

Village Voice

Your community news
magazine for West
Woollahra/Paddington

Official Journal of the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association

No. 69 January - June, 1999



● Our own "wildlife sanctuary"!

The Queen Street Association is concerned at the stagnation of development at the "disaster area", where the Holdsworth Gallery once stood, at the corner of Jersey Road and Holdsworth Street. (See President's Report, pages 2-3.) Meanwhile, a lonely ibis appreciates having his own private swimming pool, formed by rainwater.

"Onslaught" of development

WHAT has been described as a "development onslaught" of new housing in Paddington, and to a lesser extent West Woollahra, is causing concern in both areas.

The Mayor of Woollahra, Councillor Mairaed Bilmon, has been asked at the Queen Street Association's annual meeting on May 25 to discuss how Woollahra Council ensures new residential development does not impact unduly on the quality of life in the area.

"Paddington is one of the densest residential suburbs in Australia and a conservation zone," said Paddington Society president, Penny Carle.

"The onslaught of new development will, for a start, increase traffic around Paddington, and we are concerned that the infrastructure cannot keep up with it."

Apart from the vast residential development in progress on the Royal Hospital for Women site,

new large-scale multi-apartment developments are planned for the former cigarette warehouse in Brown Street; the tennis clubhouse at White City; and the taxi depot at the corner of Glenmore Road and Cascade Street.

Insufficient parking

The Paddington Society is not objecting in principle to the conversion of the taxi depot into an apartment block. The proposal is for 110 apartments, ranging from studio to three-bedroom units.

However, the Society has objected to Woollahra Council that the development application allows for only 82 resident parking spaces and 10 visitor spaces.

Thus, at least 18 apartments would have no carparking, even assuming the others each use only one parking space.

Continued page 4

- Is new development being properly controlled?
- What is being done about the traffic build-up?
- When will Queen Street refurbishment continue?

COME AND MEET THE MAYOR

Councillor
Mairaed Bilmon



The operations of Woollahra Council have profound effect on the quality of life in our area. Come and hear the Mayor discuss the Council's attitude and policies on various issues affecting West Woollahra, and answer questions, at the

ANNUAL MEETING AND FORUM

The Queen Street and West Woollahra Association

Tuesday, May 25th, at 7pm

Fred Pazotti Pty Ltd, 64 Moncur Street, Woollahra

Complimentary drinks and savouries



NOTE: Although the meeting is open to all local residents, only financial members of the Association may take part in the formal business. Members may enrol or renew their membership at the meeting.

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Twenty five years of real estate service in Queen Street. Special feature with historic pictures of Queen Street's famous buildings. Pages 5, 6 and 7.



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• This is the report of the President, Mr Graham Freudenberg, AM, to be presented at the Annual Meeting of the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association Ltd on Tuesday, May 25.

AS the Association entered its second quarter century, highlights of 1998 were:

- The West Woollahra Streetwatch Programme.
- The Association's Heritage Awards.
- Revival of the Christmas Carols and Songs evening.
- Two very successful public dinners.
- Top level publicity about the fate of the Joan Sutherland house at 115 Queen Street.

Streetwatch

SOON after last year's Annual meeting, the Board of Directors reviewed the Association's performance in the light of its declared aims to preserve the character and promote the amenity of the area. The focus of this review was the Association's relevance to the day-to-day concerns of the residents.

The immediate outcome is a continuing programme which we

Year's focus on street upkeep

call Streetwatch. Basically this involves compiling a street-by-street inventory, listing work to be done, for submission to Woollahra Council.

The list includes items such as potholes, broken pavements and drains, trees in poor condition and neglected vegetation. The list for each precinct is being regularly reported to Council.

To date, five Sunday morning inspections have been carried out between October and March. Streets inspected include Holdsworth, Spicer, Moncur, Rush, James, John, Nelson, Wallis, Oxford, Ocean and Queen Street, and Jersey Road.

Directors taking part were Ken Gresham (Convenor), David Collingridge, Philip Johns, Heather Smith and myself.

The poor condition of the footpaths, largely as a result of tree damage, appears to be the most consistent problem. I have emphasised this aspect in my subsequent correspondence with Woollahra Council.

Another major concern is the "disaster area" at the corner of Jersey Road and Holdsworth Street, site of the now demolished Holdsworth Gallery.

In the Streetwatch context, I also have sought from the Council its intentions regarding the undertaking, given in 1996, for a three-year allocation of \$700,000 for Queen Street refurbishment.

This appears to have stalled with the completion of stage one between Moncur and Holdsworth Street, including the Banjo Paterson Walk.

