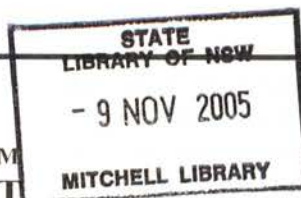


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BEECROFT - CHELTENHAM
CIVIC TRUST
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BULLETIN 3

October 2005

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Hornsby Council Heritage Control Plan - Beecroft/Cheltenham Heritage Conservation Area

Hornsby Council engaged Consultants to review five (5) Conservation Areas within the Shire. The Consultants' study and the subsequent Beecroft / Cheltenham Heritage Development Control Plan (HDCP) adopted by Council are based upon the original boundaries of the Field of Mars. Within these boundaries, nine (9) Conservation Precincts have been identified. Through the HDCP Council aims to protect the significant character of each Precinct by controlling development based upon Precinct Character Statements.

Council Officers James Farrington (Manager, Strategic Town Planning) and Christopher Reeve (Heritage Planner) attended a meeting at Cheltenham Recreation Club on 25 Aug 05 to explain the background leading up to the design of the HCP and how the regulations under the HCP would be applied. This meeting was organised by The Trust to provide a forum for residents to gain more information on the HCP and its proposed application. Council Officers stressed that flexibility would be applied in application of development controls for Precinct Protection. This assurance gave some comfort to residents in attendance who were concerned about their property values being affected through not being able to readily undertake home improvement renovations due to HCP development controls.

The issue of an emerging clash of values was considered at the meeting. Long term residents of Beecroft/Cheltenham, who had often been in the area since childhood, tended to desire the maintenance of the traditional bushland and low impact development character of the area which had created a very attractive lifestyle environment. Some newer residents able to pay the current high prices for land and properties, may have lifestyle requirements

which emphasise larger homes with modern living arrangement. These new requirements may clash with traditional resident values that prefer low impact development. Council Officers confirmed recognition of this emerging trend.

Council Officers indicated that Heritage Consultants had confirmed that Beecroft and Cheltenham are the only two remaining late 19th century Sydney railway suburbs which have not been significantly impacted by high density and/or high rise development. They stressed the dominant character of the area being derived from the Tall Tree Canopy in pockets of remnant and regeneration forest located in large household gardens and public reserves. The area contains a fine collection of homes from the Victorian, Federation, Arts and Crafts, Inter-War and Post-War eras with the predominant building materials being brick walls and tile or slate roofs derived in part from building covenants.

The Trust has adopted a policy of supporting low impact development and believes that modern living standards can be achieved within this framework. We welcome the Heritage Development Control Plan which, with sensitive and sensible application, aims to maintain the character of our unique suburbs.

Proposed New Classroom Building at Cheltenham Girls High School

The Trust was pleased to hear that the demountable classrooms at CGHS are to be replaced by two new buildings providing much needed classrooms and staff facilities. We appreciate that these buildings are long overdue and will be of great advantage to the school.

However, it has been brought to our attention that the two storey classroom building, 65 m long and 7.8m high from ground level, is proposed to be located along the north west boundary of the school, only 7 m from the fences of at least four adjacent residences

in Murray Road and Beecroft Road. Despite this building being situated with an excavation into the slope of the ground to reduce the height to one storey on the residential impact side, it will still affect the privacy and amenity of these residents and dominate the outlook from these significant houses.

In addition, it will result in the destruction of over 50 mature, tall native trees, mainly Turpentines, which must provide a significant wildlife habitat and add to the local amenity. The impact of the removal of these significant tall trees on the outlook from the adjacent residences is recognised in the Development Application. Provision has been made to plant suitable low level screening with trees that grow to 8 m, in the 5m space between the retaining wall of the building and the fence-line, but this will not replace the present outlook onto the tree canopies. Understorey planting and ground cover have been recommended.

These nearby residents have enjoyed an excellent relationship with the school and have appreciated being advised of school functions. The first they heard of the current proposal was when Council advised them of the Development Application. In addition, the period for notification covered the School Holidays which made it difficult for those concerned to visit the site.

