



# Glebe Society Bulletin

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## A new lease of life for iconic civic building

The re-opening of the renovated Glebe Town Hall was a day for celebration. This beautiful civic building once again became available to the people of Glebe. Many of Glebe's historic civic buildings are no longer functioning, the 2011 closure of the Post Office being a sad example.



**Lord Mayor Clover Moore opens renovated Glebe Town Hall on Saturday 2 March 2013**

Michael West provided the Welcome to Country and Uncle Max presided over the smoking ceremony. Clover noted that this ceremony was particularly important because at one time the Town Hall had been used as the local police station and lock-up. Council believes this may have been during the 1940s. Here is an excerpt from Clover's speech:

*It's the building's first major upgrade since it was opened in 1880. It was the most important work of the architect Ambrose Thornley junior, whose father was an alderman on Glebe Council. That sort of thing isn't allowed any more, which is a good thing! But it's still a fine building.*

*The work was necessary to make sure the building will continue to serve the Glebe community, to make it more accessible and welcoming for everyone, and to make it more sustainable. At the same time, its original features have been carefully and lovingly*

*restored, and that stunning glass façade marks the new accessible entry on Lodge St.*

*We've spend \$6.8 million, some of it on necessary repairs such as fixing salt and water damage on the façade, restoring the clock to working order, replacing the slate roof, improving accessibility, insulation and sound proofing.*

*There's a new ramp on Mt Vernon St for pram and wheelchair access from the bus stop. new access to the Lodge building from the Town Hall ground floor and a new lift to all floors.*

*As with all our work, sustainability has been a key issue, so as much as possible has been recycled. There are new fittings to reduce energy and water use and a monitoring system to check their effectiveness. We're collecting rainwater from the roof for re-use in toilets and garden irrigation, and natural ventilation and light have been maximised to reduce reliance on air-conditioning and electricity.*

*The Town Hall now has spaces for hire, meeting rooms and artists' studios. It will also house the Glebe Early Childhood Health Centre and Sydney University's Glebe Community Development Project, an organization that works locally with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents and social housing residents.*

*I thank and congratulate all those who've worked on this refurbishment – it's a fantastic result and a great tribute to your skills and expertise.*



**Glebe Town Hall: (Image: City of Sydney)**

## Lord Mayor participates in Glebe Society Management Committee meeting

In December 2012 the Committee invited Clover Moore to the first meeting for 2013. The purpose of the invitation was:

- ✓ to thank Clover for the initiatives that have been completed in Glebe. These include the foreshore walk, *Earth V Sky* installation, Glebe Point Rd upgrade, Walter Burley Griffin site, Foley Park, Harold Park open space, the Glebe Town Hall restoration and much more;
- ✓ to inform the Lord Mayor of the Society's concerns and initiatives for the future of Glebe; and
- ✓ to support Council with relevant submissions such as planning system, draft public transport long-term plan, Infrastructure NSW plan and Federal Heritage policy. So when policies are decided the Glebe Society is keen to help implement and enrich the relationships. Prime examples include, *Connecting our City* and *Sustainable Sydney 2030*.

We want these strategies to happen. We see the City of Sydney as our ally and we want to work with the City to achieve positive outcomes.

Concerns raised by the Society included:

- How can the people of the Glebe Estate gain their entitlement of properly maintained homes? How can this wonderful Victorian heritage be secured, whilst protecting tenants?
- The White Paper on Planning;
- The Bays Precinct Task Force Report (sensitive development of Bays);
- The LGA Review;
- How can the Glebe Society work with the City to see Sustainable Sydney 2030 implemented expeditiously?
- How can the Glebe Society work with its community to improve social capital and village commerce?

Clover informed the members of the following issues:

- Work on the upgrade of Jubilee Park playground and the timeframe.
- A trial of late night events at the library, to be held in June-July.

- Discussions about creating a Glebe Neighbourhood Advisory Board.
- Discussion about whether the Bays Precinct Taskforce paper has been considered by cabinet.
- Copy of the Planning Green Paper submission comments to be sent to Society.
- Discussion about State Government plans to amalgamate councils. Clover said a prominent community campaign would be necessary and asked the Society to be involved.
- Urban Ecology Strategic Action Plan is due to be reported to the next Committee meetings (18 and 25 March).
- Mapping existing plaques: community members are mapping existing plaques (approx. 5,000 plaques) based on a package of information from City staff.
- The Society asked how to be informed about major developments or work that fall outside Council's jurisdiction.

Discussion with Clover was lively and informative and the Management Committee members were very appreciative of the Lord Mayor's attendance. The Deputy Lord Mayor Robyn Kemmis and a staff officer, Brigid Kelly also attended.

Thank you, Clover, for your presence and ongoing support in Glebe.

*Jan Wilson*

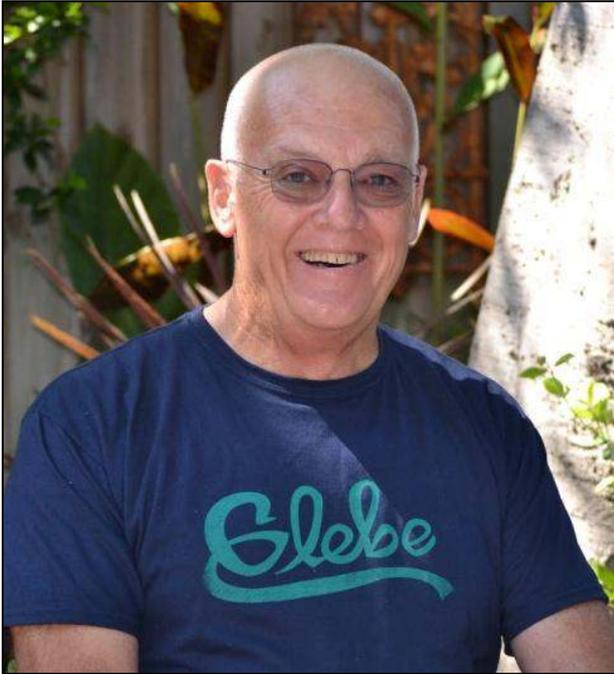
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*"Maintenance of the Glebe Estate is poor and some people live in unsatisfactory conditions. Victorian housing stock may be expensive to maintain but the rights of tenants are irreducible. Community and heritage intertwine and form identity and a sense of place. Any threat to the Glebe Estate is therefore a threat to the identity of Glebe."*

This is an extract from 'Why is the Glebe Estate Important?' The full article can be found on page 7 of this Bulletin.