Overall, however, we believe the Streetwatch programme will provide an ongoing basis for co-operation between the Council and the Association in pursuit of the common aim of improving amenity of the area.

Heritage Awards

THE inaugural Heritage Awards fulfilled a concept long held by our founding father, Robin Brampton. They are intended to give recognition to those who make a positive contribution to preserving the area's rich past, for example by way of sensitive property development and/or restoration.

It is significant that the first four recipients are all operating concerns, thus linking the past, present and future. They are:

- The Hughenden Boutique Hotel, 14 Queen Street, Elizabeth and Susanne Gervay.
- Susan Avery, Floral Decorator, premises at 59 Jersey Road, Susan Avery.
- Walford and Horgan Interiors, premises at 117 Jersey Road, Leslie Walford.
- The Dorbauer Steam Joinery Works, Smith Street and Halls Lane, Merle Atkins.

Our Patron, the Hon Neville Wran, AC, presented specially designed plaques at the Heritage Dinner, held at the Bellevue Hotel, Hargrave Street, on August 19. The recipients delighted the audience in their brief but excellent responses in which they each expressed their appreciation of being part of a community such as ours.

115 Queen Street

BY contrast, the deterioration of the property at 115 Queen Street continues to concern us. In my correspondence with the Council, I have described this as "demolition by neglect".

The house was Dame Joan

Sutherland's home from early childhood until she left for London to take up the Sun Aria scholarship which launched her on her incomparable career. What should be the gem of Queen Street is now its worst eyesore, in the very heart of the Village.

Robin Brampton and I have had discussions with Councillors David Leach and Stephen Davies on this matter. One result was an excellent article by Ben Hills on page 3 of the *Sydney Morning Herald* on March 6 this year.

We have also been in contact with Dame Joan, living in retirement in Switzerland, who has expressed her sympathy and interest.

Although, as Mr Hills' article concluded, the bottom line is money, the Association will continue to enlist support to prevent the disgrace which would result if this historic property were to be lost.

Christmas Carols

FURTHER down Queen Street, our friends at Ozanam Villa were the welcoming hosts for the Concert of Christmas Carols and Songs evening on December 8. This was the first time since 1992 that the Association had organised and sponsored this function.

Director Heather Smith enthusiastically took up the suggestion of Association stalwart, Monica MacDonald, that we should revive the tradition. And as in the past, the Taverner Consort provided the music.

Altogether a charming evening, much appreciated by the Villa residents, and, I hope in future years, a larger number of members and friends.

Dinner at the Bellevue

FOLLOWING the success of the Heritage Dinner in August, Robin Brampton arranged a Scottish Night on St Andrews Day, November 30, complete with piper and Scottish menu.

Flagging interest?

THE Queen Street Association would like to give away three boxes of the banner type flags which used to hang in Queen Street for the Queen Street Fair. Inquiries Robin Brampton, 9362 0713 or 9326 1257.



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Queen Street's touch of Heather!

At the Queen Street Association's St Andrews Night dinner, Scottish costume prizes were won by Heather Smith ("Flora MacDonald"), seen left with Queen Street Association President, Graham Freudenberg; and Philip Johns ("Braveheart") seen with Paddington Society President, Penny Carle.

This dinner was held jointly with the Paddington Society.

The invariable success and enjoyability of our dinners really deserve a larger attendance by members and friends, and I do hope this will be forthcoming on future occasions.

Traffic

THE ever-increasing pressure of through traffic remains the area's most intractable problem.

At last year's Annual Meeting, I reported on Woollahra Council's proposals for trial bans on peak hour traffic entering Paddington\West Woollahra. As well as encountering local opposition, these proposals were vetoed by the Roads and Traffic Authority and have now been shelved.

The Council has now set up a Traffic and Transport Study on which the Association is represented by a Director, Ken Gresham.

Dorhauer Carpark

THE Association facilitated the holding of a public meeting to discuss the future of the Dorhauer Lane Carpark, the only off-street parking area in Queen Street. The meeting was held at the Holdsworth Centre on August 25, under the chairmanship of Councillor David Leach (Cooper Ward).

The Association has resolved to oppose any development which would lead to a reduction of the existing number of parking spaces.

This view was put to the Council by correspondence and at the August meeting by four Association Directors who attended, Robin Brampton, David Collingridge, Ken Gresham and myself.

Finance and Membership

THERE was a disappointing decline in membership in 1998, due to the failure of some 20 ordinary members to renew. At the

beginning of 1999, there were 113 life members, 6 honorary members and 70 ordinary members, a total of 191, down 24 on 1997.

The ongoing nature of the problem can be measured by the fact that, for the first time, life membership exceeds ordinary membership. The Directors will give priority this year to halting and reversing the trend.

