

CATHO CHRONICLE

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CATHERINE HILL BAY PROGRESS ASSOCIATION
ESTABLISHED 1901



WHERE ARE OUR WALKWAYS?

With the population of Catho growing rapidly, more and more people are walking in the town's streets as well as the adjacent coastal and bushland environment.

However, for a coastal township surrounded by National Parks, the lack of designated walkways in Catherine Hill Bay is quite astonishing.

There is no safe pedestrian link between the heritage villages of Main Camp and Middle Camp except for the narrow verge of Flowers Drive. Dangerous driving is still a problem in Catho, and with more families and children using Flowers Drive as a walkway, the Association believes this is an accident waiting to happen.

While beach walking is great, it is not a practical pedestrian option between the residential areas of Catherine Hill Bay. There is not even a single well-formed footpath connecting Main Camp with the new Beaches development at CHB South.

In addition, there are almost no designated walkways connecting Catherine Hill Bay to the adjacent National Park areas except for a handful of fire trails that are mostly overgrown, highly eroded, and prone to flooding after rain.

There are some historical reasons to explain the lack of walkways. Firstly, NPWS acquired the land surrounding Catherine Hill Bay relatively recently in 2012 (from mining company Coal and Allied).

IN THE NOV ISSUE...

HEADLAND WORKS

HISTORIC CATHO PUB

LANDCARE UPDATE

NEXT MEETING

**4pm Sat 28th Nov 2020
at 17 Flowers Drive**

*Covid restrictions apply –
refer page five for details*

Some recent good news is that NPWS has allocated \$180k of funds for a walkway connecting CHB South to Moonee Beach.

Secondly, the ongoing mine rehabilitation works at the southern headland has prevented the development of walkways in this area. Now that these works are almost complete, the Association is hopeful that Coastal Hamlets Pty Ltd will soon deliver a coastal walkway in this area as part of their commitments under the consent conditions for the Beaches Estate.

The Association's vision is that there should be a safe, continuous coastal walkway connecting Middle Camp, Main Camp, CHB South and Moonee Beach. We have prepared a Catho coastal walkway plan which has been presented to Council Officers. As well as providing amenity for local residents, this scenic walkway would be a wonderful tourism asset for visitors to the Lake Macquarie LGA.

The Association believes that Lake Macquarie City Council (LMCC) should lead the delivery of a network of walking paths and cycleways in Catherine Hill Bay as a high priority.

Council initiates Catherine Hill Bay Masterplan process

Lake Macquarie City Council has started the initial master-planning process for public lands around the Surf Club and the Bowling Club site (now demolished).

Council's high level strategic plan for the area, published in 2018, includes provision for an expanded coastal park adjacent to the Surf Club (timeframe 2018-2023) and construction of a new Surf Club building (2023-2028) to be located further back from the beach. At the Bowling Club site it is proposed to provide upgraded sports fields, an amenities building and a neighbourhood play area (2023-2028). The masterplan will provide the next level of detail in the planning process.

The Association looks forward to participating in the community consultation process in the development of the Catherine Hill Bay Masterplan.

Headland Works & Beaches Development Stage 3

The mine site rehabilitation works on the southern headland, being carried out by Delta Electricity, are close to completion. These works include the filling and capping of the Bin Building. It is proposed that the Bin Building will be made suitable for a whale watching platform or cafe.

Coastal Hamlets Pty Ltd has been given approval to modify the staging of their works in this area so that the village shops, at the corner of Hale Street and Montefiore Parkway, may be built prior to and separate from the Stage Three Residential Development.

Timing of the redevelopment of Hale St, the village shops, village park and the headland walkway by Coastal Hamlets Pty Ltd is still unknown at this stage.

Jetty Update

The jetty still stands but has been locked off. No money has gone into the maintenance of the jetty since its closure in 2006. The only money that has been spent, by a succession of owners, has been to try to keep people off the jetty. The Association has tried unsuccessfully to have the jetty heritage listed, however a number of Councillors objected when the matter was raised with LMCC and it did not progress.

Our jetty has a sister jetty that's also still standing; at Balls Head in Waverton (Sydney Harbour). For many decades this was the destination jetty for the small coal-carrying ships that left from Catherine Hill Bay. North Sydney Council is intending to nominate the Waverton Coal Loader for heritage listing, including the jetty at Balls Head.

Did you know

The Wallarah Hotel, or "Catho Pub", was initially opened in 1875. The building has been a well-known feature of Catherine Hill Bay for over a hundred years and represents a long tradition of inn-keeping in the Lake Macquarie area.