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## PRESIDENT'S PAGE



John Gray, President (Image: Di Gray)

### Strategy 2013 to 2019

Every five years or so the Glebe Society considers its constitutional aims and prepares a Strategic Plan. This Strategy then becomes the basis for rolling annual plans, which of course are adjusted to suit changes in context. Thirty of us including the Management Committee, invited members and non-members will meet on April 7 and work through ideas.

The workshop will focus upon our next six years bringing us up to our fiftieth birthday. We will consider our vision for Glebe in 2019 and how we can improve prospects for that vision occurring. Its logic will **not** be to **project from current plans**, though these may be fine, for its purpose is to look beyond what we do and **consider what we should do**. For example I would argue that although building community is mentioned in several of our constitutional aims we have not defined a strategy for what we wish and consequently cannot evaluate how well we do.

The workshop will produce a draft which will be made available to all members for comment before its adoption, If you have any strategic ideas please email me.

### Inaction Scars Glebe

The site at Cowper and Elger Sts consisted entirely of affordable housing. Now it is a bare sandstone outcrop. It has been thus since 2010. All the houses have gone and although a DA for development was submitted, and withdrawn in 2011 by Housing NSW, nothing further has occurred.

So, after three years we have 150 people relocated from their homes, one successful DA to knock the homes down, one withdrawn DA to develop and promises. The Coalition of Glebe Groups (COGG) was assured by Housing NSW that a new DA would be submitted early in 2013 with work to start in July. My most recent conversations with Housing reveal that 'any DA is stuck' and there have been off the record comments from Treasury that there are no funds. This seems odd given that the Federal Government allocated \$9 million dollars to this project.

I am following the matter up with Jamie Parker, our local Member of the Legislative Assembly, who has asked the NSW government searching questions on the matter, and Tanya Plibersek, our federal Member of Parliament, who had housing in her portfolio when funds were supplied.

If you want to get involved email me.



Neglected site at Cowper and Elger Sts (Image: Jan Wilson)

## Housing NSW Tenants Deserve a Fair Go

I attended a meeting at which an official from Housing NSW agreed that tenants who complain about maintenance of their homes in the Glebe Estate and more broadly do not get effective service. The official told us:

1. They wait too long for attention at the Call Centre or 'drop in days' at the Old Fire Station.
2. They are not informed when their work will be done.
3. Housing NSW does not have customer service criteria by which its performance can be monitored.
4. Any work which is done is specific to the complaint and does not attend to other, perhaps contributing, factors.
5. People who rank highly on the priority list for housing typically have need of

community services but these do not transfer with them from other suburbs.

6. The maintenance generally throughout Housing NSW sites in Glebe and Forest Lodge is poor.
7. Some sites have been sold on the Glebe Estate because of lack of maintenance.
8. Why it is every other agency's fault that Housing NSW cannot do its job.

I really feel sad. It must be hard to 'clock on' when you are being prevented from helping people who do not have running water, have mould on their walls, whose wonderful 1850s working class homes and their wonderful community are being demolished by neglect. I reckon Tom Uren should counsel him and his colleagues. Don't you?

*John Gray*

## PLANNING MATTERS

### 20 Glebe Point Rd, Montrose

This application is for a three storey redevelopment of the stables at the rear of this heritage building. It is very similar to the previous proposal, and the Society will object on the same grounds of excessive height in relation to the existing building and to the rear lane and the buildings that line it. The Society has no objection to a development of reduced height.

### 73 Glebe Point Rd

This shop, formerly the Turkish Cushion House, was partly destroyed by fire last October and subsequently demolished. It is proposed to rebuild it in the same style, with all the features that made it a significant building in the street.

### Better Planning Network

The Society joined the Network last September, with the aim of securing the best outcome for the Government's proposed changes to the planning regime. The Network attracts a wide range of organisations with environmental and planning concerns, and the number of affiliated groups has now reached 300. According to media reports the Planning White Paper on which new legislation will be based has been

further delayed because there was still no agreement about how new infrastructure associated with development was going to be paid for. The BPN believes the White Paper will be available shortly.

### Environmental Defender secures funding

The Society wrote in support of the Environmental Defender's Office retaining its funding, and this campaign appears to have been at least partly successful. The EDO has secured \$1.2 million for the forthcoming year.

### Johnstons Creek Parklands Masterplan

I attended the City's Environment Committee on Monday 18 March, and spoke about the need to set clear stages for this very large project, involving 19ha of parkland, 4.2ha of which is new (land adjacent to The Crescent, and the land dedication at Harold Park). It is likely the Masterplan will be exhibited for public comment shortly, and that further discussion will take place.

*Neil Macindoe*



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## Background on the Johnstons Creek Parklands Masterplan

The Johnstons Creek Parklands include many existing parks, such as Federal, Jubilee and Bicentennial Parks, plus Council-owned land near the railway viaduct and the 3.8 hectares of new parkland to be transferred from Harold Park, and the Hill. The City has held two consultations to glean the views of residents, the most recent on 8 December last year. Attendance has been large and enthusiastic. The Masterplan came to Council on 18 March this year.

The Society made a submission which is too long to be included in the Bulletin. What follows is a summary of the main points to guide members when the Masterplan is exhibited for comment. Points are listed under Council's six headings for ease of reading.

### Transport, Access and Circulation

The Society emphasised the importance of access by foot and bicycle, plus the proposed extended Light Rail and buses. Car parking should be limited to the current area at Federal Rd and the area adjacent to The Crescent.

### Heritage

Heritage areas include possible Aboriginal remains, the viaduct, the Tramsheds, Jubilee and Bicentennial Parks, cricket pavilion and Allen Truss Bridge. All the surroundings and approaches are of high heritage value.

### Water

The Society stressed the importance of water and water views, and supported the naturalisation of the creek and extension of wetlands and mangroves provided this was feasible and had no adverse impacts.

### Environment

There is a very wide variety of issues here, but the key seems to be to provide a wider variety of habitats while maintaining the majority of the parklands for passive recreation of various kinds. Other major issues include corridors and pathways to connect areas short of open space with the parklands, and a complete reworking of the Hill.

### Recreation and Community Facilities

Cafés and amenities should be located within existing buildings where possible, especially the

Tramsheds. Sporting fields should be flood-proofed, and an additional sports field created, as well as a playground. There are also opportunities for additional picnic facilities. Water craft should be limited to those without motors. There are significant educational opportunities.

### Character and Visual Amenity

The Society has suggested greater variety, particularly in the plantings generally, and also the treatment of the Hill. The former garden near the Tramsheds should be reinstated, together with the World War One Memorial. There are opportunities to create greater diversity with different levels and views, while ensuring harmony with the surrounding areas and secluded corridors.

