary College, which is adjacent to the site, Dragon Boats NSW and Glebe Rowing Club, which use the waters of Blackwattle Bay, the residents of 84 Wentworth Park Rd, which is opposite the main gate to the development, Pymont Action Group, Blackwattle Bay Residents Group and the Coalition of Glebe Groups.

There are also three individual community representatives, John Faulkner, who has a long association with the Fishmarket and lives close by, Paul McGuirr, who has owned the Kauri Hotel for over 30 years, and Lindsay Charles, from Pymont. The representatives were appointed from a large number of applicants, some from far afield. The chair, David Johnson, said they wanted locals on the committee.

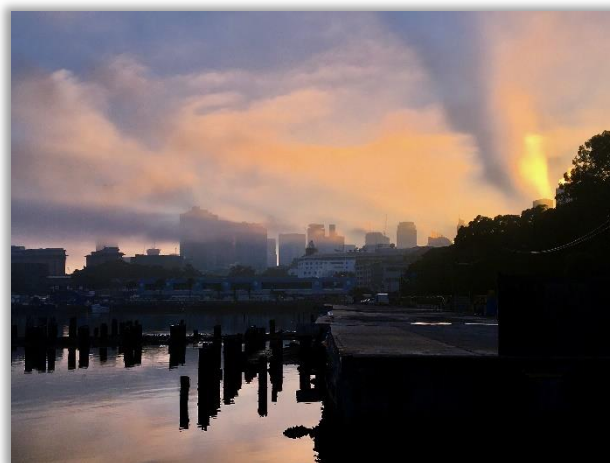
The first meeting was held on 12 March. It was well attended, with Deputy Lord Mayor of Sydney, Jess Scully, in attendance along with two representatives of Multiplex and two attendees from Infrastructure NSW.

Hansen Yuncken has completed the early stage. Most of the built infrastructure, including the wharves, has been removed, along with many of the piles which supported the wharves.

The main issues have been dust and noise complaints, although they did cease noisy work during exams at

Sydney Secondary College, at the request of the principal, Leiza Lewis. There has also been a problem with the silt boom, which is in place to catch pollutants disturbed by the removal of piles, which has been getting in the way of recreational boating.

David Maher, from Multiplex, said there is still work to be done removing piles and seawall revetment. Between 600 and 800 piles have been removed so far, with another 400 still to go.



Remaining piles at dawn in Blackwattle Bay. Between 600 and 800 piles have been removed so far, with another 400 still to go (photo: Judy Vergison)

The Glebe Society raised the question of pollution from heavy metal contaminants and other toxins in the mud, which will be disturbed by removing the piles. The Development Application for the Fishmarket reported:

Heavy metal, PAH (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons) and TRH (total petroleum hydrocarbon) contaminated sediments have been identified within the extent of the development site that were reported to exceed both low and high trigger value sediment quality guidelines protective of ecological communities. (E.I.S. 7.10.3 p. 156 [<https://tinyurl.com/44bu6bh8>]).

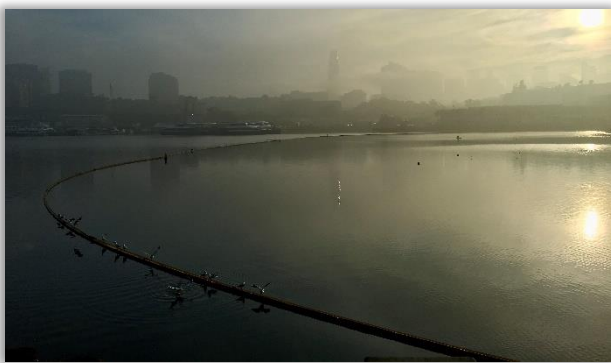
The heavy metals that exceed the high trigger values include Mercury, Lead, Zinc, Copper and Nickel, while Arsenic was also found (DA, Appendix 4, Figure 4B ¹)

The Glebe Society fears that disturbing these pollutants could threaten the 26 fish species and over 50 other organisms, including oysters, shrimp, limpets, sponges and algae, that live in the Bay. The Glebe Society requested a briefing on how the silt boom will work, and what water quality tests will be taken.

The remaining piles will be removed in May and June, after which new piles will be installed.

Mr Maher said Multiplex will be putting in some test piles, using 'silent' sheet piling technology from Japan.

Dredging is not permitted under the consent conditions of the DA, but 'silt reprofiling', i.e., removing silt from the site, is permitted.



Seagulls are enjoying their new fish-spotting vantage point on the silt boom intended to contain toxic contaminants stirred up during the building of the new Sydney Fish Market. (photo: Judy Vergison)

The strata body of 84 Wentworth Park Rd has commissioned an independent noise impact

assessment for their property, which is not yet available.

The Rowers, Dragon Boaters and Ms Lewis, whose students are active rowers, were all concerned about the number of barge and tug movements in and out of the Bay. Mr Maher said the conditions of consent limited barge movements to nominated hours, and they must operate within a Vessel Traffic Management Plan.

Jess Scully was particularly interested in how the works would affect Bridge Rd, and the impact on cyclists. (The Bridge Rd pop-up cycleway ends before the Fishmarket site, so cyclists ride out on the roadway).

