



Department of Road Transport and Trams—Bus Services No. 109

**TIME-TABLE**

**ROUTE 266**  
Osborne Park—Ronald Park—Northbridge

Commencing Tuesday, June 10, 1952

**MONDAYS TO FRIDAYS**

FROM NORTHBRIDGE TO OSBORNE PARK—8.30, 11.50 a.m., 1.50, 3.50 p.m.  
 FROM CROWS NEST TO OSBORNE PARK—8.40, 7.20, 8.40, 9.20, 10.40 a.m., 1.10, 2.30, 3.45, 4.55, 5.25, 6.15 p.m.  
 FROM OSBORNE PARK TO NORTHBRIDGE—8.51, 11.8 a.m., 1.10, 2.10 p.m.  
 FROM OSBORNE PARK TO CROWS NEST—8.41, 8.41, 8.26, 9.1, 9.26, 11.9 a.m., 12.9, 1.0, 2.26, 3.40, 5.11, 5.51, 6.59 p.m.  
 A—To St. Leonards Station.

**SATURDAYS**

FROM NORTHBRIDGE TO OSBORNE PARK—8.5, 10.25, 11.40 a.m., 1.50 p.m.  
 FROM CROWS NEST TO OSBORNE PARK—7.50, 8.10, 10.20, 11.20 a.m., 1.10, 4.0 p.m.  
 FROM OSBORNE PARK TO NORTHBRIDGE—8.11, 9.30, 11.0 a.m., 1.20 p.m.  
 FROM OSBORNE PARK TO CROWS NEST—8.11, 8.25, 11.0 a.m., 12.20, 1.20 p.m.

**SUNDAYS AND HOLIDAYS**  
NO SERVICE.

A SHORT HISTORY OF  
**GREENWICH**  
**COMMUNITY**  
**ASSOCIATION**  
 1944 - 2014



JOHN MAY

**A SHORT HISTORY OF THE  
GREENWICH COMMUNITY  
ASSOCIATION  
1944 TO 2014**



*Jessie & Bill Henningham GCA Pioneers*

For Jill without whose help, encouragement and unfailing enthusiasm this  
would never have seen the light of day

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# Introduction

The Greenwich Community Association was established as the Greenwich Progress Association on the 8<sup>th</sup> December 1944 at the Balfour Street home of Mr Bill Henningham (Snr) and Mrs Jessie Henningham. The Progress Association was not the first to be established in Lane Cove, being preceded by the still operational Osborne Park Progress Association whose constitution was used as a model for the newly formed Association.

The Henningham family have been prominent in Lane Cove community and Council affairs with Bill Henningham (Snr) serving on Lane Cove Council for 10 years and his son (Bill Henningham) also serving on Lane Cove Council from 1976 to 1983 and as Mayor from 1977 to 1981.

During the seventy years of its existence the Association has seen a number of name changes from the Greenwich Progress Association to Greenwich and District Progress Association, back to Greenwich Progress Association and most recently to the Greenwich Community Association. The Association was also referred to as the Greenwich Heights Progress Association in various documents, but there does not seem to be a record of any official change to this name in the minutes.

This short history is an account of the highlights of the Association and is derived from notices of meetings and minutes of meetings held by Lane Cove Library's Local Studies Centre and Greenwich Community Association as well as recollections provided by current and past members.

The early minutes of the Association described the issues in some detail and recorded views that were expressed. However as time went on the minutes became more abbreviated and in some cases required background knowledge to interpret events, the causes and actions taken.

There is a multitude of issues in the newsletters and minutes, which at the time seemed extremely important such as the Army Duck episode, but in retrospect were not at all significant. Some issues keep coming up such as the intersection of Greenwich Road and River Road and Council Amalgamation, but you will have to look elsewhere for all the details of these.

From 2012 the Newsletters and Minutes of meetings have been stored on the Association's website and are available to all to read and sometimes wonder about.

# 1944 TO 1953

## **Bus routes, timetables and other matters**

Up to the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge the 'centre of Greenwich' was located around the ferry wharf at Greenwich Point. However once the bridge opened rapid development occurred throughout the suburb resulting in an increased demand for services – particularly an extended and more frequent bus service in the area north of River Road referred to often as 'Greenwich Heights'.

The minutes of the first meeting commence with 'Opening remarks by Mr Henningham dealt with lack of transport facilities retarding the progress of the district and the need for an Association to further the interests of Lane Cove and Greenwich in particular'.

Bill Henningham (Jnr) remembers that the formation of a Progress Association north of Greenwich Road had been a bit of a shock to 'the establishment' on the peninsula.

The bus route and timetable were major issues in 1944 and continued throughout the first phase of the Association. In 1944 car ownership was very limited and housewives relied on buses to do their shopping. Lack of efficient refrigeration could mean almost daily shopping expeditions. Milk, bread and ice (for the ice chest) were delivered to the door with the odd 'rabitoh' passing by.

It was a long walk to the shops at Crows Nest or Lane Cove – especially with a pram and small children, and the hilly terrain did not facilitate the use of bicycles, hence a 'shopping bus' was a much sought after feature of daily life.

Going to the pictures was the major social event then and a 'picture bus' was also deemed necessary.

From the minutes of that first meeting attended by 55 residents we learn that Mr Henningham had already discussed with the Local Member Mr Woodward a proposed route for a feeder bus service starting at Lane Cove and proceeding along the Pacific Highway to Osborne Road through the Innes Estate to Ronald Avenue, Innes Road, Balfour Street, Kingslangley Road, St Vincents Road, River Road, Milner Crescent, Shirley Road and on to Crows Nest.

Mr Woodward had promised to approach the Minister for Transport Mr O'Sullivan regarding this proposal immediately!

Nothing happened, so with support from Hillcrest School (then a private day and boarding school in Kingslangley Road) it was 'decided that we must force the issue and the lack of transport was the reason for Greenwich and Lane Cove being such backward districts' and the first of many meetings and many letters to the authorities on the subject eventuated.

It was to prove to be a long battle.

In that first set of minutes there was also mention of the need for a Greenwich Community Centre.

Many impediments were thrown in the way of a new bus service – the Minister for Transport for example indicated that he would only accept representations from Lane Cove Council, which in turn did not appear to want the new bus route as it would require sealing of a section of Ronald Avenue which at that time was in a poor state of repair – an expensive exercise.

It transpired also that there was a certain amount of friction between East Ward Alderman Brady and Mr Henningham that was seen as delaying progress on the issue and as a consequence Mr Henningham stood down as President of the Association in favour of Mr Roy Willis who was the then NSW Registrar General.

When it seemed that the full service requested was not going to be provided, a second proposal was prepared – this was the extension of the 263 bus service along Ronald Avenue (as far as the unsealed section). Osborne Park Progress Association joined the push and the new president Mr Willis headed a deputation to Council's Transport Committee and received a favourable reply.

Six months after the formation of the Association this became the new bus route objective and the letter writing continued.

The extension of the 263 bus service along Ronald Avenue was submitted to Transport Minister O'Sullivan by Lane Cove Council only to be rejected '*due to staff shortages and would be considered in the Post War Planning*' – perhaps women were not permitted to drive buses in 1945.

Further delays!

Mr Willis died suddenly – '*a great loss to the community*' – and Mr Henningham once again took over the presidency.

In mid July 1946 Council amalgamation under the 'Greater Sydney Scheme' was proposed and the Association discussed pros and cons and anxiously awaited the publication of the report.

This was the first of several amalgamation proposals to be considered by the Association during its long history.

At the same meeting it was resolved that 'Lane Cove Council be asked to reserve the unseverable portion of the Long Innes Estate in River Road as a public park with the view of building a nine hole golf course.'

Further discouraging advice from the Department of Transport – a business hours bus service could not be provided, but a service to suit picture parties for Wednesday and Saturday matinees would be considered and a lunch hour bus on Saturdays. However, the unsealed section of Ronald Avenue would have to be completed.

It was announced at the meeting of 9<sup>th</sup> August 1946 that at last work was about start on sealing the remaining section of Ronald Avenue – it took until November for this to be completed.

After two years of active agitation no bus service had yet been provided, but with the imminent sealing of the road discussions commenced with the Osborne Park Progress Association as to where the service should start (Ronald Avenue or Osborne Park), variations in the proposed route and the time of departure in the morning.



Finally at the meeting of 8<sup>th</sup> November 1946 Lane Cove Council announced that Ronald Avenue was suitable for the extension of the 263 bus service from Crows Nest to Wollstonecraft and then on to Lane Cove.

After all this communication and negotiation, the Department of Transport advised in December 1945 that an extension of bus route 266 was being considered instead, and this is what eventuated. After some protracted negotiations with the Department about routes and times including the provision of a 'picture bus' on Friday nights and the need to connect with the tram from Lane Cove to Wynyard the service commenced in mid 1947.

At this point the Association, having achieved its objective of a bus service seems to have gone into recess for a time, only to be revived in March 1950 with the news that the Christian Science Hillcrest School in Kingslangley Road was to close, with the land to be sold for a residential subdivision.

Led by Mrs Henningham, representations were commenced with the Department of Education to purchase the school and establish '*Greenwich Heights Public School*' – these representations continued for a further three years.

With the Association reactivated, further meetings were held concerning the 266 bus service relating to routes, timetables, bus stops and fares – Mr Clarke, Superintendent of Trams and Omnibuses attended the 7<sup>th</sup> May meeting (can you imagine that happening today!) where it was requested that the 266 bus proceed on to Wynyard over the bridge or at least as far as North Sydney Station.

In June 1951 a subcommittee was formed chaired by Mr Henningham to promote the erection of a Lane Cove Civic Centre and determine '*how it would best meet the needs of the ratepayers.*'

Among other matters dealt with by the Association at this time was a soot problems from the nearby brickworks at Artarmon and a proposal to establish a garbage dump at Gore Hill, resulting in protests to the Health Department.

Just when the bus service appeared to be going well it was announced by the Department of Transport that all non peak (shopping) buses on the 266 service were to be discontinued immediately.

This staggering news prompted a Special Meeting of the combined Greenwich and Osborne Park Progress Associations on 17<sup>th</sup> October 1952. The minutes of the meeting are interesting and are as follows.

*Notes of special meeting of combined Osborne Park & Greenwich Progress Associations at 8 Balfour Street, Greenwich on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> October 1952 at 10 a.m.*

*Chairman – Mr N James President of the Osborne Park Progress Association.*

*Press representative: Miss Val Marshall of 'The Sun'.*

*The chairman briefly outlined to the 91 people present the elimination of all shopping buses without any official notification or even the placing of notices in the bus. We were left to rely on a short paragraph in the newspapers. Also that Mr McCaw our local member could not attend a meeting at such short notice (& also Parliament was sitting) but that he would support the protest. The Transport Department had been notified and asked to send a representative to the meeting adding 'but they have passed the buck, no-one is prepared to come from the Department this morning to let us know why the cuts are being made. No*

reasons have been given & they cannot send any-one to tell us'. Mr James explained to the new comers to the district the long fight to get the bus & in view of all the representations made to the department about steep hills, long distances from the shopping centres etc it appeared that the official attitude was 'knock the housewives, they don't matter'. He then called for constructive suggestions and no recriminations.

Mrs Henningham told the meeting of two conversations over the telephone with Mr Clarke of the Transport Dept. the first assuring her that the newspaper report was a mistake & the next day that the report had been correct. She had suggested to him the running of alternate trips of bus 267 to Osborne Park (see final recommendation of the meeting) Also she had asked Mr Shoebridge's private secretary to arrange for a representative to be at the meeting but at 9.45 was informed by him that no-one was coming. The Mayor had telephoned to say that Alderman Shaw had endeavoured to obtain some concession from the Department but the only suggestion was valueless as it would have allowed about four minutes shopping time.

Mrs Willis explained that we now have no taxis from St Leonards only hire cars which would be too expensive for daily shopping & for people attending the two public hospitals served by the bus.

General discussion followed and many suggestions all with the object of having one morning and one afternoon shopping bus.

Mr White outlined a comprehensive plan which would retain Route 266 time table in its entirety or better still an hourly service from 5 minutes past nine. This could be done by combining route 267 and route 266. This would cut out the non paying Kameruka Road Northbridge sections and require no additional buses & no additional staff. He also said we should ask for a combined bus and train ticket to town. These suggestions were well received by the meeting.

Signed Mr Henningham, President

It would appear that *The Sun* reporter accompanied the delegation to Mr Shoebridge's office, as in that evening's paper it is reported:

### **WOMEN WIN REPRIEVE FOR SHOP BUSES**

23 women stormed the offices of Transport Commissioner Shoebridge today and got a 'stay' of execution of three shopping buses to be taken off the run.

The women, members of Osborne Park and Greenwich Heights Progress Associations, protested against proposed cancellation from Monday of five shopping buses from 9.50 am to 2.32 pm.

They claimed the nearest shops were more than a mile and a half away and the steep hills made walking impossible for aged and those with children.

After seeing Mr Shoebridge the women's leader Mrs W A Henningham said:

'We fought 10 years to get these buses, and we are not going to see them taken away from us now. Three will be kept on next week.'

*The Telegraph* joined the action and the columnist of 'A CHIP ON MY SHOULDER' column of October 27, 1952 says:-

*Just what goes on in the upper strata of the State's transport organisation – anything?*

*Last week I told of a party of housewives who went to Transport Commissioner Shoebridge with plans to integrate two bus services – the 266 (Crows Nest-Osborne Park) and 267 (McMahon's Point-Chatswood) – to save money and provide a service for local residents.*

*Mr Shoebridge said his officials would look into the plan – and I asked why they hadn't done so before they decided to make panic-stricken cuts in the 266 service between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.*

*Now I think I know that the Department had this plan put before it as long ago as last April – and did nothing about it, except to put off with specious excuses the proposers of the plan (two local residents, who could see bankruptcy looming for the Department long before the Department's highly paid experts apparently).*

*These two local residents put no half-baked plan before the Department. They even went to the extent of preparing a complete timetable of the integrated service they proposed, giving the idea in detail.*

*They got support from local progress associations, even from the local branch of the bus union, put it all before the Department – which did nothing.  
And just 10 days ago Mr Shoebridge said his officers would investigate the plan. In whose pigeonhole, Mr Shoebridge, are the details of the plan worked out six months ago?*

A one-month trial of the new combined service then proceeded and despite early teething difficulties was permitted to continue.

A lesson for government bureaucrats – don't mess with Greenwich women!

## **Shell land swap**

One of the early achievements of the Association was the successful push, led by Ken Oram and Ted Pain, to have Lane Cove Council agree to a Land Swap with Shell whereby Council gave the unmade 'paper road' at the east end of George Street to Shell (the section past Victoria Avenue that went down to the water line in Gore Bay) thus consolidating two Shell owned properties. Shell gave the Council the southern end of the land it owned. This enabled Council to expand the size of Manns Point Reserve.

## **Greenwich Community Centre**

While battling the bureaucracy about buses, ideas about a Community Centre for Greenwich were discussed – a site in the grounds of 'Loyola' on the corner of River Road and Greenwich Road was suggested and in July 1945 Miss Rosetta Edmonds of the Post War Reorganisation Department gave 'a lengthy and most interesting address on Community Centres' and it was agreed that such a centre should consist of a Preschool and playground with a library and Home Craft and Baby Health Centre was also considered. The needs of adolescents were also to be catered for in a new centre. These were all eventually to come to pass, although the Baby Health Centre was located at St Leonards.