The Glebe Society's full submission can be viewed on the website.

*Neil Macindoe*

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## The NBN is coming to 2037 soon

The National Broadband Network (NBN) is coming to Glebe, Forest Lodge and parts of Annandale, with construction now scheduled to commence in the area in April 2013. That doesn't mean, however, that you'll be able to connect to the super-fast NBN this year. The NBN Co defines construction as including planning and issuing contracts to construction partners so that they can commence detailed design and field inspections. It also signals the date from which engagement with the local community and council commences. The last construction is then scheduled to commence in June 2014. They will mostly use the existing Telstra underground ducts.

If you live in a strata-titled block, then no work will be done to supply your block until your Body Corporate has provided consent to the NBN to install the cable and equipment on its premises.

The NBN will provide you with both internet and phone services. Internet speeds will be considerably higher than at present. Generally speaking, the fastest possible internet speeds available at home today via a modem connected to the phone line is about two megabytes per second, whereas the NBN can provide up to 10 megabytes per second. The NBN proudly proclaims its 100 Mb a second, but they're talking about megabits not megabytes.

If you choose to accept the NBN into your home, then your existing phone handset will plug directly into the newly supplied network termination device (NBN modem). Unlike the current phone system, in case of a power failure your phone will stop working after about five hours when the NBN battery backup in your home is exhausted, and you will then need to rely on a mobile phone. The backup battery will need to be replaced every few years.

There will be no requirement for you to use the new NBN for phone and internet services; at least not for 18 months after the NBN is available for your home, but the Telstra copper cables will then be disconnected and possibly removed in order to recover the vast amounts of valuable copper. You will then have no choice but to switch over to the NBN.

Once you connect to the internet via the NBN, you will no longer require an ADSL modem, so keep this in mind if you are planning to replace your current modem in the next year or so. You will connect your computer to the NBN via a standard blue network cable, however wireless ('wi-fi') access at home will require you to obtain a device called a 'Wireless Access Point' or a 'Wireless Router' for at least \$100, depending on your needs.



**Rolling out of the NBN (Image: Sydney Morning Herald)**

Whilst the NBN provides the cabling and hardware, you will access the NBN as a customer of one of the many internet service providers (ISPs). Internet access via the NBN will cost about \$50 a month for a basic plan, with ordinary download limits at ordinary speeds. Or you can pay \$80-\$100 a month for a high download limit at super-fast speeds. Go to the websites for iiNet, Optus or Telstra to see the details of their plans, along with some other ISPs; Telstra is the most expensive and with lower data limits and slower speeds. Phone services will also be provided by those ISPs, with a range of phone plans available for both budget and heavy users.

The NBN Co will contact each householder when the NBN is available for you, and I expect that won't happen until late 2013 at the earliest.

*Phil Young*

## ***FROM THE TERRACES***

### **Bravo! Glebe Town Hall**

Glebe Town Hall (1880) has reopened after a meticulous renovation which included repairs to the external and internal fabric of the building, improvements to acoustic performance, new catering and bathroom facilities, improved access and the preservation and highlighting of heritage features.

The local community had the opportunity to inspect the restoration on Saturday 2 March and as I looked at the faces around me, I could see amazement, pleasure and a deep sense of pride.

The airy glass enclosure at the rear of the building, designed by architects Tonkin Zulaikha

Greer, not only improves access and light but also allows users to enjoy the clever linkages and hitherto inaccessible views of stained glass, revitalised iron lace, burnished wooden banisters and other decorative features.

Ambrose Thornley Jnr, the architect of Glebe Town Hall, also designed *Bellevue* on the Glebe Point foreshore. We have the City of Sydney to thank for restoring both of these iconic Glebe buildings and preserving their useful lives.

Let us hope that users and hirers of the spaces within Glebe Town Hall will enjoy and value the experience and respect the building's new-found beauty and new-found functionality.

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## Ambrose Thornley Jnr, Glebe Town Hall Architect

Ambrose Thornley Jnr was born in Glebe in 1844. Max Solling in *Grandeur & Grit* notes that Thornley "began working in the building industry under the tutelage of his father, as a carpenter, graduating to master builder from 1864 until 1872 when he was elected architect for the Industrial Provident Building Society."

Thornley was one of the most active architects in Glebe during the 1870s. Solling notes that in a period of just over 20 years, Thornley had called tenders on about 100 buildings, including houses, villas, cottages, corner shops, etc.

He built and lived in the Picturesque Gothic *Florence Villa* (1873-6) in Leichhardt St. Most notably, however, he will be remembered as the architect of Glebe Town Hall.

However, the economic depression of the 1890s caught up with Thornley and he was declared bankrupt in 1895. He died in 1911.

Thornley's output also included the former *Gresham Hotel*, Corner of York St and Druitt St (1890-94) which from the George Street intersection, sits visually and harmoniously (if on a rather smaller scale) between the Town Hall and the Queen Victoria Building (QVB).

*For this and other sketches of early Glebe*

*Architects, go to*

<http://www.glebewalks.com.au/Glebe-Architects>.

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## Bravo! Author Kate Grenville on heritage

Novelist Kate Grenville, writing in the Sydney Morning Herald (11 March 2013) about the threat to Thompson Square at Windsor, stated "...Losing so much of our past is a national tragedy. It's left us with many stately homes and grand public buildings, but very few places that tell us about how ordinary people lived..."

This resonates with those of us in the Glebe Society who believe that the built form of the Glebe Estate tells us vividly about the lives and living conditions of its early occupants. As Grenville points out, "ordinary" folk left few written records because few of them could read or write. However, the lack of written record cannot in any way deny the daily struggle of "ordinary" folk to live productive lives, raise families and put food on the table.

"History used to be all about the top lot. Now we recognise that to fully understand the past we need the perspective of the bottom and middle lots as well," Kate Grenville wrote.

*Liz Simpson-Booker*

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## WHY IS THE GLEBE ESTATE IMPORTANT? (PART 2)

*Vanessa Witton and John Gray's piece on the local and national significance of the Glebe Estate continues from the previous Bulletin. If you missed Part 1, you can read or download Bulletin 1/2013 here: [http://glebesociety.org.au/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/file/bulletins/2013\\_01.pdf](http://glebesociety.org.au/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/file/bulletins/2013_01.pdf).*

### 1974 – Glebe Project

In December 1972 the new Federal Labor Government, headed by Gough Whitlam, created the Department of Urban and Regional Development (DURD). Tom Uren, Minister for Urban and Regional Development, recognised that the Glebe lands were a perfect opportunity to show that urban renewal could take place without disturbing communities and their physical environment. Uren was concerned about poverty and the need to protect the traditional ways of life within long-standing urban communities. The Glebe Estate was a timely opportunity to

implement Uren's groundbreaking vision very early in his appointment as Minister.

