



BEECROFT - CHELTENHAM

CIVIC TRUST

INCORPORATED

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

BULLETIN 2

May 2008

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### Autumn Walk – learn more about your locality Sunday 18 May 2008 at 2.00 – 4.00 pm

Our Trust's annual Autumn Walk on Sunday 18 May starts at 2pm from Beecroft rail station. All welcome! The walk will incorporate a guided heritage & history tour of parts of Beecroft's built environment, then view recent volunteer bush regeneration works in the Welham St area. We recommend good walking shoes, plus hat and water. The walk will return to the station where afternoon tea will be provided. [Details - Ross Walker 9875-4446.]

### Resident Survey results – keep our area green and friendly!

*Maintain the natural environment* is the strongest call from hundreds of Beecroft & Cheltenham residents. Tree planting in our streets and enhancement of local bushland was also strongly supported by responses to the Trust's resident survey, distributed in its February bulletin. In contrast, parking and traffic flow in Beecroft shopping centre was reported as unsatisfactory by most of nearly 300 completing the survey.

People choose to live here because of the area's tree & bushland character, its village atmosphere and quality housing. Good schools, good transport to work, and safe area are ranked next.

Shopping in Beecroft is seen as convenient & friendly, with a good range, quality and village atmosphere. Bad shopping points include parking & traffic problems and a limited range of shops – especially the loss of specialty shops. You can access more details at [www.2119.org.au](http://www.2119.org.au)

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**Saturday 17 May, 10.30am Ray Park Heritage Group is holding 'Practical Research in Family History'**. For bookings/information, phone 9876 5713.

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### North West Rail link or Metro Rail – key points from a resident response

The NSW Government recent announcement of an alternative to the earlier North West Rail Link raises a number of issues. From many residents' viewpoints, the rolling announcements of different plans indicate the link may be decades coming.

The following summary points, from a local resident, highlight some strategic issues for Sydney's rail planning:

- North West Metro proposal – provided it is built to the alignment outlined in the North West Rail Link Preferred Project Report Alignment of May 2007 – is a sound and worthwhile solution to the lack of a good public transport corridor serving the Hills area; *however*
- The abandonment of the CBD Rail Link, without another solution to the limited cross harbour capacity for the North Shore, Epping-Chatswood line (ECRL) and Northern CityRail services is a serious and irresponsible deficiency; *and*
- The visual and environmental design and practice over the whole NW corridor requires significant improvement from that of the TIDC ECRL and current RailCorp examples.

## THE 'NO SOLUTION' TUNNEL

**PROPOSAL** may be postponed by lack of Government affordability.

Over the last five years community groups, along the Pennant Hills Road corridor and in surrounding affected areas, have branded as 'No Solution' the foolhardy proposal for a tunnel linking the F3 to the M7 Corridor via the M2. The recent change of Federal Government may have delivered to us, in Anthony Albanese, a Federal Minister for Transport and Infrastructure who will fearlessly question the viability of major road projects promoted by vested interests.

A recent article by Transport Reporter Linton Besser in the SMH Weekend Edition 26 - 27 Apr 08 confirms that Anthony Albanese has expressed, through his spokesman Jeff Singleton, concerns about the tunnel proposal underneath Pennant Hills Road and has stated the need 'to ensure this project is still necessary'. The article confirms that the RTA will begin a new round of traffic modelling to double-check the proposal's viability. Unfortunately, traffic modelling will not take into account the potential community impacts from this large project. These impacts must strongly influence planning process.

\* Congestion - the tunnel will not improve traffic flows. Ever-increasing numbers of large trucks can still impose their 'might of way' in the geographic constraints of the F3 to M2 corridor.

\* Road Safety - while the surface road remains toll-free, larger trucks will prefer to keep using it. They can thereby avoid the lane space restrictions characteristic of tunnels. Passenger sedans will continue to bear the safety risk inherent in sharing the surface road with large, heavy vehicles. Trucks carrying dangerous cargoes will be banned from using the tunnel.

