

VILLAGE VOICE

No. 35 MAY, 1987

Newsletter of the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association

Gains and losses in a year of changes

• Although our area has lost the amenity of Eyles heated swimming pool, it may gain a much-needed entertainment centre through a proposal which the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association supports. These and other aspects of the Association's work and attitudes are discussed in the annual report of the President, Tom Wilhelm, which is printed in full below.

ABOUT OUR SPEAKER

Peter C. James has been executive director of the National Trust of Australia (NSW) since 1983 and previously was for seven years deputy director. He comes from Tasmania where he gained a degree in law and practiced both in Hobart and Sydney before joining the staff of the National Trust. He has also lectured on various aspects of law – including conservation practice and conservation law – and delivered many papers, particularly on conservation and heritage matters, at conferences and seminars in Australia and overseas. Peter lives in West Woollahra and is a member of both the Heritage Council and Woollahra Municipal Council's interim Advisory Committee on Conservation.



All local residents are cordially invited to the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

of the Queen Street
and West Woollahra Association

Showrooms of Fred Pazotti Pty Ltd
64 Moncur Street, Woollahra

Wednesday, May 20th at 7 pm

GUEST SPEAKER

Peter C. James

Executive Director of the National Trust
of Australia (NSW)

who will talk on matters of local interest

Followed by free wine tasting and refreshments

ANOTHER milestone was reached in West Woollahra this past year. A derelict property, a neighbourhood landmark, the Diamond Horseshoe on Oxford Street may have found a purpose.

There is a proposal before the Woollahra Council to renovate the old theatre and put it back into use.

The plans are extensive and will result, if they go ahead, in a badly needed entertainment centre for our area.

Naturally neighbouring residents are concerned about the increase in activity that will result if the proposal goes ahead and have put their views to Council to modify the plans slightly.

The Association is in favour of the plans even though they will result in a change of zoning for the property from residential to a slightly higher usage.

On an opposite note, we lost the Eyles Pool this year which, as most of you know, is now a row of town houses. This was a real loss of amenity for our area.

Protested

We had protested the loss to Woollahra Council, trying to get some alternative swimming venue. But the forces of economic gain are great and our protest, along with others, fell on deaf ears.

A concern by one of our committee members about the increasing number of household burglaries in our area led one of our committee members, Mollie Lenthall, to investigate the forming of a local Neighbourhood Watch.

These efforts resulted in signatures being obtained and then a meeting held with the police, a prerequisite for a Neighbourhood Watch being set up.

The first meeting, attended by 120 people, was held at Forth Street School on September 15. A further meeting

continued next page

Garbage mars Sunday in Queen Street

By Monica McDonald

A VISITOR who walks down Queen Street from Oxford Street on a Sunday could be forgiven for thinking he was in the back lane of a slum rather than in a famous street in a "fashionable" suburb.

In spite of extra clearances by Woollahra Council staff, there are always heaps of garbage, boxes, papers, etc, lying around at the mercy of dogs, the weather and those with high spirits.

A lot of waste is left behind by business people who close up on Friday nights and go home to their own clean suburbs for the weekend.

The Smith Street back lane is the logical place for rubbish but the people concerned are too lazy to place it there.

This behaviour is not fair to the residents and the other shopkeepers whose elegant window displays attract many visitors to the area who then have to contend with often smelly refuse.

What is the good of the Council planting trees, upgrading the footpaths, etc, to have this good work negated by the actions of a few thoughtless and selfish people?

If this practice continues, Queen Street will soon be a less-than-desirable address.

Perhaps if garbage clearance times were changed to Tuesday and Friday mornings, instead of Monday and Thursday, it might relieve the problem.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT CONTINUED

ected a management committee.

All of this was a success, judging by the interest shown by local people, and we now have a Neighbourhood Watch.

We instituted a few social mornings, to enable members to meet directors and discuss our area and their concerns about it. It was felt that the Association was not "social" enough and this was one way of trying to rectify that.

Resignations

The first such Sunday brunch was held at Pixie Nolan's house in August and the second at Ron Osborne's house.

We thank those people for being so gracious and allowing us to use their homes on those occasions. Both gatherings were interesting and productive and brought new people to the board of directors.

We were sad to receive resignations from Pixie Nolan, Margaret Lewis and David Ross, all of whom were effective directors. But for various reasons, they could no longer spare the time for our meetings.

We wish them all well in their new endeavours.

As replacements, we co-opted James Furber, owner of Screws Hardware, and Warren Fahey, local resident and Paddington businessman.

