

VILLAGE VOICE

Newsletter of the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association

No. 34

NOV-DEC, 1986

The smell of greasepaint, the roar of the cars?

By Ronald Osborne

A LIVE theatre in Woollahra is the exciting prospect for residents and non-residents alike, following a recent application to Woollahra Council to approve a development based on the Diamond Horseshoe building, with associated car parking.

Readers will be aware from our previous issue that the Queen Street Association supports the concept. The smell of the greasepaint and the chance to hear the words of the Bard have us in thrall.

The application itself might be viewed as a scene in a drama of sorts.

The players are those well-known protagonists who tread the boards on such occasions

— either in person or in spirit — the architects and town planners, the owner and the residents, the Department of Main Roads and the police.

Their collective roles will inevitably mould the final production.

The earlier scenes assist our understanding of the one before us. Sometimes stormy and well publicised, they included thespian talents of our former Premier, himself a resident and no mean player.

Of equal or greater importance was the scene which saw your association stride the stage like a colossus, eventually winning the residential zoning of the site.

Continued page 2

Picture above shows the derelict facade of the Diamond Horseshoe night-club building in Oxford Street which has been disused for some 20 years.

The owner has lodged an application with Woollahra Council to redevelop the building and two adjoining terraced houses, Nos 76 and 78, as a theatrical complex.

This would include a 200-seat live theatre with supporting studio accommodation for rehearsals and teaching.

Previous applications to use the site for a functions centre and a cinema have foundered for one reason or another.

The new scheme has been designed by Victor M. Berk, a senior lecturer in architecture at the University of NSW, in a manner which would retain the

Theatre scheme for Diamond Horseshoe site

present facade behind which would be a foyer and the theatre auditorium.

The frontage would be extended in a similar style down Oxford Street and include a new entrance. Behind this would be the studios overlooking an open area with a glazed roof.

Picture below shows a model of the proposal from the Oxford Street frontage.

It is planned that the Thalia Theatre Company, led by Polish-born director and actor Bogdan Koca, would be the theatre's resident company. The auditorium would also be available for other productions and general community purposes.

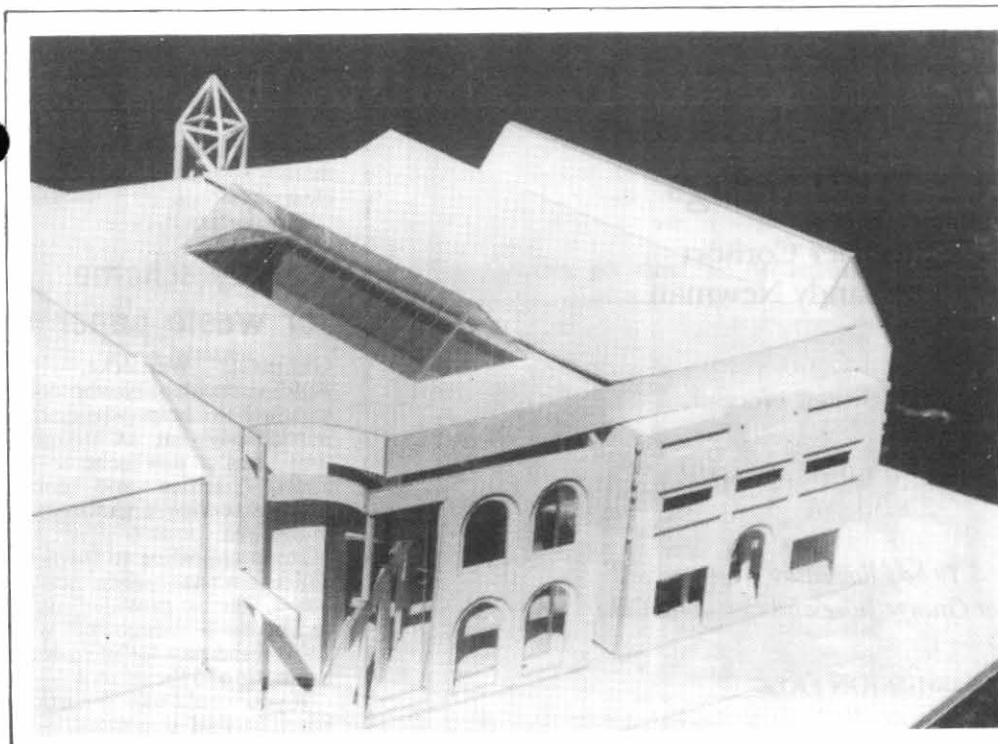
A carpark at the rear of the building, with access to James Street, would provide parking for 28 cars of people working at the complex.

