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CIVIC TRUST  
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P.O. BOX 31, BEECROFT, N.S.W. 2119

BULLETIN 3

December 2004

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

## *Advance Notice*

### **A Special General Meeting**

followed by the Trust's

### **Annual General Meeting**

will be held at the Cheltenham Recreational Club on Thursday 17 March  
2005 commencing at 8:00 pm.

The purpose of the Special General Meeting is to consider and, if appropriate, approve proposed amendments to the Civic Trust's Constitution. These amendments are intended to update the existing Constitution to reflect current practice and also to facilitate the amalgamation of the Beecroft Cheltenham History Group with the Beecroft Cheltenham Civic Trust.

All members of the Civic Trust and the History Group will be individually provided with schedules showing the existing Constitution together with the proposed amendments early in the New Year.

## Draft Masterplan for the Beecroft Commercial Centre

The Trust recently attended a meeting at which matters contained in the Draft Masterplan for the Beecroft Commercial Centre were discussed. A copy of the Draft Masterplan was also made available to the Trust.

The development of an appropriate "Master Plan" for the Beecroft commercial area is vitally important to ensure the future of the commercial centre and to contribute to the vitality of the area. The Trust is concerned however that certain aspects, identified in a separate Heritage Study, were not fully explored in the Masterplan, notwithstanding that the Heritage Study formed the basis of the Draft Masterplan.

Items of concern to the Trust include -

- The area covered is limited to the current Commercial zoning area notwithstanding the quasi-commercial changes which are taking place in residential areas adjoining the Commercial zoning. In the Trust's opinion, the impact of these changes has not been strategically managed by Council and in this context the Heritage Study clearly refers to areas surrounding the commercial area.
- The design objectives of the Masterplan are predominantly all building related. There appears to be no comment in relation to the

importance of retaining and promoting appropriate vegetation as recommended by the Heritage Study.

- The Masterplan also appears to concentrate on street frontages with minimal comment on rear car-parks and overall connectivity. These aspects are just as important if only to facilitate pedestrian and vehicle movement.
- Availability and easy access to car-parking is an important issue as evidenced by comments contained in the Heritage Study. Yet the Masterplan is silent on this matter.
- There is also the matter of Public Toilets, or the lack thereof. The Heritage Study identified this deficiency yet the Masterplan makes no mention of this important facility.

The Trust hopes to organise a public meeting early in the New Year at which these and other issues will be canvassed. Council Officers have been asked to attend to both clarify aspects of the Masterplan and to answer questions.

## Your Civic Trust is 40 Years Old

This important landmark celebration held at Pennant Hills Golf Club on 29<sup>th</sup> October was highly successful with 126 people in attendance. Guests were

greeted on arrival by a string quartet from the Beecroft Orchestra, who played an entertaining range of music from well known classics to lesser known gems of the chamber music repertoire.

The audience included our parliamentary representatives, Philip Ruddock and Andrew Tink, as well as the Mayor of Hornsby, Nick Berman, and Councillor Felicity Findlay. Robert Browne and Ron Leslie, represented the Pennant Hills Civic Trust. Many founding and early members of the Beecroft Cheltenham Civic Trust attended. Our thanks to John Noble, Shirley Manion, Robyn Rowlands, Olive Dunk, Earl Goodwin and Dorothy Addison for being there. Guests were welcomed by David White, President of the Trust.

Following some historical reminiscences on the Beecroft Cheltenham area and a brief outline on achievements of the Trust by long time Cheltenham resident, Carolyn Watt, the guest speaker was introduced. Professor Ben Boer (Professor of Environmental Law at the University of Sydney) delivered a highly informative address. This included reference to all the many heritage sites in the Beecroft Cheltenham area and its surrounding unique bushland. Professor Boer also presented the interesting concept that heritage also included the spiritual ties and oral histories of an area.

Particular reference was made to the role played by the late Marie Byles who established her home Ahimsa as a

centre for promotion of bushland protection in association with residential living. Professor Boer's presentation included visual material on Ahimsa and other important landmarks in the area protected by heritage listings. He stressed that heritage was not just buildings as it can include fences, trees, monuments and small items. A heritage item does not necessarily have to have an impressive façade or 'age' to make it worthy of 'heritage' status.