\* Health and Pollution - thorough research now confirms that diesel fumes impose serious health risks. Those fumes are known to be many times more carcinogenic (cancer-producing) than emissions from petrol engines. Stacks built to extract vehicle emissions from tunnels would spread concentrated carcinogenic emissions (through 'groundstrike') into surrounding areas that would otherwise be subjected to less toxic levels.

\* Noise - large schools, special residential facilities for Senior Citizens, retail centres and the general community would continue to suffer the stress of loud noise. Persistent noise is plainly detrimental to mental wellbeing, especially if it regularly interferes with a good night's sleep. However, the effects of these serious oversights in RTA modelling are dwarfed by the revelation that immediate economic factors are likely to be the primary force behind Government decision making.

The NSW Government cannot fund large projects like the No Solution tunnel proposal. Nor can the Federal Government, which must meet many urgent national infrastructure requirements, afford to see funds wasted on No Solution proposals. It is sheer folly to allow Sydney's economic fortunes - a critical element in the overall National economy - to remain dependent on a State decision to persist with single major road and rail connections to the North that are predictably seriously disrupted whenever accidents or bushfires occur. The existing road corridor has such serious geographical constraints that it remains resistant to useful modification. The rail corridor was constructed in the 19th century. As it bears the full load of all northern freight traffic, both its current inefficiency and future inadequacy are obvious.

## THE REAL SOLUTION

The Hon Marla Pearlman, in her review of the proposed tunnel connecting the F3 to the M7 Corridor via the M2, stepped outside narrow and unsatisfactory terms of reference to make the prudent and realistic recommendation that 'an Option C (Western) Corridor be planned now'. Pearlman infers the futility of building a tunnel with no firm idea of the final cost nor any adequate analysis of the full outcomes following construction. The onus rests on the public to see that Pearlman's eminently sensible view gains traction among elected government decision-makers who have been conspicuous for selective deafness and lack of concern towards the constituents they represent.

Details of this key issue, identified in the 2008 Beecroft Cheltenham Residents' Survey, will be updated at Policy Drafts on [www.2119.org.au](http://www.2119.org.au)

# The Swinging Social Life of Beecroft Cheltenham – *past & present*

*by Catherine Bartho*

*No. 11 in a series of articles on the history of Beecroft and  
Cheltenham*

Many residents of Beecroft Cheltenham live their lives here going to and coming from their daily work, very content to spend the remaining hours quite isolated from the community. However for those wanting enrichment from the amazing range of activities which are available locally, the area is provided with a diversity of activities. And so it has been since the 1890s when the suburb took shape from the farming community – when city dwellers came up the train line looking for a more pleasant domain in which to raise their families.

The gentry of the time soon commenced tennis and croquet clubs, debating and drama societies and musical groups for choirs and instrumental players. There were dances in the School of Arts, smoking socials, and snooker by night, and garden club and charities fund raising committee activities by day. One resident complained to the local paper that life was too busy here –and that was in the 1890s.

For over a hundred years, social life here has provided pleasure and relaxation for young and old. Many of the groups are largely unchanged, such as tennis, croquet, bowls and the garden club. Others have come and gone as popular appeal has altered. Squash courts such as the complex at Midson Road have disappeared and yet the sport flourished in the 1960s and 70s. Decades ago there was a boxing club and a rifle club.

During the first and second world wars, social life frequently revolved around fund raising for the war effort, drilling of local volunteers for various duties and huge efforts by local women to knit or make camouflage netting in the School of Arts which also housed a lending library for many years. The war years also produced the Beecroft Children's Library, which was a major part of the Beecroft scene until it closed in 1998.