In July 1973 DURD commissioned a feasibility study regarding acquisition, housing types, and administration methods on the Estate. Consultancy firm Jackson Teece Chesterman and Willis undertook the physical and social study and reported:

*The architectural importance of the area is of a special kind. ... Within the area cottage types and terrace types of great importance for an understanding of the development of architecture in Australia have survived. ... They are unique in Sydney and even in Australia.<sup>4</sup>*

This appraisal echoed that of Bernard and Kate Smith, who had already recognised this type of cottage as the dwelling best able to show the survival of a style:

*It is in the cottage that the survival of the Georgian and the Regency in Glebe may be studied in more detail and more profitably.*<sup>6</sup>

Amongst other recommendations, Jackson Teece Chesterman and Willis noted that although dilapidated, the housing was worth rehabilitating. In November 1973 the Commonwealth Government reported that it would acquire and rehabilitate the 700 dwellings and 60 commercial buildings on the Glebe Estate. In April 1974 the Commonwealth purchased the Glebe Estate from the Church for \$17.5 million.

‘Glebe Project’ was the name used from 1974 to describe the Commonwealth’s rehabilitation activities on the Estate. It was considered “a unique demonstration of an alternative approach to housing and construction in Australia”<sup>4</sup>. The Glebe Project Office opened 12 August 1974 at 113-115 Mitchell St Glebe, comprising a small terrace house and the old Glebe Fire Station.

#### **Tom Uren AC**

We are proud to celebrate Tom Uren’s prestigious award of Companion of the Order of Australia in the 2013 Australia Day honours. Uren was the Minister whose radical leadership of the Department of Urban and Regional Affairs (DURD) was instrumental in creating and funding several cutting-edge urban renewal projects. In Sydney these were the rehabilitation of Glebe, Woolloomooloo and Redfern. The project was so successful that it served as a model for inner areas in other cities, most notably Bologna in Italy.

In front of No. 4 Mount Vernon St is a historical plaque that commemorates his achievements in Glebe:

*This plaque recognises the efforts of Tom Uren who in 1974 as Federal Minister for Urban and Regional Development in the Whitlam Government led the struggle to save the Glebe Estate for working people, public housing tenants and the people of Australia. Unveiled on behalf of*

*the people of NSW by the Hon Andrew Refshauge, MP Deputy Premier, Minister for Planning, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister for Housing 6 February 2003.*

#### **Conclusion**

Today the Glebe Estate serves as a rare, largely intact and cohesive, record of Victorian architecture from the third quarter of the nineteenth century. Rehabilitation rather than redevelopment demonstrated that heritage and low cost housing could combine to protect a continuously occupied working class and low-income precinct, which is intrinsic to the identity of Glebe.

However the Glebe Estate protection is under threat due to inadequate maintenance by its cash-poor landlord. It is almost as if we repeat a cycle in which a well-meaning landlord cannot maintain property due to an institutionalised system. The Church of England faced controlled rents. Housing NSW now faces lack of state government funding. Both models affect our people, our Victorian heritage housing stock and our community.

Maintenance of the Glebe Estate is poor and some people live in unsatisfactory conditions. Victorian housing stock may be expensive to maintain but the rights of tenants are irreducible. Community and heritage intertwine and form identity and a sense of place. Any threat to the Glebe Estate is therefore a threat to the identity of Glebe.

In our next article we will review the heritage houses and streetscapes of the Glebe Estate and provide historical stories of the people who lived there. In our last article we will analyse the problems: “How can the Glebe Estate be properly maintained for its current tenants?” and “How can the Glebe Estate be retained in the long term?” We won’t have answers but the discussion will be worthwhile.

Please join that discussion by emails to [president@glebesociety.org.au](mailto:president@glebesociety.org.au), letters to the Editor or on the website.

**Sources:** <sup>1</sup> Kelly, J-F.; Breadon, P.; Davis, C.; Hunter, A.; Mares, P.; Mullerworth, D.; Weidmann, B., 2012, *Social Cities*, Grattan Institute, Melbourne.; <sup>2</sup> Heritage Council of NSW. *Submission on NSW Planning*, 2012.; <sup>3</sup> Neil Macindoe. *The Glebe Estate*. (unpublished); <sup>4</sup> Department of Housing and Construction. *Glebe Project*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1980.; <sup>5</sup> Max Solling. *Grandeur and Grit: A History of Glebe*, Halstead Press, Ultimo, NSW, 2007.; <sup>6</sup> Bernard and Kate Smith. *The Architectural Character of Glebe*, University of Sydney Press, NSW, 1973.

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## Two Glebes ...?

*Glebe Society member, Ian Edwards, shares his perceptions on social divisions in Glebe.*

Glebe is a divided suburb, perhaps not to the extent of Disraeli's two nations or Kipling's East and West but, nevertheless, divided. Its name originated in the grant of land by Governor Phillip to the Church of England which the Reverend Richard Johnson was reported to have described, somewhat ungraciously, as "four hundred acres not worth four hundred pence". Parts of the estate at the north-western end of what is now Glebe Point Rd, particularly those which commanded a waterfront view, came to be seen as desirable places of residence for the more prosperous citizens of the colony while still being at a convenient distance from their businesses or professional rooms in the city and were sold to people such as the solicitor (later Sir) George Wigram Allen. St Scholastica's and Lyndhurst are legacies of this period.

The division between the more affluent middle class end of Glebe and the predominantly working class end is not as clear cut as it was in the nineteenth century but it still exists. The Rules of Te Glebe Society Inc define Glebe as "the area bounded by Wattle St, Sydney Harbour, Johnston's Creek and Parramatta Rd" but, without having access to the Society's membership list, I have no hesitation in asserting that the overwhelming majority of its members would be found in that part of Glebe to the north-west of St Johns Rd. The Whitlam government, largely at the instigation of the then Minister for Urban and Regional Development, Tom Uren, bought what was left of the original grant from the Church of England; the Fraser government didn't want it and sold it to the NSW government who placed it under the administration of the Housing Commission.

This is not to say that the Glebe Society is totally uninterested in the rest of the suburb as evidenced recently in the considerable help the Society gave to the celebration of the sesquicentenary of Glebe Public School and its current support of Centipede but perhaps we should all try to be more aware of the problems and needs of the more disadvantaged members of our community.