The question of a Greenwich Community Centre was further pursued at a public meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> October 1945 chaired by the Local Member Mr Woodward and it was decided to create the Greenwich Memorial Community Centre Association. This Association would approach the Rev. Father Clarke as to the possibility of leasing part of the grounds of Loyola for a community centre.

The GMCCA continued to operate as a separate entity and in 1957, ten years later, the Greenwich Memorial Community Hall was officially opened on three blocks of land purchased by Lane Cove Council.

## **Hillcrest School**

In 1953 it was time for the Association to switch its attention back to Hillcrest School as it had been three years since discussions about purchasing the school for a Kindergarten and Primary School commenced with the Education Department after the land had been slated for a new housing development.

At a Special Meeting of the Association on 12<sup>th</sup> March 1953 it was decided to allocate pairs of women to streets in the area to carry out a census of children who would benefit from the new

school, and twelve days later at a General Meeting the Local Member Mr McCaw was given the result to take to the Director of Education. There were 457 children – 184 under 5, 182 between 5 and 8 and 91 between 9 and 12.

The representations were successful, with the State Member for Education (Bob Heffron) negotiating and completing the State Government purchase of the site within one month for a kindergarten and primary school to be known as Greenwich Heights Public School. A celebratory meeting and social evening at the Henningham home was attended by 65 local residents, the Local Member, Ken McCaw, Mrs McCaw, and the Mayoress representing the Mayor.

Jessie Henningham had been very active in pursuing the matter and Lane Cove Council subsequently honoured her by designating the park area adjoining the school site as “Henningham Playground”.

Subsequently the school was made the primary campus of Greenwich Public School. The school in Greenwich Road would continue on as the infant campus. When in later years the two sites were threatened by amalgamation, the Association was again active in the preservation of both sites.

The Association now became dormant until reactivated in August 1965 – the energy of the community being directed to fundraising and building the Greenwich Memorial Community Hall on land acquired by Council for this purpose. A loan was obtained from Lane Cove Council to complete the building that was opened on 7<sup>th</sup> November 1957.

However, the GMCCA was unable to pay back the loan to Council and the Council subsequently acquired ownership of the building, which continued to be managed by the GMCCA.

An extension opened in 1962 enabling the hall to be licensed as a Public Hall for social and cultural events and meetings.

The Greenwich Branch of Lane Cove Library (subsequently renamed the Marjorie Propsting Memorial Library in recognition of Alderman Propsting’s significant contribution to the community) opened in 1964. Alderman Propsting served as Mayor in 1964 and 1965 and was the first female Mayor on the North Shore and was the Foundation President of the National Local Government Women’s Association.

A comprehensive history of the Greenwich Memorial Community Centre 1957 – 1997 is available from the Local Studies Centre, Lane Cove Library.

# 1965 TO 1977

## **A new beginning**

The minutes of the meeting of 5<sup>th</sup> August 1965 record 'In July 1965 a circular letter was sent to all Greenwich ratepayers by Alderman R J Brickhill inviting residents interested in establishing a Greenwich Progress Association to attend a meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> August.'

The meeting took place in Greenwich Community Centre Hall on 5<sup>th</sup> August with 46 people attending.

The chair was provisionally taken by Ald. Brickhill who stated that in the past it has often appeared that individual ratepayers have no means to exercise control on measures taken by Council – a collective action by a body of ratepayers should be much more effective.

Ald. Brickhill was subsequently elected as President and Mr A W Aitchison elected as Vice President of the new Greenwich and District Progress Association. Alderman Russell Brickhill, the brother of the author Paul Brickhill, had set his sights on a wider audience than just Greenwich and later in the year retired as President citing a potential conflict of interest, having established a body that could influence Council actions and decisions.

The Mayor (Alderman Propsting) was unable to attend the initial meeting of the revitalised Association as she was in hospital. The major item on the agenda was a plan to establish a factory on the corner of Greenwich Road and the Pacific Highway which the meeting did not consider appropriate – this never eventuated however as the plan was subsequently withdrawn

The focus of the Greenwich and District Progress Association, now centred on the new Community Centre, switched from Greenwich Heights to the Greenwich Peninsula where it has subsequently remained. A new constitution was adopted – again modelled on the constitution of the Osborne Park Progress Association. It was to be a very active period and East Ward Aldermen and sometimes the Mayor and Council Officers made a point of attending Association meetings.

## **Street Representatives**

One of the first actions of the Executive Committee was to appoint 'Street Reps' who would distribute notices of meetings and later newsletters and who would also be an interface between residents and the Association – they also performed a vital role in fundraising for the fight against a second harbour bridge going through the middle of Greenwich in the 70s.

## **Service Stations on Greenwich Road**

This is hard to visualise today, but Service Stations on Greenwich Road were mooted in the late 1960s. Two Service Stations were proposed, the most likely being opposite Greenwich School, where there was a newsagency, and the other was at the intersection of Chisholm Street. The minutes of August 1965 record that the proposal '*most likely will not be welcomed by most of the residents and that Council is to be informed that the establishment of a service station should not be approved without consultation with the Association.*' Several applications were made by the

proponent who also (unsuccessfully) attempted to convince members at an Association meeting of the benefits of such a service station and the Association eventually convinced Council to reject the application in May 1966 (and also one at Blaxland Corner which eventually was approved at a later date).

There was yet another application for a Service Station on Greenwich Road in May 1970 but this was also rejected and even as late as 1973 Esso was proposing a Service Station at the newsagency site opposite the Infant School.

## **Senior Citizens Centre**

The need for a Senior Citizens Centre on the Community Centre site was first raised in September 1965 and representations were made to Council on a number of subsequent occasions as to the need for such a facility, but this had to wait 10 years and the Whitlam Government funding to become a reality in 1975. The Seniors Citizens Club came into existence in 1973 and met in the Greenwich Presbyterian Hall pending the construction of the Senior Citizens Hall.

## **The Bond site**

The cessation of the usage of the wharf below O'Connell Street as a Bond Store for copra by Burns Philp provided an opportunity for a development at the site advantageous to Greenwich residents, and also led to the first recorded dispute within the Association.

Recognising the need to *'move quickly otherwise industry or speculators might take possession'* and possible undesirable developments such as home units, a factory or even relocation of the submarine base that was causing complaints by neighbours in Neutral Bay, the Executive Committee in October 1965 asked Messrs Dalton and Pain to report on a possible development on the site and Council was requested to hear a deputation from the Association on the matter.

Various proposals were discussed, mainly centred around provision of boat sheds, a launching ramp, an access road, parking facilities and even a ferry wharf.

The availability of the Bond site was opportune as the Greenwich Sailing Club's original site, a short distance up the Lane Cove River from the Greenwich Ferry Wharf, was too small, with inadequate toilet facilities and had no road access. Applications by the Club to put an access road through the adjacent reserve were vigorously opposed by local residents.

The Bond site was the obvious place to relocate the Greenwich Sailing Club, with plenty of space to expand – all that was needed was an access road from O'Connell Street and this became the source of dispute as residents of O'Connell Street opposed such a move due to increased traffic along their street.

Discussions with the Greenwich Sailing Club and members of the Executive Committee were arranged and after one last attempt to extend the existing Club house the Club eventually moved to its current location.

At the meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> November 1965 the majority of residents present defeated a motion that the Association support the proposal by Council to build an access road and install boat lockers on

the site. However, the vote was deemed invalid as *'most of those against are residents from the Point who have not been members of the Association for two days as required by the Constitution. They are not entitled to vote and the President requests them to move away for a moment so that only members are left in the middle of the hall. Voting is repeated and now 21 are in favour and 6 against'*.

Work eventually started on the access road in July 1966 and in September 1967 the Maritime Services Board approved the building of a sailing club and boat lockers on the site.

## **Parking problems in St Leonards and Greenwich**

Parking issues in the narrow streets leading to the Pacific Highway emerged in the mid 60s with students attending the Technical College over the Pacific Highway at Gore Hill parking along the roads, impeding traffic flow and preventing residents parking outside their homes.

At that time there was vacant land at the College that could be used for student parking, and the Association convinced Lane Cove Council to write to Willoughby Council asking for student parking to be provided on the grounds of the College.

Willoughby Council did not accede to this request and the situation has grown worse over time with the expansion of the College as North Sydney TAFE and the building of the adjacent Gore Hill development at 219 Pacific Highway – both of which provide insufficient parking for students and employees – resulting in extreme parking problems for affected residents and the implementation of street parking schemes by Lane Cove Council in an attempt to mitigate the situation.

Similar problems later emerged in Greenwich due to commuter parking in St Giles Avenue (and later in Glenview Street and Greendale Street) by workers parking and crossing the footbridge to Wollstonecraft Station and in May 1970 the Association requested Council to impose parking restrictions in the street.

Parking restrictions in St Giles Avenue were subsequently implemented in 1973 and later extended to Greendale Street and Glenview Street as the problem spread.

## **Spot rezoning**

Proposed developments of a motel and prestige office building on the corner of Greenwich Road and the Pacific Highway raised the issue of spot rezoning that was executed by Council to permit such developments without any notification or discussion with residents.

From the minutes of 10<sup>th</sup> February 1966 'Mr Pain suggested that at least Council creates some machinery to inform residents of impending plans. They should be published in the local papers and the various Progress Associations should be notified' and Colonel Oram added 'There should be no secrecy between Council and ratepayers.'

The Association resolved to write to the State Planning Authority (SPA) to have the prior zoning reinstated and a subcommittee was appointed to inspect plans and discuss the two proposed developments with Council's General Purpose Committee.

The development application for the motel was rejected by Council because there was parking provided for only 60% of visitors' cars, but was subsequently approved when the proponent increased the parking to 90% of visitors' cars.

The Mayor, Ald. Friedlander, attended the Association's 14<sup>th</sup> April 1966 meeting to discuss the decision on the motel and to announce that a General Zoning Plan for Lane Cove would be exhibited in four to five months – he also commented *'I think developers are too greedy and the residents too conservative'* – a thought I imagine echoed by many Mayors before and since.

At the following meeting Mr Chivers from the State Planning Authority attended to explain that the County of Cumberland Planning Scheme will be replaced by local Council schemes that will be reviewed by the SPA and put on public exhibition and the SPA will consider all submissions prior to finalising the plan for the Minister to make a final decision. This will result in greater certainty for residents as to the status of their land.

He also mentioned that the SPA would be encouraging urban consolidation to make better use of infrastructure and public transport – so this ideal has been in vogue with planners since 1966.

### **Council's dire financial position**

At the June 1966 meeting attended by the Town Clerk, Mayor and Council Engineer several issues were discussed. However, the main issue was Council's dire financial position, with the Town Clerk reporting that rates were insufficient to meet Council expenses.

Various means of increasing revenue such as a 'Head Tax' where the rates payable would depend on the number of people living in a dwelling were discussed, together with measures to reduce expenses.

To cover the shortfall in income, rates had to be increased by a whopping 25%, with further rate increases flagged.

At the July 1966 meeting it was revealed that Council had \$1,168,000 in loan debts, of which \$830,000 was borrowed in the prior five years, and the interest on these loans (\$112,400) represents 15% of Council's income. Council had only repaid \$18,000 of the loan amount in the past four years – clearly an unsustainable position. Council had \$250,000 in fixed commitments, representing 34% of income and also had to pay various statutory authorities such as the Fire Commissioner \$136,000 p.a.

It was also revealed that Council had received \$500,000 from the sale of land in Mars Road and this was used to construct the Olympic Pool, new Council Chambers and the Sanitary Depot.

As a consequence of the parlous state of Council's finances and the inability of Council to properly manage its financial affairs the Association decided to call a public meeting in the Town Hall to which all Lane Cove residents were to be invited to protest against Council's current financial policies and to demand that urgent remedies be instituted.

The public meeting was scheduled for September 1966, and 5000 handbills were printed for distribution throughout the municipality to advertise the meeting. The local press were requested to advertise the meeting and asked to attend and invitations were sent to all the Aldermen.



Over 310 Lane Cove residents attended the meeting from all three wards and the following motion was proposed by the Association:

'That Council as the ratepayers' elected representatives be urged:

1. To adopt a future policy of negotiating no further loans for public works of a routine nature
2. That non essential but desirable additions to the municipality be placed on a work priority schedule and be carried out in a strict order of priority when funds are available
3. That Council spending be carefully controlled and every effort made to reduce the balance of outstanding loan monies'.

Twenty residents spoke to the issue and the motion was carried unanimously.

Subsequent to the public meeting representatives of the Association were invited to discuss the resolution with Council at the 26<sup>th</sup> September 1966 Council meeting in front of a packed public gallery.

The Mayor, Alderman Friedlander, attended the following Association General Meeting and announced that a public address system was to be installed in the Council chambers as a consequence of the increased number of residents now attending Council meetings, where previously residents were apathetic and rarely attended Council meetings.

Council deferred expenditure on many proposed works such as an additional heated pool at Lane Cove Swimming Pool, floodlights at Gore Creek Oval, beautification of the Bond site and by November 1968 ended the year with only a small deficit.

As a result of the initiative of the Association Lane Cove residents were far more involved in Council affairs and were intent on holding Aldermen to account.

## **Environmental concerns**

1966 saw the start of environment consciousness amongst residents and the management and upkeep of Council reserves, parks, bushland and verges was frequently discussed by the Association. Representations were made to Council by the Association which led eventually to a greater recognition by Council of the change in resident attitudes and the formation of the Bushland Sub-committee in 1969 – the precursor to Council's Bushland Management Advisory Committee.

In 1969, dumping of building material from adjoining building sites into the bushland reserve at the end of Wallace Street led to the formation of the 'Bushland Group'. The group was formed by Bill Ashton and Jill Pain. Supported by Jack Hartman, the then Council Engineer, it was invited to investigate methods of managing bushland in Lane Cove. Bill Ashton was the son of Nigel Ashton, a long time Greenwich resident, Head of Planning in the NSW Government and a very active supporter of the Bushland Group. His support gave further clout to the group. At this time bushland management was a little known science. However, research through the National Trust

brought to light the 'Bradley Method' and this was adopted by the group and strongly endorsed by the Association.

The Association received regular reports from 'The Bushland Group' and in June 1969 Mrs Pain reported that 160 native plants had been planted on the foreshore reserve between the old sailing club and Shell Park. The Association was a significant supporter of this emerging group.

Smells and noise emanating from the Shell Oil Terminal and the North Sydney Gas Works were also of concern and resulted over time in the formation of three Association Subcommittees responding to particular issues associated with the terminal. The Shell Subcommittee continues the work to this day.

## **Traffic**

By 1967 the level of traffic along River Road and Greenwich Road had increased to such an extent that the Association spent a considerable time addressing resulting issues. The main concerns were the need for a pedestrian bridge over River Road adjacent to the school and traffic lights at the intersection of River Road and Greenwich Road and the Pacific Highway and Greenwich Road.

The pedestrian bridge across River Road never eventuated despite numerous requests and much later pedestrian lights were installed with a signalised entry to Greenwich Hospital associated with a new development at the hospital.