The children through to teens have been well catered for by Boy Scouts and Girl Guides which remain popular. Churches have active women's groups, youth fellowships, Girls Friendly Society groups, and boys' groups. The Beecroft Sports Club covers a range of sports – netball, soccer, tennis and cricket. Little Athletics and swimming

clubs are available locally and martial arts are taught at the Community Centre, which was once called the School of Arts. After school programmes at Beecroft Primary School cater for a range of interests such as pottery, leatherwork, Chinese brush painting and languages. Today is a far cry from the 1890s when attending Band of Hope meetings (temperance groups) and Sunday school was about the most exciting activity for the young, and they were quite content with that.

Young mothers pushed prams and strollers around the streets to the shops (few women had a car until the 1960s), forming friendships with other pram-pushing mothers. Now, mothers' groups can be seen meeting in local coffee shops, enjoying their shared experience of child-raising. These women frequently return to work, but the social network has been formed and it continues when their children are enrolled in the long day-care centres and kindergartens. Mothers form babysitting groups and socialising, involving husbands, often results. Life-long friendships regularly commence.

There is a group of mothers of girls involved in Girl Guides in the 1970s and 1980s who regularly meet just for the pleasure of friendship and shared memories of fetes, fund-raising and helping to support pack leaders.

Arts and craft groups have provided a way for skilled people to meet. Art teachers have pupils, young and old meeting to receive tuition, with the Cheltenham Art Show providing an opportunity for many to exhibit work. There are several quilting groups, the Malton Road Quilters having met together for many years. The Embroiderers' Guild meets in a church hall regularly. A Cheltenham lady, Miss Abell, had a sewing and knitting group for many years. These women made garments for Anglicare. Detailed lists were kept to show the annual output, which always seemed to exceed the previous year.

In more recent years, hand workers often linked to church groups have supported 'Wrapped with Love' (knitted rugs), trauma teddy bears, and singlets for African babies and garments for premature babies. A particularly outstanding effort has been that of the women who used their creative talents to have an annual Jacaranda Fair in November. The high standards set by the committee ensured such a following for this event that it was known you had to either be early or miss out.

Now, after seventeen years, and over \$40,000 having been donated to charity, the group has decided to have a break from their activities.

Discussion groups and book clubs have been popular for many years. Originally, Workers' Educational Association discussion groups provided a way for women who sought cerebral stimulation after a day of domestic duties. Reference books and notes were provided by the WEA for a modest fee. A comprehensive range of topics was available and tutors paid visits to groups. Many local women, stimulated by adult education, enrolled at Macquarie University when it opened in 1967. In the 1970s there were more than seven Beecroft discussion groups. Book clubs are usually organised by the members who may all read the same book at the same time, using notes now available on the internet. Another local book club operates by members contributing several books each year, providing a diverse lending library for one another. There is also a book club attached to the local bookshop.

This article will be continued in the next bulletin. The full text can be viewed now on the trust's website.

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## Beecroft Scout Hall - resident concerns unanswered by Scouts

Reflecting local residents' concerns, your Trust is working to clarify the intended sale by Scouts' head office of the York Street hall and lands. This may yield them some \$1M. Our research indicates the site was given to the Scouts with conditions by Ida Byles, in memory of her brother Wilfrid Unwin, who lost his life in WW1.

Your Trust's and resident concern is that the Scouts are not acting correctly. Aware of this, the Construction Forestry & Mining Employees Union has imposed a green ban on the site. Following our representations, local Member of NSW Parliament, Greg Smith SC, has sought a meeting with the Scout Commissioner for NSW. Unfortunately at time of preparation of this bulletin, the Hall is being demolished.



Land title records indicate a Deed was agreed between the Scouts, the Public Trustee and Byles. Regrettably, the terms of the Deed have not been located in the NSW Land Titles Office, nor has the Public Trustee, a party to the deed, been able to assist. Council records show Byles' draft terms of deed required the Scouts not sell the lands *until a Scout troop in Beecroft no longer existed*. Scouts are still active here - and a Scout's honour is to be trusted.



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