In keeping with the Trust's policy of supporting low impact development and the retention, where possible, of trees, we approached the Principal to request a meeting on site with the Department of Commerce, who control the project, and any interested parties. This site visit has now been arranged but will take place after the period of notification. We had hoped to make our submission to Council after the site visit so that we could have made a more comprehensive and better informed submission. No extension of time was possible.

This is the largest building project to be undertaken in Cheltenham and informed judgements must to be made. Based on available information, the Trust has made a submission which attempts to balance the needs of the school and the concerns of the adjacent residents.

Spring Walk

Another enjoyable Spring Walk was held on Sunday 28th August in the Lane Cove National Park. The Spring walk, similar to the Trust's Autumn Walk, is an annual occurrence.

The weather was fine and sunny and a mixed group of young and old set out from the Day Rd picnic area at 2pm and headed in the direction of Britannia Rd



Pennant Hills. Steady progress was made while we all admired the high quality of the surrounding bushland. A number of rest stops along the way gave participants to gather breath and admire views from various vantage points along the fire trail leading to the junction of the Lane cove River and Devlins Creek. We returned to Day Rd along Devlins and Byles Creek. All fifty three participants considered the walk a huge success, especially over afternoon tea that was waiting for the weary trekkers at Day Rd.



There will be another walk in Autumn and spring next year. Dates will be advertised on the Trust's Website 2119.org.au and in shop windows at Beecroft.

Meet the Committee

The Committee of the BCCT always welcomes community consultation as often occurs at and after public meetings. Whilst members of the community are encouraged to write, phone, email or contact us through the website, the committee wants to have other opportunities for you to meet with us.

On Friday 11th November, some of the committee will be at the Cheltenham Recreation Club from 6.30 pm to meet with you. We plan to have dinner in the café at 7.30 and you are welcome to join us. If you intend dining, please make a booking through the café on 9869 8666 and say you will be at the Civic Trust table.

Good News from Hornsby Council

The Trust congratulates Hornsby Council on winning the prestigious Sustainable Cities Award for Best Heritage Management by a Metropolitan Council. We appreciate the calibre of Council staff, particularly Christopher Reeve and James Farrington in this regard and urge the Council to continue to maintain its high standard.

Excellent Community Education programs are run by the Council's Waste Education Officer (9847 4835). These include visits to a recycling plant, non-toxic cleaning, compost and worm farming and eco-gardening. Courses fill quickly so you need to book early.

The Community Nursery in Britannia St, Pennant Hills gave away free native plants to residents on October 1st. They have information on attracting native animals to your garden, bush-care, water issues and much more.

Cheltenham Memorial Preschool

We have received a request from a member of the Parent Executive Committee for information on the history of the Kindergarten and photos of the early days. They are interested in the activities that we used to have in which the children might participate as part of the Hornsby Council Centenary celebrations next year. If you attended the Kindergarten in the 1940s or 50s or know someone who did and have any photos or memories, please will you contact Carolyn Watt (9876 3266) who will collect the information and pass it on to the Committee.

www.2119.org

Have you had a look at your web site lately? The interface has been completely revised and offers a "one-click stop" to what's happening in Beecroft / Cheltenham.

Take the survey – tell the Trust what your immediate concerns are.

If Everyone Cared

No. 4 in a series of articles on the history of Beecroft and Cheltenham. Contributed by the Beecroft Cheltenham History Group

To start at the beginning would have been a good idea however to give a full account of the first people who lived in the Beecroft Cheltenham area is very difficult. There is a chapter in Beecroft and Cheltenham – the shaping of a Sydney Community to 1914 which draws attention to the fact that indigenous people of several Sydney groups would have lived in or passed through these parts. There are descendents of these people who continue to uphold their heritage to this day. There are still major gaps in our knowledge of this early time. Rather than recount what the major local history already contains, it is felt that another and quite tragic part of the more recent Aboriginal story in this district should be told.

