



# VILLAGE VOICE

QUEEN STREET & WEST WOOLLAHRA ASSOCIATION NEWS BULLETIN

APRIL, 1978

## Helen Keller House to be restored

*In the past 12 months, the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association had continued to be a strong and influential body, working actively on behalf of the local community.*

*The President, Mr. Robin Brampton, says this in introducing his annual report which will be presented at the Association's annual meeting on April 26.*

*The full text of the report is as follows:*

### HELEN KELLER HOUSE

The most welcome development during the year was the sale of the Helen Keller House building in Waimea Avenue to a private purchaser, Mr. Bill Kelly. He has bought the building from the Royal Blind Society of New South Wales to restore it as a residence.

Most of us remember with horror how, in 1973, the Royal Blind Society almost succeeded in demolishing this fine old Georgian house. They were prevented only by the fast action of local residents.

Subsequently your Association went to considerable trouble and expense to protect the building from the weather and, together with other concerned bodies, we have been seeking ways to ensure its permanent restoration.

Happily, Mr. Kelly has now taken over the responsibility and the very heavy financial commitment which will be involved.

To handle the project, he has engaged a distinguished firm of local architects, Allen, Jack and Cottier, who specialise in restoration work. In congratulating Mr. Kelly, we have offered to give him and his architects every support.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE



Elizabeth Bay House

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
of the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association  
will be held on

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26TH, 1978

at Queen Street Galleries,  
38-40 Queen Street, Woollahra, at 7.30 p.m.

*After the presentation of reports and the election of officers for the coming year,  
we will hear a talk on*

### THE RESTORATION OF ELIZABETH BAY HOUSE

*by Mr. Clive Lucas, O.B.E., B.Arch., F.R.A.I.A.*

*Chairman of the Historic Buildings Committee of the National Trust (N.S.W.)*

*The evening will conclude with a WINE TASTING, by courtesy of  
PENFOLDS WINES*

*Please come. The meeting is open to all local residents, whether or not they are  
members of the Association.*

# ASSOCIATION'S ANNUAL REPORT - CONTINUED

It is likely that the area surrounding Helen Keller House will be used for town house development, designed in complete sympathy with the central building.

## WOOLLAHRA WEST ACTION PLAN

Woollahra Municipal Council recently released its preliminary Action Study for West Woollahra.

Before the Council's original Action Plan was drawn up several years ago, your Association prepared its own recommendations. These were in the form of an authoritative report, prepared by our Architectural Sub-Committee.

We like to feel that this influenced the original Action Plan considerably.

In the past few weeks, the preliminary Action Study proposals have been put on public exhibition and a public meeting organised to discuss them.

The proposals, as now set out, contain some different zonings from those originally proposed, but the Association is not prepared at this stage to say whether the changes are sufficiently significant to warrant concern.

As an extension of its previous very thorough work, we have asked the Architectural Sub-Committee to prepare a report on the new Action Study. This will be compiled in association with a legal expert and I hope it will be ready very early in the life of the new Committee.

At all times in its approach to planning, the Association has sought to foster Queen Street's unique "village high street" atmosphere, to preserve worthwhile buildings from the past, and to prevent buildings falling into disuse or being put to uses which are too much in contradiction with the original design.

## QUEEN STREET FAIR

The sixth annual Queen Street Fair was held on Saturday, November 26, 1977, again in very good weather.

Crowds were as great as ever - probably around the 35,000 mark - and from total receipts of \$15,609, the Association made a surplus of \$2731.

Because of the present legislative situation regarding the holding of street fairs, the 1977 Fair was organised by a Committee of Woollahra Municipal Council, on which I acted as Chairman, and the Association was invited to provide the majority of representatives.

Most of the administration was handled in the name of the Council and I would like to express my great appreciation and thanks to Mr. Michael Ahern, Mr. Alex Lyons, Mr. Alex Stuart and Mr. Wally Bunyon, the Council officers who sat on the Committee.

## 1977 QUEEN STREET FAIR INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

INCOME:	\$	\$
Revenue from Stall Hire		
Donations and Concessions		15,609.37
<b>LESS EXPENDITURE:</b>		
Hire of Stalls/Stages/Bins/Toilets	4,737.08	
Cleaning and Security	1,749.24	
Printing and Stationery	1,167.45	
Promotion and Entertainment	1,184.68	
Insurance	1,166.20	
Telephone/Postage/Office Costs	290.00	
Administrative Expenses	2,446.00	
Miscellaneous	136.88	12,877.53
<b>Surplus from Fair</b>		<b>2,731.84</b>

They worked very co-operatively and helpfully to ensure the smooth running of the event.