Although the association supports the development in principle, we understand the fears of nearby residents about the number of other cars that would descend on the area when performances are given.

One suggestion is that if the development is approved, Victoria Avenue should be blocked off to keep visitors' cars in Oxford Street.

In any case, we believe it would be helpful in clearing the air if the applicants held a meeting at which residents could voice their fears and hopefully have them allayed.

In the article opposite the situation is discussed by our honorary treasurer, Ronald Osborne, who lives in Victoria Avenue just behind the proposed carpark.



Traffic build-up in Ocean Street issue still alive

ALTHOUGH he now lives in Bowral, our former president, Norman Prescott, still owns a town house in Ocean Street, at Trelawney Place, and continues to take an interest in the Ocean Street traffic horror.

Norman was recently in touch with Woollahra Municipal Council suggesting that the introduction of traffic lights at the junction of Ocean Street and Trelawney Street had created a traffic hazard for vehicles using the parking area of Trelawney Place, off Trelawney Street.

Norman also reiterated a previous suggestion that a better method of traffic control at the junction of Jersey Road and Ocean Street would be a roundabout.

Meeting with DMR

While not agreeing with Norman on either point, the Council's reply revealed that it has not entirely abandoned Ocean Street to its plight.

In March the Council engineer, Denis Cafe, held a meeting with the area traffic engineer of the DMR, Rick Chaseling, and the principal director of the Traffic Authority, Bruce Hazel.

Queen Street Week planned in 1987

THIS has been a quiet year for activities organised by the Queen Street Association, following the decision not to hold a Queen Street Fair in 1986.

However, the association is formulating plans for a Queen Street Week just before Christmas, 1987, with the special aim of focussing attention on the street's distinctive shopping.

The week will also probably be the association's Bicentennial Year occasion - if a trifle early.

Likely activities include:

- A Saturday of events, including a charity bazaar on the Dorhauer Lane carpark and an historical walk.

- A special evening opening of the antique shops, perhaps finishing with a supper.

- Publication of our long-planned book and guide to Queen Street, with perhaps more contemporary emphasis than was originally planned.

Promotional activities would include a special

poster. And local churches and community organisations would be encouraged to benefit by holding their own activities during the week.

To kick off the idea, we are holding a public meeting on Tuesday, February 10, at 5.45 pm at the showrooms of Fred Pazotti Pty Ltd, 64 Moncur Street, Woollahra.

A special invitation is extended to proprietors of local businesses whom we trust will give the idea plenty of support.

Mr Cafe's purpose was to reiterate the Council's opposition to the high volume of traffic in Ocean Street and see what could be done to make the Eastern Distributor, now under construction, more effective in relieving the situation.

He got very little encouragement. In fact he was told that the Eastern Distributor would only cater for the increase in traffic due to normal growth and its construction would create the potential for redevelopment of areas just east of the central business district.

However, in receiving the

report, council decided to again write to the Minister for Roads and the Minister for Transport, reaffirming its views:

- That it remains opposed to the high volume of traffic using Ocean Street.

- That suitable alternatives should be found for traffic travelling to and from the South Eastern suburbs to the Harbour Bridge and North Shore, using designated main roads.

The Council also decided to review the matter at the end of 1986. We will send them a reminder and report any further results.

THEATRE SCHEME

continued

courtesy of Local Environment Plan No. 24, gazetted in 1985.

What are the obstacles to be hurdled in the present scene? Not the least are the concerns of many James Street residents, aghast that car parking access is intended via their little "lane, not a street".

It is true that James Street is only 16 ft wide in parts. The prospect of vehicles associated with 200-odd theatre patrons cruising Victoria Avenue, James Street and John Street is not a pleasant one.