That the social division in Glebe will ever completely disappear is probably too much to hope for but we could all play some part in bridging the gap.

*Ian Edwards*



**Glebe Public School (Image: Glebe School P&C)**

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## Colin Leslie James, 1936 – 2013

The words that headed the *Sydney Morning Herald's* obituary for Col James on February 23 were "giant architect built for justice". The wonderful wake held at the Redfern Community Centre on Saturday 1 March went on for hours as many hundreds of people celebrated the life of this great educator. A wide cross section of people – local Redfern people, social justice activists, academics, students and architects of all stripes – were there to honour the life of this 'quiet revolutionary'. One of the many great speakers asked would Sydney University employ him if he applied for a job today and suggested that they might not. Thank God they did back in the late 1960s.

Col James had all the required professional credentials – an architecture degree from UNSW, a Master of Architecture from Harvard, and a Diploma in Town and Country Planning from the University of Sydney where he was for many decades a member of the Architecture faculty. He became Director of its Ian Buchan Fell Housing Research Centre. In 1994, James was made a Member of the Order of Australia for services to

architecture and the community and he received the NSW Royal Australian Institute of Architects President's Medal in 2003.

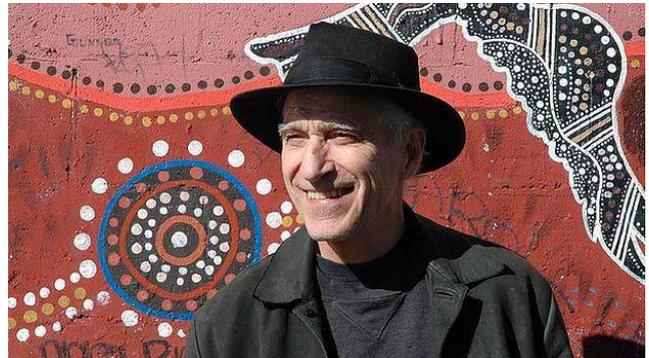
But he will be remembered for much more than the bones of this professional career indicate, and the memories will be held in the wider community as much as in the academic one.

What drives many architects is the desire to create excellence in the built form. What drove Col James was the desire to make architecture and buildings work for social good. He was influenced by European architects who were dealing with huge housing shortage and squatter issues following World War II and his passion was to educate students into the possibilities of working in their chosen career to improve the lives of the poor and the homeless. His legacy is the thousands of lives he touched as a teacher and as an activist and an intellectual and in the many projects he worked for to develop co-operative and low income models for housing, in inner Sydney, and for Indigenous and rural communities. If you rang him up at Sydney University and got his recorded message, it always asked you to "make housing a verb"

As a young man in the early 1970s he became involved in South Sydney Community Aid and he worked with elder Shirley Smith (Mum Shirl), Fr. Ted Kennedy and others to form the Aboriginal Housing Company, which bought houses in Redfern with the Whitlam government's support. Col James remained involved all his life in pro bono activities for the area which is known as The Block and with the Pemulwuy Project which aims to reinvigorate this troubled area. Several Indigenous friends and colleagues, as well as many others, spoke warmly of Col James at his wake.

In the early '70s Col James was employed by the Whitlam government as a residents' advocate in Woolloomooloo when planned major redevelopments threatened that community, and old timers can still remember the little house he occupied, with a teapot stuck on the outside to welcome anyone who needed to drop in to talk tactics or let off steam. He joined the BLF (Builders Labourers Federation) and provided advice to those involved in the Green Bans, and around this time he also found time to get involved in planning for the 1973 university students' arts festival, which became the first

Aquarius Festival. Anyone else might have just held the festival on campus, but by taking it to Nimbin in northern NSW Col used it to show students how unused rural property could be usefully recycled. And the rest, as they say, is history.



**Col James (Image: *Sydney Morning Herald*)**

Reusing surplus buildings was something he did and something he taught. When the University was expanding into Darlington he bought a disused factory slap in the middle of the land they coveted, and turned it into cooperative housing against the opposition of South Sydney Council. He lived there for the rest of his life. There were other similar projects and he gave unstintingly of his professional skills to work with squatter groups and social housing programs including Shelter NSW, the Tenants Union of NSW, Homes on Aboriginal Land (HOAL). In the late 1980s he was seconded from the university to establish the Homes on Aboriginal Land program for the NSW Department of Housing. In the early 2000s, after a study tour of Britain and Europe where he investigated use of surplus building stock by the homeless, he worked back here in Sydney with developers, architects and government to set up CRASH (Construction industry Relief and Assistance for the Single Homeless).

There are no grand homes or public buildings in Sydney designed by Col James. That didn't interest him. But he passed on many grand ideas and there are many who work in the profession and in the wider community for social justice who put it down to Col James that they learned to think critically about the social purpose of buildings, spaces and design.

*Shirley Fitzgerald*

Former City Historian for the City of Sydney

## WHO LIVED IN YOUR STREET?

### **Edwina Doe, 224 Bridge Rd, Forest Lodge**

Edwina recently retired as long-term editor of the *Glebe Society's Bulletin*. Her work in that capacity was the subject of an article in *Bulletin* 5/2009. This is a further tribute to 'Ed the Ed', by Lyn Collingwood



**Edwina Doe 1976**

Edwina – her name means ‘wealthy friend’ – was born in Battersea, the eldest of three children. Her mother was an ophthalmic nurse, her father a London Transport bus maintenance man. When war broke out her father served in the army and the family moved to Twickenham where Edwina was educated at Twickenham County School, an all girls school with an emphasis on academic achievement. A quiet, serious child with her head always in a book, Edwina left school at 16 as her pay packet was needed by the family. Following an interview arranged by her father she was employed by London Transport, firstly as a clerk in the publicity department and after a few months in its laboratory. Her next job was at the local hospital as a trainee laboratory technician. A keen cyclist, she used that mode of transport to get to work and to the local technical college where she studied laboratory technology. Edwina’s other interests were camping, bushwalking, bellringing and membership of the Richmond YHA social group whose newsletter she edited and ran off on a Roneo duplicator.

At 21 Edwina took her first overseas holiday – to France, Andorra and Spain – with a boyfriend and another young couple before taking up a new job testing toiletries for Unilever. In 1960 she moved into market research, a field of study then in its infancy. From designing and testing questionnaires she moved to the position of interviewing team supervisor with Gillette’s. In

her leisure hours Edwina went bushwalking and camping with the Twickenham 21 Club and served on its committee.