However, our financial position improved during the year. The loss in subscriptions was more than offset by administrative cost cutting and the success of the two dinners. Overall, the Association's activities during the year resulted in a profit of \$923, compared with a loss of \$1041 in 1997.

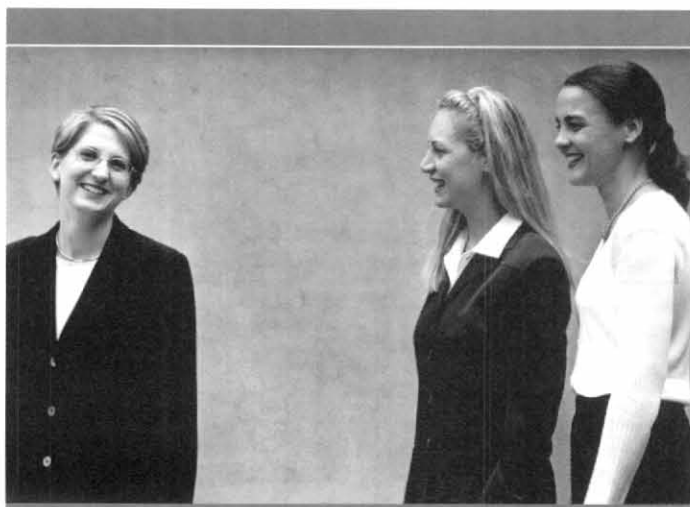
I shall be reporting to the Annual Meeting on the outcome of the decision of the 1998 Annual Meeting to investigate the possibility of switching the Association from a company limited by guarantee to a non-incorporated organisation, outside the aegis of the Corporate Affairs Commission. This would make the work of Directors considerably less onerous.

Directors

AGAIN I thank my fellow Directors for their work and co-operation. The 1998 Directors were Gail Booth, Robin Brampton, David Collingridge, Nick Eddy (Secretary), Graham Freudenberg (President), Patti Graham (Vice President), Ken Gresham, Philip Johns, Tim McCormick (Treasurer) and Heather Smith.

Gail Booth and Patti Graham will not be re-nominating, and I would like to especially express gratitude for their work over the years.

In conclusion, despite the problems I have mentioned, I believe we can claim another successful year for the Association.



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Parking meters opposed near Paddington homes

THE Paddington Society continues to be strongly opposed to a pay-and-display parking meter scheme for some Paddington residential streets, currently being assessed by Woollahra Council.

The Society considers parking meters:

- Are inappropriate for a heritage/conservation area.
- Will create additional obstructions on already crowded footpaths.
- Have an undesirable visual impact.

The Society is not opposing pay-and-display meters in commercial areas, such as Oxford Street, but does not support the Council's suggestion of placing them in the first 100 metres of streets intersecting with Oxford Street.

"This is likely to be the thin end of the wedge, ultimately resulting in metered parking throughout Paddington," says the Society's latest *News Bulletin*.

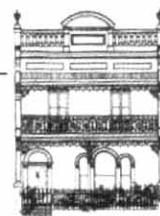
Limited revenue

The *Bulletin* says revenue opportunities in intersecting streets would be limited, and possibly minimal, if most of the parking spaces were occupied by residents, as intended.

Conversely, the scheme is likely to encourage parking by non-residents, especially close to commercial areas, the exact opposite of what residents desire.

The *Bulletin* says there is no suggestion that the gross annual profit of \$2.571 million, estimated to be generated by the scheme, would be applied for the benefit of the Paddington community.

The capital cost of up to \$450,000 could be better used addressing the traffic problems of Paddington.



The Paddington Society

Serving the community and heritage of Paddington.

Address: Juniper Hall, 250
Oxford Street (PO Box 99)
Paddington, NSW 2021.

Ph: 9360 6159

Annual subscription:
\$30 family, \$20 single,
\$10 non-wage earning.

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Vice Presidents: Robyn
Attuelli, Loys Thompson

Secretary: Mary J de
Merindol

Treasurer: Francis Walsh

Committee: Anne Fraser, Bill
Garret, Lorine Marsh, Bill
Morrison, Susan Tooth

Development "Onslaught"

from page 1

The Paddington Society has also told the Council that the proposal represents an over-development of the site, providing more apartments within the building than can reasonably be accommodated.

Control plan

THE Paddington Society has congratulated Woollahra Council on developing its extensive Control Plan for Paddington which has recently been exhibited at Paddington Library.

The plan recognises the special individual character of Paddington, and that its planning requirements may be different from those of other areas.

