



the balmain association

council report



LEICHHARDT COUNCIL MEETING - 5th and 19th APRIL

DEBATE, Leichhardt Style

Have we mentioned before that business before Council appears to have been dealt with elsewhere first? At its April 5 meeting, Council adopted two motions from Aldermen Heffernan and Casey for submission to the Local Government Association of N.S.W. for consideration at its forthcoming conference. Read by Ald. Heffernan, A.L.P. Rozelle, the motions covered three typed foolscap sheets. Alderman Origlass, Balmain, attempted to impress on the Major that this was the first he, Ald. Origlass had heard of these proposals. It also appeared that Ald. Heffernan was the only person who had a copy. For a proper and informed Council, Ald. Origlass suggested a fourteen day deferral. Ald. Heffernan interjected that Ald. Origlass would probably get a copy on the next business paper. This was followed by laughter and derisive remarks directed at Ald. Origlass. The motion was then carried. Ald. Hoy, A.L.P. Balmain, then chided Ald. Origlass for his concern, saying the matters "were only minor". Mayor Rodwell then commented, "... the motions were not much but mean a great deal". One wonders why they were not discussed, and who thought of them.

STYLES STREET Playground

Leichhardt Council has gone ahead with the demolition of the old workshops building at Styles St., Annandale. Council has apparently decided to do this on its own despite a history of community interest. Council held a works inspection to which not one resident was invited. Council's social

worker also was uninvited, and had to make her own arrangements for a private visit with the Council Engineer.

INSTITUTIONAL SPRAWL

Residents in other inner city areas have been putting the pressure on their local parliamentarians to recognise the loss of housing, and the detrimental effects on remaining housing caused by institutional expansion. The member for Sydney, J.L. McMahon, in a letter to Council proposed "... a re-examination of environmental planning for the inner city, and ... that ... each Council carefully scrutinize its own town plan and then meet with other inner city Councils in order to develop a more co-ordinated and socially adequate inner city environmental plan!

Well, Council didn't quite know what to do with this one. It appears some one lost the rubber stamp. They don't seem to be particularly good at planning. After much mumbled and disorderly interjection and accusation between aldermen, it was decided the consultant Town Planner will bring down a report.

Their general level of awareness and interest can probably be gauged from Alderman Pursehouse. His contribution and interjection, was that this was not Leichhardt Council's concern as 'it was outside our area'.

AMALGAMATIONS

Council does not seem to care much about the subject. They just don't want to talk about it. They do seem intent on getting together with Marrickville Council. For a Council that claims such a superhuman administrative record (we suggest you might have a different opinion), Council seems remarkably devoid of ideas of what the most desirable unit of Local Government ought to be. Council has decided to wait for the Boundaries Commission Surveys before commenting, which will be something like being asked if you have any last words before going to the gallows. Council certainly will not be taking us residents into their confidence even then.

Alderman Origlass, Balmain, tried to impress upon Council at its April 19th meeting that Council should want to be heard before decisions are made. Commenting on a Local Government Association submission, he said that he supported the call for an all encompassing enquiry into Local Government which should be held before changes are made. The present enquiry was not such that it could cover all the aspects. Ald. Origlass did not agree with other aspects of the L.G.A. submission as they were too restricted in options as to what the appropriate unit of Local Government ought to be. People wanted smaller units so they can have some say. "Bigger is better" is proclaimed, but no evidence is advanced. Assertions are made as to economies of scale and rate of growth, but no

benefits are shown cost-wise. Cost factors cannot be relied upon.

Alderman Origlass's motion calling for a restructuring of the Boundaries Commission and its operations to embrace all facets of Local Government: "THAT amalgamations be opposed as we will lose the very factor that gives Local Government validity and control over it by the residents; and THAT we indicate our support for proper criteria for the examination of Local Government", was lost for want of a seconder. Ald. Hoy successfully moved deferral until after the Boundaries Commission surveys and no further discussion took place on this.

LOLA SCALES, A Case to Remember

People have rights, tenants have rights, absentee landlords have more rights. Lola Scales, 23 years a resident of Rozelle in the one house, cherished what little space she had in the front of her rented cottage. She cherished the sun that came in, fresh air, and views of the surrounding water and park. But her neighbour wanted a six foot sidewall and enclosure. Lola Scales objected. She would be jailed in, she claimed. After consulting the absentee landlords, Council got a compromise. The wall would be four foot six. What did Lola Scales think of this proposal, Ald. Origlass asked of the Chief Building Inspector Brimble? Ald. Origlass angrily repeated the question. Was she asked, Ald. Origlass asked again. 'No', was the eventual answer. Ald. Origlass said that tenants were entitled to equal consideration. Lola Scales has probably paid the value of the property in rent, and will be disadvantaged every day. Council should be guided by residents. Instead they sought only the opinion of an owner who probably has never lived there, or hardly seen the house.

