

NEWS BULLETIN

Registered by Australia Post Publication No NBG 1470 • PO Box 99 PADDINGTON NSW 2021 • Tel: 9360 6159

April, 2001

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Our AGM was well attended in a more comfortable venue at the EJ Ward Centre in Underwood Street - not only could we all fit but we could all sit! It's encouraging to have such an enthusiastic committee whose talents will be well utilised. Jack Munday, our special guest gave an entertaining address of which excerpts appear later.

We are concerned with maintaining a reasonable environment by preserving existing open spaces and features of Paddington that have architectural or historical value. Several current building developments are impacting on our environment.

We, and other stakeholder groups have been involved in a comprehensive consultation process with Woollahra Council staff, and Tennis NSW who own the White City site. We believe the valley floor is sacrosanct. The original Masterplan had substantial buildings on the valley floor and was rejected by Council. The revised plans were unacceptable and currently Tennis NSW is in the process of drawing up another Masterplan. We commend Woollahra Council staff for the meticulous manner in which they have handled this difficult development and in continuing the consultation process, hopefully to a satisfactory result.

The Development Application for the St John's Church site on Oxford Street will be heard before the Land & Environment Court in May. We believe that building a group of 14 flats in the back yard of this historic site with access onto a one-way lane, not to mention the conversion of the 1930s church, the old manse and front yard to shops and restaurants, is gross over development.

We are still waiting on the outcome of the Scottish Hospital DA with a proposed increase in the number of aged care beds from 90 to 250. This will impact on the existing gardens to the point of substantially removing them.

The residential development on the Royal Hospital for Women site is nearing completion and bears little resemblance to the Masterplan we approved many years ago. We are still negotiating with Council and the developers to ensure the establishment of a simple community public park as agreed in 1997, on the Glenmore Road/Brown Street corner.

The State Government's policy of urban consolidation is playing havoc with trying to maintain Paddington as a heritage conservation area, and during this last year a huge amount of time and energy has been devoted to just that. Already our infrastructure is suffering with our narrow streets at capacity for vehicular traffic and parking, burst water mains, electricity sub-stations collapsing and buses filled to capacity during peak hour.

At our public meeting in July, over 150 people met with our Ward Councillors to express their frustration over lack of maintenance of relevant infrastructure and traffic management while major new developments are still being approved.

We have written letters of objection regarding local pubs' (the London Tavern, the Greenwood Tree, the Light Brigade, Durty Nellies and the Windsor Castle) application for extended trading hours. All are in residential streets.

We mounted a major campaign, letter-boxing over 6,000 dwellings, shops and offices, when we realised Council voted in favour of installing parking meters in 16 of our residential streets adjacent to, as well as Oxford Street. Along with the Little Paddington Task Force Group's support, the community was galvanised into action with the result that Council is "not proceeding at this stage with parking meters in residential streets".

In our submission to the Sproats inquiry into the structure of local government, we expressed our view that Paddington should be united into one local government area; that we should have a

'place manager' who is solely responsible for Paddington; and that there should be greater transparency and accountability in revenue and expenditure.

On another note, our archives have now been safely housed at Woollahra Council's Local History Centre where they are being catalogued and restored with the help of a Federation Grant.

We thank Bruce Gallie who has been our honorary auditor for many years and welcome Daryl Hughes who has agreed to take on this role.

This year we aim to increase our membership and involve members to a greater extent in our activities. We have developed a series of sub-committees to help achieve this and will be holding more open meetings.

Robyn Attuell

WHITE FOOTPATHS IN PADDINGTON

Recently we noticed many of our footpaths were being resurfaced with white concrete. Phone calls, letters and an on-site meeting were too late to stop the work and change the concrete to the special Paddington Mix recipe. This mix had been formulated, trialed and agreed to in 1996. Council appears to have overlooked the fact that in recognition of the heritage nature of the precinct, and after considerable effort on the part of Council and The Paddington Society, a particular concrete mix had been adopted Paddington for which the phrase, 'The Paddington Mix' has been coined.

The need for this mix followed concern that the normal ready-mix concrete was too white and stark in its appearance and wherever it was used, created an inappropriate visual impact on the heritage qualities of the precinct.

Considerable research was carried out into the nature of the concrete which is prevalent in the Paddington. It appeared that the majority of concrete footpaths had been laid, perhaps at the time of the Depression, with a 'fly-ash' mix utilising fly-ash as aggregates, and a bush sand instead of the whiter sand now generally available. This produced a softer and more mellow concrete finish with a variable surface which features some visible pieces of the ash. The concrete was generally ruled into 900mm x 600mm rectangles to give the characteristic small panel look of most of the older footpaths (where they are not asphalt).