The works will clearly impact traffic, including cyclists and pedestrians, along Bridge Rd.

Despite the intention to bring a lot of the building materials in and out by barge, there will be many truck movements onto the site through the entrance at the end of Wentworth Park Rd. It is hard to see how they will manage to conduct all their works on the remaining narrow wharf, without spilling out onto Bridge Rd. The Glebe Society will be keeping a close eye on the impact of the works on Bridge Rd, on the effect of the noise and dust on local residents, and problems with workers parking in Glebe streets.

The hours of work are 7 am to 5.30 pm, Monday to Friday, and 7.30 am to 3.30 am on Saturday. There will be no work on Sundays or public holidays. The Fish Market is expected to be completed by 2024.

Complaints can be made to:

blackwattle.bay@infrastructure.nsw.gov.au

Letter to the Editor



Dear Virginia,

Thank you for having emailed The Glebe Society *Bulletin* of May 2021 to me, which I read with great interest, especially about the yearly Anzac Day

memorial celebration at the Diggers' Memorial and Prince Phillip's visit in 1956 not only to Sydney, but even to Glebe! As I arrived at Sydney in April 1974, it happened before my time.

Some time ago, you asked if we would be happy to receive the *Bulletin* by email only, which I declined, as I used to collect the *Bulletins* in the original. Due to the Corona crisis, you started to only email the *Bulletin*. A few days ago, I received the *Bulletin* of April 2021 by post, which still took a few weeks to reach me.

I have made up my mind: The advantages of receiving the *Bulletin* by email only outweigh receiving it by post. So, you can wipe me off the postal list for the *Bulletin*.

The advantages of receiving the *Bulletin* by email are:

I receive the *Bulletin* in a split second and don't have to wait for it for several weeks.

The photographs are in colour, which I love.

I need the space for more arch files on my shelves for my family research.

Nobody has to come to a place, fold it, put sticky tape on it, the address label plus stamps and has to take it to the Post Office.

Even though we read that Australia has hardly any Covid-19 any more, it is still safer not to undertake Nr. 4.

TGSi saves on postage. By the way, I have continued to save a lot of stamps for you.

With many thanks to everybody working voluntarily in The Glebe Society and kind regards to everybody who still remembers me.

Marianne von Knobelsdorff

Planning Matters

New Glebe Society video: *Treasure in the City*

by Ian Stephenson, Planning Convenor

The Glebe Society has collaborated with postgraduate students from The University of Sydney to produce a new video. It includes some fresh perspectives on Glebe as well as exploring current threats to this special place.

You and your friends can watch it by clicking the link: <https://youtu.be/Ai6--TtgvpQ>.

Register with us using the QR code at the end and give us your feedback. Alternatively, email me via planning@glebesociety.org.au.



Screenshot of the new Glebe Society video, *Treasure in the City*. (source: <https://youtu.be/Ai6--TtgvpQ>)

Cowper St DA is out – consider making a submission

by Ian Stephenson, Planning Convenor

Development Proposal reference number D/2021/493: 17-31 Cowper St, Glebe; Applicant: NSW Land and Housing Corporation

Our April *Bulletin* under *High Rise for Glebe's St Phillips Heritage Conservation Area* reported on Sydney City Council's spot rezoning of two low-rise properties in the St Phillip's Heritage Conservation Area in order to allow two eight-storey apartment towers to be erected.

Sydney City Council have now received a development application from the NSW Land and Corporation for the demolition of existing buildings and the construction of mixed-use development comprising 70 apartments, 5 dwelling houses and two commercial tenancies.

Estimated Cost: \$30,906,517

Closing Date for comments: 23 June

This link will take you to the details:

<https://online2.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/DA/IndividualApplication?tpklapapl=1532758>.

The application is on public exhibition up to and including 23 June 2021. During this time, you are welcome to make a submission on the proposal. You can make a submission by emailing:

dasubmissions@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au, or if you would like to speak to a Council planning officer, please call Lotti Wilkinson on 9265 9333 or Bill Mackay, Manager Planning Assessment.

The Glebe Society supports the provision of additional public housing in Glebe but deplores the method by which it is being done. It should be provided through sensitive low-rise infill which respects the urban fabric of Glebe, has better amenity for public housing tenants and does not create a suburb of two residents – private in low rise and public tenants in high rise.

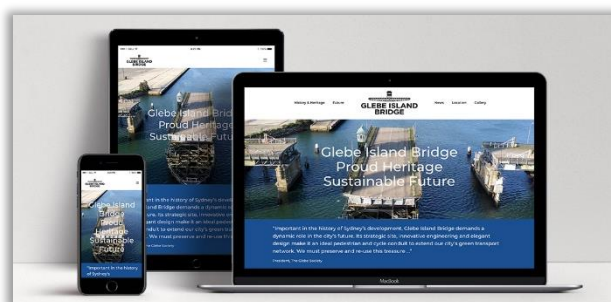
The DA has very serious implications for both the urban and social fabric of Glebe and undoes almost 50 years of good public policy. It is the precursor of more to come. Members are encouraged to make submissions.