WHY THE PATERNALISTIC APPROACH?

Following expiration of its initial 12 months trial, renewal of Town Planning permission was sought by the Birchgrove Community School. A works inspection was recommended. However on the motion of Ald. Hoy a further 12 months approval was given. Ald. Origlass called for the works inspection in view of the deputations. There would be no disadvantage in an inspection, and a decision would be better made.

FOUR CORNERS and CHILD CARE

It seems the A.B.C. program claimed inadequate child care was available in the Balmain/Rozelle area and has upset Council. So, Council has called for a report on the accusations.

TREE PLANTING AND PRESERVATION

Council's committee is one alderman short. He resigned because the committee's only job was to do nothing about the stack of requests for trees. Ald. Hoy, Balmain, asked the right question when he asked Council, "... do you think we need a new committee member?" Ald. Wilson, Annandale, got the job.

GLADSTONE PARK BUS PROBLEMS REMAIN

Leichhardt Council decided at its April 19th meeting to ask the Public Transport Commission to investigate Booth, Darvall and Eaton Streets as an alternative route for buses terminating at Gladstone Park. The current route via McDonald and Curtis Streets is meeting with mounting opposition from residents. The change in routes is at the insistence of the P.T.C. to avoid buses making a complete turn at the junction of Curtis and Darling Streets. Council claimed that it had the support of the Balmain Hospital for the around the park route. (Presumably the support of the Hospital Board.) It was asserted that pensioners would benefit via the Hospital Route. It would be anticipated that the Streets would become One Way for this route. Ald. Origlass, speaking in favour of an investigation of taking the buses to the Darling St. wharf terminus, said that Council had defaulted on its responsibility to its residents in agreeing to the P.T.C. proposals, and not fully investigating all the options. Council had not notified residents that the alternative routes would operate. It was doubted that Council had either the support of the schools or the church, or residents on the new proposal to be investigated by the P.T.C. By not fulfilling the responsible approach, Council had placed McDonald and Curtis Streets residents in an awkward position. If the residents pursued their objections, and the Hospital route was adopted, this would be to the disadvantage of other residents. Council should go to the highest level, the Minister, and not be deterred by the intransigence of P.T.C. officials. It was absurd for Council to claim that its excuse for not being strong-willed with the P.T.C. was that the bus services were likely to be cut off. (The Mayor repeated this several times.) Ald. Origlass said that the P.T.C. claim that the Darling Street wharf terminus was more costly, should be properly ascertained. With a proper study in hand, and with the buses already a subsidised public service, the public interest and amenity could be effectively evaluated. Darling St. Wharf route was already clearly attractive. By improving the service, the waiting period for commuters would be reduced making cars less attractive and reducing traffic. There would be benefits to P.T.C. staff in ease of the route. The Hospital route was of questionable value to patients with buses passing so close. Residents were not invited or informed they could speak. The motion of Ald. Origlass's for the Darling St. Wharf route was lost for want of a seconder.

PARKING PROBLEM

An Annandale restaurant has lost the rights to the parking available in a nearby service station. The new owner of the restaurant-wine bar claims ignorance of the Council conditions of operation, that some parking be provided. He now wants to sell and can't because a new restaurant has bought the rights to the parking available. Council can't rescind the parking requirement as they have made it conditional for the other restaurant. It appears the restaurant-wine bar was uneconomic. The one solicitor was apparently used by the seller and purchaser.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARIES.

On 28th March last, the Association sent the following submission to the Local Government Boundaries Commission :-

"This Association wishes to place before the Commission its views regarding the proposed examination of Local Government boundaries in accordance with the public notice invitation dated 14th January, 1977.

In 1973 the Barnett Committee of Inquiry on Amalgamation of Local Government Boundaries recommended that the Municipalities of Leichhardt, Marrickville, South Sydney and Botany should amalgamate. This new municipality would have comprised some 300,000 people (hardly to be considered a "local government" unit). In 1973 60% of councils had less than 10,000 residents and amalgamation would have meant that, of the new areas created, about 50% would still have had a population of less than 20,000. If an area containing this density of population was considered a viable size, then it must follow that a compact area like Leichhardt, with approximately 70,000 residents, is already viable. On that ground alone the Association would be opposed to any amalgamation with other municipalities.