Whilst we are pleased that our footpaths are being resurfaced, the lack of attention to detail in not using the appropriate concrete mix is disappointing. We feel that this kind of attention to detail is necessary if Paddington is to continue to maintain its place in the world as a significant heritage precinct.

Robyn Attuell

GRAFFITI GRUMPS

Woollahra Council is finally going to get serious about the ever rising tide of graffiti, but it needs YOUR help. They are seeking a resident from EVERY street to register and be the graffiti-look-out for that street. A brochure will be in your letterbox soon. In the meantime, if this is a subject dear to your heart, you can contact Council's SueAnn Muller on 9391 7170 from Mondays to Wednesdays. She can give you advice too, about graffiti prevention and removal, although, when pressed she admitted that there was no magic potion.

Mary J de Merindol

YOUR COMMITTEE FOR 2001

- President:** **Robyn Attuell**
37 Paddington St. 9361 3877
- Vice Presidents:** **Bill Morrison**
29 Brown St. 9331 1405
Leonie Furber
5 Hargrave Lane 9380 8327
- Secretary:** **Mary J de Merindol**
7 Stewart Place 9331 5777
- Treasurer:** **Francis Walsh**
133 Windsor St. 9363 9572
- Committee:** **Stephen Fitzgerald**
128 Paddington St. 9362 4619
Anne Fraser
33 Bent St 9331 1445
Bill Garrett
68 Ormond St. 9331 1903
Susan Lenehan
10 Duxford St 9331 6224
John Mant
26B Caledonia St 9286 8000
Lorine Marsh
21 Glenview St. 9331 6525
Drew Robertson
158 Jersey Rd. 9328 7792
Susan Tooth
108 Jersey Rd. 9363 3136

AGM ADDRESS BY JACK MUNDEY AO

Jack Munday is a conservationist and the instigator of the Green Bans which saved much of old Sydney and green space. He was a former trade unionist and secretary of the NSW branch of the BLF from 1968 to 1975. He was a councillor with Sydney City Council from 1984 to 1987 and for the last 6 years has been Chairman of the Historic Houses Trust of NSW.

“Thank you for inviting someone from the Western Suburbs to address you. Your Society is very impressive, having been in existence for nearly 40 years, especially when you consider how recent the “environment” is. The first EVER international conference on the environment was held in Stockholm in 1972, when the planet was already well on the way to being ravaged. And that conference more or less ended in a brawl, as the urban conservationists and the nature conservationists could not agree. Cities in the world were then, and are now, getting out of control.

By the way, EJ WARD, whose name graces this Centre, was a very fiery speaker, one to the few who used to rattle Menzies, during his sixteen year reign. One of his jibes was “A promising military career was cut short by the outbreak of war” referring to Menzies’ failure to enlist.

The start of my activism was in the trade union movement. Up to 1957 the height limit for building in the city was 150ft. This limit was then removed entirely, and 1959-75 saw the biggest ever building boom in central Sydney. This was called “progress”. The AMP building was finished in 1961 and was so much admired that they charged six bob to climb up it and look at the view. But resident action groups began to stir, arguing that biggest was not necessarily best and that history was important.

The Builders’ Labourers Federation (BLF) consisted of unskilled workers, many of whom were at this time dying on the job owing to lack of safety regulations and unsafe practices. The BLF also fought for women’s right to work, raised the subject of black rights and we fought against Vietnam and apartheid. Progressive unions must be not only concerned with wages but must consider the environment and social issues.

At this time a group of middle-class women in Hunters Hill were arguing against the developers

AV Jennings for demolishing the last bushland, Kellie’s bush on the Parramatta River in order to commence construction. They asked the BLF for a ban. This was the first of 43 bans, and the union simply reacted to residents’ concerns. The Askin government of course was pro-development. AV Jennings was also building on a site in North Sydney, so our line was that no work would proceed there until Kellie’s bush was preserved. When the Wran government came in, Kellie’s Bush was dedicated as open space.

We also refused to allow the destruction of 3 old fig trees in the Domain when the Domain parking station was being constructed. The chief of staff at the Sydney Morning Herald told me that he’d had more letters on those fig trees than any other issue.