From the surplus, the Association has decided to make donations of \$250 each to the following associations:

- The Woollahra Senior Citizens Welfare Association.
- The Parents and Citizens Association of Woollahra Demonstration School.
- Paddington/Woollahra Youth Service.

The balance of almost \$2000 will be set aside to provide for further streetscape improvements in Queen Street.

It will be remembered that last year we gave \$2000 towards the cost of a tree-planting scheme for Queen Street and it is now proposed to provide an ornamental fountain to enhance the street's Victorian character.

Returning to the Fair itself, the format is a matter which your Committee is always reconsidering.

Although I do not believe any of the retiring Committee would wish to see the Fair discontinued, it is the belief of some Committee members that it could be improved by (a) A more imaginative approach by stallholders, and/or (b) Stronger participation by local people.

My personal view is that the question is not so much the desirability of either of these two developments, but what we could do successfully to encourage them. Doubtless the whole debate will be renewed by the new Committee.

## STREETSCAPE AND STREET MAINTENANCE

Woollahra Council's tree-planting scheme for Queen Street, to which we made a substantial financial contribution, was implemented in the middle of 1977.

Most of the 52 trees have taken healthy root and in the few cases where they have been damaged, they have been quickly replaced.

We can therefore hope that in a few

years' time, the scheme will prove to have been well co-ordinated and bring to the street a splendid degree of colour and shade.

A matter which does concern us in these early years is the absence of tree guards which are especially necessary in places where the young trees are susceptible to damage by traffic or hooligans. We have made representations to the Council on this matter, so far without success.

We have also been disappointed during the year by other aspects of street maintenance and refuse collection, made more noticeable by the very hot summer we have just experienced.

In particular, we recently complained to the Council about neglect in John Street. As a result, last month the Mayor, Alderman Tony Perry, informed us that instructions had been given to improve the frequency and standard of street cleaning there.

## TRAFFIC LIGHTS

As a result of strong local representations, in which the Association took a leading part, traffic lights have now been installed at the busy junction of Queen Street and Moncur Street.

They appear to be working well in protecting both traffic and pedestrians and from my observations, I do not believe that the fear of some John Street residents that through traffic would start using their street to avoid the lights was justified.

## WINTER WALKABOUT

It had long been suggested that the Association should organise some regular public event in addition to the Queen Street Fair.

As a result, on September 4, we held a "Winter Walkabout". Visitors were invited to walk round local shops and galleries in a planned pattern on a Sunday afternoon.

Despite the blustery weather and the fact that it was Mother's Day, some 150 people took part - sufficient for the Association to consider organising such an event again.

I would like to express my grateful thanks to a Committee member, Miss Mollie Lenthall, who did most of the organising together with our Secretary, and also the local shopkeepers and gallery owners who took part in the scheme.

#### NATIONAL TRUST

Last year the Historic Buildings Committee of the National Trust in New South Wales made an inspection of Queen Street. The Trust's Urban Conservation Committee has also taken a deep interest in our area.

A number of properties have been given a National Trust classification and recent additions include numbers 34-48 Queen Street, which includes Queen Street Galleries, the Post Office and the fine Victorian house at 115 Queen Street.

It was also very pleasing to see the very large number of local properties in the first list of inclusions in the register which the Commonwealth of Australia is keeping under the Australian Heritage Commission Act of 1975.

These include All Saints Church in Ocean Street, the Congregational Church in Jersey Road, Runnymede in Jersey Road, and a considerable number of houses in Queen Street, Ocean Street, Woods Avenue and Waimea Avenue.

In view of our close association with the National Trust, your Committee recently decided that the Association should seek to become affiliated with the Trust's New South Wales branch in the same way as the Paddington Society. I am pleased to inform you that the application was accepted.

#### ASSOCIATION PATRON

Recently, the Committee decided to invite Miss Joan Sutherland to become the Association's Patron. Miss Sutherland lived in Queen Street for approximately 12 years when she was in her teens and early twenties.

At the time this report was compiled, we had not heard whether she will accept.

#### MEMBERSHIP

Currently the Association's membership stands at 268, including life members — the highest total in its history.

As there are approximately 2000 dwellings in the area, many of whose inhabitants are transitory, we believe we have a very strong representation of the truly local people.

According to the Association's Constitution, its official year should correspond with the calendar year. However, the practice has grown up of charging members a subscription based on a year from June 1 to May 31.