In 1964 as an unsponsored ‘ten pound Pom’ Edwina flew alone to Sydney. The only migration requirements were passing a medical and having £40 in the bank on arrival. The warm weather and a day’s sightseeing with a cousin were enough to convince her she’d made the right decision. Within a week she started working for Beacon Research in Unilever House at Circular Quay, in an office with a view of the Opera House being built. She was soon living in a group house in Cremorne. After five years with Beacon (during which time she was on the committee of the Unilever House Staff Club) Edwina moved to ASRB, another market research company, joined the Market Research Society of NSW and served on its committee, editing its newsletter and the *Interviewers’ Handbook*. She then became a partner in a small market research company, Tavistock Research, whose government surveys included a part of the Henderson Commission into Poverty.

In 1980 Edwina, with her secretary and team of casual interviewers, joined another market research company, MRA. She remained with this company, under various managements, until her retirement in 2002.

In 1972 Edwina realised that she was a feminist and became an active member of the Women’s Electoral Lobby. She helped to edit *Well Informed* for 14 years.

In 1974 Edwina confirmed her affection for Australia by being naturalised.

In retirement, Edwina turned to voluntary service with the Glebe Society, the Adult Migrant English Service, Radio 2RPH and the Red Cross Trauma Teddy knitting program.

Edwina’s love of travel has not diminished since her first modest European trip in 1957. In 1991 she travelled through the USA and

Canada; she made frequent family trips to the UK; visited China in 1997; cruised to Canada, Alaska and Hawaii in 2003; and went to Antarctica in 2004. In 2001, using a round the world ticket – a 65<sup>th</sup> birthday present from her bosses – she toured through Europe and America and safaried in Africa.

### Edwina's house

Edwina moved to Glebe on Melbourne Cup Day in 1976. Looking for a house with space to live and work, she and her business partner settled on 224 Bridge Rd, a deceased estate subdivided into three dwellings. Edwina had a mental image of the owner as 'a little old lady' but discovered from real estate agent and Glebe Society member Eileen Lacy that it was an investment property owned by a young man from the Eastern Suburbs who had met with a skiing accident in Europe. The deposit of \$500 was paid but it took time to find a mortgagee as the property was DMR affected, with plans to widen Bridge Rd. At the rear was a large vacant block with plenty of space for parking and stables for three trotting ponies (Edwina took a bag of manure to friends' parties instead of 'a bottle'.) In 1998 she and her neighbours lost a court action against developers and Leichhardt Council and the block is now covered by St Johns Wood, a complex of 17 townhouses.



Rear of 224 Bridge Rd in 1976

Number 224 Bridge Rd is in a terrace of ten built 1913-14 on or close to the site of the original Forest Lodge House. Early occupiers of Munro Terrace included Mary and Annie Cummins at no. 220 and Elsie Armstrong at no. 222. Labourer John Martin Knutsen and his wife Mary Ellen were neighbours at no. 226

where their three-year-old son Cyril died in 1914 and where Mary's mother Elizabeth Baird died in 1925.

Music teacher Bruce Sheldon Green was living in 224 Bridge Rd by 1915 when he was offering board and lodging accommodation. Soon after advertising in 1919 for a rental cottage in 'a decent suburb' he moved to Rose Bay. He subsequently lived at Double Bay and Chatswood (where he died in 1969). Known occupiers of Edwina's house after Green's departure include Miss Jane Brady; widow Franzeska Loops née Schacht; Mrs May Brennan; labourer William Forrester and his wife Margaret; and GPO letter carrier John Vernon and his wife Fanny. Long-term owner-occupiers were RAAF leading aircraftman John Francis Garvey (1905-69) and Veronica Elizabeth née Hand. John returned home after war service but had left by 1954. His wife sold the building in 1973.

*Lyn Collingwood*

**Sources:** Australian War Memorial; NSW births, deaths, marriages registry; NSW electoral rolls; Personal information from Edwina Doe; Jocelyne A Scutt (ed.) *Singular Women: reclaiming spinsterhood* 1995; *Sydney Morning Herald* 7 June 1913, 18 October 1913, 2 December 1913, 26 October 1915, 22 July 1919, 23 May 1935

### Glebe novelist Justin Sheedy's new book

*Vanessa Witton recently interviewed Justin Sheedy at his local, the Toxteth Hotel on Glebe Point Rd.*

The first thing that strikes you on meeting Glebe author Justin Sheedy is that he's a man of passion. It's a trait which shines through in his writing and is one reason – combined with the fact that he tells a great Australian story – that his latest book has been so warmly received. *Nor the Years Condemn* is a tale of shining young men destined never to grow old, an historical fiction based on the stunning true and untold story of the young Australians who flew Spitfires against Nazi tyranny in WWII.

*VW: What was your inspiration to write this story?*

*JS: First of all I wanted to tell a truly great Australian war story of which, by contrast to our Gallipoli story, most Australians are unaware. Gallipoli is so important to us, as there we discovered who we were as nation: a young*

people looking after each other in the midst of the worst situation imaginable, all while fighting a heroic defeat for our imperial masters. *Nor the Years Condemn* is based on a true story of Gallipoli magnitude; not one of heroic defeat but of stunning victory, albeit at tragic cost.

VW: *These Australian Spitfire pilots – how young were they exactly?*

JS: In their late teens and early 20s. Hadn't had a girlfriend yet. 1939, England, alone against Nazi Germany, calls out to its British Empire, "HELP. Send us pilots". Every young Australian male says "Pick ME!" yet to fly a Spitfire, only the "best and brightest" could be picked. With staggering irony, this "best and brightest" had volunteered for one of the fastest ways to die of the War. First time on a ship, if they survived being torpedoed they got to England where they flew Spitfires against young German gentlemen; when they should all have been Olympians against each other, Formula 1 drivers; for this was the kind of young men they were –because they had to be.

VW: *Riveting stuff...*

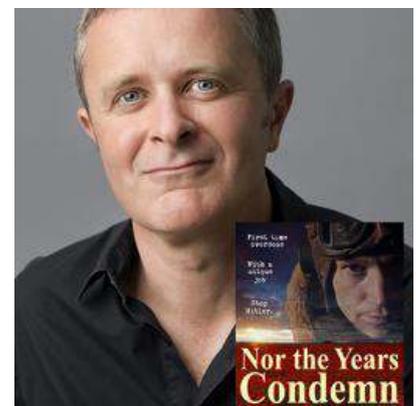
JS: Precisely! It's a saga so exciting, so tragic, so dramatic as to seem the stuff of science fiction, and yet it's true! And it's just so rewarding for me that readers are engaging with

my story as the anti-war portrait I intended; one of young people doing with such brilliance, style and world-beating heroism what they should never have been asked to do: end a war. Which they did.

