



# VILLAGE VOICE

QUEEN STREET & WEST WOOLLAHRA ASSOCIATION NEWS BULLETIN

NOVEMBER, 1984

## Ocean Street – legal advice sought

*The following article, describing recent moves in the battle to reduce the intolerably high traffic volume in Ocean Street, was written by committee member Neville Kitto who is also convenor of the Ocean Street Traffic Committee.*

THE Queen Street and West Woollahra Association is seeking legal advice on the Ocean Street traffic situation.

The Traffic Committee, assisted by a firm of solicitors, is preparing a brief on the issue for consideration by a senior Queens Counsel.

It is expected that the QC's response will play an important role in future strategies and actions adopted by the Association in its continuing fight to get some justice for Ocean Street residents.

The fight goes on, but results are few and far between.

There were two recent developments. While each, to some degree averted further deterioration of the traffic situation, neither could be regarded as a victory and neither could be interpreted as a change of heart by the Woollahra Council or the Department of Main Roads.

We were advised, somewhat arrogantly and without any advice, consultation or justification, that the "trial" closure of one turning lane from Oxford Street into Ocean Street was to be abandoned, and the two-lane system resumed.

Naturally we protested vigorously to the authorities against this decision. No response has yet been received and the "trial" closure was still in place when this article was written.

But we must expect that, true to past performance, the authorities

## Plenty of novelty at the fair

**MORE** excitement and diversity than ever are expected at this year's Queen Street Fair – to be held next Saturday (November 24).

This follows the organisers' decision to encourage genuine craft workers to take stalls by offering special rent concessions.

Novel craft items to buy will include handcrafted mobiles of Australian birds, and pressed flowers in leadlights.

There will also be a greater-than-ever Australian flavour among the 200 stalls, although plenty of exotic merchandise from overseas will be on display.

So look out for French nautical postcards, as well as Billy Tea potholders; Tibetan books as well as Australian loofah sponges.

The dozens of charity and community service stalls will include Diana Fisher's celebrity food stall on which Penny Cook and Jeannie Little have been invited to serve.

### Best decorated home

Diana has organised the stall in association with Graham Gould of David Jones and herself made 200 pots of lemon marmalade to sell.

Another celebrity, Noel Ferrier, will open the fair on the stage near Moncur Street at 10 am, introduced by a town crier wearing the traditional tricorn hat.

This is one of three stages from which free entertainment will be offered throughout the day – everything from the Sydney Youth Orchestra to an



NOEL FERRIER  
to open the Fair

Australian bush band. 2 DAY FM will provide all the entertainment from one stage.

Other musical attractions will include the Lufthansa German Band which has played at every Queen Street Fair since the first in 1972.

This year, for the first time, there will be a special cash prize of \$100 for the best decorated home in the area of Queen Street where the fair is held.

This will be in addition to prizes for stall decoration and the best decorated shop in Queen Street on fair day.

As usual, Queen Street will be closed to traffic from Oxford Street to Ocean Street and some 30,000 visitors are expected.

So, given good weather, it will again be a glorious occasion. We look forward to seeing you there.

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# THE ASSOCIATION AT WORK

UNFORTUNATELY for us, our president, Norman Prescott, has moved to Bowral and is no longer able to take part in the Association's day-to-day work.

Curiously, the Association's constitution makes no provision for the resignation of an officer during his year of office.

Norman will therefore remain nominally President until the 1985 annual meeting. Meanwhile, the rest of the committee and I will take up the reins.

I would like to pay tribute to Norman for the enormous amount of dedication he has put into his 18 months as our leader.

His patient work on the frustrating task of trying to achieve a reduction of traffic in Ocean Street has been particularly valuable.

We will miss him greatly, and wish him well in his new (and quieter!) surroundings.

## Mayor's protest

We have written to congratulate our most senior ward alderman, Jock MacCallum, who was elected in September to serve a second year as Mayor of Woollahra – a rare honour.

Although the Association and local residents have often been bitterly critical of the Council over the Ocean Street traffic problem, it should also be acknowledged that Jock has recently been taking some constructive initiatives with the State authorities.

As reported in the previous *Village Voice*, he wrote to the Department of Main Roads protesting at the ineffective manner in which the trial reduction of turning lanes from Oxford Street into Ocean Street was carried out.

He also shares our concern at the arbitrary way in which it was announced that the trial would be abandoned (see separate report beginning on page 1).

