



North Swanbourne Beach Users Association

Our biggest battles still ahead?

Winter may be closing down around our ears but the critics of nude bathing (unlike most bathers) have certainly not gone into hibernation! Two groups in particular came to our attention during April. Locally the Swanbourne Coastal Ratepayers Group has been formed to oppose North Swanbourne Beach's continuing existence as a nude bathing area. The SCRG is scheduled to meet with the Nedlands City Council on the 20th May, and we will keep you informed of any important developments emerging from this meeting.

The NSBUA is certainly sympathetic to the ratepayers' frustrations over parking and access problems resulting from the increasing popularity of the beach. It believes that these problems can be solved if there is a spirit of co-operation and tolerance between all the parties involved. The NSBUA is, however, concerned over the increasing use of unsubstantiated allegations in recent attempts to sway local authorities against North Swanbourne. Opposition to the beach on moral grounds is clearly a different issue that must be considered in the light of both the changing community attitude and the beach's increasing popularity.

Liberal thinking, however, is still a rare animal around this neck of the woods. At least on the strength of the case reported in the Wanneroo Districts Times (April 9th, 1980) it is! The Marmion-Sorrento-Dungraig Progress and Ratepayers Association have called for the expulsion of nude bathing from a remote beach near Sorrento. The only grounds for this call are that, in the Association's view, the nudists are 'openly flouting' regulations hence security patrols should be made to the area - especially at weekends. The beach in question, incidentally, is hidden from view by sandhills and north of the populous area of Sorrento Beach. A clear case of persecution rather than progress, it would seem?

Speaking of battles over North Swanbourne Beach, the aftermath of one on the Army Rifle Range caused quite a stir at the beginning of May. A stray spent bullet hit an unlucky groundsman at the Cottesloe Golf Club and sparked off a big public re-think over the existence of the rifle range in a near-city suburb. It all culminated in an editorial in The West Australian called, appropriately enough, 'OFF-TARGET'. The Swanbourne Range, it pointed out '....intrudes between suburbs, cuts off access to a stretch of prime metropolitan beach (U.S!) and stands in the way of orderly road development...Whatever the legitimate needs of the Army, the range is incompatible with its civilian surroundings and thwarts important city planning objectives...It may be time to get tough, to stop using blanks and to fire some effective bullets at Canberra. "Whatever the 'city planning objectives' are we had better make sure that they include a nudist beach!

OTHER NEWS

1. Swanbourne Surf Lifesaving Club

The SSLSC was also responsible for two critical articles on North Swanbourne Beach that appeared in the local press recently. In line with NSBUA policy press statements were issued in reply to both articles (see page 4). As much as the NSBUA regrets having to take firm action of this nature, one of our primary aims is to prevent misrepresentation of beach users in particular, and of nude bathing in general. Since these events, however, relations with the SSLSC have certainly improved and we hope that they will continue to do so.

2. The Petition

The petition to amend the Police Act obscenity Law was closed with over four thousand signatures taken. It will be formally presented to the Minister for Police and Traffic, Mr Bill Hassell, who is also the Liberal Member for Cottesloe, early in May.

3. Hassles

One of the outstanding features of North Swanbourne is the open and friendly atmosphere on the beach. All beachgoers are of course keen to see that the reputation of the place should be maintained. The NSBUA therefore encourages everyone - especially newcomers - to let committee Members know (near the volleyball court) if they are hassled in any way at all on the beach, and the problem will be dealt with immediately.

YOUR VIEWS

Quite a few beachgoers have come forward with comments about various aspects of the beach. Those that haven't already been mentioned are summarised below.

1. Dogs - The majority opinion is that dogs will definitely

Parents hit at beach nuders

Angry parents have threatened to take young lifesavers out of the Swanbourne club because of nudists using the beach.

The parents decided at a meeting this week to make their children join other clubs if an "undesirable element" among the nudists continues to use the beach next season.

They say the "undesirable element" includes nudists using the main swimming area in front of the club house, homosexuals cavorting on the beach, nudists using the sandhills as a lavatory, and drunks. They are also angry that a shortage of parking space is stopping them supervising junior members.

Club member Mr Kevin Somes, who is the father of three girl members, aged eight, 10 and 11 says he no longer lets his children go to the beach during the week by themselves. He says there is a "huge" hygiene problem at Swanbourne because of a lack of toilet facilities at the nude beach. "The beach should be closed on moral grounds alone because these people are openly flaunting the law," said Mr Somes.