Perhaps the closure of Victoria Avenue (once called Eliza Street - G. B. Shaw would not have approved the change) at its Oxford Street opening might help preserve for residents the car parking facilities of both Victoria Avenue and James Street.

An Oxford Street entrance to the car park might also be considered, as usage would be mainly nocturnal and outside clearway hours.

The curtain rises...

Charity scheme for waste paper

GEORGE Warnecke, the Paddington identity who does so much to help pensioners, particularly at Christmas time, has a new scheme to assist charities and community service organisations in the area.

He is appealing to them to collect waste paper, cardboard, etc - provided it is recyclable - which he will collect and pay for in cash as a donation to their funds.

If you would like to participate, or find out more, you can ring George on 331 4887.

All local residents are invited to join members of the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association for

A Concert Of Christmas Carols And Songs

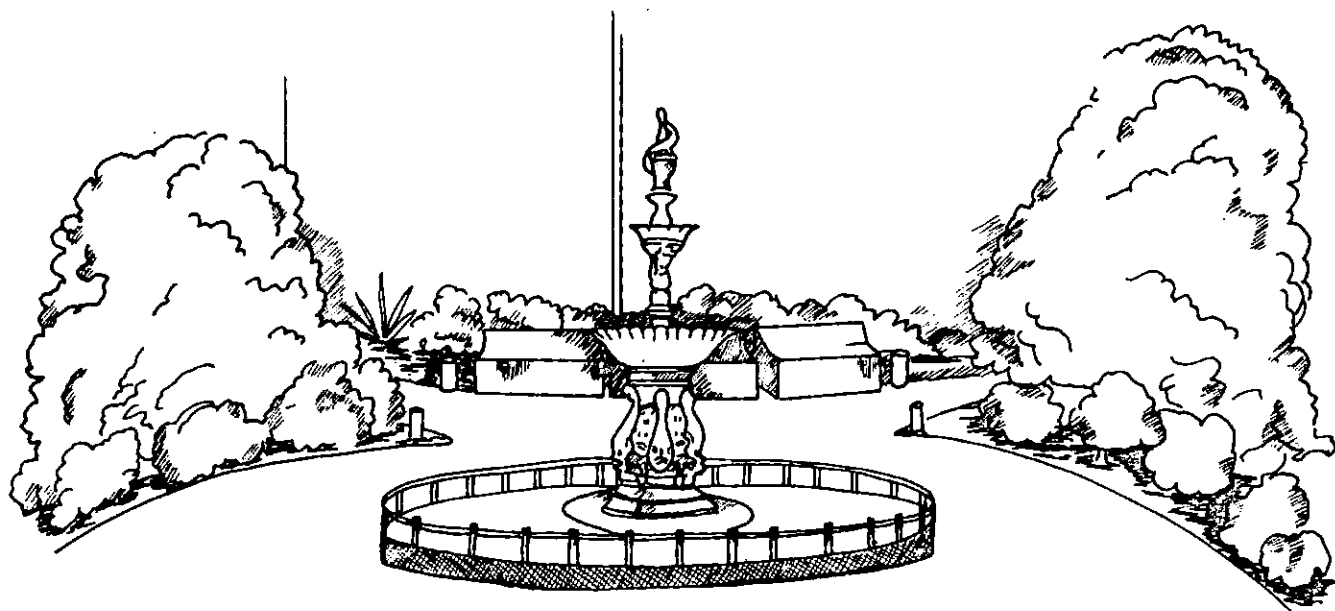
By The Taverner Consort
conducted by Sandy Newman

Queens Court
118-120 Queen Street, Woollahra

Tuesday, December 16th, 1986
6.30 pm

To be followed by
Champagne or Orange Juice and Christmas Cake

ADMISSION FREE



Fountain scheme for Queen Street by 1988?

THE Queen Street Association is holding discussions with Woollahra Council with a view to having a magnificent early Victorian garden fountain installed as part of a new landscaping scheme for Davies Reserve.

We see this as an ideal Bicentennial project for Queen Street and would like it completed in time for Queen Street Week, proposed for late in 1987 (*see separate report*).