When this issue of *Village Voice* was being prepared, the Mayor was hopeful of having a meeting about

## By Robin Brampton Vice President and Acting Chairman

Ocean Street traffic at senior Government level.

Our Association would be represented at the meeting and we would again press strongly for positive and permanent action to reduce the traffic flow.

Meanwhile, the cudgels have been taken up very strongly on our behalf by Michael Yabsley, State member for Bligh.

He described the reported decision to discontinue the trial reduction of turning lanes as "a cynical cop out of an election promise".

In a protest telegram to the Minister for Transport, Mr Yabsley said: "The unilateral and arbitrary decision to end the trial is intolerable in view of the well publicised statement by the then Minister for Roads that Ocean Street 'should not be required to carry other than local traffic'."

"Your immediate co-operation is sought in continuing the trial with the ultimate aim of reducing the flow of traffic along Ocean Street."

## Fountain decision

The Association would like to see a more interesting landscape treatment for Davies Reserve, at the corner of Queen Street and Oxford Street, which is one of the gateways to the municipality.

In 1981, Woollahra Council drew up a scheme which we considered inappropriate.

Instead we said we would prefer a treatment with some bold central focus – so the Council asked us to suggest one.

We went one better. We arranged for a magnificent Victorian fountain to be donated to the National Trust on condition that it was placed in Davies Reserve.

We then got two architects recommended by the National Trust, with

specialist knowledge of the planning of Victorian gardens, to draw up a scheme which we discussed with Council staff.

The whole exercise has been costly – involving the Association in obtaining valuations for the previous owner, and arranging the dismantling, cataloguing and transport of the fountain into storage.

Imagine our dismay, therefore, a few weeks ago to be told that the Council had decided that the fountain should not be incorporated in the reserve.

No reason whatever has been given for the decision, and we are seeking a meeting with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on the whole question.

## Our plan – at last

One of the Association's most cherished goals, a planning scheme to control development in West Woollahra, is about to be achieved.

The Town Clerk, Michael Regnis told me at the beginning of November that he is confident that the West Woollahra Plan will be gazetted before the end of the year.

He bases this on the advice of Mr Merv Shearman, regional director for the city and eastern area with the Department of Environment and Planning.

Mr Shearman told Mr Regnis that the plan was now with the Parliamentary draftsmen for the preparation of a Gazette notice – the last stage in making it a reality.

We believe our Association did much to shape the plan which was eventually adopted by Woollahra Municipal Council in 1980.

Although there is some room for quibbling with the finished document, we are very pleased with its broad principles.

