

The Original
**VILLAGE
 VOICE**

Official journal of the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association
 No 90 • December 2007

BIG Carols Night

IT was a big night for Queen Street and district on Tuesday 11th December, when the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association held its Community Carols in Chiswick Park.

On the same evening carollers were giving forth in Queen Street for the intimate Christmas Shopping Experience. More than 40 participating stores were open for the evening.

The Chiswick Park event was again a great success with carols from the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Choir and earlier by the Baden Senior Citizens Carol Singers.

The Mayor of Woollahra, Coun. Geoff Rundle, Coun. Keri Huxley and the Federal Member for Wentworth, Malcolm Turnbull, were both on hand to wish everybody "Happy Christmas" and the rain mercifully held off.

The evening included the announcement of the three winners in association's Christmas window dressing competition, judged by Leslie Walford (see page 3).

Holdsworth Community Centre held a Red Frog Competition, with Mr Ian Crawford guessing the correct amount of 167 red frogs.

Elizabeth Gervay, president of the Queen Street Association said thank you to the sponsors, supporters and committee for making this a wonderful community event.

Major sponsors were Pruniers Restaurant, the Hughenden Hotel and the rug and carpet retailer, Robyn Cosgrove.

Donors of lots for a successful silent auction were; Cosgrove Rugs, Hughenden Hotel, Writers & Illustrators of The Hughenden, Jules Collins Jewellery Shop, Alan Smith, Robin Brampton, Johnsons Computers, Perrymans and Michael Greene.



ABOVE: Santa Claus has a special word for children's author Susanne Gervay who was master of ceremonies of the Community Carols in Chiswick Park. BELOW: Some of the big crowd who listened to the carols



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Protest against local hotel extensions

WOOLLAHRA Council has rejected a proposal by the owners of the Woollahra Hotel, at the corner of Queen and Moncur St, for a new third floor for staff amenities.

The proposal was a concern of the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association and a number of local residents.

Coun. David Shoebridge was one of the Woollahra Council members who voted against the scheme. He said it would be an intensification of what was already a dominating presence in Woollahra village.

The Queen Street Association added its protest after being contacted by local people expressing concern about "creeping development", in a residential area.

Although the additional space was intended for staff amenities the association feared increased noise and congestion because the extension for staff use would free up additional space in public serving areas.

Superior drinking

The hotel has recently opened its Moncur Terrace development on the ground floor, to provide a superior drinking area.

Local residents fear there is a strong possibility that the hotel will lodge an appeal with the Land and Environment Court.

Local residents are also opposed to a development application lodged earlier this year, for alterations and additions to the Light Brigade Hotel at the corner of Oxford Street and Jersey Road.

These would involve the creation of an external smoking area on the Oxford Street frontage with changes to the windows and doors

The hotel has recently opened a new restaurant area for 80 diners on the first floor, reviewed in "Local Tables" on page 8.

Councillor's comment

Coun. Keri Huxley, of Woollahra Council supplies the following comment: "Pubs in Woollahra and Paddington have enjoyed a long history living 'cheek by jowl' with local residents. However over time many things have changed, as have the wants and needs of pub owners and needs of local communities.

"In the days of early Sydney, hotels provided bars and eating areas on the ground floor, while upper floors were often low cost accommodation, and, or a publican's residence. Now, in 2007 many hotels want extra commercial space – offices, bars, lounges, larger restaurants, excavated basements, storage rooms, lift wells, and smoking rooms that comply with 'new' smoking laws"

"It's hard to imagine changes such as these were ever anticipated and though some may welcome these changes; often the 'cost' to local residents is far too great. Some say 'the pubs came first', but this is to ignore the original intention of these old 19th Century pubs and the current needs of local residents"

TRADERS' MEETING

The Queen Street and West Woollahra Association has arranged a meeting between local traders and Woollahra Councillors on Tuesday 22 January. Venue to be confirmed.