The \$25,000 cast iron fountain was donated to the National Trust in 1983 on condition that it was placed in the reserve at the corner of Queen Street and Oxford Street.

The fountain formerly stood in the garden of a mansion in our area and the association was instrumental in arranging the donation.

We then arranged for it to be dismantled and placed in the custody of Woollahra

Council pending installation in the reserve.

We also engaged James Broadbent and Michael Lehaney, architects who specialise in the re-creation of Victorian gardens, to prepare a suitable landscaping scheme.

Plans were submitted to Woollahra Council some time ago but this year we had a model prepared to show more graphically how the scheme would look.

This model was given to the then Mayor of Woollahra, Hilda Rolfe, when representatives of the association discussed the fountain project with the Council in August.

We'll do work

In requesting the Council to approve the scheme in principle, we have now offered to undertake the actual work of refurbishing and installing the fountain, including providing

new parts, plumbing and electrical works.

Landscape architect Duane Norris, a member of the association committee, would be responsible for supervising the work to required standards.

It is envisaged that the Council itself would do the landscaping, following its decision some time ago to spend money on upgrading the reserve.

We have suggested that the fountain should play for a number of hours each day to provide an interesting visual focus for "the gateway to the municipality".

Paddington Chamber of Commerce is writing to Woollahra Council supporting the project as an extension of its Bicentennial plans to upgrade Oxford Street.

A very useful contribution to progressing the scheme was made by students of landscape architecture at the

University of New South Wales.

As a class project, they were set the task of providing a landscape design for the reserve, incorporating the fountain. Some of the individual students' designs were very imaginative.

Book presentation

To mark our gratitude, the association has donated a book, *Fifty Years of Landscape Design*, to the library of the School of Landscape Architecture.

The book was due to be presented at the school's open day at the university early in September.

But because it had not arrived from London, association vice-president Robin Brampton amused the audience by miming its presentation to senior lecturer Douglas Crawford.

Happily the book has since arrived and been delivered.



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A Neighbourhood Watch precinct in the Triangle

PRECINCT 37 of Neighbourhood Watch in the Eastern Suburbs got under way on September 16 with an inaugural meeting at Woollahra Public School.

The Queen Street and West Woollahra Association was instrumental in setting up the meeting for the Triangle area bounded by Oxford Street, Ocean Street and Jersey Road.

Until the meeting, this was the only pocket of West Woollahra not covered by the Neighbourhood Watch programme.

Senior Constable Buttrose, police community relations officer for the Eastern Suburbs, gave a run-down on the form of crime we are commonly exposed to and how Neighbourhood Watch works to prevent it, including not only the "do's" but the "don'ts".

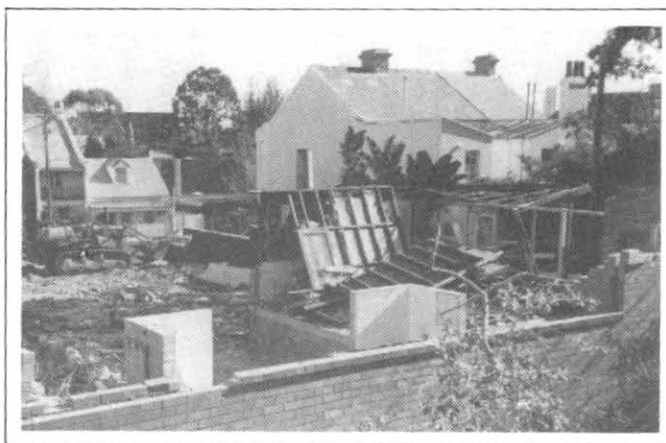
Also representing the police were Chief Inspector Archie Willis, who is in charge of our police district, and Sergeant Morrie Joseph, the local Neighbourhood Watch liaison officer at Paddington Police Station.

In describing some of the crimes we are commonly exposed to, Constable Buttrose warned that bag snatching had grown to an alarming extent in the Eastern Suburbs over recent months.

"It's an open invitation for women to carry over-shoulder bags swinging behind them," he said. "They should tuck them under the arm."