Glebe Island Bridge now has a website

by Janet Wahlquist, Glebe Society President

The Glebe Society is launching our new website promoting the restoration of Glebe Island Bridge and highlighting its past and potential.

The Society continues to campaign for the restoration of the historic Glebe Island Bridge. We want to see it put into use as a green pedestrian and cycling thoroughfare, to be part of an extensive pedestrian and cycling network. We see the restoration of the bridge as a possibility not just to maintain and value an historic bridge but to create an attractive route for green transport and leisure. With the increase in housing density that we have already seen and the even greater density proposed on the Glebe Island /White Bay Peninsula, the Fish Market site and Pyrmont, the bridge could become part of an invaluable walking and cycling route.



The Glebe Society's new website for the Glebe Island Bridge campaign (image: Tarny Burton)

We are greatly concerned that for every day that the government delays restoration the bridge falls into greater disrepair and the cost of restoration increases. Last year barriers were placed in the water after more

of the Bridge fell into the water. We are concerned with the proposal for the new concrete batching plant at White Bay and the huge number of truck movements that will pass along the road in front of the old bridge that restoration will make it less attractive and restoration into a pedestrian/cycleway less likely.

We hope the new Glebe Island Bridge website will help continue the momentum for its restoration. We also

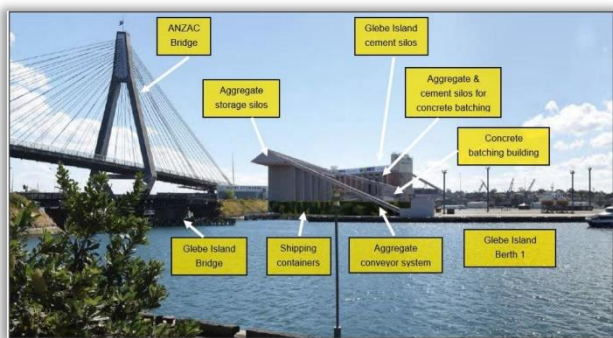
encourage people to contribute to the site. Comments and any pieces about how you think saving the Bridge is important are encouraged. The website can be accessed at <https://www.glebeislandbridge.com/>.

Articles or comments can be sent to: contact@glebeislandbridge.org.au.

Opposition to the proposed Glebe Island concrete batching plant

by Janet Wahlquist, President

The Glebe Society has objected to a proposal for a Concrete Batching Plant and Handling Facility at White Bay. ¹ According to the proposal, ² the proposed Concrete Batching Plant and Handling Facility will consist of a 24-hour a day, seven-day a week operation. The facility will consist of six 34-metre-high silos, six 25 metre concrete batch silos, and other infrastructure. The proposal is that the plant will be supplied with materials by boat, and the concrete and aggregate will be moved out by truck at the rate of 182 trips per hour.



Is this desirable? Is this necessary?? A photomontage of the proposed concrete batching plant (Source: <https://www.ipcn.nsw.gov.au/>)

The Glebe Society believes this will seriously impede the development of a waterfront path that we have been campaigning for. It will be detrimental to pedestrian and cyclist movement in the area. We are also concerned that it could impact the desirability of

restoring the Glebe Island Bridge into an attractive pedestrian/cycle route. It is also contrary to the promises of increased access to the waterfront under the Bays West Strategy. We are concerned that it returns heavy industry to the inner-city foreshore.

It is argued that this plant is to replace the one that was removed from the site that is to become the new Sydney Fish Market. However, this is much larger with many more truck movements and longer hours of operation.

The Glebe Society has voiced our concern about the impact of increased shipping on the ecology of our local waters. We are also concerned that the concrete plant will generate noise that carries over water, and will likely impact the residents of Glebe and Forest Lodge.

There has been recent media coverage of a Government plan to build a park on the top of the Batching Plant (see the *Sydney Morning Herald* article by Megan Gorrey dated 27 May, 'What does that mean?': *Park above inner west concrete plant sparks confusion* ³).

So far, we have heard no details as to what is proposed. It sounds like it could be a plan to try and placate local opposition.

The opportunity for objection has been extended until 4 June 2021.

Notes: 1. <https://tinyurl.com/3dkpyh3y>; 2. <https://tinyurl.com/3byabytn>; 3. <https://tinyurl.com/sc4eu2jt>.

2021 Walks Program: Exploring Glebe on Foot

Please join us on a series of walking tours

Glebe is a great place to walk, with heritage streetscapes, significant historical buildings, the foreshore walk, parklands and a rich social and industrial history. Its proximity to Chippendale, Pyrmont, Annandale, Camperdown, and several university campuses provide ample scope for discovery.

The Glebe Society is planning a new series of walks for members and friends in the second half of 2021. Our events program has been limited over the past year because of COVID and social distancing. It is time to resume activities which can be largely outdoors and which provide opportunities to explore our

neighbourhood and enjoy the company of others. A registration fee of \$20 per person will contribute to the cost of background preparation and any handouts.

Choose the theme and time which suits you. Walks will be offered on weekends and weekdays and will include familiar places and hidden gems, new architecture and heritage streetscapes, art and story-telling and a focus on our environment. We welcome ideas for other walks in Glebe and our area.