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What really matters in real estate

by JOE ABBOUD

Principal of Richardson & Wrench, Woollahra

THIS year, Richardson & Wrench celebrates 25 years of successfully operating a real estate agency in Queen Street, Woollahra. We are right in the heart of the shopping area, near Moncur Street, with an old fashioned window to display details of our properties.

Our agency is very focussed on the West Woollahra and Paddington areas which have so many attractions in buying real estate. These include convenience to the city, Centennial Park, sports stadiums and beaches. Also we have high quality shopping in Queen Street and Oxford Street, improving all the time.

And West Woollahra is also attractive because its people enjoy a relaxed, friendly lifestyle, away from the hustle and bustle of such areas as Double Bay, attractive as they are to some people.

We believe sellers should be given a choice of marketing methods, private treaty or auction. A good agent will plan your move and in some cases a fast sale is not appropriate. A good agent has the ability to find buyers but, more importantly, to keep them. Our duty to the seller is to offer the property to buyers recorded at our office prior to any advertising expense the sellers may incur.

We have sold many homes by private treaty in this manner, notably many homes over \$1 million, achieving record prices in many streets.

This rather more subtle approach is particularly important for sellers who want the sale to be discreet and confidential. Private treaty also eliminates the need for hundreds of inspections by misguided buyers looking in the wrong price range.

Different approach

Because we are different in approach, you will find that we advertise less than other agents. This can give the impression that we do not sell as many homes which is not correct.

Our focus is on Woollahra and Paddington where most of our sales occur. We suggest you should always interview at least three agents and list your property with the one you feel you can trust. Rather than providing potential sellers with glossy brochures and pre-written presentation kits, we discuss and plan your move to suit your needs at the time. We provide references from past sellers and we are happy to provide contact phone numbers from previous clients who will vouch for our success.

Another difference with Richardson & Wrench Woollahra is that although we are part of a large and famous real estate network, we are essentially an individual business where you work all the time with the principals. Your property will always be handled by a qualified executive from our Queen Street office.



Joe Abboud and Louise Snowden, owners of the Richardson & Wrench Woollahra real estate agency. Joe has worked in real estate for 20 years, since he was 20 years old. He has been with Richardson & Wrench since 1983. Joe was licensee of the Woollahra office before the couple acquired the business. Louise comes from the Blue Mountains where she was manager of a real estate office for eight years. They met at a real estate conference and were married recently.

Whether you are a seller or interested in buying, you can ring our office at any time and somebody will get a message to one of our principals. We do not mind being called late at night. We know this is the time some people are most in the mood to discuss business.

Small and select

Even though we have a rich tradition and a famous corporate name, our office will always have a small select staff who will remain with us for many years. Some agents have, over the years, tried to remain "boutique" but have grown and diversified into other areas of the Eastern Suburbs. We will never lose touch with our area of Woollahra and Paddington.

What do I like about being in real estate? The attraction is looking after wonderful properties and meeting so many different people, often when they are making one of the biggest decisions of their lives. And I love the happy look on the faces of buyers who have bought the home of their dreams; or of sellers for whom we have achieved a better price than expected.

It's an exciting world. Our basic principle is that we work for the seller first. And remember, a property is not worth what the market says it is – it's worth what a good agent can negotiate from a qualified buyer!

Richardson & Wrench Woollahra is at 105 Queen Street, Woollahra. Ph 9328 6177.



Above: At the turn of the century, MacDonalds Corner with its large hardware store, dominated the corner of Queen Street and Moncur Street. Now known as Queens Court, the much altered buildings retain their original structure.



Left: Number 123 Queen Street was a bank when this picture was taken in 1886. Restored in the 1970s, it is now a private home.

THE CHANGING FACE OF QUEEN STREET

While Queen Street has seen many real estate changes over the years, it still retains its Victorian character and charming village atmosphere.

These pictures are a reminder of its distinguished architectural past.