Traffic lights at the notoriously dangerous River Road/Greenwich Road intersection were installed in February 1968, but did not then include pedestrian lights. The lights at Pacific Highway/Greenwich Road had to wait for a later date.

Long-term parking outside the Greenwich shops was a concern that finally led to restricted parking zones, and double parking outside the school and shops was (and still is) an issue.

## **Development Application notifications**

After a number of controversial Development Applications came to the attention of residents during 1967, such as a motel development on the corner of Bellevue Avenue and Pacific Highway, a major extension to Sunshine Homes (a home for the handicapped – now Waterbrook Retirement Resort), conversion of the WWII Komlos Hostel in Greenwich Road to a convalescent home (now Glenwood Nursing Home) and the purchase of a house in George Street as a hostel for patients from North Ryde Psychiatric Hospital, the Association pressed Council to notify adjacent properties of applications for external modifications so that they could make a submission regarding the application if they so wished.

Limited success was achieved as the Association was told that Council was not in favour of advising the neighbours of building applications in all cases. The limited advice by Council of Development Applications was still an issue raised in November 1969.

The George Street hostel was subsequently refused and in July 1967 Alderman Aitchison pointed out that 'successes like this are the result of the existence of the Progress Association. Although

not all members of Council will admit its importance it is definitely a potent force influencing its policy.'

## **Lane Cove Plan**

In June 1968 the long awaited Lane Cove Plan was exhibited and submissions were received from Lane Cove Chamber of Commerce, Lane Cove West Industrial Group and all Progress Associations.

The Plan limited high density areas to along the Pacific Highway and sections of Greenwich Road. The new concept of town houses was considered as medium/high density development, and town houses were only permitted in high density areas.

A long-term plan to retain and acquire ownership of the foreshore by Council was incorporated in the Plan.

A request to rescind a four-year extension of regulations that permitted houses to be broken up into flats to alleviate the housing shortage was to be made to the Minister of Local Government.

The Minister was to also be approached as to the lack of architectural design in high density dwellings being constructed – an issue that was only finally addressed by the Carr Government in 2003.

The Association recorded general acceptance of the Plan with the State Planning Authority and it was formally approved in May 1972.

In April 1969 work commenced on a Greenwich Shopping Precinct opposite Greenwich Infant School – the two houses to the south of the shops are included in the precinct.

The 1972 Plan did not survive for very long and in 1975 a new Plan was to be developed and in April 1975 the Association resolved

1. It does not want any more land rezoned for home units and would like any area of home units and town houses to revert back to single dwellings
2. A submission that the Shell land should be reserved (pending the outcome of an environmental study commissioned by the Association on receipt of a State Government Grant of \$1000)
3. Council preserve for or secure to the public, the use of the areas of all shades of green for passive recreation
4. The Town Planner be asked to look at the green bits of open space and place them under Council control so they have legal cover and therefore the areas can be used by everyone
5. The State Planning Authority was to consider only large commercial developments and more power was to be given to local Councils.

The Association was advised that 'Local Councils will prepare and adopt local plans and be responsible for development control of the local environment and informing and involving the

public. Local Councils will make local decisions and carry out local planning processes within regional or sub regional guidelines and plans.'

In November 1976 the Association wrote to Council supporting the proposed variations to the Planning Scheme.

### **Greenwich Ferry Wharf**

The access ramp at the old Greenwich Ferry Wharf at the tip of Greenwich Point was a recurring issue and featured in most Association meetings from 1967. The ramp was designed to allow passengers to transit between the wharf and ferry at various tides but was slippery and dangerous.

Eventually after many representations from the Association, Council replaced the ramp with a series of steps as an interim measure in April 1968. This improved the situation, but the steps became slippery and by May 1980 the relocation of the wharf to the current site – which was not affected by the strong currents at the extremity of Greenwich Point – was being proposed by Lane Cove Council and supported by the Association and *'if approved by Treasury could be finished by Christmas.'* However in April 1981 it was reported that delays in completing the new wharf were not in fact due to foundation problems but to a strike by boilermakers.

### **Parking problems at Greenwich Point**

Parking problems at Greenwich Point started to emerge by the end of 1969 associated with workers at Cockatoo Island – representations to Vickers resulted in management attempts to *'impose their own discipline on workers re parking at Greenwich Point to avoid sanctions by Council.'*

Presumably the workers never heeded management advice as a plan for proposed parking restrictions was tabled at the May 1970 meeting.

Objections to the plan were voiced by some residents, leading to the formation of the Greenwich Point Parking Restrictions Subcommittee to investigate the matter further and to meet with Council's General Purposes Committee to discuss the plan, and it was shelved.

Proponents of parking restrictions at Greenwich Point however continued to press their case with Council and the Police Traffic Department and eventually restricted parking was introduced to streets adjacent to the ferry wharf.

The Cockatoo Island workers were also notorious for the car race up Greenwich Road in the afternoon when the workers' ferry docked at Greenwich Wharf.

### **Leeman Reserve and Greenwich Tennis Courts**

In February 1971 Council commended the Association on its *'increased and active interest in open spaces available for public recreation'* and in particular preserving the natural bushland between Shell Park and Greenwich Point.

Council also intimated that it would be developing the Education Department land between Wallace Street and Robert Street and agreed to build a tennis court on the south west corner of the site.

The Association resolved to request Council to give serious consideration to the development of the site as a children's playground and that the existing trees (especially the fig tree) be preserved in any landscaping being undertaken.

Landscaping work commenced in May 1972, but other facilities such as a barbecue and practice wall were deferred.

However, the future of the land was uncertain as it was only in December 1982 that the Education Department decided it was surplus to requirements and *'the Government Real Estate Branch of the NSW Housing Commission was asked to dispose of the site once it is confirmed that no other Govt Dept or Instrumentality entertains an interest in the land.'* Council advised the Association that the land would not be disposed of without prior consultation with the Association. The Greenwich Tennis Club asked the Association to request that the land be transferred to Council.

In February 1983 Mr Dowd advised he had received a letter from the Department of Education stating that the site of the tennis courts in Wallace Street was to be sold. Letters were written to Council, the Minister of Education, local member Mr Dowd and the State Government Real Estate Office opposing the sale. A wide ranging petition organised by four local residents, Jean Nugent, Meg Firth, Judy Bell and Jill Pain to maintain the area for tennis courts and local recreation was organised.

In March 1983 Council advised that the land would not be disposed of without prior consent of Council.

Council eventually acquired the site and the future of the tennis club and play area was assured.

## **Building boom**

The early 1970s saw a mini building boom in Greenwich with a large motel on the corner of Bellevue Avenue and Pacific Highway, major extensions to Greenwich Hospital, a private Psychiatric Hospital at 2 Greenwich Road, a large block of units at 171/175 Greenwich Road (Landenburg Place), town houses in Bellevue Avenue, home units on the corner of Greenwich Road and Bellevue Avenue and the 14-storey Johnson and Johnson building on the corner of the Pacific Highway and Greenwich Road.

There was considerable controversy over some of these developments and each was discussed at length at Association meetings. It was noted that residents were generally more accepting of changes, with appropriate developments happening especially along the Pacific Highway and Greenwich Road north of River Road.

## **Shell Terminal moving?**

A frequent concern amongst residents was the prospect of Shell selling its now very valuable site at Gore Bay to developers for the construction of a very large complex of home units. These

concerns were generally based on rumour and would subsequently be denied by Shell with the message that it had no intention of vacating the site.

The first rumour mentioned in the minutes was at the 11<sup>th</sup> October 1973 meeting where Council Engineer and Planner Jack Hartman was asked whether it was true that Shell had sold the land to Home Units Ltd. Mr Hartman had no knowledge of such a sale or even discussions concerning a potential sale. He said that if a developer was to acquire the site it would have to apply to Council to have the land rezoned, and if Council did decide to rezone the land then this would need to be approved by the State Planning Authority.

Shell advised the Association that 'they have no plan to vacate their Gore Bay property and will be pleased to cooperate with the Association's desire to create more parkland reserves.'

In 1975 Shell announced that a pipeline was to be built between Gore Bay and the Clyde refinery to transfer crude oil and other petroleum products, reinforcing their often stated position of remaining at Gore Bay. Prior to the pipeline, crude oil and other petroleum products were transported up the Parramatta River from storage tanks at Gore Bay to storage tanks at Clyde by lighters pushed by a series of small tugs (all given a name starting with 'W').

Subsequently the pipeline was modified to permit two-way operations.

Even as late as December 1997 rumours appeared, attributed to real estate agents, that Shell was going to move, even though Shell had just completed a \$16m upgrade of safety and operating facilities.

The announcement by Shell that they were going to close the Clyde Refinery and import refined products rather than crude oil in through the Gore Bay Terminal in 2001 initiated another scare that the terminal would be sold to a developer for a massive apartment complex similar to Wondakiah, built at Waverton on the site of the old AGL gasworks.

The refinery eventually did close, but not until 2012. At the time of writing there was no plan to close the Gore Bay Terminal.

### **Compulsory Council voting**

In 1975 compulsory voting at Council elections was proposed by the NSW Government.

There was 'much discussion on this, especially the effect that party politics might have on Local Government. The Association resolved to write to the Premier, the Minister for Local Government and to Council saying that it does not support compulsory voting in local elections.'

This was a very perceptive comment, as party politics have subsequently played a major part in Lane Cove Council elections.

### **Rubbish tip full**

In August 1974 Council announced the closure of the rubbish tip except for ratepayer delivered rubbish on weekends, and that in future Council collected rubbish would go to the Artarmon Transfer Station or Warringah or Ryde tips.

The tip was eventually totally filled and then sealed to be converted into the Blackman Park playing fields.

To reduce tipping charges and as an environmentally sustainable initiative, Council flagged the future provision of recycling bins – a move that was thoroughly endorsed by the Association.

## **Fire at Shell Terminal**

On 29<sup>th</sup> June 1976 there was a fire about 12.20 a.m. on the deck of the Shell owned and operated tanker *MT Cellana* berthed at Wharf 2 Gore Bay (the inner berth – tankers normally are berthed at the outer Wharf 1). The fire was caused by two cargo valves that should have been closed being open, allowing flammable overflow from a slop tank to spill onto the deck of the vessel. The overflow was promptly stopped by the Second Officer, however five minutes later *'a flash of flame travelled from the oil fired boilers on the shore across the intervening water to the stern of the "Cellana" and almost immediately the port side accommodation superstructure and deck of the ship were engulfed in flames.'*

The fire was extinguished with the help of the fire brigade at about 2 a.m. – two seamen were afterwards found dead in the accommodation superstructure.

The Report of the Court of Marine Enquiry into the incident (CMI Report No. 160) dated 15<sup>th</sup> April 1977 can be found in the Lane Cove Local Studies Library.

The next meeting of the Association was held at Manns Point on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> July 1976. It was attended by Mr John Dowd, MLA for Lane Cove, Mr John Howard, MHR for Bennelong, Ald. W Fleming, Mayor of Lane Cove, Ald. Bill Henningham, Mr Cotterell, Manager of Shell Gore Bay Terminal and approximately 200 residents.

The incident was discussed in some depth – Mr Cotterell outlined the firefighting capabilities of the terminal that are required by Government regulation and are inspected and tested at regular intervals for compliance. He also answered questions relating to the fire.

Mr Dowd then proposed:

- That the State Government conduct a full enquiry into the accident immediately and the findings of same be available to all, particularly with regard to safety
- That the State Government makes an immediate enquiry into the minimum requirements of safety – i.e. access, buffer zones, fire fighting facilities
- That either Shell or the State Government let us know when they plan to leave [sic]

Ald. Andrews closed the meeting and advised that Council had an enquiry under way with the help of the police and fire department to see how evacuation from the peninsula could be handled speedily and safely.

At the following Association meeting in November 1976 there was much discussion concerning the fire. The Maritime Services Enquiry was in progress and *'it is understood that a person had admitted that contrary to procedure he had opened a tap and there was a failure of the ship's warning system.'*

As a consequence of the accident Shell was required to build an access road for fire trucks from Manns Point and to improve the shielding on the boiler furnace.

The Association resolved to invite Mr Cotterell to future meetings of the Association and he was a frequent guest in the following years.

At the following meeting in March 1977 the Controller of State Emergency Services discussed the role of the SES in an emergency and stated that the police would be responsible for evacuating residents if that proved necessary.

There was one more meeting of the Association in August 1977 where Ald. David Andrews was elected President but the Association again went into recess and failed to meet again until March 1979.

During the prior 13 years there had been three attempts at amalgamation of Lower North Shore Councils – the Greater Sydney Scheme of 1946, the Barrett Commission in 1973, and another Commission in 1977. Aldermen started to get a small allowance. Attendances at meetings fluctuated but averaged about 30 people. Meetings were generally attended by East Ward Aldermen. There were about 250 residents who were members of the Association and the first mention of the ‘rat run’ along St Vincent Street, Sarner Road and Ronald Avenue was noted.

A portent of a calamitous threat to Greenwich was mentioned in 1974 at the August AGM. A local resident reported that he had managed to get a copy of the almost unobtainable Sydney Area Transportation Study which incorporated a road bridge over the Harbour from Greenwich Point to Long Nose Point, Birchgrove and commented the ‘idea is still nebulous’ – this did not unfortunately prove to be the case.



# 1979 TO 1984

The Association did not meet for two years, but at the AGM of March 1979 chaired by the retiring Chairman Ald. David Andrews, attended by the Mayor Bill Henningham and Local Member John Dowd MLA it was reported *'After strong expressions of opinion as to the necessity for a Progress Association, the motion that the Association be continued was put to the meeting and unanimously carried.'*

It is worth noting the regular attendance and active participation at Association meetings by East Ward Aldermen, the Mayor and Local Member in contrast to more recent times where it is rare to have more than one East Ward Councillor attending and never the Mayor or Local Member.

Philip Burgess was elected the new President with Vice Presidents John Gleeson, David Lake and Rosemary Varley and Secretary Margaret Mahony.

Amalgamation was on the table again and Bill Henningham explained the function of the Local Government Boundaries Commission. The Association resolved to write to Council and the Minister of Local Government opposing amalgamation.

The Association resolved to continue to oppose a new road from Greenwich Hospital to St Vincents Road after the hospital had appealed against its refusal by Lane Cove Council. The road was eventually built but is closed on weekends and evenings.

Other issues included an application to Council by Shell to provide staff parking off Gother Avenue. John Dowd reviewed some of the problems with the traffic lights at the intersection of Greenwich Road and River Road – in particular the absence of a right hand turn lane from River Road into Greenwich Road. (Maybe Mr Dowd used his influence here, as by the next meeting in May 1979 the Department of Main Roads had installed the required right hand turn lane.)

The Association changed its name back to the Greenwich Progress Association *'as it no longer represented an area other than Greenwich itself'*.

## **The rat runs**

By 1979 traffic problems had worsened in Lane Cove and at a 1979 meeting of the Association 100 residents were present to discuss traffic issues and potential solutions.

Council called for tenders for a traffic study covering the whole municipality. Two particular problems had emerged in Greenwich – motorists avoiding a congested River Road and Pacific Highway (this was prior to the Gore Hill Expressway) were using Sarner Road, St Vincents Road, Bellevue Avenue and Ronald Avenue, First Avenue, and Dorritt Street as rat runs. The Ronald Avenue rat run was even shown as a yellow secondary road in Gregory's Street Directory.