Our first walk, through the Toxteth Estate, will be led by Max Solling, well-known local historian, with a reputation for revealing little known stories of our neighbourhood.

Other walks in the planning stage include:

- *A wander around Rozelle Bay and Johnson's Creek – how a swamp went through many stages, becoming the landscape and urban facilities around Harold Park that we know today, starting at the Tramsheds and finishing at Toxteth Park, with Jan Macindoe, Thursday 12 August 2.30 pm (booking details in the July Bulletin)*
- *The Blackwattle Foreshore: history, marine life and impact of development including the new Sydney Fishmarket, with Asa Wahlquist*
- *Forest Lodge, with Max Solling. Like all places over time, Forest Lodge is multi-layered and*

complex, with its character constantly shifting and being remade. The walk follows Lodge St and its lane, down Arundel St, Short St, Junction St, across Bridge Rd and along the walkway through Orphan School Creek Gully, finishing at the Tramsheds.

- *'Sensitive Infill': how to add diversity to an historic suburb, with Ian Stephenson.*
- *Guided tours of the Chau Chak Wing Museum and other new architecture at the University of Sydney.*

Glebe's Aboriginal residents, 1788-1859

by Helen Randerson

Did the creation of the Glebe Municipality in 1859 mark the end of a long, visible, Aboriginal presence in Glebe that had coexisted with early white settlement in the area? It has often been assumed that Aboriginal people were no longer living in the Glebe area from some date soon after the earliest British settlement. Yet, there is scattered but important evidence that points to a very different story.

Is it possible that some Church-owned lands around Sydney were chosen for a time by groups of Sydney's Aboriginal population because they were relatively safe places to live, once they had been excluded from most of their own lands? Max Solling has written that Bishop Broughton (the Church of England Bishop of Australia) told a House of Commons Select Committee in England in 1836 that, by taking over the land and seriously disrupting their food supply, European

campsites on their land or merely turn a blind eye whilst the land remained undeveloped and unfenced?

In October 1810 William Cowper, Resident Chaplain, had placed two notices in *The Sydney Gazette* addressed to the 'Inhabitants and Herdsmen of Sydney', warning them not to cut any wood nor drive cattle to graze on the Glebe of St Phillips estate, on the north side of Parramatta Rd, between Blackwattle Swamp and Grose Bridge (i.e. Orphan School Creek). Cowper's clear message was that this land was now reserved for the use of the Church and anybody else using it was trespassing.²

All of the land reserved for the Church was in the area known by the whites as the Kangaroo Grounds.³ The Aboriginal names for the lands on and around which 'The Glebe' was then situated were Cadi and Wanne. Cadi was described as extending from South Head to Long Cove where Wanne commenced, extending as far as Parramatta or Rouse Hill.⁴ The names given to the people were taken from the names of their country (Cadigal from Cadi, Wangal from Wanne).⁵

After 1788, many Aboriginal people were killed, and many died from a range of infectious diseases, including smallpox. However, this didn't mean that Aboriginal people had disappeared from Sydney, including Glebe, by 1810. As long as there had been agreement, there had always been Aboriginal movement across 'Country' with different groups intermingling, marrying and having families.

Very few Cadigal people are said to have survived smallpox, and more men survived than women, but there were still some Cadigal and certainly Wangal – together with other Aboriginal groups and their descendants – living in Sydney who had survived. The campsites in Glebe would now have consisted of Aboriginal people from a variety of areas. They simply tended to become more 'invisible'. Grace Karskens in *The Colony* has written:

Nonetheless, they were there, their presence glimpsed in peripheral vision, mentioned in newspaper snippets, travellers' tales, seen in names on old maps, faces in photographs, in the reminiscences of old people, in local and family lore.⁶



Allan's Bush, Glebe by Samuel Elyard, 1868 (source: State Library of NSW)

settlement had destroyed the tribal life of the Sydney clans.¹ Yet there is at least one tree – believed to be a scarred tree – that continues to exist in Glebe which has been dated by Council to approximately the 1850s – suggesting that Aboriginal people may not only have continued to live in the area, but may have been active in conducting ceremonial life there.

Did Glebe's open paddocks, most probably on unbuilt Church land such as Bishopthorpe Estate (not leased until 1856), for a time provide a relatively safe place for Aboriginals to live? Given the views of Bishop Broughton, did the Church sanction Aboriginal

From 1788 to 1859, the Aboriginal people living in camps in Glebe may have been able to continue to access sufficient food and water supplies from Glebe's freshwater creeks, from fishing in the bays and harbour using shells for hooks – and from the native animals, birds and plants living and growing in the area. Adequate timber for a variety of uses, including women's canoes (nowies) for fishing, coolamons and shields, would also have been available.

If supplies were scarce, it's likely that some incursions were made into fenced-off areas – by Aboriginal people, as well as escaped convicts. An early white colonist, Joshua Palmer, who had a 25-30 acre farm adjoining the Glebe lands at Perroquet Hill opposite Grose Farm, regularly placed cautions in *The Sydney Gazette* in an attempt to stop people 'cutting timber, making inroads to the injury of the fence, turning stock, or in any other manner trespassing' on his farm.⁷ (The name Perroquet Hill indicates that birds were in abundance there.)

