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BEECROFT - CHELTENHAM
CIVIC TRUST
I N C O R P O R A T E D
P.O. BOX 31, BEECROFT, N.S.W. 2119



BULLETIN 3

December 2003

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The President and Committee of the Beecroft Cheltenham Civic Trust wishes all residents of Beecroft and Cheltenham a very Merry Christmas and a successful, healthy and rewarding New Year.

Jenifer Lewis's Herbarium

It was nice to see an article on page 10 of the October/November edition of the Monthly Chronicle praising Beecroft resident Jeni Lewis' work on the recording of all plant species throughout the Hornsby local government area. The work has involved the collection, recording and pressing of physical specimens. She had to obtain a licence from NPWS to carry out the work.

Jeni, who has been actively involved with the Trust's bushland subcommittee for many years, has been meticulously collecting individual plant specimens for over 15 years. This work is unique in Sydney, and is recognised by the Royal Botanic Gardens.

The Herbarium was officially launched by Council in August and information concerning the Herbarium can be found on the Council's website at -

www.hornsby.gov.nsw.au/library/localstudies/herbarium

The collection, from all over the Shire from Wiseman's Ferry to North Epping, Old Northern Road to Cowan Creek, including all the bushland in Beecroft and Cheltenham, contains over 800 native species - so far. All higher plants from ferns to trees are included. It also contains a collection of introduced plants likely to be found in bush regeneration sites, as a resource for bush regenerators. Recently a generous donation of mosses, liverworts and lichens was made by Alison Downing of Macquarie University's Downing Herbarium to supplement the Herbarium.

Much of the Herbarium is now accessible through the Internet, and all of it should be available in the near future. This resource contains scanned images of fresh material as well as relevant data.

By the way Jeni is still collecting - well done Jeni.

Proposed extension of the Uniting Church Retirement Village in Copeland Road, Beecroft.

Residents may be aware that the Uniting Church has recently acquired approximately 5,000 square metres of residential land in Hannah St in order to provide additional aged housing in Beecroft. There is a demand from within the community for this type of accommodation and the Church is trying to satisfy the demand the best way it can.

All stakeholders have acknowledged that due to Beecroft's hilly nature any aged development on the site will have its constraints. Access has been designed to be in from Hannah St and exiting through the existing Copelands Gardens onto Copeland Rd. There are, we understand, 14 units proposed, and a substantial section of land is planned to be set aside for private open space.

Naturally, adjoining residents are concerned about the impact the proposed development will have on their existing environment, for example, privacy and overshadowing. The Church has held a number of low-key meetings to achieve a proposal that will meet their requirements and at the same time address the neighbours' concerns. Representatives of the Trust Committee have attended these meetings and have tried to assist in both mediating and in offering advice. The Church has yet to lodge the Development Application to Hornsby Council.

Bush Regeneration in Kirkham Street, Beecroft

Residents have been noticing a change in the bush in Kirkham St around the entrance to 2nd Beecroft Scout Hall. There has been a dramatic alteration in the streetscape and the Trust has received comments from passing motorists as to what is happening. This area of bushland has been regenerated through funds provided from the advertising signs on the M2. Hills Motorway, being the Lessee of the M2, sort consent from Hornsby Council for up to 5 advertising signs on the M2. Council has eventually approved 2 signs, one under the Pennant Hills Rd underpass, and the other on the Pennant Hills offloading ramp. While the Trust opposes advertising in principle, the advertising company were prepared to financially contribute towards Council's bush regeneration program. Besides weed removal and planting, the funds provided for new barriers and a sign identifying the bush reserve.

From a bush regeneration perspective the work has been very welcome, with the Trust's bushland sub committee involved in the ongoing management of the site.

Review of Local Government Boundaries.

Residents may have noticed articles in the local press and Sydney newspapers on proposed changes to local government boundaries. Last month, Ryde City Council submitted a proposed boundary change to the Minister for Local Government seeking all of Epping shopping centre, that part of Beecroft south of the M2 and all of North Epping to be included in the Ryde LGA. This hit the residents of Epping and North Epping like a bombshell. Our neighbouring Epping Civic Trust held an urgent public meeting on the 21st October to discuss the matter and 3 of your committee members represented the Beecroft/ Cheltenham Civic Trust. Over 80 residents, including 3 Lachlan Macquarie Ward Councillors from Parramatta City Council, Hornsby C Ward Councillor Robert Browne and the State Member for Epping Andrew Tink, attended the meeting.

All Councillors spoke on the matter and were supported by a clear majority of the residents that they were against such a takeover by Ryde Council. Apparently there had no public consultation by Ryde Council. In fact there appeared to have been no consultation between the Councils themselves. So even the Councillors were surprised with the submission. The Trust's understanding is the submission to the Local Government Minister will not be supported, as Ryde Council did not follow the required process of community consultation.

It would appear that the main objective of the current LGA Review is to encourage better use of resources, such as sharing services like waste management. Apparently Hornsby Council has a very efficient working relationship with other northern suburbs councils and there has been an understanding between them that there was no need for boundary changes. The Review's main focus has been on country councils that have a 'doughnut' relationship with the adjoining councils. A good example being the Goulburn Council which services the surrounding rural Mulwaree Shire that surrounds it.

The latest on the changes in Hornsby Council's ward structure and number of Councillors

Many readers may already know of the latest changes and how they will affect residents at the next local government elections next year.