Council commissioned a study on how to resolve the Sarner Road, St Vincents Road, Bellevue Avenue rat run but the recommendations were opposed by a number of residents – *'it would geographically divide the community'* and a petition of 700 signatures was raised objecting to the proposed measures (which were eventually adopted).

The Lane Cove Municipal Traffic Study was completed in July 1980 and the Association resolved to write to Council asking 'could action be taken in East Ward without being held up by lengthy discussions re new access roads in West Lane Cove and that the parking situation in Bellevue Avenue was getting worse.'

In February 1982 the Association wrote to Council expressing support for the recommendations in the traffic study to limit traffic along the Dorritt/First/Ronald/Wisdom 'rat run' and the planned traffic management works at the St Vincents, Sarner and Wisdom Road intersections.

George Clark, Convenor of the Traffic Subcommittee, attended a meeting convened by Willoughby Council to press the Department of Main Roads to construct a '*limited access link between Epping Road and the Warringah Expressway*', which eventually materialised as the Gore Hill Freeway and relieved much of the congestion on the Pacific Highway through Greenwich. In May 1982 the Association was pushing to have the link constructed urgently so as to '*reduce the unacceptable level of traffic through suburban streets.*'

Some time elapsed before the traffic measures to combat the rat run through the Sarner/St Vincents /Wisdom Road intersection and the rat run along Ronald Avenue were announced and submitted to the DMR for approval. The proposal was considered inadequate and Council was urged to appoint an independent consultant to design traffic measures that would control through traffic. This eventuated in July 1983 with the distribution of a questionnaire for local residents leading to the formulation of a traffic management plan.

The traffic measures were eventually introduced in 1993 after much community consultation. These proved to be very successful and these rat runs ceased to exist.

### **The first Shell Subcommittee**

Issues with the Shell Terminal prompted the Association to form a Subcommittee chaired by Maralyn Lawson to focus on this.

Mr Cotterell the Shell Terminal Manager, whose name comes up frequently in the minutes, Inspector Allen from the Police Disaster Group and Superintendent Goudice of the Fire Department attended the July 1979 meeting to discuss noise from particular ships, smells (floating roofs had been installed on some tanks to prevent vaporisation), road tankers, a disaster plan and fire safety at the terminal.

Mr Cotterell advised that continuing improvements at the terminal had resulted from the interest expressed by the Association.

Maralyn Lawson advised that an inspection of the facility for 20 residents and representatives of the Maritime Services Board had been arranged and that issues of smells, noise, buffer zones, smoke, road tankers and a planned staff car park off Gother Avenue had been discussed.

Further meetings were held with the MSB and in November 1979 the Shell Subcommittee reported that dredging to permit larger oil tankers to berth was to occur, acetone was no longer imported into Gore Bay, the oil companies with facilities around the harbour wished to move tankers at night (never permitted), a boom around a ship unloading at Gore Bay was felt unnecessary as

they do not work with currents greater than two knots, skimmers and dispersant would be a better option to deal with an oil spill (proved wrong subsequently), and a 28-point checklist had to be completed before pumping from a tanker commenced.

In March 1980 the Subcommittee reported that the State Pollution Control Board had required Shell to make interim improvements to the venting of tanks and to provide plans for permanent improvements within three months, and that ships whose smoke caused excessive pollution may have to be stopped from using the terminal. In May 1980 Mr Cotterell reported that a landscape designer had been employed to create a visual buffer zone around the terminal and that tanks were to be painted to blend into the surroundings and noisy ships were to be replaced by quieter vessels.

In July 1980 the Subcommittee reported on minor oil spills in Gore Bay and problems with road tankers filling up at the road tanker loading facility at the north end of the terminal off Greenwich Road (now dismantled) at 1 am.

Noise continued to be an issue and in June 1981 it was reported that the State Pollution Control Board was unable to do anything about the noise from the pumps as the terminal is a non-scheduled premise under the *Noise Control Act 1975*. Noise from loudspeakers, generators and pumps on ships was also a problem and Mr Cotterell was invited to attend the next Association meeting.

The focus on Shell diminished after 1981 as the Association faced the looming spectre of a **Second Harbour Crossing** over the peninsula.

A questionnaire on smells was prepared by the Subcommittee in 1982 and the results given to Shell, the State Pollution Control Commission, the Maritime Services Board, and Lane Cove Council.

Opposition to the proposal by Council for a corrugated iron fence around the terminal was heeded and a green coloured see-through spandex fence was erected instead.

The Subcommittee remained in place until March 1982 when the Association formed three subcommittees to deal with specific problems – Second Harbour Crossing (convenor Tom Lawson), Traffic (convenor George Clark) and Shell (convenor Maralyn Lawson).

The next mention is in 1983 when Shell announced that major fire prevention measures at the terminal were being installed.

## **Local History Collection**

At the May 1980 meeting the Council's Chief Librarian Miss Fegan-Will described plans for a three-day '*Back to Greenwich Week*' consisting of historical displays to be held early August. Miss Fegan-Will also announced the establishment of a Local History Collection and the appointment of Judy Washington as the Local History Librarian.

This was to be a major event in the development of the library and was initially located in 'the dungeon' in the basement of the old library, but now has its own purpose-built facility in the new library.

Judy Washington's appointment turned out to be an inspired choice and the extensive well sorted and documented collection that exists today is very much a product of her hard work and enthusiasm. Judy retired in June 2002 and at the August 2002 Association meeting gave a talk on working for 22 years at Lane Cove Library. The Local History Collection started with two boxes of documents and one photo. The collection now boasts shelves of books and documents with a multitude of boxes held in the archive, all catalogued to speed up recovery, together with a number of oral histories.

This history would have not been possible without the existence of that collection and the extensive assistance of the current librarians, in particular Naomi Bassford, Manager, Local Studies and Archiving and Margaret Farlow, Local Studies Librarian.

## **The Second Harbour Crossing threat**

The first hint of a second harbour road bridge from Birchgrove across the Harbour to Greenwich was mentioned in the minutes of September 1980 (Simon Brook) and the Secretary was instructed to *'write to the Premiers Department seeking confirmation or denial of such a plan. Birchgrove and Wollstonecraft Progress Associations to be approached for a joint opposition to such a project.'*

The Premier Mr Wran did reply in February 1981 and stated that 'this is a possibility to be looked at'. In June 1981 Mr Wran advised the Association that a copy of the report on the feasibility of a second harbour crossing would be made available to Lane Cove Council and Mr Cavalier, MLA for Gladesville. In a letter to Council regarding the proposed second harbour bridge Mr Wran stated that *'Greenwich has long since lost any distinctive character and grace'*. The Association requested the Secretary to reply and express the *'strongest exception to his remarks.'*

The threat of a road bridge over Greenwich peninsula had become very real and at the November 1981 meeting of the Association in the Community Hall 200 residents from Greenwich, Wollstonecraft and Waverton attended and there was standing room only at the beginning of proceedings.

The President Peter Henschman chaired the meeting and representatives of Lane Cove Council, North Sydney Council, the Balmain Association, Waverton, Berry and Brennan Precinct Committees, Osborne Park and St Leonards North Wollstonecraft Progress Associations plus other groups attended.

There were apparently three proposals under consideration:

1. The more easterly bridge. An extension of the Warringah Expressway through Lane Cove, thence near St Leonards Station to Wollstonecraft, Waverton, Balls Head, by a bridge to Goat Island to Balmain, coming to ground in the centre of Balmain.
2. The alternative bridge. The route leaves Wollstonecraft on the other side of Gore Cove, through Greenwich, past the Shell terminal to Manns Point, by bridge to Long Nose Point, to Ballast Point and comes to ground at Balmain.
3. Tunnel. The route leaves Artarmon, and goes under the harbour to Rozelle.

As one can imagine, lengthy discussion followed as revealed in the four pages of minutes.

The following draft resolution circulated at the meeting was moved by local Greenwich resident, Professor Harding:

The motion was carried overwhelmingly and discussion continued for some time. A collection for a Fighting Fund was made and the meeting closed at 10.40 pm. *'This meeting, convened by the Greenwich and District Progress Association, attended by residents of Greenwich, St Leonards, Wollstonecraft, Waverton and the Leichhardt Municipality resolves to express their deep concern at the proposals in the press of plans for a tunnel or bridge in these areas.*

*'That the President and Secretariat of the Greenwich and District Progress Association convey to the Premier and the State Government and to the appropriate Representatives and Authorities the Resolution and the substance of this opposition as formulated in the document circulated at the meeting.*

*'Further it is resolved that the President and Secretariat of the Greenwich and District Progress Association prepare a press release conveying the substance of the Resolution and the objections put forward at the meeting to the media – and added from the floor.*

*'That the Greenwich and District Progress Association make an approach to the relevant Authorities to determine the information on which they are basing the need for a new harbour crossing.'*

The fight was on!

Following the public meeting the Association called a Special Committee Meeting in December 1981 to structure the opposition to the second harbour crossing proposals.

Topics covered were:

- Attitude of Shell Refining
- DMR to put plans on public display and whether DMR costing included land resumption
- Legal Action (proposed by the Balmain Group)
- Expanding arguments against
- Why the proposed locations
- Town Planners' review of proposals and suggestions of alternatives
- Collection of pertinent studies such as the Sydney Area Transport Study
- Simultaneous meetings on Greenwich and Balmain headlands
- Funding the Fighting Fund
- Letter writing to the Premier
- Petition
- Door knocking
- Media releases

In April 1982 a meeting of 100 residents representing the various discrete groups on both sides of the harbour opposed to the second harbour bridge had combined to form CBAG (Combined Bridge Action Group). Tom Lawson was appointed as the Association's representative.

The Balmain Bridge Action Group (BBAG) had held a press conference that was televised on a few Sydney TV channels and were also interviewed by long time Greenwich resident Carolyn Jones on 'City Extra'.

It was seen as essential to stop the proposed new bridge before the planning became entrenched in the bureaucracy. CBAG vowed to stop the bridge with submissions to DMR's Study Team and a Media Campaign to be run by Campaign Palace.

A \$50 per head (a considerable charge then) fundraising dinner at the Wentworth Hotel was planned and the venue booked for 1<sup>st</sup> July 1982. It raised \$14,000.

Fighting Fund funds were also to be raised by Association Street Representatives.

It was even proposed to have a voluntary levy on houses in Greenwich and Balmain that could raise \$100,000 – 500 houses in Greenwich and 500 houses in Balmain.

It was discovered that the toll was to be \$8 a return trip – considerably more than the 20c toll on the Sydney Harbour Bridge at the time.

At the Association meeting of June 1982 it was reported by Tom Lawson that there were regular monthly meetings with representatives of Waverton and Berry Precincts, North Sydney; North Wollstonecraft and St Leonards Progress Association; The Balmain Association; Balmain Bridge Action Group and White Bay Residents Group.

A simultaneous protest picnic was being organised for Manns Point, Ballast Point and Long Nose Point. The Wentworth Hotel fundraising dinner was proceeding. A protest song had been written by Glen Sturrock of the Little River Band. The Greenwich Progress Association was raising money for the Fighting Fund by organising a fun run, a sports day, bumper stickers and T-shirts and was getting residents to sign the petition. A joint protest meeting was organised by Lane Cove and North Sydney Councils at North Sydney Council.

By August 1982 CBAG had raised \$32,000, of which \$11,000 was from the Association.

The DMR study team had spent \$74,000 on the study so far and importantly had commissioned consultants to look at a tunnel option.

A concert by the Little River Band with Glen Sturrock was organised by the Balmain Bridge Action Group at the Opera House on 7<sup>th</sup> November 1982 to raise funds.

In December 1982 Tom Lawson reported to the Association that the Department of Environment and Planning has disassociated itself from the interim report published by the Second Harbour Crossing Study Team and the Association wrote to the relevant authorities urging that the DMR study be stopped and that the investigation take the form of a broader based Commission of Inquiry to investigate all aspects of the movement of people and traffic from one side of the harbour to the other.

By February 1983 (after two years) the fight had been won and donations of more than \$10 to the Association Fighting Fund could be reclaimed or donated to a Fighting Fund for the future or to Lane Cove Library. Most donations were not reclaimed and stayed in the Fighting Fund.

A tunnel was subsequently built, but on the east side of the Harbour Bridge.

## **Urban Consolidation**

The concept of Urban Consolidation – first mentioned in 1966 by a representative of the then State Planning Authority at an Association meeting – had not gone away and in the June 1982 meeting of the Association it was revealed that the Department of Planning and the Environment planned to achieve a 10% increase in Sydney's population density by 2000 by rezoning. David Lake, local resident and a heritage architect, and the Council's Town Planner, addressed the December 1982 meeting on the topic and the Association resolved to support Council's policy in this regard.

The 1982 Local Government Conference did not support the State's Urban Consolidation proposals.

Pressure to increase the degree of Urban Consolidation continued unabated by both political parties, and the 1996 Association Newsletter reported that Council had been requested to reconsider its draft housing strategy, particularly regarding the failure to incorporate higher densities.

A Council working committee including representatives of the Association had been established and Eric Armstrong the Town Planner was requested to attend the next Association meeting to describe what might be under consideration that could affect Greenwich.

## **Threatened closure of Greenwich Library**

In August 1982 Council advised that the cost of running Greenwich Library would be kept separate from Lane Cove Library – an ominous move that could lead to its closure.

Action was to be taken to promote usage by improved circulation of books and more paperbacks and an increase in the Junior Library collection. In March 1983 it was announced that 10% of new stock would be sent to Greenwich.

The Greenwich Library was achieving 10% of the overall business, of the overall library despite being open only one third of the hours.

In spite of these initiatives, a financial rather than social view of the library was gathering force and the Chief Librarian recommended it be closed.

Fortunately Council did not adopt these recommendations and Maralyn Lawson reported that at the Council meeting of April 1983 Council decided that the library would remain open, that a forward plan be developed to upgrade and promote the library over five years, and that it was to be linked to the Lane Cove Library computer.

Maralyn Lawson also stated that 'it is important that we continue to watch very closely to ensure that improvements are made.'

The Association constructed a survey of residents to determine attitudes and what they would like to see done. Three hundred responses were received and the consensus was that the library needed to be upgraded and there should be an emphasis on reading for leisure and pleasure.

In 1985 the library celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary intact.

## **Proposed sale of Infant School**

In 1983 the number of children attending Greenwich Public School was steadily falling and the Greenwich P&C wrote to the Association warning it that there was a proposal to merge the Infant and Primary schools on the Kings Langley site and sell the Infant School.

## **Other items**

The growing prevalence of robberies in Greenwich saw the establishment of a Neighbourhood Watch scheme followed by a Safe House scheme for school children. A Security Subcommittee of the Association was formed in October 1983 to introduce measures to improve the situation. Incidents in Smoothey Park led to representations being made to North Sydney Council resulting in the erection of lights along the footpaths from Wollstonecraft Station to the footbridge to Greenwich and to Russell Street, Wollstonecraft. Council amalgamation was yet again raised by the Boundaries Commission in March 1983 and again rejected by the Association. The private 99 bus service from Crows Nest to Greenwich Point was deteriorating, with unreliable service and removal of the Saturday morning service and services only between 10 am and 4 pm on weekdays.