There has been much controversy in recent years over what has come to be called 'the stolen generations'. One fact without dispute is that Aboriginal children of 'lighter caste' (which meant that one parent or grandparent had been non-indigenous) and who were perceived by white authorities to be 'neglected' were to be removed from their families. An appraisal of this policy should be made in the light of the years when it happened. The attitudes and values of the early 21st century are quite different from those of two, three and four generations ago.

One young person who was caught up in this policy was Margaret Tucker or Lillardia, taken from her school by police at the age of thirteen. She was born in 1904 on an Aboriginal settlement in southern New South Wales. After several carefree years of childhood, listening to the stories of her tribal elders and being taught by kindly Christian missionaries, Lillardia was forcibly removed from her part-Aboriginal parents and sent to the Cootamundra Domestic Training Home for Aboriginal Girls to be trained as a domestic servant. Lillardia came to a family in Cheltenham and has written an account which was first published in 1977. She called her book "If Everyone Cared".¹

This is her account of her training, her time working in a home on Beecroft Road, her loneliness and homesickness and yet, as the cover of her book states, it is a story told without 'self-pity or malice'.

She writes -
"When I look back at those years, I see how cunning I got and what an obsession I had with food. I

pondered over how I was going to obtain food with that money. [A visitor had given her some pocket money]. The nearest shop was a mile away at Epping. I didn't have a hope of being let out on my own. But out of the blue, I was sent to Epping on an urgent message for my mistress. I assured her that I would go straight there and back. I enjoyed the walk. There were trees and shrubs along the way, and I felt the freedom of being alone, being trusted. It did not enter my head to run away. As I clutched the five shillings tied in a rag, I thought and wondered what eats I could buy with it. I soon made up my mind. Rock cakes and other kinds of cake. I ate some walking back and thought I would keep some for tomorrow, or longer if I could. I wouldn't need to pinch any food. Not that there was much hope of that. My mistress seemed to know my every move. Just before I arrived at the front gate, I saw a thick hedge, well kept, along someone else's front fence. Before I entered the gate, I hid my half dozen luscious cakes in their paper bag. I found what I thought was a good hiding place in the front hedge. I went contentedly through the gate, the front door opened, and out she came. I knew by the look on her face that something was not going to be good for me. She had been watching for me through the windows as usual and had seen me. 'Follow me,' she said. She opened the gate and went straight for my bag of cakes, back through her own gate and up the drive with me following, anxious about my cakes. She detoured to the fowl yard with me still following and opened the

gate. The ducks, bantams and fowls clustered round thinking it was feeding time, although it was the wrong time of day. She took the cakes out of the bag and broke them into little pieces deliberately. I felt I couldn't win, so why keep trying. Those fowls just picked casually at the pieces of cake here and there and walked away. The truth dawned on me later. They were better fed than I. When she was out of sight, I hunted the chooks away and picked up some of the bigger pieces of cake and put them in the paper bag she had thrown on the ground. At Moonchulla, no matter how hungry we were, we did not pick things off the ground and eat them."

Lilardia lived a full life sustained by her true Christian spirit and her love of Australia, not only for her race but her 'love and concern for her country and her hope that one day all she had worked for would come to pass, and that all Australians, black and white, would live in harmony. This amazing woman was honoured in 1968 with an M.B.E. for services to the Aboriginal community. She died in 1996.

See :
<http://www.kooriweb.org/foley/heroes/tucker.html>
 and 'Anty Marge Tucker', in
<http://www.kooriweb.org/bbm/aal/p10.html>.
If Everyone Cared: the autobiography of Margaret Tucker. Published 1977, Ure Smith, Sydney.
Margaret Tucker, M.B.E.

Please note that your membership of the Trust is due for renewal on 1 January 2006.

If you have recently moved into Beecroft of Cheltenham and not already a Member of the Trust, you can use the form below to join. Remember, numbers do count – the Trust needs the support of all residents.

BEECROFT CHELTENHAM CIVIC TRUST, INC
MEMBERSHIP 2006

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

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