To deliver a comprehensive address on his topic "Protecting the Past for the Future: Heritage Law in New South Wales", Professor Boer provided an overview of the National, State and Local Government legal framework now in place to protect heritage sites including natural bushland. The wide definition of 'environment' in the EP & A Act is an inclusive one and '...includes all aspects of the surrounds of humans whether affecting any human as an individual or in his or her social groupings'.

He stressed the need for community involvement in identifying such sites for presentation to government authorities to provide the necessary protection.

He further indicated how the emerging legal framework on environmental issues is an evolving process. It requires dedicated community participation to ensure that legislators understand the heritage values of the natural and man made environment.

A number of thought provoking questions were presented to Professor

Boer from the enthusiastic audience. At the conclusion, a vote of thanks was made by Malcolm Powell who organised attendance by Professor Boer as Guest Speaker.



*The Guest Speaker - Professor Ben Boer*

*(Several other photographs of the Anniversary Dinner are on our web site - [www.2119.org.au](http://www.2119.org.au))*

## *The Ludovic Blackwood Memorial Sanctuary at Observatory Park*

*(The following was received from the Bushland Manager, Janet Rannard, National Trust of Australia (NSW), GPO Box 518, Sydney - Tel: 9258 0132 or email at [jrannard@nationaltrust.org.au](mailto:jrannard@nationaltrust.org.au))*

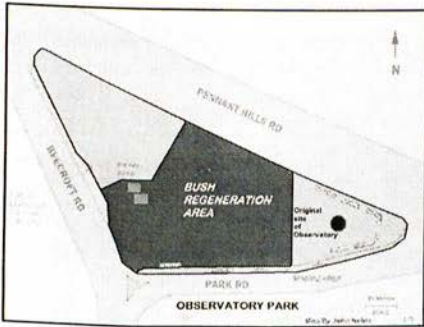
Would you like to help restore to its former glory the bushland known as The Ludovic Blackwood Memorial Sanctuary on the corner of Beecroft Road and Pennant Hills Road - opposite Observatory Park?

The National Trust is forming a Bushcare group and will provide training. It is very satisfying work which will provide an important legacy for our children.

You'll learn about the local environment and ways to look after your own garden. It's sociable and good exercise but not hard work. The group will meet once a month on a Tuesday, Friday or Saturday morning. We plan to start in November.

Please ring Jane Gye 9489 3171 and let me know which day you prefer. Experienced bush-carers and regenerators are also welcome.

## UNVEILING CEREMONY FOR NEW PLAQUE AT OBSERVATORY PARK



An important unveiling ceremony will take place at 10:00 am on Tuesday 14 December at Observatory Park on the corner of Pennant Hills Road and Beecroft Road when a plaque commemorating John Noble's foresight and will power in protecting this valuable pocket of native vegetation will be unveiled.



John Francis Noble, a retired engineer and resident of Beecroft, and also a founding member of the Beecroft Cheltenham Civic Trust, approached Council in 1988 to seek permission to undertake regeneration of approximately one hectare in the

middle of the park. Work commenced early 1989 and mowing was restricted to areas outside the designated regeneration area. Working single-handedly John removed weeds with painstaking care to allow native species to re-emerge from the original forest seed-bed.

The original natural vegetation of this area, known as Red Hill, comprised Sydney Blue Gum High Forest, a feature of the high ridge-tops of northern Sydney. High rainfall and rich soil supported this tall forest and ecological community. However, less than 1% remains as clearing took place for logging and development. Despite the establishment of an observatory at



the eastern end of the park in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and an army camp during World War II, the tall trees were

retained and the understorey was kept mown for decades. The Park was placed under management of Hornsby Shire Council and was zoned for Public Recreation in 1953. Initially there were only 45 recorded plant species in the park, now there are over 116 after 15 years of natural and assisted regeneration. A young understorey, including replacement tree saplings, has now been firmly established. This will preserve the forest for future generations.

John Noble's vision and dedication has restored this mown park to a healthy forest. His hard work, now that he has retired, is being continued by other Bushcare volunteers

The forest in Observatory Park, now a lasting tribute to John Noble, has been recognised by the NSW Scientific Committee as Sydney Blue Gum High Forest and is an endangered ecological community under the Threatened Species Conservation Act (1995).