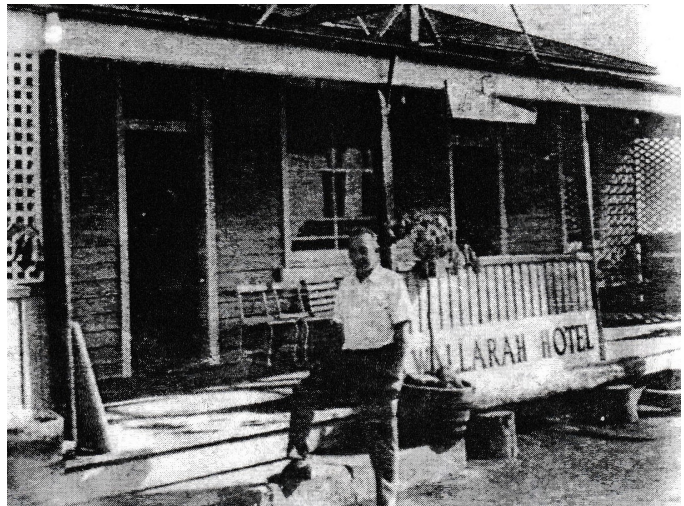
It is one of the oldest pubs still operating in the Hunter Region, and in 1971 it became the first hotel in Australia with an indigenous Licensee - David "Teddy" Wotherspoon (pictured).

"The minute he pulled that beer the cameras were flying and the next day we were on the front page of the Newcastle Herald," his partner Dorothy Wotherspoon said. "I was a simple little Aboriginal girl from Moree that stood alongside him."

One of the fond memories Dorothy had of her time behind the bar was when a movie crew was filming close by in 1976. One of the unknown actors became a regular at the pub and stands out in Dorothy's mind, before he took on Hollywood.

"We knew his name was Mel Gibson but didn't know he was going to be a big superstar in America."

After the premier of the film 'Summer City' at Newcastle's Civic Theatre, the tables were turned and Mel became the bartender.



"I sipped pink champagne with Mel because he said I had to have it, because I was always his barmaid."

After Teddy passed away in 1981, Dorothy went on to run Catherine Hill Bay's pub for over 30 years. She was initially hesitant in taking it on, but eventually turned it into home for her and her family.

"I had all Aboriginal colours right through the pub. Yellow, red and black carpet right through the pub, because it was an aboriginal pub."

The Catho Pub has always had a unique character and has featured in numerous movies made in the town. It is a great stopping off point for walkers and travellers.

Follow the link below to view an ABC TV News story from 1971 on Catho and the local pub:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=euws_d-Xb0I

(Dorothy Wotherspoon interview courtesy of ABC Newcastle)

Landcare Update

Join us on first Mondays of each month, except the summer ones due to heat, from 3-5pm, at the Graveyard Beach site. In August we resumed and planted coastal banksia, acacia sophorae, pig face and native geranium in the hollow south of the walkway to the beach. At the start of the arched walkway we planted tea tree ready to replace the ageing ones, and some ground covers, in September.

After the months away, the bitou bush is back with a vengeance so we restarted the endless weeding earlier this month.

Last session of the year this week - join in and get some exercise! BYO gloves, secateurs, a garden fork if you're strong! Let us know on 0438 499636 if you're coming for the first time, for a welcome chat.

Bushfire Season

Last month was the seven year anniversary of the bushfires that descended on Catherine Hill Bay when tragically three houses were lost, two other houses were damaged and even the jetty caught fire.



It is a timely reminder that we need to prepare our homes for the risks posed by the summer bushfire season. The RFS has some great information on their website here:

www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/resources/bush-fire-survival-plan

The recommended bushfire season checklist includes:

1. Discuss among household occupants what to do if bushfire threatens your home and make a plan
2. Trim trees and shrubs overhanging your home
3. Mow grass to keep it low and remove the clippings
4. Remove items from around the home that can burn (wood piles, mulch etc)
5. Remove leaves from gutters and install metal gutter guards
6. Install a sturdy hose that will reach around your house and ensure water tanks are full.

Community Noticeboard

Sea View Yoga will restart regular Monday morning Hatha yoga classes in Catho Surf Club in November. Further details can be found here:

www.facebook.com/groups/1601489383402359/

Next PA General Meeting and AGM

The next general meeting and AGM will be held at 17 Flowers Drive at 4pm on 28th November 2020. Covid restrictions apply and the maximum allowable number of attendees is 20.

Members wishing to attend the meeting are required to pre-register by email to the address below. Attendance will be confirmed on a first-come first-served basis and it is requested that face masks be worn at the meeting. Online attendance options (via Zoom or similar) may be arranged depending on demand.

admin@catherinehillbay.org.au

Membership renewals

A reminder that membership fees are due from the 1st July each year. The annual membership fee is \$20 (\$10 for pensioners). The renewal form is attached to this newsletter email. Please email membership forms to:

accounts@catherinehillbay.org.au

Catho Chronicle Mailing List

If you would like to receive future editions of the Catho Chronicle by email, or would like to submit stories or photos, please email us at:

newsletter@catherinehillbay.org.au

For more details check out our website:

www.catherinehillbay.org.au

and the various Facebook pages for the latest news and great photos:

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