The Original Village Voice

Published by the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association Ltd
 Editorial : Robin Brampton and Annette Robinson
 Correspondence: PO Box 16 Woollahra 1350 or Ph: 0411 141 931
 Email: admin@qswwa.com.au
 Designed and printed by: Village Press,
 Double Bay. Ph 02 9363 0353
 Email: trent@villagepress.com.au



A sense of Christmas - the window of Master and Miss, one of the three winners in the annual Christmas Shop Window Dressing Competition.

Christmas window winners

THE Queen Street and West Wollahra Association's Christmas Shop Window Dressing Competition was judged by Leslie Walford on Monday 3rd December.

The three winners were Artwear on Queen, Orson & Blake, and Master and Miss.

Certificates will be presented to the winners at the Community Carols night on Tuesday 11 December. Each winner will also receive a meal for two at a local restaurant.

Mr Walford, well known interior decorator and antiques expert, comments on the winners and the contest:

Artwear on Queen: A model dressed like a tree in silvery fur, with tiny lights. Chic and simple.

Orson & Blake: Four green Christmas trees, models, decorative objects. Not much and little colour, but an effort and about Christmas.

Master and Miss: The sense of Christmas in dingle dangles and colours, with presents wrapped.

Congratulations to these shops but there were very few displays about Christmas!

And I was hoping for drama in colour and content, pumping out a sense of Christmas to excite shoppers and make us all feel Christmassy!

Frankly I'm very disappointed in what I've seen around Queen Street. It seems that Christmas has been by-passed, almost forgotten.

This season can supply colour and fun, love and friendship, be stimulating, and bring renewal of interest in the shops.

But it is not generated now as in the past. What a pity!

Robin Brampton, who went around all shops in the area with Mr Walford comments that several shops with very effective displays were not considered because they did not reflect Christmas.

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FOR YOUR 2008 DIARY

THE Annual meeting of the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association will be held on Wednesday 8 April, at the Goethe Institute in Ocean Street.

This historic building was at one time the chamber and office of Woollahra Council.



by Annette Robinson



Clare of Cambodia House with two of it's unusual gift items, a woven wire insect and a shopping carrier made of ice packs

Wonderful Gifts from Cambodia

MARY Read is a well known identity in Queen Street. Her boutique, **Reads**, is still the first stop for generations of women on the lookout for a new outfit or a special party dress. More often than not they find just what they want and so Mary's business has thrived.

But Mary Read has an altruistic side. Since 1999 she has also established **Cambodia House**, a not-for-profit business that works with non government organisation income generation projects in Cambodia .For more than eight years Mary has travelled regularly to Cambodia to search out and oversee the production of an amazing array of items that are for sale in her Cambodia House shop.

Originally in Queens Court, Cambodia House moved to Oxford Street Paddington but has now relocated to 3 Spicer Street (near Reads in the old video shop premises). The store is an Aladdin's Cave filled with wonderful items for Christmas giving.

These go from simple candles and tealights to beautiful turquoise Moroccan ceramics. Cambodia House also has soft furnishings, handloomed silk, cotton blankets and cushions, handmade silk scarves and shawls and wonderful lanterns. Also Oxfam gift cards and Unicef Christmas cards.

Cambodia House also has a VIP customer list which informs members of the latest news from Cambodia.Register at the website www.cambodiahouse.com.au.

Getting ready for the Bay Tree

THE big news among Queen Street retailers is the forthcoming opening of the Bay Tree kitchen shop on the ground floor of the Queen Street Galleries at 40 Queen Street.

The vast area was formerly the home of Mobili who have now moved out of Queen Street.

When we went to press, extensive work, including new flooring, was in progress to make ready for the Bay Tree's move from Holdsworth Street. All should be ready by Christmas which would mean the Bay Tree could open soon thereafter.

Meanwhile Susie Loudon and her ever helpful staff were continuing their shuffle with customers around the cramped Holdsworth Street store and holding a pre-Christmas sale with generous discounts.

Susie promises a lot of new lines will be offered for the Queen Street opening

But somehow we are going to miss the quaint Holdsworth Street store where the Bay Tree opened in 1969, bringing customers from all over Sydney for its novel and exclusive quality kitchenware.

Galleries 140 years old

QUEEN Street Galleries, where the Bay Tree will soon be located, is the largest building in Queen Street. First built in 1867 as an Oddfellows Hall, it was later extended then became a tobacco factory.