# 1985 TO 1998

The minutes of the AGM of 27<sup>th</sup> February 1985 were the last held by the Lane Cove Local Studies Library and the next set of minutes so far recovered is dated 9<sup>th</sup> December 1998, leaving a 13-year gap in our history. Correspondence between the Association and Lane Cove Council, plus Association Newsletters filed with the Council papers have been used to bridge the gap.

## **Council communication issues**

Pre the Internet, communication between Council and the Association on Development Applications, Policy and Council plans and activities was problematic and the June 1986 Newsletter advertised that the following suggestions would be discussed.

- Formation of Precinct Committees in the style of those operating in North Sydney
- Neighbours directly affected by a Development Application to be notified
- Council papers for meetings be made available to community groups such as the Association
- Important planning matters such as the Local Environment Plan should be widely publicised and displayed and made available to community groups
- Council should appoint a Contact Officer to provide representatives of community groups with clear and accurate information.

Council replied in October 1986 saying that 'it was unable to comply (re business papers) due to financial and staff constraints – Council papers are available at Greenwich Library on the Friday afternoon preceding the following Monday Council meeting' – presumably Greenwich Library was open on a Friday at that time and the Association was asked to '*outline its views where Council is not meeting community expectations in respect to its determining Building and Development Applications.*'

Issues with notification of Development Applications continued and on 26<sup>th</sup> June 1988 the Association wrote to Council stating that the '*GPA seems no [longer] to be receiving "pink slips" or notices of Development Applications on a regular basis.*'

This turned out to be true as the Council replied on 18<sup>th</sup> July 1988 that Council policy is that the Town Planner will 'notify Local Progress Associations when significant Development Applications have been received which in the opinion of the Town Planner may have a significant effect on the amenity of the areas covered by the Progress Association: such advice to be in the form of an explanatory letter for the information of the Associations and inviting any comment that they may wish to make within the time allowed for comments by neighbours.'

The letter went on to say 'at this time no guidelines have been formulated as to what is a significant development. It is suggested however that a Development Application which is likely to have an effect over a wider area than the immediate neighbours or in which some town planning principle is involved is an appropriate way of determining what may fall within the ambit of a significant development.'

This was not a particularly satisfactory response, as no information was to be given on individual Development Applications.

### **Greenwich Baths under threat of closure**

Following an incident at the Greenwich Baths where a person diving from the diving board that existed at the time was seriously injured, the Council was facing a large compensation claim and a huge increase in its insurance premium. As a consequence Council was contemplating closing the Baths. The Association newsletter of 8<sup>th</sup> April 1987 reported that over 100 concerned Greenwich citizens filled the gallery of Lane Cove Council to hear the future of the Greenwich Baths discussed.

After the Council meeting the Newsletter states that:

- Council is investigating alternate insurance companies
- Council has written a letter to the Premier and others requesting legislation to limit liability
- The Association has written to endorse this request and also asked Mr John Dowd MP to join in pressing the matter
- Council hopes to select a design at its meeting on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> April 1987 for major construction work on the Baths. There are five alternate designs offered by construction engineers
- The Baths Subcommittee will make a recommendation as to the best plan.

A plan was eventually selected which resulted in major changes to the Baths including removal of the walkway around the perimeter and the associated diving board.

### **Drug Awareness Course**

The April Newsletter also advertised a 'Drug Awareness Course' for parents to be held over three sessions of two hours each in the Community Hall. The sessions were very well attended, signifying an increasing concern with the use of drugs by young people in the community and heralding significant concern with a growing problem.

### **Spot rezoning**

Spot rezoning, last considered as an issue in 1966, reappeared as a concern and the Newsletter of June 1989 announced recent changes to the Environment Planning and Assessment Act designed to facilitate spot rezoning in residential areas for medium density housing and stated that the whole of the next meeting apart from the Alderman's report would be devoted to this topic.

Bill Henningham, ex Mayor of Lane Cove Council and now the Secretary of the Local Government and Shires Association and the Chief Town Planner Eric Armstrong were to speak on the topic and a chart explaining the new process was included in the Newsletter.

The Newsletter observed that 'Local Government planning is not considered by the Land and Environment Court in determining the merits of a medium density Development Application.'

The Greenwich, St Leonards North Wollstonecraft and Osborne Park Progress Associations were to develop a 'Defence Kit' that would explain residents' rights in simple terms and the steps available to resist an inappropriate development *'that will affect you'*.

The system of Street Representatives that proved so effective in the second harbour crossing fight was to be reconstituted.

### **Night tanker movements**

An insert in the June 1989 Newsletter advised that 'the MSB at the request of Shell and without consultation with any residents or others who it may have an effect on recently issued guidelines to port pilots to allow the movement of some tanker ships in Sydney Harbour by night.'

To prepare for submissions objecting to night-time movements of tankers the Association appealed to residents who had specialist knowledge or knew someone with specialist knowledge in Safety, Maritime Practices, Pollution Control Legislation, Management of EIS Objectives, Noise Control, Insurance, Hazard Management, Fire Protection and EIS Legislation.

In the Newsletter of March 1992 it was reported that night-time movements of tankers had been approved by the MSB but not by harbour pilots.

Given the refusal of pilots to pilot tankers at night-time and the need to produce an EIS to support the proposal Shell gave up the idea and the issue eventually died.

The reported refusal of the Government to release a study by ICI of oil tanker movements on the harbour in the June 1994 Newsletter meant that the Association needed to continue to monitor the situation.

### **East Ward Traffic Management Scheme**

Lack of a community consensus on the proposed East Ward Traffic Management Scheme prepared by Council consultants led to excessive delays in implementation. At the AGM of March 1992 the Association again voted to support the proposals. The Council committee dealing with the issue recommended that the Ronald Avenue and Kings Langley project proceed and that street meetings be held for Wisdom Road and Bellevue Avenue.

### **Approval of non-compliant Development Applications**

Considerable concern was expressed at the number of non-compliant Development Applications that were being approved by Council despite a recommendation for rejection by Council's Town Planning Department. Statistics illustrating the problem were provided by Alderman Tudge at the March 1992 AGM, however East Ward Alderman Daly was not of the same opinion and considered it *'log jam clearing and the new broom'*. Alderman Daly was to later resign from Council after having his controversial unit development approved on the casting vote of the Mayor.

## **Lane Cove River pollution**

Pollution of the Lane Cove River had become a major environmental issue, resulting in the frequent closure of Greenwich Baths and closure of the river to all water contact recreational activity including boating, swimming and fishing.

At the April 1992 meeting Jill Pain gave a presentation on the role and objectives of the Lane Cove River Total Catchment Management Committee. It had been established in 1991 under the auspices of the Environmental Protection Authority.

The aim of the Committee was to manage the total catchment area of the Lane Cove River 'by utilisation of land, water and natural resources to ensure the highest quality of water in the river.'

Lane Cove River at the time was experiencing periods of severe pollution, causing closure of Greenwich Baths for several months in the summer of 1991. The major causes were:

- Sewage overflow at the junction of three trunk sewer mains off Blackman Park during heavy rains caused by stormwater from downpipes illegally entering the sewer pipes and doubling the normal flow and exceeding the capacity of the system to handle it.
- Garden fertiliser entering the river, also rotten vegetation associated with illegal dumping and dog excrement (estimated as 220 tonnes per day in Sydney).

At the request of the Association the Water Board provided detailed information about the sewage overflow problem at Blackman Park and advised that the Clean Waterways program would take 20 years to complete.

Fines for residents attaching downpipes to the sewer system and engineering works at the Blackman Park outfall were instigated. However, it did take some years for the problem to be resolved. During that period a daily reading of water quality at Greenwich Baths was conducted to determine whether the Baths should be closed.

## **New shelter at Greenwich Wharf**

John and Ena Hall led the push for a shelter on the new ferry wharf and in April 1992 the Newsletter announced that Council had voted \$30,000 for the demolition of the old shelter on the old wharf (which was still being used in inclement weather) and construction of a new shelter. John was to coordinate resident suggestions as to location and design and worked with Council to bring this much needed facility into being.

## **Development Application monitoring**

As an indication of residents' dissatisfaction with Development Application approvals the Association decided in April 1992 to monitor Development Applications and attend Council meetings. It arranged to receive copies of Council Papers and notifications sent to adjoining residents.

A year later a process had been set up whereby the nominated resident would pick up the agenda from Greenwich Library on the Friday before the Monday Council meeting together with a 'what

to do sheet' and complete a report after the meeting and return it and the agenda later in the week.

John Gebler, the new Association President noted in the April 1993 Newsletter that 'attending a Council meeting is an educational opportunity each member of the Association should undertake at least once a year.'

Mayor Jim Welsh is reported to have stated at an Association meeting that 'Council will be more tolerant of minor discrepancies from Council Codes and would facilitate arbitration of disputes between residents' raising the question of just what constituted a minor discrepancy'.

John's contribution to the community over the years in studying Development Applications and spotting anomalies often missed by Council's planners was immense and many inappropriate developments were stopped because of his efforts.

## **Community events**

During the early 1990s the Association was involved in numerous social events during the year and the Newsletter promoted a Trivia Night, Wine and Cheese Party, Halloween, Trash and Treasure, Greenwich Village Games, Garden Competition, Crazy Whist Night, Café de Greenwich, Greenwich Walk, and a Gem Club Exhibition, amongst others.

The Greenwich Village Games was conceived and founded by Tom Lawson based on his experience of the Highland Games in Scotland. It has been held regularly every fourth (Olympic) year since its inception in 1988. More onerous regulatory requirements required the Games to be the responsibility of a Subcommittee of Lane Cove Council in 2004 in order to gain cover under Council Insurance.

The Games were always held at Gore Creek Oval, with the Review Night initially held in the Mormon Church Hall and then at Ramsay Hall, Riverview College when that became too small, and more recently on an immense outside stage at Gore Creek Oval.

Community events gradually diminished over time due to the change in demographics and the permanent usage of the Community Hall by the Preschool during school terms.

The Greenwich Village Games continue to go from strength to strength.

## **Urban Consolidation**

Ten years after the last mention in this history Urban Consolidation was seriously back on the agenda and at the July 1992 meeting the Newsletter reports on a debate between Mr Sean O'Toole representing the State Planning Department and Mr Peter Woods representing the Local Government association and Concord Council.

The pros and cons were debated and Mr Woods made the points that:

- Local Government is not against Urban Consolidation
- Local Government however is being inadequately consulted
- Local Government wants control of where medium density growth occurs

- Local Government is more in touch with residents
- The RTA cannot ensure adequate roads for higher densities
- Dual Occupancy developers are appealing to owners' greed

In August 1993 the Association was invited to attend a public meeting called by the five North Shore Councils to discuss problems associated with the dual occupancy legislation and it was resolved that it should be the prerogative of Local Councils and not the State Government to permit dual occupancies and that many inappropriate dual occupancies had been constructed by developers purchasing unsuitable single occupancies and developing dual occupancies.

## **Amalgamation of Greenwich Infant and Primary Schools**

The amalgamation of Greenwich Infant and Primary Schools proposed by some parents and teachers as reported in the July 1992 Newsletter was the largest issue faced by the community since the Second Harbour Crossing drama.

The proposal was that new classrooms would be built at the Primary site to house the Infant classes – funded by the sale of the Infant site – and any profit would remain with the Education Department. The State Government would determine the use of the abandoned site.

The Parents and Citizens Association was tasked with investigating the proposal and the Education Department and P&C concurred that it was a community matter.

The Association agreed that for the time being the P&C alone should investigate and canvas the community with an emphasis on the usually dormant 'C' aspect of 'P&C'.

Sensing a potentially unbalanced cohort of residents canvassed, the Association advised that all Greenwich citizens were eligible to join the P&C and could then vote at meetings and that the next P&C meeting would elect members of the Investigating Committee (also called the 'Facts Committee').

The Investigating or Facts Committee presented findings on issues raised by the community on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> February where it was anticipated that the meeting would decide on the next step(s).

The Association meeting of 1<sup>st</sup> April was advertised in the Newsletter as '*Very Important*' and was well attended.

The Greenwich School P&C Site Options Committee was invited to address the Association on:

- A brief history of school amalgamation proposals
- Where we are today
- Responses to facts requested by the Association
- Objectives and composition of the Subcommittee
- Intended process to be followed

The Newsletter 'strongly encourages all Greenwich residents with past, present or future interests in the Infant and Primary School to attend the meeting.'

In June 1993 the Greenwich School P&C Site Options Committee chaired by Bill D'Apice gave a presentation on problems associated with a split site and options for consolidating the Primary and Infant School sites – a number of parents of Greenwich school children were in attendance. Pros and cons of amalgamation were discussed and issues with the amalgamation were raised and noted by the Committee.

The Site Options Committee had scheduled a number of meetings with stakeholders over the following three months, the aim expressed being *'to hear and record views expressed by the community on site options for Greenwich School and ways of otherwise addressing problems associated with the split site'*. A daytime meeting with older residents was held in the Senior Citizens Hall to hear views from this segment of the community.

The Site Options Committee advised that there would be two more public meetings on the issue later in the year.

The September 1993 Newsletter advised that there would be meetings on 23<sup>rd</sup> September and 28<sup>th</sup> October to discuss the school amalgamation proposals and that indicative plans of changes to the Primary School would be displayed and discussed at the first meeting and a report on issues would be available at McConaghy's Pharmacy and other Lane Cove pharmacies.

The October 1993 Newsletter reported that the P&C Site Options Committee had completed further consultation with various *'stakeholders'* and members of the community, had considered opinions expressed at the first public meeting, would present a report of general community acceptance, and discuss potential further activities.

At the final meeting it was announced there was not general community support for amalgamating the two schools and that a community group was to be formed to assist the school overcome some of the problems inherent in continuing to operate as separate Primary and Infant School sites.

The recommendations of the P&C Site Options Committee were:

The committee recognises the particular problems in operating a split site and recommends:

- Amalgamation was not an acceptable solution and that alternate actions should be pursued
- The community be asked to form a steering committee to establish a permanent community based committee with clearly defined objectives and method of operation with the task of providing financial and practical assistance to the school to minimise the effect of continuing to operate the split site

The November 1993 Newsletter reported that the public meeting endorsed the recommendations by a decisive majority and Bill D'Apice was congratulated on his handling of what was a difficult and potentially divisive community issue.

Shortly after, a steering committee chaired by John Hall was formed and was in the process of establishing Friends of Greenwich School (FOGS) that would also participate in an ongoing political lobbying campaign to get the school fully funded as a split site.

The major issue was that the Education Department's funding of the school did not recognise the additional costs in operating on separate sites such as provision of two photocopiers, two school libraries, two sets of administration staff, operating a microwave communications link between the two sites etc.

In retrospect, given the stress on Greenwich School by rapidly expanding enrolments resulting in four portable classrooms at the Infant site and six portable classrooms on the oval at the Primary site the retention of the two sites was very fortunate.

### **Friends of Greenwich School (FOGS)**

Friends of Greenwich School was a very active community group and raised considerable amounts of money for the school over a number of years. It had the honour of having the first P.O. Box (P.O. Box 1) at the Greenwich Postal Agency.