VW: *Who do you see as your readership for this book?*

JS: It's been to my delight and relief that I've had *grandmothers* vowing, "I laughed and cried, didn't want it to end, I was right in the cockpit with the main character!" Also, it's very much a mothers' story too, as for every shining young man who flew a Spitfire, there was the poor mother cursed to let him go.

Vanessa Witton



Glebe author, Justin Sheedy  
(Image supplied by the author)

## BE INVOLVED

### Working Bee at Tranby

Tranby Aboriginal College is re-establishing its community connections, social justice and adult education focus. The new Chair of the Board of the Co-operative for Aborigines Ltd. (Tranby) Darlene Hoskins-McKenzie, is seeking to rebuild the Friends of Tranby through regular meetings and activities.

On Saturday 20 and Sunday 21 April, the Friends of Tranby are organising a working bee in the Tranby gardens at 13 Mansfield St, Glebe. This is to be the first in many joint projects. Apart from the gardening, there are a couple of small maintenance tasks to be undertaken.

We will start each day at 9am and finish up at 4pm. A BBQ lunch will be provided at 12.30pm. For catering purposes, if you can come for any or

all of these times, could you let the College know on 9660 3444? You might like to join the Friends – we will have application forms available.

Bobbie Burke

### NAIDOC 2013 Glebe

The Glebe NAIDOC committee is excited to invite local community to participate in the planning of celebration of NAIDOC week this year. The theme is: *We value the vision: Yirrkala Bark Petitions 1963*.

NAIDOC week is a whole of community celebration held across Australia each July to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

To get involved please come along to a planning meeting to be held in April; most likely Wednesday 24 April at 11.30am at Glebe Public School Winangaay Room.

If you are interested in coming to the meeting, phone Kate on 9566 1285 to confirm the date. The Committee will meet at least monthly until NAIDOC Week in July.

*Bobbie Burke*

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### Volunteer homework helpers needed

*The Heart of Glebe* is looking for Volunteer Tutors for our Homework Helpers Club – we would like to keep our one-on-one ratio with students and this means we need about six more volunteers.

The time needed is about 3.15 to 5pm Thursday afternoons during school terms. We meet at the Old Fire Station. The children are Infants and Primary aged and basic Maths and English proficiency is all that is required of tutors.

If folk would like to call me, I would be happy to talk with them. My contact numbers are: 0426 503 351 or 9692 8377 (please leave a message).

*Julie Brackenreg*

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### Political Correctness Gone Mad?

Thursday 11 April 2013 at 6 for 6.30 pm; Harold Park Hotel, Forest Lodge

With; **John Derum**, retired actor, exhausted political satirist, indefatigable gadfly, champion of Australian writers, recently viewed as a younger man in Shock Horror Aunty.

And; **Parnell Palme McGuinness**, principal of Thought Broker, a communications agency which specialises in making complex and abstract ideas engaging, editor of the contrarian Binge Thinking Magazine and convenor of Shaken and Stirred Salons. Parnell has written, edited and translated for an eclectic range of clients and outlets including the German Green Party and the Fairfax Press. Think about examples as much audience input will be invited.

Admission: \$10/\$7 for BASF (Bridge for Asylum Seekers Foundation). RSVP and enquiries: [katebarton3@optusnet.com.au](mailto:katebarton3@optusnet.com.au).

*Kate Barton*

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### Earth Day: Blue Wren habitat planting

Sunday April 21: Local Earth Day Celebrations, 10am-noon, Paddy Gray Reserve (between Hereford St and Wigram Lane, down from Walsh Avenue).

Join volunteers and Council staff planting native shrubs and groundcover species to provide habitat for Superb Fairy-wrens and other small birds now scarce in Glebe and Forest Lodge.

Wear sturdy shoes, hat and sunscreen and if possible bring gardening gloves and trowel. Morning tea will be provided. We hope to see you there!

*Andrew Wood*



**Blue Wren habitat planting day, Paddy Gray Reserve 2010 (Image: the Glebe Society )**

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### Balmain Walks Website Launch

Inspired by the Glebe Walks Website, Glebe Society member Meg Wallace has collaborated with Red Ant media on a Balmain Walks website for the Balmain Association. Glebe Society members are invited to attend the launch. Red Ant will demonstrate the first walk, which features 21 colonial Balmain buildings dating from 1840 to 1860. The new website provides a free, printable walking guide, with maps, illustrations and information about the 21 buildings. Initially designed for computers and tablets, a smartphone version is also in production. Light refreshments will be available.

6pm, Tuesday 30 April at Balmain Town Hall, 370 Darling St, Balmain

Bookings are essential. Contact [localhistory@lmc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:localhistory@lmc.nsw.gov.au) or phone Aimee Zar, 9367 9211.

*Margaret Wallace*

### Blue Wrens at Glebe Town Hall?

Although the Glebe Town Hall has been officially opened, its gardens still require attention to conform to the City's original plans for a biodiversity (Blue Wren friendly) garden.

The contractor's current plantings are incorrect and not as specified by the City. Chris McBride, Senior Design Manager, City Projects and Property, has informed the Society that they will be replaced with the originally requested native flora (*Grevillea sericea*, *Viminaria juncea*, *Bursaria spinosa* and *Acacia linifolia*). In addition a bird-bath will be installed and native grasses and scramblers (including *Hardenbergia violacea*) will be planted to improve the diversity of the ground cover.

The Town Hall gardens form part of a Blue Wren corridor linking the campus of the University of Sydney with John St and Paddy Gray Reserves in Glebe.

Andrew Wood

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### Glebe Shrimp

Foodies have been moving into the micro realm with micro herbs and vegetables. Glebe shrimp could be the next new craze, but they are not something you could put on the barbie.

Tiny little pink shrimp-like creatures invaded my kitchen last year. Approximately 1cm long, plump, pink and shaped like a new moon they seemed like water creatures because they were always dead when I found them. Sometimes one or two, sometimes a dozen or more – what were these visitors?

My friend Professor Google came to my aid, and with the help of photographs I identified the little ones as belonging to the family *Gammaridae*; water creatures that make their way to land and live in leaf mould and debris.

Too little water and they dry out; too much water and they move to a supposedly safer area. Unfortunately the kitchen floor is not an appropriate environment, and the inevitable occurs.

Subsequent to my own identification endeavours I took a sample to the Australian

Museum in Sydney where it was identified as lawn shrimp or hopper – *Arcitalitrus*.

So, whichever Archipod they are, one or two have appeared in the last month after heavy rains, and this time I have seen ants dragging off the carcasses – no doubt to put them on their barbecue.