Left

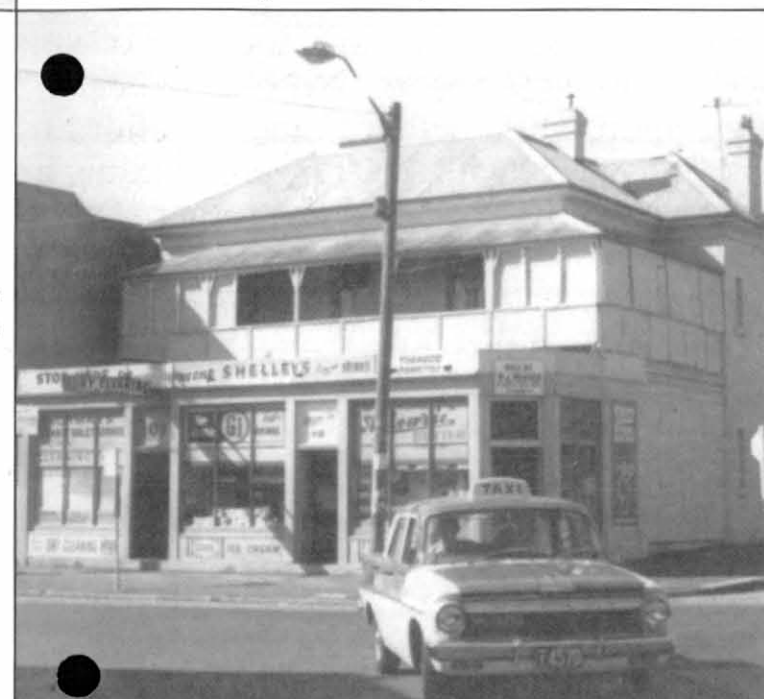
Acklands Hotel, at the corner of Queen Street and Moncur Street, in 1930. The elaborate Victorian building was demolished to make way for the Woollahra Hotel.

Right

Woollahra Post Office, just after construction in the early 1900s. Note the next building was then a shop. (Copyright Australia Post.)



Two views of the corner of Queen Street and Moncur Street in 1966 when real estate agent, John Cowling and his wife, Merle, combined with Neville Marsh to make a stylish restoration. The old shops in front of the solid Victorian house structure were swept away. At the time of the restoration, John Cowling had his office at 105 Queen Street, now the establishment of Richardson & Wrench Woollahra. Number 107, then The Sultan restaurant, is now Zigolini's. The building is now heavily enshrouded in trees.



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BEWILDERING are the changes we have seen at this address which helped blaze the trail for fine dining in the 1960s as Patricks. In the past decade it has been successively Zeami (Japanese), Bagatelle (Australian) and Harvest (Vegetarian).

Enter now the Jersey Cow, an upmarket establishment of individual style which got a unanimous thumbs up when I mooched along there for dinner with my wife and daughter just before Easter.

The walls are an now an austere broken white which gives a more spacious feeling. Relief comes from the stylishly simple bovine drawings, and the smart blue and black gear of the professional and attentive waiterpersons.

A shortish menu (four entrees, six mains, five desserts and cheese) reflects the distinctive skills of chef and part owner, Daryll Taylor, with a slight nod towards Italy.

Heavenly broth

By-passing entrees, we all chose the Shellfish in Potacchio (\$26), almost a meal in itself. What makes it memorable is that the large dish of mussels, pippies and prawn (yes, just one big one) swim in a heavenly broth, to be demolished with a thoughtfully provided spoon.

This is the sort of establishment where instead of having entree and main, you might be kind to your pocket and ageing tum by having two of the fascinating entrees. Thus the Cauliflower Soup with Stilton Custard and Smoked Trout (\$12.50) might be followed with another melange of flavours such as Oxtail Terrine, Celeriac and Horseradish Remoulade (\$13.50).

With the shellfish, we ordered an excellent green salad. But as a potato fancier, I was disappointed with the potatoes, small tubers cooked in their jackets. From such a restaurant, I would have expected something less basic.

However, full marks for the sophisticated deliciousness of the desserts. Mine was a Vanilla Parfait with Pineapple Salad and Passionfruit. Mrs L tucked into an unusual Muscat Grape Jelly with Creme Anglaise and delicate Almond Biscuit. Both were \$11.50 and reluctantly shared with our offspring.

Canberra Fizz

As I enjoy wines from around Canberra, I was not daunted by their preponderance on the wine list, along with a couple each of French and Italian wines. Bottle prices are from \$17 for a house wine, white or red, to \$83.50 for a Vigna Adriana from Italy. Most also come by the glass at \$5 to \$12.50.

The list also includes a rare personal favourite, the Sauvignon Blanc from the heroic Jane Hunter's Marlborough winery in New Zealand (\$28.50 bottle, \$7.50 glass).

Choosing this to go with the shellfish, we also selected an old favourite for aperitif, Lark Hill's Pinot Noir Chardonnay, better known as "Canberra Fizz" (\$45 bottle, \$9 glass). And with dessert, the same winery's Late Harvest Riesling (\$21 bottle, \$9 glass).

The Jersey Cow is not a cheap creature. But her prices are no doubt justified by the complexity of the dishes which change from month to month. She is certainly very popular — jam packed on the evening of our visit.

Our offspring's verdict on the meal, TPF, which she informs me means "Total Palate F..." She's such a well brought up young lady, I wonder what the F could possibly stand for!