There was and remains, a strange mixture of people across all political beliefs. Many people thought the union was “going too far”, but the residents supported us. Centennial Park was saved, and another threat a year or two ago from Macdonalds was averted. Unfortunately unions are no longer engaged in this way today - perhaps if they were they would improve their membership.

In the end we in the BLF were smashed. The developers were feeding huge secret commissions to the governments, much more than the unions ever donated to the ALP. In Victoria a group has been formed called “Earthworker”, fighting for a sustainable economy in an ecologically sound society. We need to become a conservator society, not consumer society. But it is good to know that all our actions, so despised and vilified at the time, are now vindicated.

The next challenge will be the MSB building at the Rocks. The corporate sector is very strong now, and residents’ groups are more important than ever. We must bring back the connecting links. Remember, there are 80 buildings still standing in Sydney today which could otherwise have been destroyed.

Individuals must take action.

The Land & Environment Court at its inception, under Judge Jim McClelland, was very good. We must pressure parliament to reform it. Twenty-five years ago there was a very high level of corruption - I could have been living in Paddington today if I’d accepted all the bribes I was offered then.

Today the Labor Party receives four times as much funding from corporations and developers as it gets from the unions.

For me, the biggest single problem today is the motor car. 40% of Sydney's land is devoted to roads, freeways, driveways etc. And the cars which use all this land are themselves only in use for 3% of their time. It makes no sense."

Jack Munday AO

SOCIETY ARCHIVES

Woollahra Library is at present collating the Society's interesting and historically important Archival collection. Since 1964 The Paddington Society has had many Office Bearers, and we would be very pleased if those who have filed Paddington Society material away for safe-keeping would now contact us to enable collection of the material.

Bill Casey, Archivist at Woollahra Library (who has received a special grant to collate our archives) will then include it in the exhibition planned for later this year. The Archival collection includes photographs of buildings, members/residents, letters, minutes and much documentation of the Society's record of working for Paddington and its people.

Please help us to save and preserve our history.

Susan Tooth

AIRCRAFT NOISE

While the planes flying over Paddington don't appear to be as frequent, they certainly seem to be louder. Are they flying lower to save fuel? If you wish to complain about this call the aircraft noise complaint phone number on 1800 802 584.

WHITE CITY

The proposed redevelopment of the White City site has reached a new phase. Over the past year, members of the Paddington Society committee have attended a number of Community Reference Committee (CRC) Meetings at Woollahra Council Chambers with members of the Stakeholders Group, representatives from Tennis NSW, their consultants, Councillors and Council officers. The Stakeholders Group consists of ACE Residents Group, White City South residents, National Trust, Paddington Society, Sydney Grammar School, Medina Apartments, White

City Tennis Club, Darling Point Society, Rushcutters Bay Foreshore Protection Association, Woollahra History & Heritage Society, Whites and the Member for Bligh, Clover Moore.

Council Officers' reports in relation to the original masterplan were presented at the CRC Meeting on 8th December and covered Traffic, Open Space Audit, Urban Design, Heritage & Conservation, Hydrology and Contamination. The Stakeholders Group then formulated a response document outlining key areas of concern. This was presented at the CRC Meeting on 14th February 2001.

The next stage of the process occurred at the CRC Meeting of 4th April when Tennis NSW presented a new proposal for redevelopment and rezoning of the site. Space does not permit the outlining of these plans, but suffice to say that many of the key concerns raised by the Stakeholders were addressed in this new plan. However, there remain some fundamental issues which were tabled at the CRC Meeting of 24th April. This was a lengthy meeting, concluding with the following major issues still needing resolution:

- Land tenure north of the canal and south of the viaduct (difficulties posed by the 40 year lease of Tennis NSW at Homebush).
- Public accessibility.
- Height of the proposed building on New South Head Road.
- Location and design of the proposed buildings along Glenmore Road, particularly in relation to Medina Apartments.
- Walker Ave residents' concern re public access from this street and potential future development.
- Heritage issues regarding the southern stand
- Traffic issues - Glenmore Road / Alma Street.

The meeting concluded the formal process of this stage of the CRC consultation. Tennis NSW will 'press ahead' with their revised plan for redevelopment, advising at this last meeting that they will formally respond to the above issues. The formal statutory Council process will then take place in consideration of a new masterplan and rezoning application which will be on public display.

We will continue our commitment to maintaining as much open space as possible with minimal impact of buildings by the developers of Tennis NSW on this precious site in Paddington.

Leonie Furber