Their arrival has brought the number of Queen Street businessmen on our board of directors to new heights and is slowly changing the direction of the Association.

The Queen Street Fair, as you all know, has fled to Double Bay. Many of us were saddened by that turn of events, but in general the consensus was favourable.

We considered arranging some alternative event to replace the big hole that change made in the last Saturday in November last year but planning did not get off the ground.

Robin Brampton proposed an event for 1987 and planning is well under way at this time.

The event is to be called QUEEN STREET CELEBRATIONS and will bear no resemblance, accidental or otherwise, to Queen Street Fair.

It will be a week-long celebration composed of many events and we have high hopes for it.

Meetings were held early in the year and interest shown by local businesspeople has been great.

Historical book

A committee of a dozen new people has been created to organise and run Queen Street Celebrations.

For the Celebrations, the Association is arranging to publish an historical book about West Woollahra and has hired a researcher/writer to work with Robin Brampton in its production.

The book will be published in a softbound and a hardbound copy and should be of interest to all local residents. It will contain advertising and be released just prior to the Celebrations.

The Association has also undertaken to install a Victorian fountain in the Davies Reserve.

This fountain was donated to the Association a few years ago for placement in the Davies Reserve. A few problems have plagued and delayed the project, but these seem now to be overcome.

Opening ceremony

We are fortunate to have on our Committee the talent of Duane Norris who has undertaken to direct this big project for us.

Between him and Russell Lloyd, from the Council engineering staff, the fountain will no doubt be ready in time.

An opening ceremony will take place on the first Saturday of the Celebrations and the fountain will make a beautiful addition to the "front door" of Queen Street.

The Association has not raised its fees for many years and they frankly have become absurdly low in the era of the 36c stamp. So we propose to raise all fees by 100 per cent. Lest you think this is outrageous, it means that it will now cost \$10 per year for an individual to join the Association, still very good value and not very expensive.

Other fees are up similarly, \$15 for family membership, \$20 for corporate and \$100 for life members.

Secretary leaves

We are especially sad to see Monica McDonald leaving us as Secretary this year. Her tireless energy and great generosity have literally kept the Association going for years.

Such efforts and dedication cannot be praised too highly and we know that finding a replacement is all but impossible.

We wish Monica the best in the coming year and hope she enjoys all the free time she will gain by this decision.

Finally I would like to thank all those people whose efforts have made it possible for me to carry out the office of President this year and think they all have reason to be satisfied with the many worthwhile projects that have been accomplished and begun.

Tom Wilhelm

queen st BRASSERIE

DINNER: TUESDAY — SATURDAY FROM 6 PM

LUNCH: SATURDAY FROM 12 NOON

107 QUEEN STREET,
WOOLLAHRA, NSW

RESERVATIONS: 32 5865
B.Y.O.



Compiled by Monica McDonald
and Robin Brampton

THE past few weeks has seen the blossoming of two excellent new restaurants in our area - Queen Street Brasserie in Queen Street and Big Mumma's in Moncur Street.

Queen Street Brasserie is the first venture into restaurant ownership of Ray Turner, although he has plenty of management experience, some gained in catering.

He has given a stark but very stylish decorating treatment to the former Folly Restaurant and installed a French chef, Eric de Pres, to provide nouvelle cuisine with the emphasis on quality presentation.

The small menu offers a choice of six entrees, six main courses and a small selection of desserts. The restaurant is still BYO.

Somewhat more hearty, but excellent when we tried it, was the fare at Big Mumma's, the Moncur Street eatery which has seen many changes since it was first opened by a group of ex Qantas stewards as the Mon Coeur back in the 1960s.

New owner Victor Prezioso is an experienced Italian chef whose aim is to create an Italian family style restaurant with reasonable prices.

On the night we patronised Big Mumma's, we were also impressed by the friendly service of the two young waiters while Victor himself kept slaving away over the pasta in the background.

WORK is proceeding well on Queen Street - a History and Guide, the book which the Association will publish for Queen Street week.

The research is being handled by Alison Halliday, a teacher of history who was brought up at 119 Queen Street where her mother still lives.

Alison has interviewed a number of local people with interesting recollections of Queen Street in bygone years, but would still welcome more such contacts.



St Kevin's at 117 Queen Street, sold in March for \$1.39 million.

And we are particularly hoping to find more photographs of Queen Street in the past, especially of the shops.

If you can help, please phone Allison on 389 1848.

* * *

IT'S strange to think of Queen Street without Leo Schofield who has been living in the street for more than 20 years and was the inspiration of the Queen Street Association in its earlier days.

His flare and determination have led to the superb restoration of three properties in our

area which once languished in various stages of neglect.