Much more has been written about Glebe's early vegetation and fauna, than has been written about its early Aboriginal residents. Given Glebe's proximity (within walking distance) to the Sydney Markets, there may have been opportunities for some of Glebe's Aboriginal residents to collect various forms of local native produce for on-selling at the markets.

Mary Salmon, writing about the history of Glebe/Forest Lodge in 1904 reflected:

*All around was beautiful bush land, where, on holidays, parties would come from Sydney, to gather native currants, geebung, and a peculiarly rare, native delicacy called "Hellfire" berries ... Forest Lodge, which was for many years a thick eucalyptus wood, alternating with low, scrub land, where wild duck were plentiful.*⁸

There are many early references to a plentiful supply of native currants (sour currant bush – *Leptomeria acida*, *Leptomeria acerba*) growing around Glebe and Annandale. The berries from this scrub-like plant had an agreeable acid taste, and the plant was used by early colonists to make jams and jellies, to make brooms and even as a treatment by doctors for scurvy. Some variants of *Leptomeria acida*, due to extra acidity appear to have been called 'hellfire berries'.⁹

In 1881, The Town and Country Journal article on 'The Native Currant' reported that 'the native blacks used to collect large quantities, which they disposed of to the settlers at very moderate rates'.¹⁰

The price of native currants at the Sydney Markets was regularly quoted in the Sydney press. In 1843, the *Sydney Morning Herald* listed the price as: 'Native currants, from 3d. to 5d. per quart.'¹¹

The native 'sweet sarsaparilla' *Smilax glycyphylla*, which was used as a general remedy by the colonists as a substitute for tea, may also have grown around Glebe and been collected by Aboriginal people. Known as 'sweet tea' it had a taste resembling liquorice and in 1851 was still said to be 'abundant in the neighbourhood of the metropolis'.¹²

Other native produce which local Aboriginal people may have collected around Glebe for on-selling at the markets – or directly to some of the settlers and visitors to Sydney – include fish, shellfish and other edible native plants, as well as native flowers used for Christmas decorations – Christmas bush (as a substitute for English holly) and Christmas bells. Karskens considers that 'Transactions and agreements were made on a personal, reciprocal basis. Visitors often wanted artefacts and botanical and geological specimens, and Aboriginal people obliged – for a price.'¹³

In 1841, Glebe's white population was counted as 203. As estates were sold off and subdivided, as more houses were built and with the arrival of new industries, the white population grew rapidly between 1846 and 1851, from 1,055 to 1,575.¹⁴ This may have increased the pressure on safe places for Aboriginal people to live. Yet they had certainly been there far into the 19th century.

In 1880, a journalist writing for the *Australian Town and Country Journal*, wrote:

*SINCE the year 1859, when Glebe was declared to be an independent municipality, to be governed by a council chosen from its residents, a complete change has occurred in its appearance and importance. At that time the houses were few and far between, and the population not very numerous. The greater portion of the land was covered by scrub and wattle trees, occupied by numerous camps of blacks, the roads were wretchedly formed, and the lower part of the township was occupied by an impassable swamp.*¹⁵

The wording is interesting, not least because it refers to 'numerous' campsites of Aboriginal people being present in Glebe up to 1859.

This early ongoing presence of Aboriginal people living in Glebe in the 19th century is further reinforced by the memories of James Robinson, who was born in 1845. On James' death in 1929, the *Maitland Weekly Mercury* reported:

*Mr, Robinson, whose parents came from Lancashire, was born at the corner of Glebe Road [Glebe Point Rd] and Francis Street Glebe. He had a keen recollection of early Sydney and was present at the turning of the first sod of the first railway in Australia – the line from Sydney to Parramatta, Mr Robinson also remembered the blacks camping near Glebe Road, that portion of the district then consisting of open paddocks.*¹⁶

So, it was as the lands and waters of Glebe became increasingly privatised, developed and populated by white settlers, with new buildings erected on the remaining Church lands, that most of the Aboriginal population may have been displaced from Glebe's fast-disappearing open paddocks, having lost access to resources and livelihood. Some of Glebe's Aboriginal population may then have moved to other Aboriginal campsites around the harbour, further up the Parramatta River, or perhaps to La Perouse.¹⁷

John Fletcher's description of early Glebe refers to the creation of Glebe Municipality as a turning point for Glebe's early natural environment. 1859 may well have been a similar turning point for Glebe's Aboriginal population,

*Although time was when The Glebe seemed a sort of enchanted forest with its lofty gums looking as gloomy as the black feathers on a hearse, the wild duck and profusely growing geebung and hellfire berries were not left for long to enjoy their immunity once the Glebe Municipality was proclaimed on 1 August 1859.*¹⁸



Looking towards Wangal lands. Cockle Bay (now Darling Harbour), ca. 1819-20 by James Taylor (Source: SLNSW)

Yet in other areas of Sydney, this tradition of Aboriginals fishing and gathering native produce, plants and wildflowers to sell, seems to have continued well into the 20th century. In *Rivers and Resilience*, for example, Heather Goodall and Allison Cadzow recount the story of Aboriginal people living at Salt Pan Creek on Sydney's Georges River. In the 1920s, one Aboriginal family was able to make a cash income from wildflowers: 'They could use their knowledge about

where to find the best flowers, and then gather and sell them door to door or at the local and city markets'.¹⁹

So, it may be that the assumptions about the early disappearance of Glebe's Aboriginal community need revisiting. We may find, after all, that we have just failed to notice the traces of their continuing, active presence.

