

NPA CELEBRATES ITS 90TH YEAR



Members of Northbridge Progress Association at their first meeting in November 1919.

Northbridge Progress Association is celebrating its 90th anniversary with special celebrations on November 14. All residents are warmly invited, as well as former NPA members and committee members who may have moved out of the suburb. The event will include afternoon tea, free bus tours of places of interest in Northbridge and a competition for primary school children. The Federal Member for North Sydney, The Hon Joe Hockey MP, will be guest speaker.

NPA was formed in November 1919 with William Mulholland as its first President. The object in the original Constitution was "to do everything possible to further the interests of the district of Northbridge". NPA was to be non-sectarian and non-political.

THE EARLY YEARS

In its early years, NPA was concerned with many and varied matters relating to the development of a new suburb. Among these were sewage, drainage, roads, lighting, transport, control of dogs, laneways, bus shelter sheds, a post office, school buses, Long Bay reclamation scheme, tree planting, quarries in Northbridge, placing of letter collection boxes and public phone booths, cars in streets, trees blocking motorists' vision, fire hydrants, removal of 'hoboes and shacks', bus overcrowding, protection of wild flora and police protection, to name but a few.

As the suburb developed in the 1930s, the area east of Bonds Corner was much less developed than the older commercial area around Harden Ave and the new residential area near the Public School. The East Northbridge Progress Association was formed in 1936 to ensure the "orderly development" of east Northbridge. Transport was one of ENPA's greatest concerns. There was generally good cooperation between NPA and ENPA and the two organisations amalgamated in the late 1950s.

Among the important issues NPA has been involved in are:

- ◆ urging the RTA to retain the beautiful stone arches when the bridge was rebuilt in 1935;
- ◆ strenuously rejecting the suggestion that nine-storey flats could be built along Sailors Bay Rd;
- ◆ opposing the overdevelopment of Northbridge Plaza and building on the council carpark;
- ◆ objecting to the building of a large marina near Clive Park.

One of NPA's activities was to form The Centre for Leisure Activities in Northbridge (lovingly called The CLAN) in 1983. The CLAN had an amazing assortment of activities, beginning with classes in the arts, languages, handcrafts, yoga, sports and music. For nearly 10 years members organised a wealth of entertainment around Northbridge, not only the classes but also flower shows, art exhibitions, concerts (they had their own orchestra), fetes, bus trips, birthday parties and luncheons. The profits were used to provide Christmas hampers and to assist organisations and charities in the municipality. It ceased operation in 1991.

Now, NPA's Constitution contains the object: "To preserve and improve for its residents the amenity and environment of Northbridge." Its activities are more focused on preventing overdevelopment in the suburb and preservation of open space and family facilities. In her 1988 history of Northbridge, Esther Leslie said: "The Northbridge Progress Association has been an effective and useful Association since its inception, the articulate voice of the people of Northbridge ... it can be justly proud of its achievements."

HELP US CELEBRATE OUR BIRTHDAY!

On the afternoon of Saturday, November 14
we are holding a 90th birthday celebration from 1pm to 5pm,
at St Marks Hall, Malacoota Rd.

All residents of Northbridge are invited to socialise in St Marks Hall during the afternoon.

→ → → **ENTRY IS FREE** ← ← ←

1pm to 5pm

Entries for the schools colouring competition will be shown in the hall.

A collection of historic photographs of Northbridge will also be displayed.

1.15pm, 2pm, 2.45pm, 3.30pm and 4.15pm

A small bus will leave St Marks Hall for 30-minute tours of places of interest in Northbridge, with commentary.

2pm until 5pm

Home-made afternoon tea will be served in St Marks Hall.

3pm

A talk will be given by North Sydney Federal MP the Hon Joe Hockey MP.

Northbridge College of Arts principal Judy Voltz will announce the winners of the schools colouring competition and Mr Hockey will present the prizes.

Mr Hockey will mingle with residents.

4.30pm

Birthday cake will be cut

5pm

Anniversary celebration ends.

LIFE IN NORTHBRIDGE 90 YEARS AGO

By Pam Clifford & June Stevens

June and Cherie Greenfield were born in June 1922 and were the first twin babies in Northbridge. They were born at a private hospital in Cammeray but many women gave birth at home, often with a female friend acting as midwife.

Their father Victor and his two brothers had followed their mate Fred Timms to Northbridge. They had all purchased blocks in Harden Ave, possibly during the auction of the Table Land Estate subdivision in September 1904. In 1922, just three years after Northbridge Progress Association was formed, there were 525 dwellings and a population of 2407 in Northbridge.



A get-together of Harden Ave residents in 1920.

Like most of the early residents, June's father Victor built his weatherboard cottage himself. It would have had water and perhaps gas but no electricity until 1916 and no sewerage until at least 1928. Have you ever wondered why there are so many laneways in Northbridge? They allowed the "night soil man" (affectionately called Dan, Dan the Dunny Man) to collect the pans, accessing the outhouse through the back laneways.