To regularise the position, it has been decided to extend the subscriptions of all current members to cover the whole of the 1978 calendar year, and from 1979 to charge members a subscription to cover



The group of properties at 34-48 Queen Street, dominated by Queen Street Galleries, which have recently been given a classification by the National Trust. All have been restored in the past 10 years, with the exception of the shop nearest the ~~cinema~~ camera.

the calendar year.

This means that current members will not be asked to pay for a subscription renewal until January 1, 1979.

#### COMMITTEE AND OFFICERS

To my very great personal regret, Mrs. Anne MacCallum, who has acted so efficiently as Secretary during my two terms as President, resigned at the beginning of this year, after completing work on the 1977 Queen Street Fair.

It is principally due to her very energetic work that our membership stands so high and that the last two Queen Street Fairs have gone so smoothly.

At the annual meeting we will be making a presentation to her in acknowledgement of the great value her work has been to the Association.

Since Mrs. MacCallum's resignation, Mrs. Monica McDonald has very kindly combined the work of Secretary and Treasurer.

I would like to thank her, the Vice-President, Leo Schofield, and all members of the Committee for their support and co-operation during the past year — particularly at Queen Street Fair time which puts a great strain on our very small numbers.

I shall not be seeking re-election as your President for the coming year. The principal reason is that I now have to spend more time interstate, and twice during the past year this meant that I was not available to preside at Committee meetings.

However, should you wish, I am prepared to continue to work on the Committee — with the reservation which I mentioned last year that I believe it is time the Association developed new leadership.

Robin Brampton, PRESIDENT

#### NATIONAL TRUST CLASSIFICATIONS

One of the chief tasks of National Trusts throughout Australia is to survey and record our architectural heritage.

To this end, the Historic Buildings Committee of the NSW National Trust inspected the West Woollahra area late last year.

The Trust's Urban Conservation Committee has also conducted inspections with a view to classifying vital elements of the area's streetscape.

As a result of these inspections a number of properties have already been listed.

The run of buildings between and including numbers 34-48 have been listed, as have the Post Office and the fine Victorian house at number 115.

It is understood that further classifications and listings are under consideration.

The Association welcomes this official recognition of the highly important townscape of Queen Street as it provides some assurance of preservation and compatible restoration.

## A PAGE OF HISTORY

Queen Street has always had the appealing mixture of shops and residences which give it its special character today.

This is clearly shown in the Sands directories for the last 30 years of the 19th century which detail the occupant of every property in the street year by year, and their occupations.

Until the mid 1870s, Queen Street was called Piper Street. The 1871 edition, which gives it this name, shows that there were still several plots of vacant land where an enterprising businessman could establish his shop or an honest tradesman build his home.

The street then had two hotels — the Gardeners Arms, kept by Charles Hume, at the corner of Moncur Street, and the original Woollahra Hotel at number 35, run by Sam Studd.

The Gardeners Arms subsequently became Acklands, after its new licensee, Henry Ackland. The present Woollahra Hotel stands on the site.

By the end of the century, the original Woollahra Hotel had been renamed the Queens Hotel and had a new number, 43.

The present three-storey building on the site continued to be used as a hotel after its rebuilding in 1905 and it was well into this century before it was delicensed.

\* \* \*

Three long-standing identities in Queen Street in the 1870s were George Wagg, the locksmith and bellhanger at 52, Christian Dorhauer who had his timber yard next to his home at 58, and August Ludwig the photographer whose premises were next to the Congregational church and school-room between Alton Street and Ocean Street.

Another Dorhauer, Henry, had his builder's yard lower down on the other side of the street and gave his name to the adjoining Dorhauer Lane.

Later, the 1898 directory shows that Christian Dorhauer and E. G. Dorhauer, both described as builders, lived next door to each other at numbers 68 and 70.

This is an isolated pair of terrace houses in a run of shops and we can conjecture that the Dorhauers built them for their



own occupancy late in the 19th century. A member of the Dorhauer family has occupied number 68 until very recent days.

Three other local residents gave their names to the streets where they lived.

Joseph Peaker, a carpenter, probably got naming rights when he moved into the only house which existed in Peaker Lane in 1880.

George Kilminster was a builder whose home was on the corner of Ocean Street and Queen Street, stretching back to Kilminster Lane.

And Halls Lane is named after Thomas Hall, a butcher and hay and corn merchant who had his premises on the corner of Halls Lane and Queen Street where there is still a butcher's shop today.