Carole Herriman



**Arcitalitrus ('Lawn Shrimp')** (Image: <http://www.whatsthatbug.com>)

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### The Saga of *The Mixing Pot* continues

As I drove past the closed *Mixing Pot* restaurant in St Johns Rd in February, I saw that there was some work in progress. Luckily, I was able to talk to Gabriele Cesta, who told me that *The Mixing Pot* was opened in 1979, at 178 St Johns Rd. In 1997, the restaurant expanded into No. 180 next door.

In February 2011, the then owners, Gabriele Cesta and Simon Aoukar sold the restaurant business, but by October 2012 the new owners were in trouble and Gabriele took possession of the buildings. The buildings and the restaurant were offered for auction as a package in November but were passed in.

Gabriele says that very large restaurants are not commercially viable nowadays as they are expensive to equip and staff when business is inconsistent. He is restoring No. 178 as a 95 seat restaurant which he hopes to lease as a going concern, possibly a new *Mixing Pot*. We await the outcome with interest. He intends to sell No.180 as commercial premises with a dwelling upstairs.

In 2010 the Glebe Society presented Gabriele with a framed poster commemorating the history of Tiramisu, which first became popular at The Mixing Pot. I am pleased to say that Gabriele has given me the poster to look after until the future of the restaurant is known.

*Edwina Doe*



**Mixing Pot Tiramisu (Image:Mixing Pot website)**

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### Thirsty Thursdays

Members and friends are invited to meet in restaurants in and around Glebe, usually on the first Thursday of each month at 7pm, to eat and talk with other people who live in Glebe. We visit a different restaurant each month, varying cuisines. Put these dates in your diary now.

On Thursday 4 April we will go, by Light Rail if you like, to *The Persian Room*, 52 Harris St, Pyrmont. On Thursday 2 May we will go to *Despana*, 101 Glebe Point Rd. And on Thursday 6 June we will go to *Sushi-Ya* Japanese restaurant, 166 Glebe Point Rd (*The Valhalla*)

Email [thirstythursday@glebesociety.org.au](mailto:thirstythursday@glebesociety.org.au) or ring me on 9660 7066 by the Wednesday before the dinner to let me know if you are coming, or if you are likely to be late.

*Edwina Doe*

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### John St Reserve – work in progress

The City is conducting contamination studies in John St Reserve, originally the site of two factories and now to be established as a biodiversity garden.

To date, soil samples taken to a depth of 0.5m have revealed that the surface of the Reserve contains poor-quality ash. Further deeper testing will look for evidence of industrial and other waste and a decision will then be made as to whether remediation is required.

*Andrew Wood*

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### The Garden Show

Inner City Clayworkers Gallery; 10.30am-5pm (Wednesday to Sunday) until 14 April

The Garden Show consists of works by members of the Inner City Clayworkers Gallery Glebe with the theme of 'outdoor decorative pieces'. These range from the practical – vases of various shapes and designs, to the totally decorative – sculptural works that provide an eye-catching element to the garden.

Cnr St Johns Rd and Darghan St Glebe;  
Contact: 9692 9717; [info@clayworkers.com.au](mailto:info@clayworkers.com.au);  
[www.clayworkers.com.au](http://www.clayworkers.com.au)



**Exhibit from *The Garden Show*, Inner City Clay Workers Gallery (Image: John Tomlin)**

**Have you seen the Glebe Society's Facebook page? Join the conversation!**

**<http://www.facebook.com/TheGlebeSociety>**

## FOR YOUR CALENDAR

Thursday 4 April; 7pm; Thirsty Thursday: *The Persian Room*; 52 Harris St, Pyrmont.  
 Sunday 7 April, 11am-4pm; *A Regency Sunday at Home*, Elizabeth Farm. Bookings: [tickets.hht.net.au](http://tickets.hht.net.au).  
 Wednesday 10 April; 7-9 pm; Management Committee meeting; Glebe Town Hall.  
 Thursday 11 April; 6pm for 6.30pm; *Political Correctness Gone Mad?* Harold Park Hotel.  
 Sunday 14 April, 5.30pm; *Tell Me a Story*, Roxbury Hotel, 182 St Johns Rd, Glebe; Ph: 9692 0822.  
 Sat-Sun 20-21 April, 9am-4pm; Working Bee, Tranby College; 13 Mansfield St Glebe; Ph: 9660 3444.  
 Sunday 21 April, 10am-12noon; Working Bee, Paddy Gray Reserve. Contact [jancraney@bigpond.com](mailto:jancraney@bigpond.com).  
 Wednesday 24 April, 11.30am; NAIDOC planning meeting . Contact Kate on 9566 1285 to confirm the date.  
 17 April 5 May ; *Storm in a Tea Cup*, Inner City Clayworkers Gallery Glebe; Ph: 9692 9717.  
 Tuesday 30 April, 6pm; Balmain Walks Website launch, Balmain Town Hall.  
 Thursday 2 May, 7pm; Thirsty Thursday; *Despana*, 101 Glebe Point Rd.  
 Wednesday 8 May, 7-9 pm; Management Committee meeting; Glebe Town Hall.  
 Thursday 6 June, 7pm; Thirsty Thursday: *Sushi-Ya*, 166 Glebe Point Rd (*The Valhalla*).

### The Glebe Society Inc Established 1969

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| Glebe Society History                | Jeanette Knox          | 02 9660 1160 | <a href="mailto:jk2037@bigpond.net.au">jk2037@bigpond.net.au</a>   |
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# The Glebe Society Inc

PO Box 100 Glebe NSW 2037

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### Membership of the Glebe Society

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| Individual member   | \$45  |
| Joint (2 people, one address)                               | \$55  |
| Household (more than 2 adults and/or children, one address) | \$60  |
| Concession (student or pensioner)                           | \$20  |
| Institution or corporate                                    | \$110 |

### How to join

- ✓ download a membership form from [www.glebesociety.org.au](http://www.glebesociety.org.au); or
- ✓ write to the Secretary at PO Box 100, Glebe, 2037; or
- ✓ email [secretary@glebesociety.org.au](mailto:secretary@glebesociety.org.au).

### Community Contacts

#### Neighbourhood Services Centre

Manager: Nick Hespe  
Office: Glebe Library, 9am-5pm Mon-Fri.  
Phone: 9298 3191 or 0400 627 714.  
Email: [nhespe@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au](mailto:nhespe@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au)

#### Sydney City Council Customer Service

Telephone: 9265 9333(24 hours)  
Email: [council@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au)  
Website: [www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au](http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au)

#### Abandoned shopping trolleys

Trolley Tracker: 1800 641 497