The objectives of FOGS were:

- Promoting a large and involved membership from local residents concerned about the (Infant) school and wishing it to retain its central place in our community
- Raising funds for selected short- and long-term projects
- Lobbying for recognition of the school's special needs and activating improvements of selected areas
- Provision of practical assistance in the operation of the school

Fundraising was to be principally achieved by membership fees (\$25 per family, \$10 per person per annum), social events and donations for specific projects.

The first event – a 1993 Boxing Day Ferry Cruise on the Lady Wakehurst following the start of the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race as far as the Sydney Heads and organised by Brian McConaghy – was a sell out and raised something like \$5,000 for the school. The Boxing Day Ferry Cruises continued for a number of years, always booked out until the Lady Wakehurst was no longer available.

In April 1994 the first of a series of 'FOGS Flyers' was published and were included in the Council's Progress Association File.

The Flyers advertised the various fundraising social functions

- 'Afternoon in Provence' outdoor luncheons
- Car boot sale at the Infant School
- Hoedown at the Greenwich Sailing Club
- Dance in the Community Hall with the New Zenith Jazz Band with Greenwich identity Tom Woods as the pianist
- School to School Fun Run and Food Fare

The School to School Fun Run was a particularly successful event and ran for many years, raising about \$5000 for the school on each occasion. The fun run started at the Primary School and entrants (including dogs on leash) were given numbered bibs and proceeded through Lane Cove Bushland Park (runners preceding walkers) through the big pipe under River Road, through Gore



Creek Oval to the Infant School where there were a number of food stalls run by locals and also various side show type games with the Lane Cove Concert Band providing musical entertainment.

In August 1995 according to the FOGS Flyer there were 328 entrants in the fun run and Duncan Lawson won in 16 minutes 30 seconds, only to have his record broken (according to the May 1996 Flyer) by Piers Truter on 16 minutes 13 seconds, with Wendy Smith leading the women on 21 minutes 13 seconds.

By April 1994 there were 200 members of FOGS

FOGS continued to operate until 2007 when it became financially unviable to have the Fun Run due to charges for police attendance, increased insurance and the requirement for marshals to attend training courses.

### **Shell Risk Assessment and Community Consultative Committee**

At the June 1993 AGM representatives from Shell and a Risk Management consultant from Industrial Risk Management presented a list of findings and recommendations from a recently completed comprehensive Risk Assessment and Fire Safety Study of the Gore Bay Terminal.

Shell advised that all recommendations from the consultant had been accepted – the cost of the additional safety measures including a new main wharf was estimated to be \$8 million and would be completed in 1995.

A copy of the report is available in the Lane Cove Local Studies Library.

To better communicate with residents and discuss and resolve issues associated with the operation of the Gore Bay Terminal, Shell established the Shell Community Consultative Committee and the first meeting of representatives from Shell, the Association, local residents and the Maritime Services Board was held on 28<sup>th</sup> July 1993. Lane Cove Council and the police were also invited to attend.

This committee met quarterly and was supplemented periodically by representatives from the EPA when necessary and proved to be a very effective forum for reducing noise and odours from the terminal and improving safety associated with its operation.

The November 1993 Newsletter reported that the Consultative Committee was proving to be an excellent means of communication between Shell and the community and that an Association observer attended a table top exercise codenamed 'Menace', simulating a vehicle accident rupturing a tank and starting a fire.

In the December 1995 Newsletter the Consultative Committee reported to the Association on the reduction in the frequency and severity of incidents involving noise and odour and that progress was continuing on the upgrading of the 'depot equipment' following the Risk and Fire Management Assessment and the first part of the articulated ship connectors (loading arms) had been received to replace the ship to shore hoses.

The June 1998 Newsletter advised of a table top exercise to be held on 4<sup>th</sup> June 1998, simulating an aircraft crashing into the terminal. Shell, the police, fire brigade, ambulance and other support authorities such as Sydney Buses and Sydney Ferries were involved. The exercise included the responses necessary should the evacuation of the peninsula both north and south of the depot be required. Police Superintendent Brian Reith attended the next meeting of the Association to discuss and explain the responses to members.

Shell Open Days were scheduled for June 1994 and October 1996.

At the meeting of 14<sup>th</sup> December 2011 the Association was briefed on the Shell Terminal Emergency Management Plan by the NSW Fire Brigade, NSW Police and Shell. The briefing consisted of answers to 13 pre-submitted questions followed by another 13 additional questions from the floor.

The Community Consultative Committee morphed into a larger Community Liaison Committee in 2012 on the conversion of the Gore Bay Terminal to a product import terminal following the closure of the Clyde Refinery.

### **Closure of the Lorna Hodgkinson 'Sunshine' Home**

In the April 1993 Newsletter the historic Lorna Hodgkinson Home which cared for disabled residents from all over NSW was reported as closing as residents were moved out to group housing in various suburbs. It was not known what might happen to the site – a dormitory had been converted to offices and the University of Technology (which at the time occupied part of the North Sydney TAFE site) had taken over the childcare centre. It was speculated that the Home could become part of the university.

Eventually the Home was demolished to make way for the Waterbrook Lifestyle Retirement Resort.

### **The Association's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary**

The arrangements for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Association on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1994 appeared in the December 1994 Newsletter. They were:

- A display of historic Greenwich photographs in the Community Hall
- A guided historic walk from the Community Hall ending up at Manns Point
- A family picnic at Manns Point with a BBQ supplied by North Shore Apex Club
- Music provided by the Lane Cove Concert Band

A Time Capsule to be opened in 2014 (the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary) was to be organised and photographs of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary were to be included amongst other objects of interest. This possibly never happened as there is no further record of the capsule and where it was buried or stored.

### **Sale of Stella Maris**

The sale of Stella Maris (a hostel for girls from regional NSW and overseas) on the corner of Greenwich Road and River Road in 1995 to a developer caused considerable consternation in the

community. The developer was proposing a high rise apartment block for the site and the October 1995 Newsletter reported that the following motion was to be put to the next Association meeting:

'that the Greenwich Progress association vigorously opposes any proposed development of the Stella Maris site for other than the present usage of a hostel or those permitted under the present zoning.'

The Development Application for High Rise Units was rejected and the north west side of the land hived off and subdivided by the developer into six housing blocks. The hostel remained firstly as Billy Blue Student Accommodation and later as Greenwich Village Accommodation.

### **Psychogeriatric Unit for Greenwich Hospital**

The December Newsletter noted there was concern from some residents about the proposed Psychogeriatric Unit at Greenwich Hospital. The unit was to be used for short-term assessment and treatment of elderly patients before they returned to their own homes or other accommodation.

The General Manager of the hospital and a senior psychogeriatric clinician were to discuss all aspects of the proposal at the next Association meeting.

No further mention of the proposal appears in the Newsletter so presumably the Association was happy with the proposal and subsequently the Development Application was approved by Council.

### **Optus cables**

A major issue in Greenwich (and in Sydney generally) in 1996 was the installation of overhead cabling on power poles by Optus. At a special Committee meeting of the Association it was decided to distribute a special newsletter containing a pro forma protest letter which was to be collected by the Association. Responses were received from 250 residents from the 2000 distributed and copies of these were sent to Optus Vision, the Minister for Communication, Austel (the regulator) and Lane Cove Council.

The cables went up despite the objections but the Association was successful in preventing their installation on historic Greenwich Point south of Shell Park.

### **Greenwich Road traffic calming devices**

The Newsletter of June 1996 reported that two years after a list of concerns re Greenwich Road traffic was given to a consultant, proposals for traffic calming devices on Greenwich Road had been presented to and approved by Council's Traffic Committee. There had been no subsequent reference to residents or the Association and construction was to commence immediately in order to qualify for a subsidy from the RTA.

The construction was to proceed without the usual trials with sandbags, linked blocks etc to fine tune the position of the devices.

The Association's Committee requested that trials be carried out before the devices are 'set in concrete'. Full drawings of the proposals were displayed outside Greenwich Pharmacy and comments from residents sought.

Council and the RTA were invited to the next Association meeting to discuss the proposals.

### **Neighbourly Building Policy**

In April 1997 the Association Newsletter announced the adoption by Council of a '*Neighbourly Building Policy*' in an attempt to better progress Development Applications – particularly those that were deemed controversial. The Policy provided for participation in a managed consultation process with affected neighbours.

The process offered residents the opportunity to avoid considerable cost, delay and unnecessary alienation of neighbours and gave neighbours the opportunity to voice their concerns before an applicant was locked into one course of action.

Stephen Clements, the Council Executive Director responsible for the policy was to come to the next Association meeting to explain the policy to members

The Newsletter also mentioned the existence of private accredited certifiers and predicted future issues.

### **Greenwich Children's Centre**

The April 1997 Newsletter also announced what would be a controversial proposal for a Greenwich Children's Centre at the Community Centre site which involved the merger of the Community Preschool Management Committee and the Greenwich Out of School Hours (GOOSH) Management Committee and the operation of the two services out of the Community Hall, which was to be extended at the rear.

The Greenwich Community Preschool advised that the facilities available for a Preschool did not meet with Department of Community Services (DOCS) Regulations. The Preschool had been told during the two prior inspections that unless it made the necessary changes by 2000 it would have to close.

The Preschool was licensed for 25 children aged 3-5, with four-year-olds offered places Monday to Wednesday and three-year-olds offered places Thursday and Friday.

The Preschool operated from 9 am to 3 pm and Greenwich parents did not have priority over parents from other suburbs.

GOOSH a non-profit organisation run by a parent elected committee provided out of school hours care for Infant and Primary school children between the ages of 5 and 12 who live in the area. At that time sessions were held in the Uniting Church Hall in Carlotta Street and an old demountable classroom at the Primary School site.

Before school care was offered between 7 and 9 am and after school care between 3 and 6 pm during school terms and full day care during school vacations and pupil free school days.

GOOSH wanted to operate out of a single site.

Both GOOSH sites were guaranteed for the long term.

Discussions were held between the Preschool, GOOSH and the GMCCA, managers of the Community Hall.

The proposal was debated at some length at the Association meeting of 18<sup>th</sup> June 1997 where a number of issues relating to the proposal were raised chiefly concerning the alienation of public space from 7 am to 6 pm for 48 weeks of the year to the detriment of the general community and other users of the Community Centre.

The Association wrote to Council opposing the proposal, citing the following effects:

- Site and facilities unacceptable
- Objection to building extension (taking over playground space)
- Increase in noise levels with older children before and after school and during school holidays
- Interaction between older children and the Preschool children creating difficulties
- Interference with the activities of the Senior Citizens, Brownies and Gem Club
- Further pressure on parking

The letter concluded by saying there were more suitable sites at the Infant School and Primary School.

This proved to be the case and in August 1998 GOOSH put forward a proposal to Greenwich School and Lane Cove Council to consolidate their operation in a common use facility to be developed in the grounds of the Infant School and this was supported by the Association which resolved at its meeting of 16<sup>th</sup> June 1999 *'That the Greenwich Community Association Inc. in principle supports the efforts of Greenwich Out of School Hours Inc. to amalgamate its operations and purchase a relocatable building to be situated in the Greenwich Road Infant School Site.'* As a result of these overtures a specially fitted out very large portable building supplied by the Council was erected in the grounds of the Infant School after much negotiation with the Education Department for both Infant and Primary students (who are brought by bus from the Kingslangley site).

The Community Preschool eventually realised that professional management was required in an increasingly strict regulatory environment and in 2005 the Preschool was taken over by the Kindergarten Union (KU).

## **The 265 bus service**

The August 1997 Newsletter notes 'History repeats itself – in 1944 the need for a bus service through the Kingslangley/Ronald Avenue area was the prime objective of the GPA – in 1954 a group of Greenwich wives stormed the Minister for Transport's office because the department wanted to close the service.'

After decades of no bus service or inferior bus service to Greenwich Peninsula and following a lobbying campaign by Councillor Rod Tudge, a much needed Government 265 bus service

between Lane Cove shops and McMahons Point was introduced, which included a loop down to the ferry wharf at Greenwich Point.

### **Community Hall extensions – suitable Preschool facilities**

Plans prepared by the GMCCA and the Community Preschool to extend the Community Hall to provide suitable facilities for a preschool were to be presented to the December meeting of the Association, according to the December 1997 Newsletter.

These plans, containing contemporary features such as corrugated iron walls (à la Glenn Murcutt) were prepared by a local architect and approved by the Association and were presented to Council. A Development Application was prepared eventually, but stalled, and the August 1998 Newsletter notes that the *'Community Hall extension goes before Council on 7<sup>th</sup> September 1998 following a request for determination by the applicant.'*

This matter was not resolved until later the following year.

## **1999 TO 2011**

From 1999 printed copies of the Newsletters and Minutes of Committee and General Meetings of the Association up to 2011 are available in two very large folders which at the time of writing have yet to be archived in the Local Studies Centre of Lane Cove Library. [Editor: These records were moved to the Local Studies Centre in February 2016.]

After 2011 the records of the Association are held in digital form on the Association's website.

At the first Committee meeting in 1999 it was decided to change the name of the Association from the Greenwich Progress Association to the Greenwich Community Association. Keeping up with technological developments the Association also resolved to consider establishing a website (which commenced in January 2000).

From 1999 a number of major developments in the Lane Cove CBD were initiated that potentially affected Greenwich residents and therefore demanded the attention of the Committee and the Association as a whole.

Numerous local Greenwich events also arose during this period, making it a busy time for the Association.

### **Austin Street car park and Woolworths Supermarket – Market Square**

At the Association AGM on 17<sup>th</sup> February 1999 it was recorded that Council had received a proposal from Strand Estates for a car park and large Woolworths supermarket on the Council car park off Austin Street.

A Woolworths supermarket in Lane Cove in competition with Coles was of considerable interest to Greenwich residents many of whom did the bulk of their shopping in Lane Cove or Crows Nest.

The long and complex saga of a multi storey car park off Austin Street on land owned by Council behind the shops was underway and was discussed, sometimes in some detail, at every subsequent Association Committee and General Meeting until it eventually ended in 2005 with the Market Square development.

The first proposal was for a 230-space car park, units with 45 car spaces, a 500-seat auditorium and a large Woolworths Supermarket to occupy the recently closed small Clancys supermarket.

This proposal was not viewed favourably by the Association, especially as Willoughby Council had started planning for a large theatre complex at Chatswood that eventually resulted in The Concourse.

The Strand Estates proposal was initially rejected by Council but was later made the subject of a statistically significant survey of 3% of residents comparing the Strand Estates proposal against a proposed 190-space Council car park that had already been approved.

The result of the survey was exactly 50% in favour of each of the two proposals – a result never seen before by the consultants who specialised in such surveys.

Neither proposal proceeded, however the threat of competition stimulated Coles to extend the size of their supermarket and to provide limited additional multi storey parking behind it.

In 2000 Council rezoned the car park area off Austin Street to B3 and invited Development Applications for the site.

A second proposal from Strand Estates was lodged for a Woolworths supermarket from the plaza on the Clancy site back to the library and was also viewed with concern by the Association – a supermarket fronting onto the plaza was not seen as in the best interests of residents. The Association, together with many residents across the municipality formally opposed the development. The Community Alliance of Progress Associations also opposed the development and Price Waterhouse Coopers was retained to assess the probity of the proposal.

Council commissioned an independent specialist town planner to assess the application.

Parents at Lane Cove School were incensed by the proposal and the dangers it posed to schoolchildren and in 2001 a protest march was organised from the school to the Council Chambers.