These are the former rectory building in Oxford Street, now a restaurant; the imposing Queen Street Gallery, once used as a tobacco factory; and the 1893 mansion St Kevin's which Leo made his home.

But now he has decided to leave St Kevin's, with its magnificent period interior appointments, and move to a somewhat smaller home, still within our area.

On March 20, St Kevin's fetched \$1.39 million at an auction arranged by Richard-

son & Wrench in association with W. J. Bridges Real Estate - a record for Queen Street real estate.

We wish Leo well in his new surroundings and welcome the fact that he will still reside within our boundaries and keep a concerned eye on our activities.

* * *

ANOTHER departure from Queen Street is Sacha Badran, a specialist in oriental art, who has closed down her Senang Galleries.

We're sorry to be saying goodbye to Sacha, who served on the Association committee in 1983-84.

* * *

Song of the yellow sparrow

WARREN Fahey, a member of our committee and the owner of Folkways music store in Paddington, has spent nearly 25 years collecting and researching Australian folk-lore and traditional songs.

Digging through his files recently, he came across a fascinating piece about Woollahra.

In the old days it was quite common to paste newspapers on the walls of living rooms as a kind of contemporary wallpaper.

In 1927, the Sydney Truth newspaper reported that a street hawker had been working his way around Woollahra and Paddington selling Hartz Mount-Roller canaries, renowned as the best whistling breed.

According to the newspaper report, revealed during the renovation of an old

Woollahra house, the birds were actually common garden sparrows that had been dyed yellow.

Scattered next to this newspaper report some anonymous wit had contributed the following parody of "Coming Through the Rye":

*Sister Mary bought a canary
Paying cost a sigh.*

*Day and Night,
'Tis true, too right,*

*She listened for its cry.
But strange to say it never
whistled*

*And this is the reason why:
She found some old cock
sparrow feathers*

Coming through the dye.

If anyone remembers other similar old ditties, Warren Fahey would love to have them for his collection.

He can be reached on 33 3980 during the day and 332 1944 after hours.

AFTER 10 years on Woollahra Council our senior ward alderman, Jock MacCallum, will be bowing out when the municipal elections are held in September.

"It has been very interesting and I hope I have achieved something, but it's time for new blood," he told us.

Jock had the unusual distinction of having served twice as Mayor of Woollahra during his 10-year term and was always prepared to bend a sympathetic ear to Association representations.

Of our two other ward aldermen, Susan Collett, who is Deputy Mayor, will be seeking re-election, but we understand that Alderman David Wilson is unlikely to stand for a third term.

THE ASSOCIATION AT WORK

ALL is going well with the scheme to install a Victorian garden fountain, donated to the National Trust, in Davies Reserve at the corner of Queen Street and Oxford Street.

Duane Norris, a landscape architect who is a member of the Association committee, is co-ordinating the project with Woollahra Council.

Duane reports that the Council is enthusiastic about the plan and the official launching of the fountain on Sunday, November 29, should be one of the highlights of Queen Street Celebrations.

A Victorian masterpiece, the fountain once stood in the front garden of a mansion in our area. In its new home, it will act as a focal point for Woollahra and give the area a touch of bygone elegance.

Work on the restoration will begin in earnest in the next month or two. This will include sand blasting and minor repairs to rust damage, rust proofing and repainting of the fountain in a dark heritage green colour.

An elegant English pool surround has been secured from Haddonstone Australia to house the newly restored fountain.

Woollahra Council is providing the necessary transport to move the fountain into its new home; and also in trimming the overhanging trees and power installation.

All being well, the opening day of the fountain on November 29 will be a day that local residents will long remember.

Traffic study

THE Queen Street Association keeps nagging at the Ocean Street traffic problem, in support of Woollahra

Scheme for fountain moves ahead

Council's stated opposition to the present uncomfortably high volumes.

Apparently the Local Traffic Committee is also getting uneasy about the situation because at its April meeting, it was suggested that there had been an increase in traffic delays in the street.

Visual opinion

This opinion was "visual and subjective" according to the Council's engineer, Dennis Cafe, and the Department of Main Roads is organising a seven-day traffic count to see if the situation is really worsening.

In addition to the Council and the DMR, the Traffic Committee includes representatives of the police, the Urban Transit Authority and our local State member, Michael Yabsley.

Earlier in the year, Michael was not prepared to let matters lie when it was considered by the Traffic Committee that "no further action is warranted at this stage" on the Ocean Street situation.

He got the committee to agree to the need for a regional traffic flow study in conjunction with the projected completion of the Eastern Distributor and the second Harbour crossing.