In the 1970 the building was magnificently restored by Leo and Anne Schofield who were disappointed to find that the large halls on the ground and first floors could not be used for functions or public gatherings as they did not comply with fire and safety regulations.

Anne Schofield still maintains here antique jewelery shop at the front and the other store with a street frontage is the gallery shop of Rex Irwin whose art gallery is on the first floor.

The building's other large area, on the first floor, has since last year been occupied by Switzer, a company of accountants and business and financial advisors.

Rex Irwin has been running his Queen Street Gallery for 21 years, during which he has held exhibitions for some 70 artists including Picasso and Lucian Freud.

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STREET

and John Northfield

Discussing trends, Rex says that the popularity of abstracts has now given way to figurative paintings such as those by Nicholas Harling whose exhibition the gallery held in November and December.

The Rex Irwin Gallery phone number is (02) 9363 3212
Fax 02 9363 0556. Website www.rexirwin.com.

Nepalese design in Ocean Street

THE wonderful rug shop **Robyn Cosgrove Rugs** has been on the corner of Queen and Ocean Street for over a year. After 30 years in Double Bay, Robyn and her husband Trevor decided to relocate their business to Woollahra, recognising our special ambience.

They bought the old red brick building which had for years housed a doctor's surgery.

The building was completely gutted and opened up, and in the process a steel frame was built inside it to support the new structure and the heavy rugs it would house. Huge glass windows allow light to stream in, showcasing the rugs to perfection.

The renovation is a triumph but equally wonderful is the amazing foliage at the front of the building. Trevor says that they have had many comments, even calls from motorists passing by asking for the name of the plant, You heard it here, it's *Loropetalum chinese*, commonly known as fringe flower.

For her business Robyn sources rugs from Nepal, Pakistan, Turkey and wherever rugs are made to her impeccably high standards. Today she herself designs most of the rugs she sells. They are made up to her specifications by weavers in Nepal.

These weavers are supported by Cosgrove Rugs; and their children have their schooling, and their books paid for by the business so that they will have a better future.

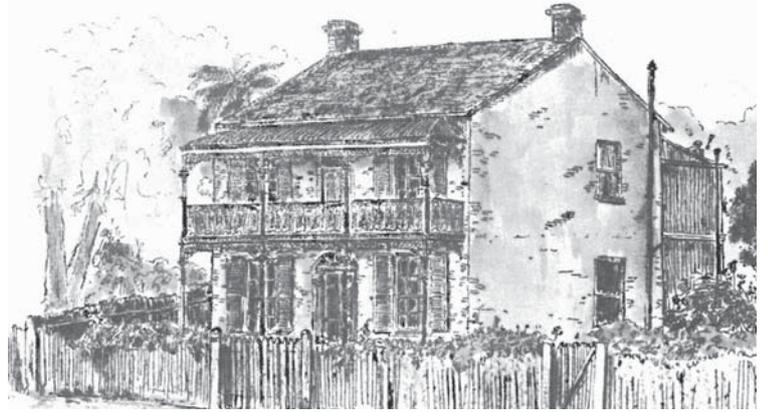
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Highly decorative tableware from the French brand, Genevieve Lethu, which has just opened it's first Australian outlet at 53 Queen Street. Established in 1972, the brand is now sold in 130 stores around the globe. The brand of ceramics and glass combines function with robust elegant design.

ROUND ROBIN Robin Brampton's Queen Street Commentary



This picture of 115 Queen Street in earlier days is from a water colour by John van Vliet in the "Joan Sutherland Album"

NUMBER 115 Queen Street, the home where Dame Joan Sutherland grew up from 1932 until 1981, fetched a whopping \$6.5 million at an auction in November.

Anthony Putigam of the auctioneers, Bradford and Pritchard of Double Bay, tells me that settlement is not expected until May. Until then the name of the buyer cannot be disclosed.

The house which was originally occupied by Dame Joan's grandparents and is in a very deteriorated condition. But the Queen Street Association asked the auctioneers to emphasise that the new owner would not be allowed to demolish it because it is heritage listed.