It is interesting that in 2020 there was still an undetermined 2009 Aboriginal Land Claim by the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council, on part of Wentworth Park, south of the greyhound track.²⁰

Notes: **1.** Max Solling, *Grandeur and Grit: A history of Glebe* Halstead Press 2007 p. 34; **2.** *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser* Saturday 6 October 1810, p. 4, and Saturday 20 October 1810, p. 4; **3.** Max Solling op. cit. p. 41; **4.** *Australian Town and Country Journal* Saturday 21 September 1878, p. 17 (Extract from Governor Hunter's journal); **5.** Grace Karskens, *The Colony: A History of Early Sydney*, Allen & Unwin, 2009, p. 37; **6.** *Ibid.*, p. 534; **7.** *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser* Sunday 21 April 1805, p. 4; **8.** *The Evening News* Saturday 18 June 1904, p. 3; **9.** *Truth* Sunday 19 March 1911, p. 9, *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser* Thursday 5 August 1830, p. 3, *SMH* Thursday 28 August 1851, p. 2; **10.** *Australian Town and Country Journal* Saturday 10 September 1881, p. 20; **11.** *SMH* Saturday 12 August 1843, p. 3; **12.** *SMH* Saturday 6 September 1851, p. 4. See also Grace Karskens, op cit. pp. 365-366; **13.** Grace Karskens, op cit. p. 436; **14.** Max Solling, op cit. pp. 47 & 64 (Census figures); **15.** *Australian Town and Country Journal* Saturday 24 July 1880, p. 24; **16.** *The Maitland Weekly Mercury* Saturday 18 May 1929 p. 5; **17.** Anita Heiss and Melodie-Jane Gibson, <https://www.sydneybarani.com.au/sites/aboriginal-people-and-place/>; **18.** John Fletcher, 'Early Days' www.stjames-stbede.org.au/our-parish/history; **19.** Heather Goodall and Allison Cadzow, *Rivers and Resilience: Aboriginal People on Sydney's Georges River* UNSW Press 2009, pp 120-122; **20.** DPIE Submission on Pymont Peninsula Place Strategy.

Who Lived in your Street? Peter Lewis Tighe (1860-1946)

by Lyn Collingwood

Real estate salesman Peter Tighe enjoyed a fleeting moment of celluloid fame in 1913 when he featured in *Picturesque Stanwell Park* a 20-minute silent film advertising a new land release. Tighe and his family are seen leaving their home *Kareela* 154 Glebe Point Rd and squeezing into a taxi waiting outside. The movie was made for Tighe's employer Henry Ferdinand Halloran, an entrepreneurial property developer who used colourful brochures and high-pressure salesmanship to market his multiple subdivisions. On sale days, Tighe attracted buyers with sports carnivals and free transport and food. He bombarded rural newspapers with information about Halloran's Bright Waters Estate at Singleton and the Ferodale Estate, dairy country outside Raymond Terrace.

Peter Tighe was born at Gundaroo on 31 July 1860, the oldest son of ten children born to Isabella and Joseph Conlon Tighe who shifted around the State, from Broulee to Hay to a 40-acre selector's run at Jandra near Bourke, to Wilcannia. Joseph was twice insolvent: as a lodging house keeper at Bourke in 1884

and in 1890 at Broken Hill. Peter too was constantly on the move and was likewise declared bankrupt: as a Bourke hotelkeeper in 1885 and as a Wagga Wagga salesman in 1891. He achieved some success as a seller of Singer sewing machines before switching allegiance to Beale and Co., piano manufacturers and importers of Singer's rival, the Torpedo. As Western District manager, Tighe's territory included Dubbo, Wellington, Nyngan, Cobar, Bourke and Warren. He also sold medical books. His knowledge of country NSW was useful when he began working for the United Land Investment Society.

In 1883 Peter Tighe married Gertrude Mary Higgins (1860-1950) at Bourke. Their children: Orville Reginald Roy (1884-90), Leila Olga Fanny (1886-1959, married name Bond), Ada Ethel Nina (1888-1982, married name Moore), Garnet Leslie (1901-1906) and Irene Gertrude Mary Ann (1904-91, married name Swan). In about 1903 Gertrude and the children began living in Annandale while Peter put up at country hotels on his weekly rounds. By the time of Garnet's death the family were at 18 Avon St Glebe. They then moved into

Calmar (designed by Edmund Blacket and still intact at 128 Glebe Point Rd) and were at *Kareela* from 1909-15.