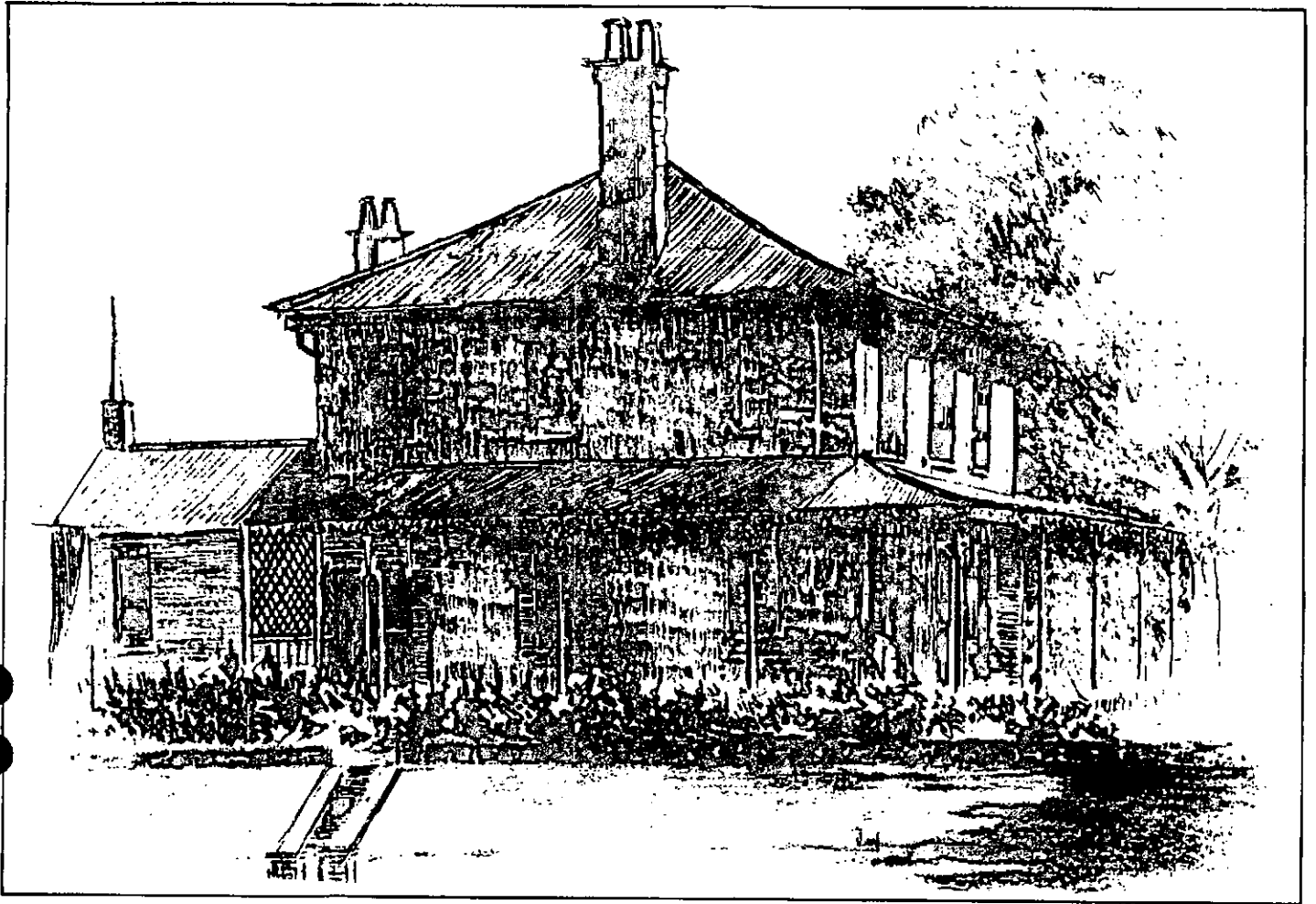
These give most of West Woollahra a conservation zoning which will preserve its character, and in particular prevent any out-of-scale development.

To get such a plan was the Associa-

## DON'T LET IT HAPPEN !

Sorry, but residents' vehicles must be kept out of Queen Street from dawn on Queen Street Fair day, Saturday, November 24. We ask residents to co-operate by not leaving cars in Queen Street, the surrounding lanes and intersections after Friday evening. The street closure begins at 5 am on Saturday and any cars still in the street at that time will be towed away – to protect them from being damaged by the crowds. And in the evening could you please help us by not bringing cars into Queen Street until it has been cleaned thoroughly.





tion's major objective when it was formed in 1972. It will be a great day when we finally attain it.

## A lively history

To celebrate Australia's Bicentenary in 1988, the association has decided to commission a book showing how our unique area has developed.

Funds have been set aside for the research and writing, and we are now looking for a suitable historian or author to undertake the task.

It is intended that the book should be very readable, with a strong concentration on people, and that it should be interestingly illustrated as well as well researched.

To find a suitable writer, we recently advertised in the *Wentworth Courier*, and we have also asked for help from the Departments of History at the Universities of Sydney and New South Wales.

Meanwhile, local people could assist us in two ways:

- Helping us to find people who have lived in the area a long time who could provide useful reminiscences.

- Particularly, helping us with illustrations. Any pictures of Queen Street and the area in earlier times would be most welcome. We could very quickly

## Waimea House – as it was

IT IS a source of continual disappointment to the Association that, 12 years after its attempted demolition by the Royal Blind Society, nothing has been done to restore Waimea House in Waimea Avenue, now the subject of a permanent conservation order.

However, the Heritage Commission is taking a great interest in the problem and in August the present owner, Dr Kelly, promised to come forward with some positive plans.

The house was originally sur-

rounded by an interesting garden and the sketch above was made in the early 1940s by Albert Clarke, gardener to Frank Yarwood who then owned and lived in the house with his wife, Emilene.

Mr Yarwood, an accountant, owned the house until his death in 1946 when it was sold to the Royal Blind Society. He had three daughters, Doris (still alive at the age of 87), Mary and Joyce. The picture was kindly provided for us by Mary's daughter, Mrs Ann Mills.

copy them and return the originals to the owner.

The project is being co-ordinated by myself with the assistance of committee members Mollie Lenthall and Tom Wilhelm. I can be reached on 331 1188 (daytime) and 326 1257 (after hours).