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A WINE WHEN YOU DINE

*Nominated by Alex Nettis
of Zigolini's, Queen Street*

• Mad Fish Bay Premium Dry White, from Western Australia, a light wine, suitable for serving with most dishes on our menu. The blend is predominantly unwooded chardonnay with small additions of semillon and sauvignon blanc to enhance flavour and complexity. Very nice!

New directions at Five Ways

RECENT eatery changes at Five Ways, Paddington, would appear designed for more informal, less expensive dining, and no doubt hopelessly increased patronage.

Sadly for me, the lovable Cambodian couple, Khamsook and Impond Minakhom, have left the Au Chabrol where the food, though very acceptable, appeared to be in a timewarp from the 1960s.

Taking their place, the lively Nina Henderson has renamed the establishment Sideways at Five Ways.

While resourcefully recycling some of the Minakhoms decor and cane furniture, she has given the place a lighter, more spacious bistro feeling.

Nina and her assistant, Rebecca, are as friendly and efficient a brace of waiters as you could hope to find anywhere; prices are highly reasonable; and the food hearty and appetising.

Mrs L and I have happily enjoyed the bargain pasta night on Wednesday when the twosome bill for three different pastas, a glass of tonic water and corkage was only \$28.50. Only slightly more expensive was a Monday night when a big selection of tapas cost us only \$15 a head.

The basic menu is also a challenge to the wide ranging culinary abilities of the chef, including an excellent trio of

Mediterranean dips and the Spanish style prawns and mussels we enjoyed on another occasion. (Phone 9331 2551).

In other changes at Five Ways:

– Though still owned by New Zealander, Julia Walker-Bengtsson, and her chef husband, Michael, the oddly named "a Restaurant" has transformed itself into a Thai eatery.

It also offers a smattering of other Asian cuisine such as Indonesian (Nasi Goreng and such) and Malaysian (Laksa). Encouraged by the impressive food quality, generous helpings and reasonable prices, what is now Eat Five Ways Thai was packing them in on the night of our visit. (Phone 9361 6640).

– While still popular for dinner, Vamps BYO Restaurant has introduced an Espresso Snack Bar, open from 10.30am to 5pm, with the opportunity to eat outside at little tables on the sunny side of Glenmore Road.

A ham and cheese croissant will set you back only \$3.50 or you can enjoy baguettes with various fillings (\$5 and \$6). Coffee (\$2.50) comes in several popular versions. If you prefer tea (also \$2.50), Vamps intriguing suggests you ask to see the "Magic Tea Box" with 20 different flavours. (Phone 9331 1032).

Welcome words from the Antiques Centre

Do you love antiques? Looking for an unusual gift? Want to bring a traditional touch to your home? We've lots to show you at the Woollahra Antiques Centre where there's always something new.

§ **ART GREAT AND SMALL:** After three years at the Centre, Fella Melas has doubled the size of her Woollahra Times Art Gallery, and has up to 150 works to delight the buyer – all Australian. The big names are there – Tom Roberts, John Coburn, Lloyd Rees, Roy de Maistre, Robert Dickerson, for instance. But Fella likes to encourage new artists. So although you can pay up to \$15,000 for a work by a "name" artist, there are artistic gems for as little as \$195

§ **B(U)Y THE BOOK:** Sam Haymes, who comes from a well known bookdealing family, and Ray Swanwick, who specialises in comics as well as books, are closing their respective shops to open a joint venture at the Antiques Centre. "Most second hand books are now sold on the internet, but we wanted a shop presence," said Sam who stocks some 30,000 fine and rare second hand books. Only some of the best will be shown at the Centre, but all can be called up on the computer. Sam and Ray also run a book search service and are interested in buying books – from a single item to a collection.

§ **UPSTAIRS AND DOWNSTAIRS:** Bosanquet Antiques, the longstanding business partnership of Brett Rainbird and Susan Thorpe, are delighted to have more space, spread over two floors. Their speciality is Victorian furniture, with the emphasis on practical pieces such as cupboards, chairs and dining tables. They also offer expert furniture repairs, restorations, upholstering, polishing and even complete cabinet making.

§ **COSMOPOLITAN NEWCOMER:** Hans Carlberg's Ambience Antiques is a new venture for the Swedish born management consultant and computer expert who has worked in several European countries as well as Australia. He specialises in 18th and 19th century European and English furniture and has been assembling stock since 1984. "I only deal in the things I like," he says. "And I like to sell antiques to people for whom they will have significance in their homes."