The 40 people who signed up to act as group co-ordinators for the precinct attended a later meeting to elect an area co-ordinator, assistant co-ordinators, secretary, assistant secretary and a newsletter editor.

Group co-ordinators will



The end of the Eyles pool where thousands learned to swim.

be responsible for contacting every home in the area to explain to householders how they can help to make the programme effective; to encourage them to display Neighbourhood Watch plaques; and to offer them the use of a kit for engraving their valuables against burglary.

Office-bearers and group co-ordinators will attend regular meetings to discuss progress, to receive latest crime figures and decide on future tactics. A regular newsletter will keep residents informed of Neighbourhood Watch activities.

Neighbourhood Watch depends not only on those who have volunteered their services, but on all residents for its success.

This local community programme is wholeheartedly supported by the association, and it is to be hoped that it will receive the support of everyone in the area who wants to make it a safer place to live.

If you would like to be actively involved in your local Neighbourhood Watch programme, start by phoning the area co-ordinator for Precinct 37, Randolph Griffiths, on 327 3623.

MOLLIE LENTHALL

Indoor swimming pool demolished for town houses

SADLY the Eyles (formerly Prossers) Swimming Pool in Holdsworth Street is no more.

Town houses will replace a valuable community amenity which enabled thousands of local children and adults to learn to swim in safety.

After the pool closed in March, the Queen Street Association wrote to Woollahra Council suggesting its acquisition as a municipal facility.

Woollahra Municipality has no other public non-tidal swimming pools, such as are provided by other municipalities, and a similar plea was made in a separately organised petition from 719 residents.

In May, the Council told us that the matter was "under investigation" ... but that didn't stop the bulldozers moving in to make any further representations useless.

The association has since expressed its horror that the pool has been demolished and a vital facility lost to the area.

We also hope that in view of the demolition, the Council will consider establishing a new heated indoor swimming pool on a subsidised basis.

All Saints plans to restore its magnificent organ

THE magnificent Victorian organ of All Saints Church, Ocean Street, is something of a national treasure - being the finest example in Australia of the work of Forster and Andrews of Hull, England.

It is their only three-manual instrument which has not been substantially altered - a fate it probably escaped through lack of funds when All Saints celebrated its diamond jubilee in 1936.

The organ also survived a disastrous fire which considerably damaged the church in 1946, after which it was dismantled and cleaned.

Further cleaning and patching up have been done since but now the 104-year-old instrument is really creaking with age and neglect. As a result, the parish has launched an appeal for \$90,000 to restore it to its former glory.

"Consumptive"

To give some idea of how badly the organ has deteriorated, *All Saints Magazine* tells us that the foot pedals are held up by an amazing arrangement of pipe cleaners.

Many of the stops work only reluctantly, to say the least, the bellows leak and the pedals rattle as if in the last stages of consumption!

As part of its fund-raising effort, the church has arranged a recital by Christopher Dearnley, organist of St Pauls Cathedral, London, at 8 pm on Friday, February 6. Separately, the church will hold an antique and treasure sale.

Meanwhile donations will be welcomed by the Rector of All Saints, Rev David Davis, All Saints Church, 85 Ocean Street, Woollahra 2025. Phone 32 1504.



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WEST WOOLLAHRA PROFILE

A special sort of place for children in Nelson Street

By Tom Wilhelm

FEW people in West Wollahra would be aware that we have one of the finest child care centres in the city in Nelson Street.

Walk down Nelson Street and you hardly notice the Sir Philip Baxter Child Care Centre.

But enter its front door and you realise what a complex and interesting institution you are in ... a real home away from home for all the children.

The building, originally a private home with grounds that stretched to Edgecliff Road, was sold to the Benevolent Society of NSW by Mr W. C. Allen who then generously donated a large sum of money for its conversion.

The work was beautifully done and the children's rooms are delightful spaces today.

The Benevolent Society of NSW dates from 1813 when it was founded to promote Christian knowledge and relieve the distressed in society.

The society is best known for the Royal Women's Hospital in Paddington, but it runs many other enterprises, among them the Philip Baxter Centre.

Since it was opened in May, 1980, the centre has gone from strength to strength.