My often expressed belief is that the house should become a museum of Australian opera which would make it a great draw for Queen Street. Then the rear garden could be developed as a series of boutique offices with parking, perhaps on two levels.

The Queen Street Association will be watching developments very carefully.

* * *

Do you have an old or disused pair of spectacles? If so, please don't throw them away. They are of great use to people in the third world and will usually be collected by an optometrist to be passed on.

I gave three pairs I found at the home of a relative I was recently turning out in England to Richard Banks, the Queens Court optometrist.

Also disused hearing aids can be refurbished and passed on to the third world through a scheme operated by most audiologists. Contact the Hearing and Balance centre at St Vincent's Hospital.

* * *

I notice that some of the smaller banks, such as the Bank of Queensland and St George have been doing very well in the 2006-7 financial year.

Perhaps one could use their prosperity to open a branch in Queen Street which has been without a bank since the year 2000.

That was when both the Commonwealth Bank and Westpac closed their busy Queen Street branches within weeks of each other, leaving the street without a bank for the first time since 1872.

Lack of a bank is particularly irksome to Queen Street traders who like to deposit their day's takings in the afternoon on a daily basis as a precaution against theft. Also many local seniors, such as myself, dislike having to go to Edgecliff, or Bondi Junction to bank.

In the New Year I hope the Queen Street Association can approach the smaller banks in the hope of attracting one to Queen Street. I have two accounts with St George and would certainly welcome them to be closer.

Queen Street gets clean and green

QUEEN Street's Clean Green Community Day on Saturday 17th November, succeeded in its aim of focusing attention on the street, its history and development.

Highlights of the morning's activities were the opening of the \$150,000 improvements to Dorhauer Carpark; the rededication of the fountain in Davies

Reserve; and the official "naming" of Pat Thompson Park in Holdsworth Street.

Coun. Geoff Rundle, Mayor of Woollahra, officiated at the Dorhauer Carpark opening, accompanied by Malcolm Turnbull, Federal member for Wentworth, and Mr Turnbull's wife Lucy.

The rededication of the fountain in Davies

Reserve at the Oxford Street end of Queen Street, was performed by Coun. Andrew Petrie.

With the rededication, the fountain is playing again for the first time in several years.

The biggest crowd attended the official dedication of Pat Thompson Park by the Mayor and Counc. David Shoebridge with the backing of John Mant, president of the Paddington Society and Pat Thompson's two sons Jack and Peter.

Pat Thompson with her husband John founded the Paddington Society. Later she was on the founding committee of the Queen Street and West Woollahra Society.

A dedicated environmentalist, Pat was the author of several local books.

Other events of the morning were and organic gift fair at the Hughenden Boutique Hotel, a sausage sizzle at the Dorhauer Carpark; and a green bag for children to collect rubbish. Participants received a free sausage sizzle.

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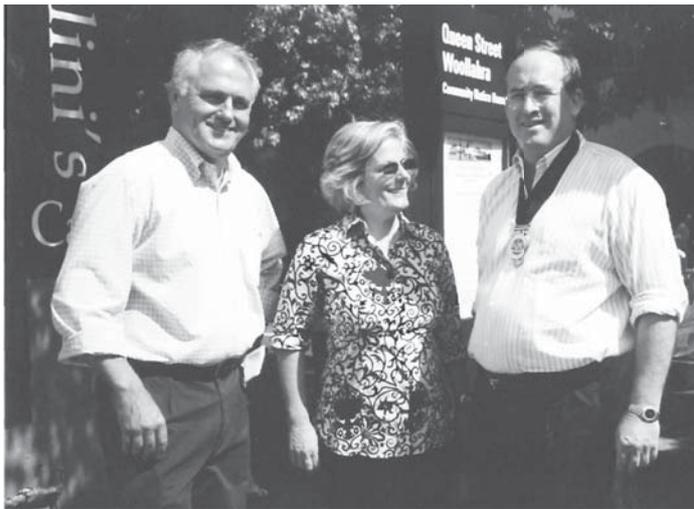
Pictures from the various activities and events for the Queen Street's Clean Green Community Day on Saturday 17th November,





ABOVE: Pat Thompson's two sons, broadcaster Peter Thompson (left) and film actor Jack Thompson are on either side of Elizabeth Gervay, president of the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association. To the right is Robin Brampton of the Queen Street Association who first suggested the naming of Pat Thompson Park.