After completing her education at the Misses Haslingden's Holtenham School at Petersham, Leila Tighe qualified as an optician. She treated patients in country towns and in Glebe at Charles West's Pharmacy 183 Glebe Rd. Peter Tighe moved to West Maitland where he went into partnership as an

auctioneer, but by 1925 was back in Glebe (19 Alexandra Rd) and working as a land salesman (with Richardson & Wrench). He and Gertrude subsequently lived with their daughter Ada and son-in-law Aubrey Moore at 27 Mansfield St. Peter Tighe died on 14 January 1946; his widow died on 3 December 1950 and was buried with her husband in the Anglican section of Rookwood Cemetery.

The Federation terrace including *Kareela* was built in 1903 and first lived in by A F Jarrett. A more recent occupant was Ivor Howard Cawley, a publisher, Wentworth Park trustee and deputy mayor of Leichhardt Council.

Sources: *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Halloran entry); Helensburgh Historical Society; NSW cemetery records; NSW electoral rolls; NSW registry of births, deaths & marriages; NSW State Records; Sands *Directories*; Trove website.



Peter, Gertrude, Irene Tighe and a young friend leaving 154 Glebe Point Rd for the trip to Stanwell Park, 1913 (Image: Helensburgh Historical Society)

Glebe-Forest Lodge bus routes to change: have your say

by Virginia Simpson-Young

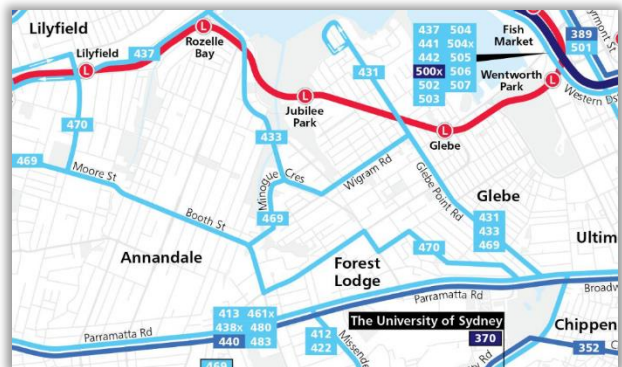
Existing bus routes in Glebe and Forest Lodge will be changed late next year. The proposed changes can be viewed here:

https://www.mysydney.nsw.gov.au/SE_bus_changes.

Under the new arrangements, the 370 will no longer come into Glebe, running instead between Coogee and the University of Sydney. A new route, the 469 will take its place, running between University of Sydney and Leichhardt. No changes are proposed for the 431, 433 or 470.

If you would like to comment on the changes, complete the survey here:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/South_East_Bus_Changes.



Mystery photo, with Lyn Collingwood

Last month's mystery picture



Ian Stephenson identified (and documented, see below) last month's mystery as a stretch of St Johns Rd, including the Glebe Congregational Church, now demolished.

Wayne Carveth thought the building might be the former Rehoboth Primitive Methodist Church at 189A St Johns Rd Forest Lodge, now privately owned.

Karol Foyle also identified the location:

My guess is St Johns Rd Glebe, looking towards Forest Lodge from Glebe Point Rd. The church could be the Methodist church or community hall that was at 81 St Johns Road that is now a block of flats.



This month's mystery photo



Where are we? Please send your suggestions to history@glebesociety.org.au.

Some crime statistics for Glebe and Forest Lodge

by Janet Wahlquist

A member of the Glebe Society attends Community Safety Precinct Committee Meetings for the Leichhardt Police Area Command. We thought members might be interested in some of the Crime Statistics for 2021.

<i>Break and Enter Offences (dwellings, including locked garages)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 77 for Leichhardt Command; 27 in Glebe 2037, which accounts for 35% of all offences ➤ 15 of the 77 were storage cages in underground car parks ➤ 21 persons arrested (may be for multiple offences) ➤ 80% of those arrested from outside the Command area
<i>Break and Enter Offences (non-dwellings Commercial premises, churches schools etc)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 26 incidents in Leichhardt Command area ➤ 8 in Glebe (3 at Broadway)
<i>Assault (Not Domestic Violence)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 91 Incidents in Leichhardt Command area ➤ 38 in Glebe (38% on Bay St or Glebe Point Rd)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 24 overall alcohol-related
<i>Robbery</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 7 in Leichhardt Command area ➤ 5 in Glebe (2 in Bay St) ➤ only 1 alcohol-related ➤ predominately juveniles
<i>Steal Motor Vehicles</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 31 in total
<i>Steal from Motor Vehicle</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 126 in Leichhardt Command area ➤ 17 in Glebe (Harold Park was a hot spot) ➤ Police advise that most steal from motor vehicles are opportunistic when people leave their vehicles unlocked or property clearly visible in the vehicle
<i>Domestic violence assaults and domestic related offences</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 202 Incidents in Leichhardt Command area ➤ 76% resulted in legal action (charging or taking out Apprehended Domestic Violence Orders) ➤ Superintendent Alf Sergi reported that Domestic Violence is a key area of active policing and that Compliance checks for Apprehended Violence Orders and Victim support were actively pursued ➤ For your Information, 80% of homicides are domestic-related

Next Players in the Pub

A World Premiere!