## Incorporation near

The change in the status of the Association from a non-profit association to an incorporated body is proceeding far more slowly than we had hoped.

However, it should be accom-

plished by the end of 1984 at which time the assets, undertakings and goodwill of the former association will be transferred to a company to be known as The Queen Street and West Woollahra Association Limited.

Members agreed to this at the annual meeting in June.

Ordinary members of the Association will automatically have their membership transferred to the new body. In the case of life members, we will write to each one giving them the opportunity to transfer to the new incorporated body without further cost.

# Ocean Street – legal advice sought

Continued

## QUEEN STREET & WEST WOOLLAHRA ASSOCIATION

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

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

**Subscription:** Individual \$5 a year; Family \$8; Corporate \$10; Life \$50.

**Patron:** Dame Joan Sutherland.

**President:** Norman Prescott.

**Vice-President and Acting Chairman:** Robin Brampton.

**Treasurer:** Mollie Lenthall.

**Secretary:** Monica McDonald.

**Committee:** Michael Crossman, Neville Kitto, John Morton, Pixie Nolan, Tom Wilhelm.

**Honorary Committee Member:** Leo Schofield.

**Convenor of the Ocean Street Traffic Committee:** Neville Kitto.

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### Please Join Us!

The Association needs all the help it can get in its fight for the best interests of the local community. If you are reading this and you are not a member, please join us. For individuals, the cost is only \$5 a year.

Family membership costs \$8 (two people); corporate membership is \$10; and life membership \$50. Just fill in the application form below and post it, with your cheque, to the secretary at the above address. Many thanks.

might attempt to revert the turning to two lanes surreptitiously.

As members already know, the Woollahra Council had been vigorously pursuing its intention, against wide public opposition, to extend the median strip in Ocean Street towards Albert Street, widen the road and remove the Albert Street pedestrian crossing.

The Council has consistently claimed that these steps are essential and solely in the interests of "public safety".

But in September the Town Clerk advised the Association, without explanation, that Council had decided not to proceed "at this stage" with any extension of the median strip between New South Head Road and High Street.

The Council has promised to "keep us informed".

Hopefully there is some sign in this of a more reasonable attitude by the Council towards public opinion – and traffic management – in Woollahra. That remains to be seen.

### Dangerous

Meanwhile, the Association will continue to press home to both the Woollahra Council and the State authorities that present traffic management practices in Ocean Street specifically, and Woollahra generally, are:

– **Dangerous**, because accidents are increasing at street junctions throughout the area and motorists continue to drive at vastly excessive speeds along Ocean Street.

– **Unhealthy**, because noise levels in Ocean Street approach double the acceptable Australian standard for inner city dwellings; because particulate or soot pollution reaches levels which are hazardous to residents with respiratory problems; and because there are significant amounts of lead in these emissions.

– **Discriminatory**, because while Ocean Street is forced to accommodate highway levels of traffic, Edgecliff Road remains closed to through traffic at the northern junction with New South Head Road; and because new initiatives are taken to control traffic in Paddington but no initiatives are taken in Ocean Street.

– **Unjust**, because Oxford Street, a declared main road, is under-utilised by through traffic for which it was built, and motorists are encouraged to divert into Ocean Street, a local road – a practice which is against the stated

policy of the previous Minister for Transport.

The task is not an easy one, and it has been made harder by the loss of the services of Norman Prescott who has left the Association after many years of valued service, especially in the fight for sensible traffic management in West Woollahra.

We need your help. Please present your views as firmly and as frequently as you can to the Woollahra Council, the Minister for Roads and the local press.

Nothing is more effective than the power of public opinion.

## Banshee wails in the dead of night

THE heavy rains of early November led to an enormous increase in the work of emergency vehicles – fire engines, police cars and ambulances.

When they have to get through heavy traffic during the day, it is understandable that they have to keep their sirens blaring. But why is it still necessary at night when traffic conditions are lighter?

Ocean Street is a prime corridor for emergency vehicles and their sirens interrupting your sleep are an additional aggravation to the annoyance already caused by the volume of traffic.

Can't anything be done?

R. B.

### THE QUEEN STREET AND WEST WOOLLAHRA ASSOCIATION

Please enrol me as a member in the category of (tick box)

Individual member

Family member

Corporate member

Life member

I enclose a cheque for \$.....

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

POST TO:

The Secretary,  
Queen Street and West Woollahra Association,  
PO Box 16,  
WOOLLAHRA, NSW 2025.