In October 2001 the independent assessor recommended approval of the new Strand Estates proposal subject to conditions, despite vehement opposition from the community. Council eventually rejected the application in February 2002 by six votes to two.

This left the Council's own approved proposal for a car park behind the library – however this approval was due to lapse in June. Councillors were not overwhelmed by Council's own development proposal and it was abandoned and calls were again made for Development Proposals for this key site on the plaza and behind the library.

In the face of total loss of momentum Council came up with a new proposal that included an expansion of the library from 1300 sq m to 3000 sq m over a 167-space car park incorporating lift access. This was subsequently approved by Council. Meanwhile a new proposal from Woolworths, who owned several of the properties on the site was reported to be in the offing.

On 18<sup>th</sup> October 2002 Council held a meeting attended by key stakeholders including RASAD (Residents for Sustainable Development), the Community Alliance (which incorporated Association representatives) and Woolworths to discuss amenities that needed to be provided at this key site.

In December 2002 Council voted to allow Woolworths to submit its third proposal. This turned out to be far superior to anything else considered by Council and consisted of a new large underground supermarket, car parking for 300 cars and a library extension (excluding fit out) to 3000 sq m and 10 residential units.

After 11 years of dealing with this key site which at times consumed Council's energy as well as members of the community this proposal was well worth waiting for. It finally came to life as the Market Square Development (minus the units).



Following a financial analysis of the Woolworths proposal Council again commissioned a survey of residents to choose between Council's proposal and Woolworths' proposal. The Association discussed the merits of both proposals at some length at its meeting of 15<sup>th</sup> July 2003.

On this occasion the survey resulted in a substantial preference for the Woolworths proposal and at the Council meeting of 15<sup>th</sup> November 2003 the General Manager was authorised to commence negotiations with Woolworths

Negotiations continued for some time during which there were some changes in the design. These were finalised by a committee of three Councillors during February 2004. However, as this was close to Council elections the Minister for Local Government decreed that the final decision be left to the incoming Council. The official opening of the library was held in February 2010 and the Market Square development finally opened in November 2009.

### **Rosenthal Avenue car park development**

At the same Association AGM in February 1999 where the first Strand Estates proposal for a Woolworths supermarket and car park was discussed, a second major development proposal for the Lane Cove CBD was to command the attention of Greenwich residents and the Association for some considerable time. This was the announcement by Council that it was to conduct a design competition for developing the Rosenthal Avenue car park as an underground multi storey car park with an extension of the plaza on top.

The Rosenthal Avenue car park site was originally residential housing which was purchased by Council and demolished to provide for a car park that was heavily used and ultimately insufficient for the parking demand.

The design proposed by St Hilliers was selected as the best. St Hilliers was given permission to prepare a Development Application for a development on Council land and the next reference to the project was in June 2001, which merely stated that the Development Application was yet to be received.

By August 2001 the Development Application had been lodged and was put on public display. An independent assessor was again engaged to assess the proposal.

At the General Meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> November 2001 the Association was advised that St Hilliers had submitted a revised plan that was substantially different from the prizewinning design competition plan and by April 2002 concern was expressed that the mixed commercial/residential component of the proposal was of an *'inappropriate scale'*.

The proposal was for 350 underground car parking spaces, extension of the plaza, public toilets, and 75 units of 2 to 4 storeys with 104 private car spaces.

The proposal received considerable public opposition and the independent assessor produced a report that raised several issues.

As a consequence the project was discontinued and Council eventually paid compensation to St Hilliers.

The urgent need for additional parking at Lane Cove was temporarily met by multi level car parks associated with the Market Square development and Coles upgrade and the underground multi level car park possibilities at Rosenthal Avenue were left for later.

### **Community Hall extension**

The Association's 1999 AGM was somewhat busier than usual with new initiatives. A long overdue start to the second and largest extension to the Community Hall was announced, with the approval by Council of a building application.

The Preschool and GMCCA had been busy preparing plans over several months for an extension of the hall to provide for Preschool toilets, office and storage area and relocated and dramatically improved hall toilets. Tenders were called in June 1999 and at the same time work was commenced to solve the drainage problems in the Girl Guide Hut under the hall.

However, at the February 2000 AGM it was reported that the submitted plans were too expensive and considerably exceeded the Council's budget. Alterations to the plan would be necessary.

Negotiations with the lowest tenderer did not prove successful – one problem being that in the pre-Olympic period building costs had skyrocketed. Finally a compromise design was arrived at in consultation with the Preschool and GMCCA which was within budget and work commenced in June 2000.

Initially the Preschool moved out into the Girl Guide Hut while demolition took place, but this proved very unsatisfactory and in August 2000 it was reported that the Preschool had relocated to the far more suitable Senior Citizens Hall where it remained until the extensions and renovations to the Community Hall were completed in December 2000.

### **Duntroon Avenue development**

Whilst Duntroon Avenue was a part of Greenwich that had been represented by the North Wollstonecraft St Leonards Progress Association rather than the Greenwich Community Association for many years, the Association still took a keen interest in the project because it was seen as a precursor to other future developments in the area.

The developer Australand, perceiving a development opportunity, had acquired the houses that backed onto the railway line along Duntroon Avenue and fronted onto Newlands Park. Now the developer sought to have the land rezoned to permit medium to high density dwellings.

At the April 1999 General Meeting of the Association the proposal was discussed and it became apparent that residents along Duntroon Avenue generally supported the concept as it allowed them to exit houses backing onto a railway line with premium prices for their properties while those residents opposite in Canberra Avenue also facing Newlands Park generally opposed the concept.

In mid June 2001 the land was rezoned to permit 4 to 5 storey residential development with a Floor Space Ratio bonus for a 'consolidated development'.

The Association did not actively participate in the dispute or its aftermath, but followed what was to be a long and hard fought battle between Australand, the local residents and Council that involved intervention by the State Government who removed Council as the determining authority in January 2002. There were several visits to the Land and Environment Court and many meetings of interested residents.

It took until March 2005 and numerous losses in the Land and Environment Court by Australand for them to undertake meaningful discussions with Council and local residents and to agree to comply with the height restrictions. Revised plans developed in conjunction with local residents were to be submitted to Council by December 2005 (later revised to February 2006) and actually lodged in April 2006. The plans were for 186 apartments in four buildings with provision for 280 car spaces and these were finally approved by Council unanimously on the 19<sup>th</sup> July 2006 – seven years after the first approach by Australand.

### **19 and 21 Glenview Street – heritage homes threatened**

At the Committee meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> July 1999 three members of the community were invited to discuss the Development Application for 19 and 21 Glenview Street for a block of units. The properties in question were heritage listed by Council, being the first houses to be built on Glenview Street in 1901 and are an impressive identical pair of two-storey Federation buildings – they were zoned A1 Residential. The application was based on existing use rights as the properties had been subdivided into flats.

A meeting in Glenview Street on 18<sup>th</sup> July attended by about 30 local residents resolved to fight the development and sought support from the Association.

Various means of informing the community were discussed – through the next Newsletter, leaflets at the footbridge and railway station, a petition at the shops, and door knocking.

The Committee resolved to ‘oppose the development D298/99 and as part of this opposition we will ask our Newsletter distributors to make an extraordinary distribution of a leaflet to inform the community of this proposed development.’

A group of local residents formed the Greenwich Preservation Society to oppose the development and the President addressed the 20<sup>th</sup> October 1999 meeting, following which the Association resolved ‘*That this Association supports the Greenwich Preservation Society in opposing the proposed development at 19-21 Glenview Street and directs the Committee to provide appropriate support.*’

The Development Application was rejected under Council Delegation.

A second Development Application was then submitted in October 1999, again for units, but reducing the block from 6 storeys and 10 units to 5.5 storeys and 8 units.

This was also rejected by the Association, which requested members to continue to lobby Council to refuse the application.

The second application was also refused and in November 1999 the applicant appealed to the Land and Environment Court and a public meeting was convened at Shell Park. The appeal was subsequently withdrawn in April 2000.

Issues with developments associated with 19 Glenview Street re-emerged in 2008 with a proposal to erect a single storey dwelling in front of the 1901 heritage listed building on the site with an underground car park for six cars underneath – the original building to have some additions but remain as three flats. Objections to this proposal were submitted by the Association. The Association also objected to further proposals in February 2010. Eventually the proposal was referred to the Land and Environment Court that approved the application but deleted the dwelling in front.

### **Shell oil spill at Gore Bay**

On 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1999 while discharging crude oil from the Italian Flag motor tanker *Laura D'Amato* there was an oil spill into Gore Bay during a routine pumping operation. This was due to the fact that two sea-chest valves had been opened some time prior to the ship berthing. These valves were supposed to be closed and checked prior to entering port and it was unclear when they had been opened contrary to operating instructions and instructions on the valves themselves.

Following the discovery the ship's pumps were immediately stopped and the Shell Disaster Plan was put into operation. This involved placing a temporary boom across the entrance to Gore Bay and the use of suckers and dispersants to clean up the spill.

Details of the incident are to be found in the report of the Marine Incident Investigation Unit of the Australian Transport Safety Bureau found in the Local Studies Centre of Lane Cove Library.

Subsequent to the incident a permanent boom was installed at the terminal. This is placed around the tanker when berthed and can be quickly swung around to close off Gore Bay in the event of a spill.

Shell executives attended the next meeting of the Association on 18<sup>th</sup> August 1999 to explain the cause of the spill and the subsequent containment and clean-up operation.

From the minutes

*'Mr Smith gave a detailed chronological description of events of the evening of the spill, the cause of the spill and the recommendations that have arisen as a result of the spill*

- 1. Improved lighting in the area immediately around the discharging ship*
- 2. Installation of infra red gas detection equipment near the wharf*
- 3. Insist on complete checking of the ships' logs prior to commencement of discharge*

*The meeting was generally pleased with the candid and honest approach and response from Shell and felt they had acted in the interests of the community during the incident.'*

The ship was later given a multi million dollar fine and the ship's master was also given a significant fine.

### **Shell Clyde Refinery closing**

At the AGM of February 2000 it was reported that Shell had advised that the Clyde Refinery would not be closing in 2001 but would remain open until 2005 or 2006. Shell had often commented to the Community Consultative Committee that their downstream refining operation had a low profit margin and return on investment compared to the company's upstream

operation of producing oil and gas and that the Clyde refinery with only a single cracker was old and very small compared to refineries coming on stream in Asia, particularly in Singapore and India.

This announcement rekindled fears that the terminal at Gore Bay that was used to import crude oil for the refinery as well as to import and export refined products and to store marine products might be sold off to a developer for a major apartment development akin to Wondakiah at Waverton.

At the General Meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> April 2000 there was lengthy discussion of two possible future actions by Shell, either

- a) Use the terminal to unload refined product (and store marine product)

or

- b) Sell the land to a developer for high density unit development

The minutes record that 'the consensus of those present was a) was preferred if safety issues can be satisfactorily resolved.'

At the Special General Meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> June 2001 it was recorded that 'Shell would be celebrating 100 years of operation at Gore Bay since the arrival of the SS Turbo on 10th June 1901 with a cargo of kerosene and that Shell would be investing \$30 million in upgrading the refinery to reduce the sulphur content of diesel as required by the Australian Government.' As part of the celebration Shell organised an Open Day at the terminal for the Greenwich community in December 2001.

Apart from the removal of a number of redundant tanks nothing very much pointed to the imminent closure of the Clyde refinery until at the meeting of 18<sup>th</sup> October 2006 it was learnt that Shell had been forced into importing refined products through the terminal as major problems with the refinery required urgent maintenance work to be initiated.

The refinery was repaired and upgraded but the writing was on the wall and economies of scale and superior reliability of multi cracker refineries in Singapore and India meant that inevitably the Clyde Refinery would be shut down and the location used for blending and distribution of refined products only. The redundant tanks would be removed and excess land sold. The refinery was eventually closed in 2012.

### **Aged care at Catholic Communications Centre – Clancy Terrace**

The proposal received in December 2000 to demolish the Catholic Communications Centre and Our Lady of Dolours Catholic Church situated on a large piece of land along Wardrop Street between Greenwich Road and Chisholm Street generated much interest in the community. The Communications Centre was once a small school associated with the church and the position diagonally opposite the shopping precinct and opposite the heritage Infant School made it a focus for opinion.

The Association was given further details of the proposal to be lodged with Lane Cove Council later in the month at the AGM of 21<sup>st</sup> February 2001. There were to be 24 self-care units, a meeting

hall, chapel and courtyard. Parking for 27 cars would be underground with access via Chisholm Street. Occupation of the units would not be exclusive to the Parish. Ownership would remain with the church with external management of the facility. Plans of the proposal were on display at the meeting.

Much interest was expressed in the proposal particularly by the 'Greenwich Action Group' so a Special Meeting of the Association was convened on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2001. One of the major issues was adherence to State Environmental Planning Policy No. 5 (SEPP5) which was a policy that regulated housing developments for older people or people with a disability. SEPP5 was amended on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2000 after 12 months' consultation with stakeholders. Amendments were aimed to provide benefits to potential residents and were more onerous for developers than previously. The Development Application for Clancy Terrace was lodged prior to 1<sup>st</sup> December and therefore did not have to comply with the upgraded standards. This was highlighted in a flyer distributed to residents by the Greenwich Action Group that listed seven instances where the application complied with the old SEPP5 standard but did not comply with the new standard.

The Greenwich Action Group was also concerned with the design of the proposed building and cited failure to adhere to five of the 25 design principles contained in the new SEPP5 (some of which were introduced in the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2000 amendments).

The Special General Meeting was attended by approximately 120 people who virtually filled the Community Hall and was chaired by Tom Lawson, the President of the Association. Tom opened the meeting by welcoming those in attendance and stated that *'the meeting is to facilitate discussions between proponents and opponents of DA 381/00 at 72 Greenwich Road and ... that the Association's Rules stipulate that only paid up members could vote on any motion.'*

Opposition to the proposal centred around the details of what was proposed, not the concept of an aged self-care facility on the site.

Father Don Willoughby explained that both the Catholic Communications Centre and the church had structurally deteriorated and had outlived their usefulness, and the church wished to reuse the land to build a smaller church suitable to a smaller, older congregation and provide living facilities for older sections of the community. There were twelve similar aged care developments in the archdiocese of Sydney.

Chris Mulvey spoke on behalf of the Greenwich Action Group which consisted of residents in close proximity to the proposed development and covered issues with design, compliance with the amended SEPP5, loss of trees, parking and traffic.

Bill d'Apice (an ex-President of the Association) explained the decision for a self-care facility and the arrangements for managing the facility and went through details of the proposal with the aid of a site and roof plan. According to the church's consultants the plans complied with the amendments to SEPP5, but this was disputed by members of the Greenwich Action Group.

During the evening the following issues were discussed in a question answer format:

- Compliance with SEPP5 and other codes
- Site ratios and scale

- Green space, visual impact and trees
- Traffic access, parking and safety issues
- Security against future change of ownership and usage
- Procedural steps towards approval or rejection, and opportunities for public comment

At the summing up the Greenwich Action Group called for a redesign and Bill d'Apice said the land was a church asset that would be put to community benefit in the provision of self-care aged units for the elderly in the parish.

The minutes of the meeting are excellent if further details are required.