\* \* \*

The businesses which were developing in Queen Street in the period reflected the affluence of the surrounding area — coachbuilders and trimmers, dressmakers, stationers and teachers of young ladies, as well as the more expected butchers, grocers, greengrocers and ironmongers.

There was once an ostrich feather shop at number 48, and the 1873 directory shows that a lady named Elizabeth Thomson had her bonnet box factory near the corner of Dorhauer Lane.

An interesting picture is conjured up by the fact that, in the same year, two teachers of singing, James Fischer and Charles Chizlett, operated in Queen Street on opposite corners of Holdsworth Street, then called Denison Street.

We trust the combined voices of their pupils made reasonable harmony.

\* \* \*

One of the oldest buildings in our area

still standing, the shop at the corner of Queen Street and Ocean Street, had a number of different occupiers in the last 30 years of the century.

In 1871 it was the business of a fishmonger with the delightful name of Fred Pepper, but in this period it was also a drapery, a boot warehouse, a stationer's, an oil and colour merchant's and finally a greengrocer's.

In the directory of 1880, James Churchill is shown to have established his butcher's shop at 132. The building was obviously constructed in the 1870s as the 1873 directory shows the site as vacant land.

Today Churchill's Butchery still flourishes at 132, making the business a century old.

Three generations of Churchills ran it before it passed into the hands of the present proprietor, Jack Wallace, a great friend of our association, who retained the family name on the shopfront.

The original James Churchill built up a considerable delivery trade in Woollahra, keeping five horse-drawn delivery carts on the road.

Behind the shop was a cobbled yard opening out onto Spicer Street with stabling for the horses. Above the stables Mr. Churchill had a dormitory for the butchers who "lived in".

James Churchill was something of a martinet. At four in the morning, he would get the butchers out of bed to clean out and feed the horses before they started on their ordinary duties which might take them until 11 o'clock at night.

Those were the days — or were they?

\* \* \*

One interesting little sidelight of our researches is that the 1898 directory shows that the shop at the corner of Queen Street and Moncur Street was then used to sell glass and china.

It was owned by William Macdonald who also had the hardware store at number 118 — a business which continued until the corner was reconstructed to form Queens Court in the 1970s.

Tradition has been restored with the opening of a glassware shop on the corner. Now may we hope that some modern Fred Pepper will open a fish shop in Queen Street again?







Personalities in these pictures taken at the 1977 Queen Street Fair are Mrs. Jill Wran, being escorted by Association President Robin Brampton and Vice-President Leo Schofield; cartoonist Pickering; columnist and television panelist Diana Fisher; Kerrie Yates and Rosie Nice who won the best costume award; plus several others who contributed to the gaiety of the occasion. (Pictures by News Ltd. and the Editor).



## WHERE THE FAIR NEEDS FLAIR

Queen Street Fair was its usual jolly self in 1977, with just over 200 stalls crammed into the street, lots of entertainment and big crowds enjoying the event in the sunshine.

Two special delights were the groups of buskers who arrived unexpectedly to entertain and the way the crowds danced so spiritedly in front of the bandstand during the afternoon.

Mrs. Jill Wran had to step only a few paces from her front door to open the Fair — which she did charmingly.

Afterwards she toured it from end to end with Queen Street Association President Robin Brampton and Vice-President Leo Schofield to judge the best stalls and costumes.

The award for the best commercial stall went to Belinda and Jane's Majic Pudding Stall and the community service or charity stall award was gained by Warrah School.

Kerrie Yates and Rosie Nice won the prize for the most original costumes with

their "Plastic Fantastics".

The two girls dressed in green and pink plastic to match their merchandise — unusual plastic shopping bags from England.

Two stores tied for the award for the best dressed shop in Queen Street on Fair Day — last year's winner, the House of Edward Bear, and Cox's Boutique.

Mrs. Wran also praised the high standard of presentation at Nigel's Birthday gift and furniture shop.

Award winners will be presented with a plaque and are entitled to free stalls at this year's Queen Street Fair.

While we congratulate the winners, it is very disappointing that so few stallholders add something extra to the liveliness of the occasion by being really imaginative in their displays and costumes.

Some really knockout stalls were seen at earlier fairs, but when Mrs. Wran came to carry out the judging in 1977, no more than six of the 200 stalls really warranted consideration.

Let's hope for brighter standards in 1978.