## Centenary of the Beecroft School of Arts

The Beecroft School of Arts, now called the Community Centre, celebrates its Centenary this December.



Built from funds raised by the community it was opened in 1904 and later extended. It has served the community for 100 years as a venue for events including balls, debates, concerts, parties and exhibitions as well as housing a library for many years.

It is wonderful to have this building still in use by our community. An excellent description of its early use and illustrations of the original and present buildings can be found in the "Beecroft and Cheltenham Heritage Walks" recently published by the History Group.

## Water Recycling

*(Anthony Whipps is a practising Hydraulic Engineer and has prepared this report for the BCCT).*

In recent years the need for sustainable water management has become the pre-eminent environmental issue that affects populations in both the regional towns and coastal cities. Unlike old growth forests and the protection of flora and fauna, water shortage is a tangible issue which we collectively face. Whilst the drought has obviously exacerbated the water shortage problems within NSW, the more fundamental problem is the population growth within NSW and the Sydney Basin in particular.

To adequately address the issue of drinking water shortage, we need to consider water reuse, conservation and storage. Recently we have all read that more dams and a de-salination plant are the panacea to all our problems, but is this the answer, or should we consider using and reusing the water resources that are currently available?

Earlier this year the NSW State Government introduced a new program called BASIX. This new program mandates that all new single residential dwellings be designed to take account of plants used for landscaping, solar access, building materials and water storage. Over the next few years all building types including commercial, industrial and even single dwelling extensions shall be required to consider these issues before local Councils will consider development approvals.

To understand water reuse issues, it is important to appreciate the different terminologies related to the level of water

quality. The following nominates the four gradings generally used to determine water quality;

**Rainwater** - Rainwater relates to water collected from non-trafficable roof areas, that is, areas where vehicles, pedestrians etc are excluded. Rainwater is the cleanest form of water collected from a site. The collection and reuse of rainwater for toilet flushing, clothes washing machines and landscape irrigation is the most popular and least expensive form of water recycling available, although it is advisable to direct the first few litres of rainwater collected from a roof area directly to waste to remove any debris or contaminates which can build up on a roof during low rainfall periods.

**Stormwater** - Stormwater relates to water collected from all other areas excluding the roof. Stormwater collected from a site can contain high concentrations of contaminates such as petro-chemicals, fertilizers or similar which are difficult to remove without pre-treatment systems, which are not generally suitable for domestic situations. However, where the soil profiles allow, stormwater can be collected into absorption trenches and allowed to absorb on site. A geo-technical survey is generally required to determine site specific absorption rates.

**Grey Water** - The collection of rainwater is generally incorrectly referred to as grey water. Grey water specifically relates to waste water collected from sinks, basins, showers, washing machines and laundry tubs. Mistakenly, many people assume that grey water is adequate for reuse without any pre-treatment when in fact grey water can sometimes contain concentrations of oils, fats and faeces which can be harmful if atomised when used for toilet flushing or irrigation

Currently there is only one grey water pre-treatment system which is approved for use in NSW metropolitan areas. Whilst reuse of grey water is laudable, there is an onus on the grey water user to ensure the quality of the treated water and to maintain the treatment systems.

**Black Water** - Black water is the least accepted option for water reuse to most of the population, yet if treated properly can be less difficult to manage than grey water, due to the high levels of "good" bacteria. Black water refers to waste water collected from Toilets and urinals. Currently there are no approved pre-treatment systems available for black water reuse, within NSW metropolitan areas.

Whilst it has not been possible to fully explore the water reuse options available I hope that the above provides an outline of what is meant by water reuse. We would welcome your questions and input and if possible will expand upon the options available in future additions of the bulletin.

*Membership Subscriptions for 2005 are now due !  
Support your local community and join the Trust*

## **BEECROFT CHELTENHAM CIVIC TRUST**

### **Annual Membership 2005**

**Annual Subscription Rates: Family \$ 15.00, Single \$ 10.00**

**Mailing Details: (please print)**

**Title ..... Initials ..... Surname.....**

**Address.....**

**Telephone ..... Email .....**

**Post Cheque or Postal Order to :- The Treasurer, PO Box 31, BEECROFT, 2119**