Club secretary, Mr Gary Olsen said the club was already faced with a membership crisis and taking the 40 ju-

niors out of it would have a dramatic effect.

"The State government and the council just seems to bury their head in the sand and do nothing," he said.

"Either the beach is closed to nudist or more nude beaches are opened to take the pressure off Swanbourne.

"It seems like every weekend I stumble across some drunk in among empty and broken bottles who has wandered up from the nude beach.

"Recently we found a Japanese tourist with no clothes on and a camera in the main swimming area. He was trying to pose for pictures with some young swimmers.

"In another incident recently, a couple of our long standing members, girls, had trouble with a nude bloke."

Mr Olsen said that if membership fell away by another 10 per cent, the club might have to close.

"Our members are finding themselves doing patrol work every second weekend compared with lifesavers at other clubs like North Cottesloe, Cottesloe and Scarborough whose services are called upon every five or six weeks," he said.

He said if the club could not maintain their patrols then the WA Surf Lifesaving Association would bar them from competing in the State titles.

Critics grasping straws—nudists

Supporters of nude bathing at north Swanbourne believe that critics of the beach are grasping at any excuse to have nude bathing stopped.

Mike Kile, the secretary of the recently formed North Swanbourne Beach Users' Association, said that problems at the beach were no different from problems at any beach. "Problems are not necessarily caused through nudity," he said.

"If there is an occasional drunk on the beach, the people these critics should be complaining about are the hotel proprietors or the surf club managers.

"If they feel there are

problems with hygiene or homosexuals, they'll find the same problems elsewhere.

"We don't dispute the fact that existing toilet facilities need improving, but it's ridiculous to suggest that nude bathers are irresponsible about hygiene."

Mr Kile was replying to the criticism levelled against nude bathers by some parents with children at the Swanbourne Surf Life Saving Club. They said there was an "undesirable element" at the beach.

"The very small number of nuisances who might appear are minute compared with the number using the beach in a proper manner," Mr Kile said.

"The same proportion of nuisances can be seen anywhere throughout the metropolitan beach zone on any given weekend.

"To associate these people specifically with the nudist beach population is an error."

He said that members of the association were highly conscious of maintaining good standards at the beach and would approach people whose behaviour could be offensive.

The numbers of people they approached were very small, and they had only ever approached one drinker.

"We're not so much tired of criticism like this as concerned that it is misrepresenting the very big number of people who use the beach responsibly," he said.

"The myth of the undesirable element continues to be used as a moralising cudgel, predominantly by those people who are opposed to nude bathing on ethical grounds.

"The fact that the police have had no reports of offensive behaviour on the beach gives grounds for questioning the accuracy of

the statements being made by these critics."

He said that there was a significant number of families using the beach, and a number of junior members of the life saving club had parents who were nude bathers.

The club could have found a big number of beachgoers at north Swanbourne interested enough in joining to assure a secure future for the club.

Instead it had chosen to alienate them with a continuing stream of disparaging remarks. Mr Kile said there were several thousand beachgoers who felt the beach was unique and were determined it should remain a nude bathing area.

Ms association had organised a formal petition which will be presented to the State government.

It calls on the government to make nude bathing legal in restricted areas, and more than 4000 signatures had been collected.

The association supported moves by the Nedlands City Council to ease parking congestion.

Swanbourne beach club defends nude bathing

The acting secretary of a newly formed organisation of nude bathers at Swanbourne beach has come out in strong defence of the beach after criticism from the president of the surf life saving club last week.

Mr Mike Kyle, of the North Swanbourne Beach Users' Association, said this week that the life saving club and his organisation shared common problems which would not be solved till there was a spirit of co-operation between the two groups.

He admitted that parking was a serious problem but as far as affecting the club's recruitment, the club could, as he understood it, set aside parking so that members could gain access to the club. "Parking is a severe problem at Swanbourne," Mr Kyle said.

By JAN HALLAM

"The most discouraging thing has been the response of the State Government which will not make any move to change the obscenity laws in the Police Act.

"This means that Nedlands City Council initiatives to make more parking available are not getting any support from the government.

APPROVAL

"The NSBUA will support the council in its move to get Federal Government approval for use of the Alfred Road extension and its attempt to get the use of a small reserve from the Public Works Department."

He said that 5000 people had recorded their signatures on a petition which would be presented to the

State Government to make nude bathing legal in restricted areas.

In answer to criticism that the nude beach was attracting a small but undesirable element to the Swanbourne beach area, Mr Kyle said that north Swanbourne beach-users were on the lookout for these people because the club openly discouraged "undesirable behaviour."