## THE QUEEN STREET AND WEST WOOLLAHRA ASSOCIATION

*A residents' action association covering the area bounded by Jersey Road, Edgecliff Road and Oxford Street, West Woollahra, N.S.W.*

**Address:** Box 16, P.O. Woollahra, N.S.W. 2025.

**Subscription:** \$3 a year. Life membership \$25.

**President:** Robin Brampton

**Vice-President:** Leo Schofield

**Treasurer:** Monica McDonald

**Committee:** Dr. John Elder,  
Douglas Gordon, Mollie Lenthall,  
Pixie Nolan, Grant Roberts

**Chairman of the Architectural Committee:**  
Douglas Gordon

**Auditor:** Michael Gilovitz

*Village Voice is published approximately every six months. Letters and other contributions on local topics are invited. The editor is Robin Brampton (357 1488 day, 32 4475 evening and weekends).*

### AN INVITATION TO JOIN US

Every home in the area covered by the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association gets a copy of *Village Voice*.

If you're reading this and you're not a member of the Association, please join us by filling in the coupon below.

We need your support, both moral and financial, in our constant fight to preserve the architectural heritage of our area and ensure that it always remains a pleasant place to live.

### THE QUEEN STREET AND WEST WOOLLAHRA ASSOCIATION

ENCLOSED IS MY SUBSCRIPTION OF \$3 FOR ONE YEAR.

IF YOU HAVE PREVIOUSLY BEEN A MEMBER, PLEASE PUT A TICK HERE .....

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

POST TO: The Secretary,  
Queen Street and West Woollahra Association,  
PO Box 50,  
WOOLLAHRA, NSW 2025.

## I THINK THAT I SHALL NEVER SEE ... THE MASSACRE OF MORTON LANE

Probably the only attractive thing about Morton Lane which runs from Dorhauer Lane back towards the rear of the new Ozanam House old people's home was two spectacular camphor laurel trees.

Their hundred-year-old branches arched over the roadway, providing dappled shade for those who use the lane and privacy for the house on whose land they stood.

However Woollahra Council's Engineer's Department, not known to be frequent users of this dead end (otherwise it would be better cleaned and maintained), did not share resident enthusiasm for the trees.

Without public debate or consultation with nearby residents, they directed the owner of 115 Queen Street to remove the trees.

The gentleman, who does not live in the house and therefore felt less warmly about the camphor laurels than his neighbours, duly commenced to do so.

Realising what was happening, neighbours contacted the Mayor, tree-loving Tony Perry, who, to his credit, came round immediately to investigate.

The owner produced the Engineer's instruction, the Mayor's face fell and he promptly asked that further activity with the chain saw be halted until he could discuss the matter with his colleagues.

However the owner ignored his request and the trees are now gone forever.

Apparently the Council had received complaints about the trees' roots wrinkling the roadway, which indeed they did.

Old people from the newly erected Ozanam House would, it was pointed out

to the trusty lads of the Council's Engineer's Department, wander along the lane and could well come a cropper on the road surface.

One wonders whether it was pointed out that they could just as easily use Queen Street, an altogether safer pedestrian concourse.

Or that older residents of Paris perambulate on cobblestones without incurring grievous bodily harm.

Or that the elderly of Amsterdam have for centuries taken the air along crinkly canal-side concourses without plunging to watery graves.

One can only suspect that the almighty car has again won out and that for the sake of the few vehicles using the Morton Lane entrance to Ozanam House, two superb trees have been sacrificed.

And some still call it progress.

### GIVE OUR TREES A CHANCE

Woollahra Council's reputation as one of the few Sydney municipal authorities sensitive to trees has been taking a bit of a battering lately.

First, two fine ficus hilli are removed from John Street. Then orders are given for the removal of two even-more-splendid camphor laurels in Morton Lane. (See previous report.)

And now we can witness the neglect of the recently-installed trees in Queen Street.

The advanced trees on the southern side of Queen Street have survived relatively well but are in urgent need of shaping. And some underplanting would not go astray.

However the somewhat smaller specimens planted (with financial assistance from the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association) on the northern sides have fared very badly.

Vandals have uprooted three so far and broken a further three in half.

The Association, in all its representation to the Council, has suggested the installation of tree guards to allow the trees to establish.

However Council clearly considers that regular replacement of mutilated specimens is a more attractive alternative.

While residents may not be directly subsidising this replacement programme, we do so indirectly via rates.

So it does not seem too silly to suggest to the powers that be at Council that tree guards, no matter how primitive, might be a good investment both in the short and long term.

Or does the constant replacement programme keep someone down there gainfully employed?