THE FIRST SHOPS

Shops were soon built in Sailors Bay Rd, with Calders Bakery, the Criterion Cake Shop and Harding & Hancock, Grocers, most popular. With the tram the only transport, the twins walked everywhere around Northbridge, often in bare feet to protect their shoes from the mud. Rocks and stones on the unmade roads made walking uncomfortable. June remembers walking to Warners Dairy (in what is now Eastern Valley Way) for their milk. Fresh vegetables could be purchased from the Chinese market gardens nearby. Their parents owned a horse and sulky for a while and, like many of their neighbours, kept chooks in the back yard.

Pity their neighbour Fred Timms, who was Works Manager at the State Brickyards at Homebush. He left home in the dark carrying a lantern, walked to Willoughby Rd through a track across the present Shore playing fields (where he stashed his lantern) before catching a tram to Milsons Point. He crossed the harbour by ferry, caught a tram to Central, and then a train to Homebush. On the return journey, he picked up his lantern and returned home in the dark, his wife leaving a welcome kerosene lamp alight in the window for him.

June and her siblings walked to Northbridge Public School, which opened in 1923. In 1925 the P & C. requested the installation of one electric light in the school but lighting in the classrooms was not provided until the late 1930s, when sewerage was also connected. The children mixed up the ink for the inkwells, collected and burnt the garbage and helped with the gardening. Just fancy!

There was plenty of entertainment for the children. The Garrick theatre and tennis courts were in Harden Ave, and their uncle had dammed a natural spring to form a small swimming pool in his yard. It must have been pretty good living in Northbridge because June still lives in Harden Ave.

CONGRATULATIONS

I congratulate Northbridge Progress Association on its 90th anniversary. In my younger days I held the role of Editor of *The 202* newsletter – in fact, I gave the name *The 202* to the newsletter! I am still a member of the Association.

I know how important the Association has been for the community over many years. It is the voice of Northbridge residents with all levels of government and has accomplished much to preserve the quality of life in Northbridge. If every suburb had an organisation like Northbridge Progress Association, our city would be much the richer.

I look forward to meeting residents at the Association's anniversary event on November 14.

Joe Hockey



THE MATERIAL IN THIS SPECIAL EDITION OF *THE 202* WAS
RESEARCHED AND WRITTEN BY PAM CLIFFORD.

SOURCES: The book and papers of Esther Leslie, Willoughby District Historical Museum, the Local History Section of Willoughby Library and memories of residents of Northbridge.



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PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday December 9
8pm St Marks Hall
Malacoota Rd

Election of officers

Guest speaker: Michele Burton
"Northbridge's new library"

All residents welcomed

FREDERICK TIMMS AND THE GARRICK



*The cast of 'The Sundowner' production at The Garrick in the 1920s.
Frederick Timms is on the far left.*

The 2000 residents of Northbridge must have been very grateful to Frederick Timms when he built a weatherboard hall on his property at 22 Harden Ave in 1920 for use as a community centre for the new suburb. Timms named it The Garrick after English actor David Garrick who died in 1779.

Frederick Timms was one of the founders of Northbridge Progress Association and its first meeting in November 1919 took place in his redwood weatherboard home at 18 Harden Ave. He had moved to Northbridge in 1904 when he was 22 years old and had purchased three adjoining blocks in Harden Ave.

The theatre had one large room with a movable front wall which could be folded back and used as a stage, the audience being accommodated in a large marquee. The new Northbridge Progress Association soon formed a dramatic company, which staged plays and recitals directed by local resident Edgar Hoskins.

The Garrick and surrounding grounds must surely have been the social centre of Northbridge. They were used for the parade grounds for the local cubs and scouts; a practice field for the football team; a venue for fetes to raise funds for Northbridge Progress Association; the depot on carnival days for the decoration of floats for the Queen of the Roses Procession which toured the neighbourhood; and the resting place for a visiting circus. The property also had tennis courts which were used for competitions; Adrian Quist played on them. The Timms' home was used for meetings for clubs and local organisations and was one of the earliest homes with a telephone.

Frederick was a founder of Northbridge Amateur Swimming Club in 1925, and was President for 14 years. Frederick's elder son (also named Frederick) was the first dux of Northbridge Public School.

The Timms' original weatherboard house and the theatre were both demolished in 1936 when he built a weatherboard cottage for each of his four children. Frederick died in 1945. His youngest child Joan lived at No 18 until she died in 2004. Members of the Timms family still live in Harden Ave.

Adapted from contributions by Peter Watson and Pam Clifford.

COME ON A MAGICAL HISTORY TOUR OF NORTHBRIDGE

Why do so many interesting people call Northbridge home?

We have actors, writers, artists, professors, singers, even an ex-Prime Minister living in our suburb.

Why not get to know the history of your suburb and some of the characters who helped develop the area?

How long since you have been to The Knoll?

Have you ever been to Hallstrom Close?

Where were the market gardens in Northbridge?

Northbridge Progress Association has hired a bus to give you a free tour of places of interest in your suburb. The bus will run every 45 minutes starting at 1.15 pm on Saturday 14 November, with the last tour leaving at 4.15pm.

You will be able to join the tour outside St Marks Hall in Malacoota Rd. All welcome.