A Saint for Our Times

by Players' actor David McLaughlin

with Adam Booth, Peter Carmody, Lyn Collingwood,
Nicky Gledhill, Tigerlily Gledhill, Emma Louise &
Jodine Muir

Wednesday 23 June at 7 pm

Upstairs Toxteth Hotel cnr Ferry &
Glebe Point Rds.

Free admission. Donations
bucket.

The kitchen is open from 5 pm.
Please order early. We always
aim to start on time!



Tiwi Islanders' visit to Sydney and Glebe

by Helen Campbell

In the middle of May, a group of nine singers from Bathurst Island (one of the Tiwi Islands, 92 km north of Darwin) braved the cold of Canberra and Sydney to sing and dance, sharing their culture with us. My daughter Genevieve has been working with these ladies and men since 2007 mainly in Darwin and on Bathurst Island and organised this visit.

They spent a week in Canberra performing at the Australian National University and at the National Gallery. Coming from a steady 34 degrees at home they found Canberra very frosty but enjoyed outdoor fireside singalongs to keep warm.

The weather didn't improve much for their visit to Sydney, coming as a cold spell hit here as well.

In Sydney they gave performances at the Chau Chak Wing Museum of Sydney University and at the Conservatorium of Music. Both events were well attended and much appreciated. The event at the Conservatorium was a workshop, so we were invited to participate and learn some of the moves – which was great fun!

I enjoyed having these talented friends at my home where they could relax.

The last time they were in Sydney was four years ago for my husband Tom's funeral at Sydney University

where they were part of the ceremony and sang their special songs for healing. We felt extremely privileged and comforted.

It was great to have these talented, generous and warm people visit Glebe again!



(L-R) Katrina Mungatopi, Regina Kantilla, Helen Campbell, Callista Kantilla, Frances Therese Portiminni, Augusta Pungatji, Elizabeth Tipiloura and Genevieve Campbell (at the back) (photo: Helen Campbell)

For Your Calendar

Wednesday 23, 7 pm. [Players in the Pub: A Saint for Our Times](#), upstairs Toxteth Hotel

Sunday 11 July, 10.30 am to 12.30 pm. [The Toxteth Estate Walk](#) with Max Solling.

Thursday 12 August, 2.30 pm. *Walk: A wander around Rozelle Bay and Johnson's Creek – how a swamp went through many stages, becoming the landscape and urban facilities around Harold Park that we know today*, with Jan Macindoe.

Glebe Society Inc. Established 1969

Management Committee

President	Janet Wahlquist		president@glebesociety.org.au
Vice President	Mark Stapleton	0417 238 158	vicepresident@glebesociety.org.au
Past President	Brian Fuller	0409 035 418	pastpresident@glebesociety.org.au
Secretary	Jude Paul	0438 600 882	secretary@glebesociety.org.au
Minutes Secretary	Mark Stapleton	0417 238 158	minutes@glebesociety.org.au
Treasurer	Jane Gatwood	0488 118 355	treasurer@glebesociety.org.au
Ordinary member	Allan Hogan	0411 607 813	allan@glebesociety.org.au
Ordinary member	Ted McKeown	02 9660 3917	ted@glebesociety.org.au
Ordinary member	Michael Morrison		michael@glebesociety.org.au
Ordinary member	Mary-Beth Brinson		mary-beth@glebesociety.org.au
Bays & Foreshores	Asa Wahlquist	02 9660 8261	bays@glebesociety.org.au
Blue Wrens	Andrew Wood	02 9660 6104	bluewrens@glebesociety.org.au
Communications	Allan Hogan	0411 607 813	communications@glebesociety.org.au
Community	Jan Macindoe	0424 537 557	community@glebesociety.org.au
Heritage	Brian Fuller	0409 035 418	heritage@glebesociety.org.au
Planning	Ian Stephenson	0415 919 874	planning@glebesociety.org.au
Environment	vacant		environment@glebesociety.org.au
Transport & Traffic	vacant		transport@glebesociety.org.au

Working Groups & Contacts

Glebe Island Bridge	vacant		transport@glebesociety.org.au
Archivist	Lyn Milton	0419 412 477	archives@glebesociety.org.au
<i>Bulletin</i> Editor	Virginia Simpson-Young	0402 153 074	editor@glebesociety.org.au
Events	Judy Vergison	0417 446 425	events@glebesociety.org.au
Local History	Lyn Collingwood	02 9660 5817	history@glebesociety.org.au
History of Glebe	Max Solling	02 9660 1160	
Glebe Voices	Fiona Campbell	02 9660 0185	glebevoices@glebesociety.org.au
Web content	Tarny Burton	0419 633 238	webmaster@glebesociety.org.au
Website technical	Tarny Burton	0419 633 238	support@glebesociety.org.au
Facebook	Virginia Simpson-Young	0402 153 074	facebook@glebesociety.org.au
Twitterer			twitter@glebesociety.org.au

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- Join online: complete the Membership Application on our website under 'Membership'
- Download a membership form from www.glebesociety.org.au; or
- Write to the Secretary at PO Box 100 Glebe 2037; or email secretary@glebesociety.org.au



See inside Toxteth Park House during our Toxteth Park Walk on 11 July (Photo: Bernard Smith Collection)

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