At the General Meeting of 15<sup>th</sup> April 2001 members present were advised that Council Officers had recommended approval for the development, that there would be an inspection by Councillors of the site on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2001, that height poles would be erected, and trees marked that were to be removed.

Following the inspection the applicant advised Council that he intended lodging amended plans and indicated that the configuration would be changed and the development moved further away from the adjoining property in Chisholm Street, but the number of units would remain at 24.

A new architect had been engaged to amend the plans and at the General Meeting of 15<sup>th</sup> August 2001 the Association reviewed the new plans. They were substantially different from the original plans in that most units now faced north, the facades had been totally changed, there was greater compliance with the amended SEPP5, more trees were preserved, the driveway was now 3 m from the southern boundary, and underground parking had been improved. On the corner of Greenwich Road and Wardrop Street the units were three storeys on either side of the chapel.

The new design was considered to be a considerable improvement not only by the community but also by the proponents and it was approved by Council on 17<sup>th</sup> September retaining the three storey units on the corner and removing the word '*only*' in a condition that stated '*units be preserved for only aged, disabled and carers.*'

### **The new Local Environment Plan (LEP) – Greenwich Heritage Conservation Area**

At the General Meeting of 18<sup>th</sup> October 2000 Eric Armstrong, Executive Manager Corporate Planning and Strategy at Lane Cove Council gave an overview of the Planning Controls of Council and announced the start of what turned out to be an exceptionally long and tedious process to seek approval from the State Government of a new Comprehensive LEP to replace the out of date and much amended 1987 LEP. There were to be a number of restarts due to the State Government changing the format and rules a number of times.

The Association was urged to actively participate in this critical project.

On 12<sup>th</sup> December 2001 the Association learnt that an Issues Paper was to be prepared by Council and decided to request that the Association be included in the consultative process, given the importance of the outcome to the community.

At the AGM of 20<sup>th</sup> February 2002 the Issues Paper had been received and the Association was invited to join the Consultative Committee. Des Brady was nominated to represent the Association.

A public meeting for Greenwich Residents was organised for 15<sup>th</sup> May 2002 at the Community Hall to explain the essence of the new LEP and to answer questions from the 50 residents who attended.

Other public meetings were conducted elsewhere in the municipality and a survey used to determine residents' attitudes. A draft Comprehensive LEP was finally produced and at the AGM of February 2003 Association members were advised that it would go on public exhibition midyear.

A community forum reviewed the draft and Des Brady attended a number of subsequent meetings. These meeting resulted in amendments and the plan was eventually put on public exhibition in September 2003.

However, further delays were encountered due to zoning issues such as at St Leonards where three Local Government Areas intersected and there was no further mention of the LEP in the minutes until the meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> April 2006 when it was announced that the State Government had finally settled on the format for an LEP and that a new plan conforming to the new requirements would be put on exhibition sometime in the future.

At the same meeting members were advised that the St Leonards Regional Strategic Study which included the Royal North Shore Hospital had been released for public comment.

As one of the two Councils attempting to create a new LEP Lane Cove Council was seriously affected by the changes in direction by the State Government which was trying to create a simpler more uniform regulatory environment across Councils to minimise complexity for developers. This ended up with a one size fits all approach.

One major issue that Lane Cove Council had with the new format was that there was no longer any differentiation between parkland and bushland in the available zonings. It took some considerable time to convince the Department of Planning that these were two very different entities requiring different controls.

As part of the process Council, prompted by some residents of Northwood, initiated a study to identify potential areas to be incorporated in a Heritage Conservation Area. Stephanie Bashford, Council's Strategic Planner addressed the 21<sup>st</sup> June 2006 meeting on the study leading up to a draft conservation areas Development Control Plan (DCP) to be undertaken by a consultant.

The Association supported a Heritage Conservation Area for Greenwich Point and had already made a preliminary submission on the matter to Council.

The Greenwich Point Heritage Conservation Area was again discussed by the Committee on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2006 when it was decided that the draft LEP contained nothing specific about controls that should be imposed for such an area and that a DCP should be developed specifically for the Heritage Conservation Area. At the following General Meeting in December attendees were advised that Northwood had rejected the opportunity of having Northwood designated as a



Heritage Conservation Area and only Greenwich residents affected would receive a heritage information package inviting comments. A public forum was proposed for early in 2007.

Concerns were later expressed by the Committee that Greenwich Point could lose its Heritage Conservation Area status if the relevant controls were not locked into a DCP before the new LEP was finalised, and additional funding was provided by Council so that the Consultant could finish work on the Heritage Conservation Area study.

The deadline for submissions on the draft new LEP was rapidly approaching and the Association ran a stall at the shops with maps available and encouraged residents to make a submission to Council.

The Association's submission on the draft LEP in April 2008 accepted that there was a need to create a new format common across all Councils and that the State Government was seeking to increase the housing density of Lane Cove by 3000 dwellings. The Association was concerned at the 'one size fits all' approach, the lack of distinction between bushland and parkland, and felt that there should be an 'E' zone for Environmentally Sensitive Areas. The Association also observed that informed comment was not possible without access to an accompanying DCP.

At the 20<sup>th</sup> August 2008 General Meeting it was stated that 'the exhibition and comment process leading up to the final approval of the plan was frustrating. It was characterised by inconsistencies between documents and maps, late availability of information before Council meetings and changes made at Council meetings with no prior warning.'

After some further last minute changes the draft LEP was approved by Council on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2008 and was sent to the Department of Planning for approval before being submitted to the Minister for signature.

One of the key concerns of the Association was the lack of any detail about conditions relating to residential buildings. These would be encapsulated in the Development Control Plans associated with the LEP and the focus of the Association now shifted to that.

The new LEP was approved by the Department of Planning in February 2010 with some significant amendments including the ability to remove covenants and higher densities permitted along Mowbray Road. This has led to massive developments in that part of Lane Cove. The LEP was gazetted on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2010 – nearly 10 years after the commencement of the project!

The LEP was subsequently reviewed after 12 months and details affecting Greenwich included heritage provisions and increasing the permitted scale of buildings along the Pacific Highway from Nield Avenue to Bellevue Avenue.

### **The new Comprehensive Development Control Plan (CDCP)**

Following adoption of the new Local Environmental Plan by Council, residents of Greenwich Point received details in August 2009 of the possibility of their properties being included in a Conservation Area. This was part of a major overhaul of planning controls for Lane Cove to be incorporated in a new CDCP.

Stephanie Bashford, Council's strategic Planner, addressed the meeting of 14<sup>th</sup> October 2009 on the rationale behind the draft CDCP and in particular the specific section relating to the Greenwich Conservation Area.

The Association subsequently made a submission by which it sought to 'highlight those features of the whole of Greenwich that gave the location its character and that should be preserved through the Council Planning Instruments.'

The CDCP was also approved by the Department of Planning and gazetted on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2010

## **12 and 14 George Street**

These two precedent setting developments on George Street overlooking the harbour illustrated the need for a DCP encompassing the Greenwich Conservation Area with specific controls, rather than relying on merit assessment that could be successfully challenged in the Land and Environment Court.

Both developments occurred in what was a designated conservation area, but there were no specific details as to exactly what that meant for property owners and Council officers or residents in general.

### **14 George Street**

The first mention of potential issues with size, loss of views and aspect from the water occurred at the Committee Meeting of 16<sup>th</sup> January 2001.

The application was followed closely by the Association and letters were written to Council about the development and at the General Meeting of 18<sup>th</sup> April 2001 the Association's President *'expressed disappointment at Council's recent decision to grant conditional approval to the proposed development at 14 George Street, setting apparent precedent for future applications with floor space ratios approaching 0.6 (the maximum supposedly being 0.5).'*

Council's conditional approval included a reduction in height and the applicant then appealed to the Land and Environment Court against this provision and won in June 2002.

A further DA was refused in January 2003 and at the General Meeting of 18<sup>th</sup> June 2003 it was mentioned that discussions had been held with 12 and 16 George Street and a possible compromise reached.

### **12 George Street**

In January 2002 the neighbour at 12 George Street followed the precedent of 14 George Street and lodged a Development Application for a substantial building.

The Association lodged an objection related to size and loss of views and the application was refused in August 2002.

A subsequent application was however approved in June 2003 'an outcome considered unsatisfactory to those observers of the process.'

## **River Road slalom**

The slalom along River Road leading up to the bridge over the railway line had always been dangerous, especially in wet weather because of the incorrect camber on the curve.

However it took a fatal accident involving a Greenwich resident for action to be taken to rectify this very obvious dangerous section of road.

At the January Committee meeting of 2002 the Committee resolved to refer the incident to the State Coroner with a request to designate this area as a 'Black Spot' area and at the Coronial Enquiry held on 11<sup>th</sup> December the Coroner recommended immediate rectification of the problem. Repairs commenced on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2003, immediately following the completion of some units that were under construction on the northern green of the Wollstonecraft Bowling Club.

## **Bushcare**

A Bushcare program modelled on one in North Sydney was initiated by Lane Cove Council in 2002 and at the General Meeting of April 2002 it was announced that work had commenced on the first site in Greenwich at the Kings Langley campus of Greenwich Public School.

A second site at Manns Point started in August 2002 and a further site at Greendale Park (under the footbridge) commenced in October followed by an additional site at Manns Point.

## **Greenwich Inn**

At the 16<sup>th</sup> April 2008 meeting Association members were astounded to learn of an application by Greenwich Inn on the Pacific Highway opposite Westbourne Street for a 10-storey building on a 15m x 700m block of land – about the size of a large house block.

The proposal would treble the number of rooms, grossly exceed the zoned height and density and also breach Council provisions in terms of landscaping and provision of adequate parking. The list went on.

On 4<sup>th</sup> August Council rejected recommendations by Council officers and approved an 8-storey building on the site, despite the fact that:

- The site is no larger than a normal block of land at 698m<sup>2</sup>
- The bulk is 5 times the maximum permitted
- The height is 1.6 times the permitted height
- The boundary setback from the edge of the balconies is only 1.2m
- There are only 25 car spaces for a projected 84 rooms
- Twenty-seven reasons were given by Council officers as to why the development should be rejected
- The building was totally outside the limits of the new planning scheme just submitted to the State Government.

A Rescission Motion followed and at the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008 Council Meeting Council voted to overturn its prior approval and reject the application.

## **Private hospital for Nield Avenue?**

At the General Meeting of 10<sup>th</sup> December 2008 the Association was informed that Waterbrook Health had lodged an application with the Department of Planning for a hospital facility in Nield Avenue adjacent to the Waterbrook Greenwich Lifestyle Resort.

The site consisted of several properties acquired by Waterbrook, a small portion of Nield Avenue itself and the pedestrian pathway leading to Morvern Gardens. A local resident reported that 167 beds were planned for the hospital and that the building would be 6 to 7 storeys high.

The application was to be assessed by the Department of Planning as it was deemed a 'major project'.

Two information sessions for residents were organised for 6<sup>th</sup> December 2008 and as this clashed with the Greenwich Village Games a further presentation was to be given at the Association's 10<sup>th</sup> December meeting.

By August the Waterbrook Health hospital development had been approved by the Department of Planning but with many conditions, one of which was to obtain approval from the Department of Health to operate the hospital for a minimum of 51% of the approved beds. This was a big step up from the 47 approved beds out of the 144 beds planned.

The Association wrote to the Ministers of Planning and Health regarding the reduction of funding to Royal North Shore Hospital if more private hospital beds were available in the area. There was already a large number of private hospitals in the vicinity and *'the addition of more private beds at the expense of public beds should be discouraged'*.

The application for a hospital at Nield Avenue was reported withdrawn at the August 2011 meeting to be replaced by a plan for a large apartment building.

## **Greenwich Shopping Precinct upgrade**

Residents of Greenwich had for many years requested Lane Cove Council to upgrade the Greenwich Shopping Precinct. Following a major upgrade of the CBD shopping area and then Lane Cove West Shopping Precinct it was announced at the meeting of 18<sup>th</sup> June 2010 that Council had budgeted \$230,000 for 2010/2011 and \$250,000 for 2011/2012 for *'improvements to Greenwich Shops'*.

The Association then organised a community forum at the Community Centre to be held on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2010.

Council undertook extensive consultation with residents and shopkeepers and at the 20<sup>th</sup> October meeting displayed two alternative plans that resulted from the consultation. At the 8<sup>th</sup> December meeting details of the plans to be implemented were provided.

The major changes to the existing arrangement were the repositioning of the pedestrian crossing so that it was safer, widening the footpath to the south to provide for additional outdoor tables and chairs, new street furniture and balustrades and a community noticeboard.

The Association also sought to increase the amount of parking available by introducing angle parking at the north side of Wardrop Street, but this turned out to be impossible due to the narrowness of the street.

The upgrade did not quite go according to plan in that more work was completed in phase 1 than anticipated. The extended Wardrop Street upgrade was completed during phase 2, made possible by the fact that phase 1 came in under budget.

# Some conclusions

After 70 years of operation it is worth considering the effectiveness of the Association in its dealings with the State Government and Lane Cove Council and how well it represents the majority of residents of Greenwich.

It is clear that attendance at meetings by Councillors, Council Officers, the local State Member and State Departmental Officers has diminished noticeably over the years and this is to be regretted. In the case of the Mayor and East Ward Councillors, attendance at Association meetings reduced normally to a single Independent East Ward Councillor following the introduction of endorsed political party candidates at Council elections.

This did not mean that the Association became ineffectual but it did result in a number of Council proposals arising that caused serious anguish in the community and often packed and noisy Council meetings. Communication with Council was better when Councillors attended meetings and results show that this was much appreciated by residents.

Does the Association represent the 'expectations and attitudes' of residents? This is something not known. The Association does give the many special interest groups a platform to express their opinion and seek community support.

## **EDITOR'S NOTE**

John completed the second draft of this document and left it with Jill Pain with the comment that he would see her on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2015 to incorporate her comments and finish the document. This was not to be. John died in Bikaner, India on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2015. The outpouring of community tributes following his death demonstrated the respect and affection of the community he loved, served and observed.

John compiled this history from the minutes and newsletters of the GCA.

I have attempted to complete the editing seeking only to clarify his prose while I hope preserving his voice. I know that there are some issues that John considered too confrontational and unresolved to include in this history. Future recorders can take them up.

Celia May, February 2016.

# Abbreviations

CBD	Central Business District
CDCP	Comprehensive Development Control Plan
DA	Development Application
DCP	Development Control Plan
FOGS	Friends of Greenwich School
GMCCA	Greenwich Memorial Community Centre Association
GOOSH	Greenwich out of School Hours [Care/Management/etc]
LEP	Local Environment Plan
SPA	State Planning Authority

## Cover Images

From left:

Possible routes for the second Harbour crossing. Sydney Morning Herald, 3 October 1982

Greenwich Public School, Infants Campus

The “new” ferry wharf, Greenwich Point. By kind permission of the Greenwich Community Association

The figtree, Leeman Reserve

The relocated Greenwich Sailing Club

June 1952 timetable 266 Bus amending the route to exclude Greenwich. By kind permission of the Sydney Bus & Truck Museum Limited

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Frontispiece photograph

Jessie and Bill Henningham at the time of their campaign for election to Lane Cove Council 1954

Used by permission of Bill Henningham (Jnr.)

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