The existing arrangement is the elected council consists of 9 councillors with 3 councillors elected from each of 3 wards. The councillors elect the mayor annually.

At the 1999 local government elections in March 1999 the residents of Hornsby were asked to vote on a 2 question referendum, resulting in 11 councillors, one of which would be elected by the residents as the Mayor.

Over the past 3 years the Trust has been actively involved in discussions with Council and other community groups throughout the Shire over the practicality of having 2, 5 or 10 wards to accommodate the 10 councillors. To resolve the dilemma, Council has requested the Minister for Local Government to reduce the number of councillors to 10, with one elected by the residents as Mayor. This will allow the 3 ward arrangement to remain, with 3 councillors each. There will be minor changes to the internal ward boundaries as the LG Act requires ward populations to be within 10% of each other. These changes will not affect Beecroft or Cheltenham, only around Pennant Hills and Cherrybrook. Plans of the ward boundaries have been on display at Council's libraries.

Common sense has finally prevailed!

LG elections are programmed for March next year. Some of the familiar councillors will not be standing, so expect some new candidates.

Trees in Beecroft and Cheltenham

Trees are disappearing from our neighbourhood. This is fact. For many years trees have been the essential element that gave Beecroft and Cheltenham its unique character, an area renowned for its bushland setting. While we can all acknowledge that some tree removals are inevitable due to old age, or simply losses through storms there has been a dramatic increase in the number of trees removed. In some cases for seemingly good reasons, but how many seedlings do you see being planted? Yet Council stated at a Workshop in June that it spends \$40,000 a year on

street tree planting – obviously it is not in Beecroft or Cheltenham!

The Trust committee members regularly receive phone calls from concerned residents about the loss of trees. Only last week the Northern District Times reported the loss of a number of trees in Lyne Rd. The article also stated that Council had notified the Trust and there was no objection. For the record the Trust was NOT consulted and the Trust has objected, to both the misrepresentation and the loss of the trees.

This recent increase in tree removals has been mainly driven by Hornsby Council's concern about public liability. Any tree that appears old, sick or diseased is being removed. Council has agreed to consult the Trust prior to any decision being made. However, in practice, the Trust MAY be notified, usually AFTER a decision is made. This is very frustrating for everyone.

Last year Council started reviewing its tree management practices. The Trust and other interested community groups participated in a council workshop in June this year on how best to tackle this issue. Council informed the participants that any recommendations would be distributed to community groups prior to going to Council. This did not occur, instead a report went to Council's Ordinary Meeting on 29 October. It has now been deferred till February 2004. **An Information Paper, A Proposal for Changes to Tree Management Practices**, is currently on display and available on Council's web site. Contacts at council include Peter Kemp 9847 6792 and Gavan Mathieson 9847 6903. Options include various changes to the Tree Preservation Order and changing tree removal application fees. Council has even acknowledged in its report that it operates under a reactive risk management policy. Submissions close 20 January 2004. Please make the effort to read it as the preservation of our current environment is in your hands. The Trust will be lodging a submission in January.

In summary, consider these facts. People are attracted to Beecroft and Cheltenham by the trees. Trees will add value to your property. Trees improve air quality, absorb carbon, reduce stormwater runoff and keep houses cooler in summer.

If the residents want to put their hands up and be proactive, the Trust is seeking your support in instigating a co-ordinated tree planting program.

Contact any committee member if you would like a tree planted in the street in the front of your residence and you are prepared to maintain it. If we get a big enough response the Trust will lobby Council for these trees to be supplied.

Diary Dates

24 February 2004

Public Meeting of the Trust at the Cheltenham Recreational Club commencing at 8:00 pm.

This is your chance to meet, listen and question aspiring "C" Riding Councillors before the LG elections in March.

There will also be a general discussion in relation to the attitudes of both the Hornsby Shire Council and the NSW State Government in relation to development in general and the actions being taken by the Beecroft Cheltenham Civic Trust in these matters.

6 April 2004

Annual General Meeting of the Trust at the Cheltenham Recreational Club commencing at 8:00 pm.

Fagan Park - Netherby Cottage - Painting Works

Fagan Parks Netherby Cottage will be closed from 3 November 2003 to 29 February 2004, in order to conduct painting works as part of its continued conservation. Further information can be obtained from Peter Hedges, Building Services Co-ordinator on 9847 4824.

Bulletin Distributors

The Trust has lost some of its regular Bulletin distributors and we are finding it difficult to service all homes in Beecroft and Cheltenham – i.e., postcode 2119. Our volunteers distribute the Bulletin to approximately 80 residences each and as we only aim to produce up to four Bulletins a year, the task is not particularly onerous. Besides walking is a wonderful form of exercise and it's one way of meeting the neighbours!

We have a few gaps in our "Distribution Schedule" and if you are interested and can spare the time, please contact Brian Sippel on 9980 6963. Your assistance would be much appreciated.

Membership

Membership Subscriptions for 2004 are now due and payable. Please complete the form appended below and send your cheque to our Treasurer. You can be sure that it will be gratefully received and faithfully applied.

Don't delay, pay today

Those of you who have joined the Trust or have renewed your subscription during the last three months are financial to the end of 2004. If in doubt, ring our Treasurer on 9484 4309.

**BEECROFT CHELTENHAM CIVIC TRUST
Annual Membership - 2004**

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