We naturally hope that these two major projects will have some effect on reducing the uncomfortably high traffic volumes and have written to the Council supporting the proposed study.



The \$25,000 Victorian garden fountain which is to be installed in Davies Reserve.

Incidentally, according to a Traffic Committee report, the average daily traffic volume for Ocean Street dropped from 32,880 in 1983 to 26,693 in 1985.

Mr Cafe agrees that these figures are inconsistent with the recent impression of Traffic Committee members that delays are increasing, and it will be interesting to see what the new study shows.

Waimea delay

ANOTHER matter of great local concern on which the Association keeps plugging away is the fact that 13 years after the unsuccessful attempt at demolition, no start has been made on the restoration of Waimea House.

Built in 1858, the two-storey sandstone building in Waimea Avenue, off Queen Street, is a fine example of regency style domestic architecture.

Park Investments Pty Ltd,

of which Dr Bill Kelly is principal, received approval in April, 1986, for a full restoration of the building.

At the beginning of this year, we wrote to Woollahra Council expressing disappointment at the delay in getting on with the work.

This produced a letter to the Council from Dr Kelly's architect, Andrew Macens, who said that the delay had been caused by improvements to the original design which had to go to both the Heritage Council and Woollahra Council for approval.

Mr Macens said that suitable builders had been asked to quote for the project and work would begin when Woollahra Council approved a development application lodged in February.

At the beginning of May, the application was still before the Council although its building department has recommended approval, subject to a number of conditions.

We'll keep plugging away!



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OBITUARY

Association loses two of its founding personalities

OUR area is the poorer for the deaths in the past few months of two local personalities who contributed greatly to the foundation and early growth of the Queen Street Association.

They were author Patricia Thompson and engineer-businessman John Newton, both of whom served on the committee in the Association's first two years from 1972.

Pat Thompson, who died in February, aged 74, was always a staunch fighter for the conservation movement and the amenities of Paddington and West Woollahra.

She had a great zest for living and was always crisp in thought and dedicated in action ... a 'no nonsense' person who liked to get things done.

Never did she hesitate to speak out on contentious issues, particularly when she saw threats to the character of the area or the wellbeing of its people.

Pat was the widow of poet, writer and broadcaster John

Thompson and together they are generally credited with founding the Paddington Society in 1964.

She succeeded her husband as Paddington Society president and when she joined the Queen Street Association's fledgling committee, she brought with her a great deal of useful experience of residents action groups.

Her writing

Her interest in the area where she lived was also reflected in her writing and she prepared the text for *The Paddington Sketchbook*.

Her other literary work ranged from collaboration with outback character Bill Harney in an unusual cookbook to writing about arts and crafts, a subject in which she took a deep personal interest.

Before her death, she completed an autobiography, *Accidental Chords*, which is to be published by Penguin Books.

Pat is survived by her two sons, both famous figures in the Australian film industry -



PAT THOMPSON ... A "no nonsense" person who liked to get things done.

actor Jack Thompson and director and critic Peter Thompson.

John Newton who died late last year, aged 74, also brought to the Association's first committee a wealth of experience, particularly from having served as an alderman of Woollahra Council.

A manufacturer of electrical equipment and switchgear, he ran his business for

many years in a building at the corner of Moncur Street and Rush Street.

John took a great deal of interest in community service activities and was a charter member of East Sydney Rotary Club, serving as president in 1959.

He leaves a widow, Trouta, always known as "Miss G", to whom we express our sympathy.

Acting studio approval halted to consult residents

PROGRESS of a proposal to build an acting studio and 240-seat theatre on the site of the old Diamond Horseshoe nightclub in Oxford Street was halted in March for consultation with local residents.

Some residents in the immediate area are still concerned that the vehicles of people using the complex will cause chaos in surrounding streets.

However, Woollahra Council's Town Planning Department believes that the scheme should go ahead, subject to a number of conditions.

Under the proposal, the present nightclub facade would be retained but two adjoining terraced houses, Nos 76 and 78, would be demolished to provide a new extension to the frontage.

Queen Street Association is generally in favour of the scheme as it will provide a useful amenity in place of the eyesore which has disgraced the Oxford Street streetscape

since the building was last used in 1961.

However we appreciate the concerns of local residents about traffic, parking and possible noise and support the type of consultation which has recently been going on to prevent any problems developing.

Before committee

When the Town Planning Department's generally favourable report came before the Council's Building and Development Committee at the beginning of March, the meeting was addressed by Ron Osborne, a solicitor who lives in Victoria Avenue.