§ **CHINA ANIMALS – AND NIPS:** Sean Cullip is another world traveller who has just ventured into the antiques business, teaming up with Paul Vinecombe, well known for his Collectors' Choice shop in Victoria. Their new area at the Centre specialises in Georgian and Victorian china and silver. Sean's passion for antiques comes from collecting Staffordshire animals, mainly in England. He also has an unusual collecting interest – antique sugar tongs, correctly known as nips

§ **TOUCH OF THE ORIENT:** Welcome also to Benson Li and Kent Wu who are offering 20 per cent discount on any purchase until June 8 to introduce their De Long Antiques on the upper floor. Until recently, Benson Li lived in Peking, and the business is importing directly from China – fine antique furniture, porcelain, ivory and bronze statues, including Buddhas. They also have an interesting selection of snuff bottles, an area Benson finds personally fascinating. An unusual offering is a translucent Buddha, made of agate and filled with water to give it weight. Price \$2000.

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REAL ESTATE REPORT

Not for John and Patricia!



Five town houses have just been completed at the corner of Jersey Road and Moncur Street. And while the Uniting Church development has some pleasing features, I am still disappointed that local opposition did not prevent the angular row reaching right to the pavement without setback. Also, isn't the ochre finish a touch intrusive? The property is named Thompson Close which I thought was a nice way of remembering Paddington Society founder, John Thompson, and his activist wife, Patricia. Not so! It's actually named after a founding family of the local Congregational Church.

Talks on "disaster area"

by Robin Brampton

WHAT is delaying development of the "disaster area" at the corner of Jersey Road and Holdsworth Street?

Peter Kauter of Woollahra Council tells me that after approval of the site plan, development approval was also given for a small art gallery on the actual corner. However the Council has rejected the plans for the six town houses proposed for the site.

Although the two site owners have appealed to the Land and Environment Court, the appeal has been postponed while the Council and owners try to iron out their differences.

I understand Council's objection to the plans is on heritage and streetscape grounds. As all six houses front onto Holdsworth Street, Council is concerned to achieve a pleasing aspect where the gardens back onto Jersey Road, not making it look like a back lane.

As we went to press, Peter Kauter told me Council hoped to resolve the issues without the matter going to court.

* * *

STILL in Jersey Road, Bill Shipton has every reason to be pleased with the success of his development of what started life as stables for horse buses at the corner of Sutherland Street. Among many other subsequent uses, the building has also been a cinema and restaurant.

In creating five two-storey (three-bedroom) and three single-storey (two-bedroom) apartments, Bill and his architect have resourcefully compensated for the general lack of interesting outlook with a large interior courtyard, enclosed balconies on the upper floors, and a superb finish. The lovely red mahogany of the floors was recycled from the original building.

Known as The Stables, the apartments have been selling briskly at prices between \$780,000 and \$1.3 million.

* * *

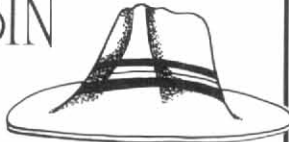
WITH so many real estate agents established in our area - and promoting their services like mad - it's hard to believe there is room for a newcomer. Yet Georgia ("who's that girl") Cleary tells me that since so enterprisingly opening shop at MacDonald Street, Paddington, in October, she has made some 30 sales, at prices from \$400,000 to \$2 million.

The delightfully courteous Georgia sees her operation as a truly boutique agency, offering personal service. Although the market in Paddington-Woollahra has always been resilient, it is especially buoyant now, she says, with annual price rises of 5 to 10 and even 20 per cent.

"I think it will go on," she says gratefully.

ROUND ROBIN

Robin Brampton's Queen
Street Commentary



On the ball!

WEST Woollahra and Paddington took a real battering in last month's mammoth hailstorm, and many people have lovely stories of how they reacted. There were, of course, various descriptions of the size of the hailstones – like golf balls, tomatoes, even melons.

At the height of the deluge, an architect friend went out into the garden to retrieve a large white object. Bearing it inside, he proudly announced: "There, as big as a tennis ball." Then he had another look at it.

It was a tennis ball!

Accent on originality

EVER changing Queen Street has had a couple of upmarket excitements since my last column – the completely new fitout at Orson & Blake, with almost twice the floorspace, and the arrival of Simon Johnson's high class providore store.

From their small shop near Oxford Street, mother and son Mandy and David Heimann's Orson & Blake expanded across the road and now occupies two levels at 83-85 Queen Street.

With a staff of 14, the store offers both furnishings and fashion using high class textiles, unusual homewares, fascinating new age items and a marvellous selection of cookbooks.

Mandy tells me the aim of the store's extensive interior rebuilding and refurbishment was to create a lovely tranquil feeling, with more of a gallery atmosphere.