BELOW: Coun Geoff Rundle, Mayor of Woollahra at the new Queen Street notice board. With him are the Federal member for Wentworth, Malcolm Turnbull, and his wife, Lucy Turnbull, a former Lord Mayor of Sydney



Towards less noise at Pruniers

SOME residents in Ocean Street have been alarmed by a notice that Pruniers Restaurant in Chiswick Gardens has applied to Woollahra Council for permission to put in a larger dance floor and shut off some windows.

They fear that this would lead to more late openings and increased noise pollution. In fact the opposite is true according to Christien Poulson, manager of the restaurant.

Since earlier this year, Pruniers has been closed for dinner and lunch trade, although it is still open for functions and was a sponsor of the Queen Street Association's Community Carols on 11 December.

Christien said the restaurant was having a complete makeover and the dance floor and music was being moved to an enclosed area from which less noise would escape to the outside of the building.

The bricking up of some windows would further reduce any possible noise nuisance.

Because of the extent of the renovation work, the exact date of Pruniers reopening was undecided when we went to press.

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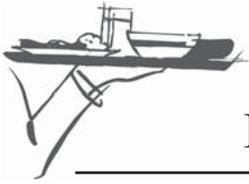
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LOCAL TABLES

Still using titular glasses

Mrs R.J.B and I like a glass of bubbly at the start of a restaurant meal. But we were more than a little surprised at a recent visit to the Light Brigade Hotel to be offered it not in the correct vertical glasses that retain the "nose" but in one of those shallow oval glasses that I thought went out in the 1960s.

I wonder, do they serve their Louis Roederer 'Cristal' 2000 in these abortions, based, so the legend goes, on the exact shape of the upper extrusions of Marie Antoinette.

But apart from this, we were very impressed with the two dinner samplings of this new addition to local dining facilities which occupy the hotel's whole first floor and seat some 80 diners.

In our assessment I would put first the attentiveness of the staff, particularly the female "waitpersons", Cheryl on the first occasion and Sarah on the second.

Both had knowledge and interest about gastronomy and were able to quickly assess their clients and give sound advice about what might be their best choices from the wine list and menu.

As you would expect from a leading hotel, the wine list is a delight offering choices from every Australian state except Queensland, plus vintage areas of France, Italy, Spain, Portugal and New Zealand.

By-the-bottle choices range from the 2007 Rolf Binder "Retro 55" Semillon from the Barossa Valley at \$30 a bottle to the aforementioned Louis Roederer 'Cristal' 2000 at a breath-taking \$420 a bottle.

And there are some 25 by-the-glass choices from a Rolf Binder "Retro 55" Shiraz/Cabernet/Grenach from the Barossa Valley at \$7.50 to the 1998 Lindermans "Pyrus" Cabernet from the Coonawarra at \$26. Also 11 varieties of beer and some exotic aperitifs, desert wine and cocktails.

I have dwelt on the wines in my limited space because the offering is truly exceptional, quite the best of any local eatery. And, yes, despite the fact that the Light Brigade is a pub, many of the wines are select vintages from smaller vineyards, rather than the "old faithfuls" which are usually the best pubs can offer.

Turning to the food, the choice is far narrower but just as select and well chosen to complement the wines, seven entrees, seven mains, four cuts from the grill and five desserts.

Mains range in price from the sautéed king prawns on a crab and a fresh herb risotto at \$25 to a roasted free range duck breast with bitter orange and endive tartan at \$30. Grills go from double lamb cutlets at \$28 to a 350gm rib eye on the bone at \$34.

From the prices given, you will note that they are very reasonable for food of this quality. And you will be pleased to know I do not propose to make any lame jokes about the charges of the Light Brigade. Neigh!
R.J.B



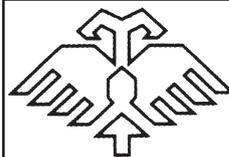
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