If you would like more information call Pam Clifford (9958 0529) or Anna Bolton (9958 5556). Please phone if you would like to book for a particular time or to give us an indication of numbers.

NORTHBRIDGE HISTORY QUIZ

Compiled by Pam Clifford, Don Landers and Ian Rannard.

1. What is the name of the Aboriginal family group which roamed the lower North Shore? To which tribe did they belong?
2. Where was the Northbridge Theatre and when did it operate?
3. Where did the tram run in Northbridge and which was its last year?
4. In what year was the original Suspension Bridge completed?
5. Which opened first in Northbridge: The Catholic School or the Public School? What were the two other schools which operated in Northbridge in the 1930s and 1940s?
6. What was the intended use of the land acquired by developers in the late 1950s where the Plaza was ultimately developed?
7. Who was the original Plaza developer who donated the Plaza car park land for public use in 1961?
8. What and where was 'Ivor'?
9. Where was Warner's Waratah Dairy and when did it cease operation?
10. Which Prime Minister represented Northbridge in Federal Parliament and when?
11. Who was the first documented resident of Northbridge and where and when did he build his home?
12. Which famous opera singer made her singing debut at Northbridge Public School singing the part of Mabel in 'The Pirates of Penzance'?
13. Which Premier of NSW lived in Northbridge? Where did he live?
14. Where was the small private zoo in Northbridge? Who owned it and what famous product did he manufacture?
15. What is the present name of the Northbridge road originally named Eric St?
16. Where were the Chinese market gardens once active in Northbridge?

Answers in the next issue of The 202, to be delivered to residents at end November.



HISTORY THROUGH OUR LANEWAYS

BENNEL LANE

(between Baringa and Baroona Rds)

Horace Andrew (Hockey) Bennell was born in Northbridge in 1916 and attended Northbridge Public School. He took up boxing at 13 and was Australian Welterweight Champion in 1938. He ran a produce store at the corner of Sailors Bay Rd and Bellambi St.



Hockey Bennell in the 1930s.

TWEMLOW LANE

(off Coolawin Rd)

William Lenty Twemlow was the second known resident of Northbridge. He built 'The Hermitage' at Fig Tree Point in the late 1870s. Twemlow was a watchmaker/jeweller in the city. The house was not accessible by land so Twemlow and a servant rowed or sailed to his work through The Spit to Circular Quay.



Neil Roberts in the 1940s.

ROBERTS LANE

(off Bellambi St)

Fred and Doris Roberts built the first house in Bligh St in 1921. Their son Neil was a seaman on the Kuttabul and is the last Australian survivor of the attack by a Japanese midget submarine in Sydney Harbour in 1942.

MCKENZIE LANE

(between Courallie and Coorabin Rds)

Don McKenzie was a much loved member of the Northbridge Sailing Club, who was dedicated to training young people to sail.

JEFFERY LANE

(off Woonona Rd)

Albert John Jeffery was the first Manager of the Bank of New South Wales in Northbridge which opened in Sailors Bay Rd in 1929. He and his family lived in Euroka St. He was active in the community and President of Northbridge Progress Association in the 1930s.

PHILLIPS LANE

(between Baroona and Marana Rds)

Jessie May Phillips (nee Blackmore) lived in Kameruka Rd until 1986 and taught at

Northbridge Public School from 1930 to 1945. She was the driving force behind the Junior Red Cross and Gould League of Bird Lovers at Northbridge Public School and was involved with the Mission to Seamen, Legacy and the Sydney Royal Agricultural Society.

RIACH LANE

(between Kameruka and Courallie Rds)

Miss E Riach and her mother ran a private school at 'Clavering' in Sailors Bay Rd in the 1930s and 1940s.

ROCHE LANE

(off Woonona Rd)

John Roche was a long time member of East Northbridge Progress Association and Northbridge Progress Association. He was an engineer and worked to ensure suitable drainage in Northbridge.

POOLE LANE

(off Woonona Rd)

Wilfred Poole was the first real estate agent in Northbridge. His general store and estate agency, on the corner of Woonona and Sailors Bay Rds, was the first shop built in Northbridge, in 1915. The first meeting of the East Northbridge Progress Association was held in the shop.

WAGSCHALL LANE

(between Woonona and Namoi Rds)

The Wagschall family built a number of houses in Northbridge after World War 1. Their daughter Jessie lived in Northbridge all her life and was known for her beautiful contralto voice. She sang in the local Methodist Church choir and with the Hurlstone Choral Society, the leading choir in Sydney for many years.

RENSHAW LANE

(between Narooma and Kameruka Rds)

John (Jack) Brophy Renshaw was the Labour MLA for the electorate of Castlereagh from 1941 to 1980. He held many portfolios before becoming Premier of NSW in 1964, a position he held for 13 months. In 1966 he moved to Northbridge and lived at 'Clavering' in Sailors Bay Rd for 10 years.

MASON LANE

(off Woonona Rd)

Jim Mason, together with Frank Bethwaite, in about 1960 designed a simple, self-righting sailing boat, the Northbridge Junior, which is still in use today.

This series will be continued in future issues of The 202.