The founding director, Virginia McSporran, remained in charge until the end of 1985 when a move took her interstate.

Fine ideas

Virginia's fine ideas of staff co-operation, decoration, and educational programmes for the children are still stamped on the centre.

The current director, Elizabeth Warren, is only too aware of following in Virginia's footsteps.

The centre caters for 55 children, plus a dozen after-school, in the most family-like atmosphere, but there is a long waiting list.

It provides a place for the children all day, from 8 am

until 5.30 pm, and all the staff aim to provide them with a homelike atmosphere.

There are four groups - the nursery, 0-18 months, 11 children; the 1-2's, 12 children; the toddlers, 2-3's, 12 children; and the kinders, 3-5, 20 children.

The children are well cared for with a highly trained staff - nurses for the younger groups and women with child care certificates for the older groups. Each group has two trained and one untrained assistant.

Education schemes

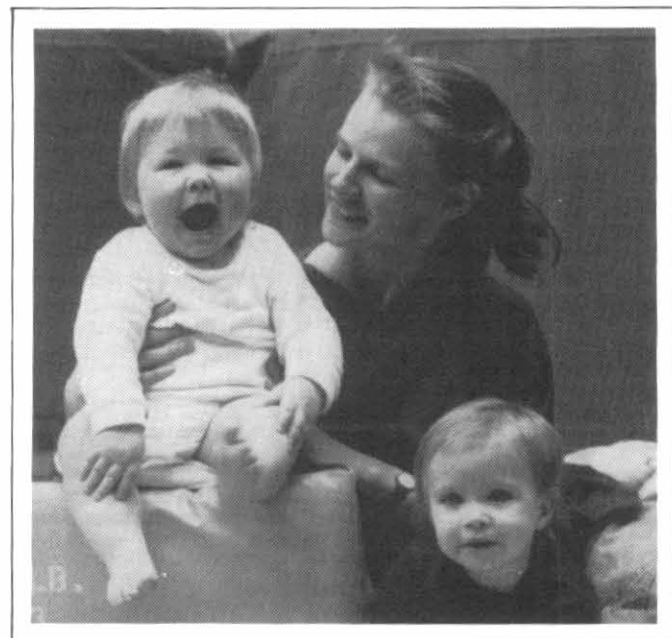
There is also a special education teacher who helps all groups set up their education programmes. Every child has an individual programme maintained by the staff.

Daily programmes and activities are based on the individual needs of the children. There is even a visiting therapist to help the staff with special problems.

The director is also a trained teacher in special education and the centre employs a full-time cook and a handyman.

The centre is financed by fees and by Commonwealth funds. This funding means that the centre must abide by Commonwealth guidelines on priority of access.

Working parents get first



Martha Rundle, a deaf assistant, has taught the staff much with her special skills of communication, using eye contact and gesture.

priority and the centre has a commitment to children with special needs - physical, social and behavioural.

I have been associated with the centre for years and am fully aware of what a fine atmosphere has been created for children at 27 Nelson Street.

The artwork, the drama, the music, the stories are all there, and the proof of success is in the happy children playing in all sections.

There are some wonderful people on the staff, some of whom have been with the centre since it began.

"Carrots" Lynn is one such extraordinary personality, fabulous with the children, always setting something right. No problem is too small for her attention, and I don't

know where she gets all the energy!

Prue Bean (currently off on maternity leave) is another bubbling person. She can take care of three children with one hand and always has a smile and a laugh for even the littlest.

A recent arrival who has made good waves is Martha Rundle, an untrained assistant who is deaf, and acts with Theatre of the Deaf.

Student visitors

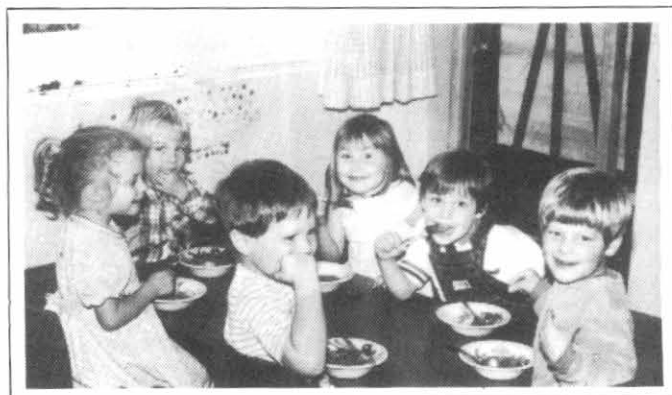
She works with the babies and has taught the staff much with her special skills of communication, using eye contact and gesture.