Although Mr Osborne is a member of our committee, he was speaking on behalf of himself and a group of local residents, not as an Association spokesman.

Voicing some of the residents' concerns, Mr Osborne asked to be allowed to commission and have presented a report by a firm of transport consultants on the

traffic and parking implications of the scheme.

As a result of his representations, it was decided to defer consideration of the scheme pending a meeting under Council auspices between concerned local residents and the applicants.

This meeting was held the following week and in a subsequent report, the Town Planning Department has suggested some new and more stringent conditions be imposed, including:

- Reduction in the number of vehicle spaces in the car park on the complex site off James Street from 28 to 20.

- Erection of a solid high wall between the car park and the back gardens of houses in Victoria Avenue.

- Provision of a means to lock the car park when the complex is not in use.

- Reduction in the seating capacity of the theatre and the number of nights or hours it is used for theatre performances.

Commenting on these re-

commendations, Mr Osborne said that Council officers still seemed generally in favour of the scheme and the application was "on course".

However, if the Council eventually endorses the scheme, it will still have another hoop to go through because the Council is not legally competent to approve development of an "education establishment" under the Residential 2(b) zoning which applies to Nos 76 and 78 Oxford Street.

Enough parking

The Council would therefore have to support an application to the Department of Environment and Planning for a special local environmental plan for the site.

Commenting on the parking question, the Town Planning Department considers that apart from the car park at the complex, there is sufficient on-street parking in Oxford Street to provide for evening performances.

A week of celebrations in Queen Street

QUEEN Street Celebrations – that's the name decided on for the exciting new event centred on Queen Street, to be held from Sunday, November 29, to the following Saturday.

And the Association has been very heartened by the way the local business community has seized on the idea as a way of promoting Queen Street's special character.

A committee including a dozen or so local business personalities, together with Association representatives, is getting down to planning the details.

However, it is very much agreed that Queen Street Celebrations should be a quality affair, reflecting the individuality of Queen Street and its polyglot businesses.

Landscape expert Duane Norris is heading the committee and among the people giving enthusiastic support are Brian Keirnan, Anya Copeland, Ernest Elphistone, James Furber, John Haymes, Keith Lehane, John Paradee, Chris Pentland, Mary Read, Ute Rose, Virginia Rose and Truus Stewart.

Fountain logo

Virginia Rose is acting as group secretary and among the first tasks is to develop a logo for the enterprise, based on the outline of the Victorian garden fountain we hope to see installed in Davies Reserve at the beginning of the Celebrations.

We also hope to have a really stunning poster to focus

attention on the event – a poster which people will want to buy and keep.

As outlined in the previous *Village Voice*, the major events planned for the Celebrations are:

- Inauguration of a \$25,000 Victorian garden fountain in Davies Reserve on Sunday, November 29. Work is going ahead on restoring the fountain and more details can be found on page 4.

- Special evening opening of antique shops and other businesses in Queen Street on Wednesday, December 2. This is being carefully planned to attract genuine antique buyers and to try to ensure that individual antique shops are not overwhelmed by the number of visitors.

Saturday events

- A concert on another weekday, probably arranged by one of the churches in the area.

- A series of events on Saturday, December 5, including a charity fair on Dorhauer Lane carpark, his-

toric walks, carriage rides and possibly a family day organised by Woollahra Senior Citizens Welfare Association on Gaden Reserve.

A competition will be organised to encourage a high standard of shop window dressing for the Celebrations, and we are planning a series of street decorations.

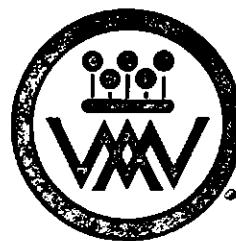
Promotion budget

The special book, *Queen Street – a History and Guide*, will be published by the Queen Street Association in time for the Celebrations.

On the financial side, it is expected that most of the events will pay for themselves. But a budget is being prepared for promotion.

As the promotion will benefit shopping in Queen Street, all businesses will be asked to contribute financially.

The organising committee is meeting monthly and we would welcome further support. If you would like to help, please contact Duane Norris on 326 2160 (business) or 818 3317 (home).



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: Warren Fahey, James Furber, Mollie Lenthall, Monica McDonald, Duane Norris, Ronald Osborne and Anthony Sunman.

Honorary Committee Member: Leo Schofield.

Village Voice Editor: Robin Brampton.

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Beat the price rise!

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.

It is proposed to increase subscriptions later this year, but if you join the Association now, it can still be at the old rate.

This is only \$5 a year for individuals. 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!



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