With the stock, originality is the keynote, and the store aims to inspire people to find new ways of decorating their homes.

At the corner of Victoria Avenue, top drawer comestibles impressario, Simon Johnson, has opened his second Sydney retail store with surprisingly few changes to its inside or outside appearance.

Although until recently the antiques business of Appley Hoare, now in London, the shop has always retained the solid

large counter and tile floor from its earlier days as a food store.

Simon Johnson's emphasis is on more unusual food items, not easily obtained elsewhere, such as a range of organic foods, including olive oil; and exclusive products from the Commissary Kitchen of Tony Bilson and Oliver Rossi. They even make risotto something very special.

Another new name in Queen Street is Richard Banks, the optometrist who has opened in Queens Court at the former premises of Day Wear whose Kate Day is now concentrating on family life.

Formerly a partner in a city practice, Richard tells me he chose to set up in Queen Street as there is no other optometrist nearby. Also he likes our area's village Queen Street.

Richard offers a comprehensive service of eye examinations; contact lenses; fashion and designer frames and sunglasses; and referrals for laser surgery and correction of eye defects.

Farewell Marian

I HAVE lost a loyal and generous friend, and the district has lost a lively and enterprising personality, with the death in February, aged 56, of Marian Clarke of Spicer Street.

Marian had traded in the antique jewellery she loved for 20 years and was notable for her promotional flair. Two years ago, she mounted a dazzling exhibition of historical wedding dresses in association with her Marian's Collection business at Woollahra Antiques Centre.

Noteworthy also was her sense of adventure and versatility. She has lived in New York and worked as a nurse and school-teacher. She also had an attractive singing voice, and led Designer Chords, a popular all-female four-part harmony group which sang unaccompanied.

My sympathies go particularly to her cousin, Sue, who worked with her in the business, and to her son, Stephen.



HERE'S TUI!

A fascinating sight in Queen Street is to see one of its younger residents, William Johnson, 11, skating along the pavement with Tui, his pet cockateal, perched on his shoulder.

A cross between cockatoo and budgerigar, Tui enjoys these little outings and never attempts to fly away from his human perch.

Lookout goes dark

ANOTHER sadness in our area is the closing down of the tiny Lookout Theatre upstairs at the Woollahra Hotel. It had survived precariously, without funding, since 1990, staging some 60 productions, involving more than 200 actors, more than 20 directors and the same number of stage designers.

The brave venture suffered its fatal blow late last year when the hotel management decided it needed the space to expand the hotel and provide more poker machines.

Diana Denley, the theatre's unquenchable guiding spirit who succeeded founders Andrea Baker and Barbara Blackman in 1995, believes the Lookout was unique in providing a space where stage professionals could re-focus on the integrity which first brought them into the acting profession.

Of the great variety of productions, my favourite was Diana's own memorable performance as the reclusive American poet, Emily Dickinson, in "Belle of Amhurst" (1992). Diana tells me she is continuing her career as a freelance director, and may be involved later this year in a Shakespeare production back home in the United States.

Where Dame Joan found harmony

I'M happy to report that Dame Joan Sutherland shares local concern about the sorry state of her childhood home at 115 Queen Street.

"The old house must be in shocking repair as my family left it in 1954, and it looks as though nothing has been done to preserve it since then," she says in a letter to Queen Street Association president, Graham Freudenberg.

Originally a single storey home, known as Clyde Cottage, the house was taken on a 99-year lease by Dame Joan's grandfather, Alexander McCausland Alston, a master builder.

"Because of his family of three children, he constructed the upper floor and extended the back of the cottage...not very substantially as he knew it was a leasehold property and 'would see him out'," Dame Joan relates.

"Upon the death of my father, my mother, sister and I moved back in to the old Queen Street house where we spent a very happy childhood and adolescence.

"There was a large, somewhat wild, garden at the back of the property with very well cared for lawns and garden plots close to the house.

"My uncle and mother were keen gardeners, and my uncle (Tom Alston) also kept the facade in perfect condition.

"Unfortunately, from the time my family gave up the house, the deterioration set in with the new owners closing in the balcony and selling off the lovely old railing. I hate to think what might have happened to the interior and garden of my childhood."

All in the family

QUEEN Street has acquired another mother and son business partnership with the arrival at the Newsagency of Faye Callaghan and her 18-year-old son, Reini.

They have taken over from another family duo, sister and brother Virginia and Lou, who were at the Newsagency for five years. Being in his own business is Reini's first occupation after completing his education.

And if you ask about his offbeat moniker, he tells you: "It's Austrian. My parents like unusual names."

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