"These people are small in number in relation to the number of people that go swimming at Swanbourne," he said.

It is wrong to associate this element with the rest of the nudist population.

"As for turning away family groups from

the beach, because of the 'stigma'—families constitute a significant proportion of the north Swanbourne beach population,

"There is no evidence to suggest that the nude beach is causing people to avoid swimming at Swanbourne."

The surf club's president, Mr R. Bosworth last week made a statement that the sand dunes surrounding the beach had become "positively unhealthy" because of the lack of toilet facilities. Mr Kyle said that there was a serious lack of toilet facilities considering the number of people that used the nude beach but it was ridiculous to suggest that nude bathers were irresponsible about personal hygiene.

SUPPORT

He hoped the lack of communication between his group and the club would be rectified and that the NSBUA would support the club in its patrolling of the beach.

Mr Kyle said the NSBUA was planning, independently, ways in which it could ease the parking problem.

He said that the group may be able to raise money through donations made by patrons of the beach so that the existing car parks could be extended.

He also the group was looking into the possibility of a bus shuttle-service from a car park nearby to the beach.

STOP PRESS : SOCIAL EVENTS

The Apollo Club is keen to see North Swanbourne nudists join in their social calendar. Swim nights (heated pools) are held every fortnight, and there's a Nudist Ball coming up soon. Once again, phone Sue for further details! Sounds like lots of fun, so join in.

not be welcome this year on the beach. The Committee has been asked to investigate the erection of signs to make this clear to dog owners. So it looks as though a nudist dog beach will have to take second place for the time being.

2.The Rifle Range

Several shooters (thanks Clem) have expressed a timely concern over nudists crossing the range to get to the beach. Two weekend rifle club shoots were disrupted due to people crossing the target area. Please tell your friends to use a safer route if they come to the beach this way. Those red flags mean something!

SOCIAL EVENTS

Due to the success of two impromptu barbecues held at the Surf Club in April, more activities are planned. The Association treasurer-Sue Pomerantseff-took the initiative and got everyone organised. Thanks to Sue and all your helpers! The second barbecue was organised in superb weather on Anzac Day and a good crowd of about 30 or 40 turned up. Our thanks to the Surf Club for the use of their facilities-it was much appreciated.

A boat trip on the Miss Houghton to the Swan Valley vineyards and a bus trip to Armadale's Pioneer Village are being planned for the near future. If you are interested in going along please phone Sue (A/H - 367 5040) as soon as possible. The trips will depend on the numbers interested so get along. And remember, everyone is welcome!

OVERSEAS NEWS

Britain celebrated the coming of Spring with the creation of the country's first official nudist beach at Brighton at the Easter Weekend. Sadly, the temperature refused to budge above 12C!, despite Met Office promises. Nevertheless, according to our correspondent, a traffic jam developed for the latest spectator sport-watching the nudists on the naturalist beach. Large groups gathered to see the bathers in their roped-off area. A middle aged man was chased and pelted with stones when he tried to take a photograph.

'We would have caught him, but it was too painful running

on the pebbles without shoes', said Miss Jill Harvey, 26, a naturalist.

Peeping Toms and voyeurs apart, however, the sun was not really strong enough to refresh the parts other holiday resorts cannot reach.

Well-known television critic, Clive James, saw it like this in his column titled -'FLASHING FROST-BITE'.

'The big deal of the week was nude bathing at Brighton. The sky was the colour of washing-up water, the sea was the colour of what floats on top of washing-up water, and the news crews were out in force to immortalise the bravery of anybody who cared to defy the elements with nothing but a birthday suit to stave off death by exposure.



Scarcely anybody did, but by the end of the short, freezing day there were enough takers for the television channels to shoot an item each. From the resulting output you could read off an exact measurement of the inhibitions, or lack of them, obtaining in each organisation. On News at Ten (ITN) a naked man came limping and shivering out of the sea to tell the camera what a terrific time he was having. He was visible down to a line drawn about half an inch about what would probably have turned out to be, if we had been allowed to see it, a frost-bitten cashew. On Newsnight (BBC2) another man was to be seen doing the full flash.

Nude bathing, one fears, is destined not to be a British thing. Although aggressive sponsorship might help to transform the picture. There could be a prize for what the cold sea does to the lower regions of the average male. The Everest Double Glazing Chilled Acorn Competition. The Birdseye Frozen Foods Jellybean Puissance.'

Well, that's all for this time. Keep memberships coming in! STOP PRESS: Committee meets/Bruce's place/3rd June 1980.