The centre has a steady stream of students visiting and helping. Some come from the Institute of Early Childhood Studies and others from the Randwick and Petersham TAFE where they train for the child care certificate, a programme that Elizabeth Warren cannot praise too highly.

There are evening get-togethers for parents and staff where problems and difficulties that arise with children can be discussed.

All in all, the centre is a very busy and friendly place.

You have only to attend one of the Christmas shows and see all the little ones singing, dressed up in costumes, to realise what a special sort of haven we have for them in Nelson Street.



All-day care means that children have meals at the centre which employs a full-time cook.

THERE'S been great building activity in Queens Court in the past few weeks.

Office accommodation on the first floor is being reconstructed to provide more offices but smaller units. On the Peaker Lane and Queen Street sides, central corridors will replace the open balcony access.

Although it is sad to see so much of the open balcony disappear, it is being retained on the Moncur Street side, now reached from the courtyard by an attractive tiled spiral staircase.

And happily the reconstruction is not involving any outward extension of the building or reduction in the attractive open courtyard area.

* * *

NICE to see Bill Bradshaw wandering happily down Queen Street again only five weeks after a massive five-bypass heart operation.

Now in his mid-60s (he certainly doesn't look it), Bill is a veteran Queen Street trader, having established his antique shop at Number 96 in 1956. He deals in clocks but his hobby is his fascinating collection of pianos.

Keep up the recovery, Bill. We need stayers like you in Queen Street.

* * *

PETER and Georgia Zoumpoulis and their family have been part of the area's trading scene for many years, operating a delicatessen first on Queen Street and then in Ocean Street.



Compiled by Monica McDonald and Robin Brampton

Now they have taken over the Queen Street Fruit Shop at Number 136, completely modernising it with a tile floor and extending it... as befits Neville and Jill Wran's favourite fruit and veg supplier.

We congratulate Georgia and Peter on their enterprise. But we are going to miss Tom Chassass and his associates who ran the busy shop for so many years, giving it a great feeling of life and friendliness.

* * *

IT'S goodbye to Margaret Lewis, a lively and valued member of the Queen Street Association com-

mittee who last year served as vice-president.

Margaret is leaving her Ocean Street home to live in Paris where she is planning to buy a small hotel and run it on budget lines... making Australians especially welcome.

When the hotel is up and running under her direction, we have asked Margaret to let us know so we can pass on the word in VILLAGE VOICE that there is now a touch of West Woollahra near the banks of the Seine.

* * *

ANOTHER loss to the area is the departure from Paddington of John and Myrtle Cowling who have retired to Port Macquarie.

For many years John ran a real estate agency in Queen Street under the name of Cowling Larkin (now Richardson and Wrench).

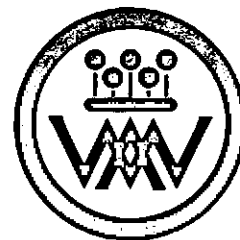
The couple supported the Queen Street Association strongly in its early days and Myrtle took a stall at a succession of Queen Street Fairs for her charity interests.

We wish them happiness in a retirement which, knowing them as we do, we are sure will be very active.

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 address on this page. Many thanks.



The Queen Street and West Woollahra Association Ltd

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.

Patron: Dame Joan Sutherland.

President: Tom Wilhelm.

Vice-President: Robin Brampton.

Treasurer: Ronald Osborne.

Secretary: Monica McDonald.

Committee: Mollie Lenthall, Monica McDonald, Pixie Nolan, Duane Norris, Ronald Osborne and Anthony Sunman.

Honorary Committee Member: Leo Schofield.

Village Voice Editor: Robin Brampton.

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