Balmain is the eastern section of the Municipality of Leichhardt yet, because of its isolation on a peninsula, it shares few community interests with the other wards of Leichhardt with the exception of Rozelle. This lack of communication within an even larger municipal unit would result in almost complete lack of interaction.

It is unreasonable to assume, as some supporters of amalgamation contend, that "bigger is better". Seemingly without supporting evidence, it is regularly postulated that, by making unit sizes larger, all of the difficulties surrounding local government would be overcome. We maintain, however, that effective orderly planning is not the natural consequence of a change of boundaries.

As yet no systematic attempt appears to have been made to define the efficient council or to define the desirable and undesirable features of a council or how these could be balanced. Neither has there been a study of the more efficient councils in order to find out what makes them that way.

The Association accepts that there are advantages in following the current progressive management trend of small flexible units, which could amalgamate with neighbouring units to achieve specific goals or to combine with other units for functions in ways which each individual unit sees as most efficient. Specifically, we advocate economies of a scale where councils could share a pool of machinery or facilities rather than the present system where each council is self-sufficient with its own equipment. When matters concerning engineering, town planning, health and social welfare are being considered, expert consultants could be hired to give advice to council officers rather than each council duplicating expert staff.

The U.K. Layfield Report, 1976, pointed out that local government reorganisation in Britain resulted in the establishment of new administrative centres and the reshaping of the existing systems, often resulting in more expensive accommodation. The report stated (Clauses 50/51) that: 'To protect staff from the effects of redundancy, generous arrangements were made for early retirement and disturbance allowances were paid to those who had to move to new places of work.

'There was a tendency for the new authorities to plan for staffing establishments and standards of services at the highest level established by any one of their predecessors. Many took the opportunity to organise their new establishments in accordance with the staff and corporate management principles ... The increased size of the new authorities was held to justify increases in the numbers and salaries of senior officers.' Much can be gained from a study of the U.K. experience.

The Balmain Association encourages the reform of local government in N.S.W. with specific emphasis on the following points :-

(1) That ways be found to improve the calibre and status of elected members rather than the alternative of appointing unelected officers. In urban areas this seems to be the crux of the present local government "crisis". When good people are elected, this forms the basis of a good council. The problems of indifferent and ill-informed elected members are all too common.

(2) That the reports made by Department of Local Government Inspectors on local government finances should be published in a general bulletin for the information of citizens.

(3) That the size and possible amalgamation of each council be decided on its merits, as it seems obvious to us that some municipalities may benefit from an increase in size, whereas others may not.

(4) That State and Commonwealth Government departments consult more with local government so that an integrated plan for the whole of the metropolitan area can be worked out, instead of the present apparent piecemeal independent development.

The Balmain Association was formed in 1965 and for the past 12 years has become involved at local level in the problems of the Balmain community. The membership of the Association comprises planners, architects, social workers, etc. and therefore has available a ready resource of experience from which to draw, with particular emphasis on inner urban matters."

In its advertisement, the Commission stated that, later in the year, it would be inviting all persons and groups making submissions to hold informal talks with the Committee. Would those members interested in becoming part of a delegation from the Association please contact Margaret Dobson, 82 2774 (after 6.00 p.m.)?

SAVE PUBLIC TRANSPORT.

Save Public Transport (the word "Committee" has been dropped) has written to the Premier and the Minister for Transport asking for a public enquiry into public transport administration and policy-making in N.S.W.

In their submission, they state, inter alia, that in October, 1975 a report was prepared on institutional decision-making in bodies concerned with providing public services in the Sydney area. This study was undertaken for the Commonwealth Bureau of Roads by a team from the Department of Government and Public Administration at Sydney University led by Dr. M.J. Painter. Only that section relating to the Public Transport Commission has been made available.

The report concludes in its chapter on the P.T.C.:

"In no sense has the P.T.C. been a success. Internal administration is chaotic, industrial relations is in the worst condition in memory, the level of services provided for passengers has fallen and, despite greatly increased fares, the financial condition of the services under the P.T.C.'s administration has deteriorated sharply. The P.T.C. has survived longer than its predecessor "experiments" solely because of political desperation in the first place and bewilderment thereafter."

One of the allegations made in the body of the chapter is that "bus, train and ferry services have been curtailed without any economic analysis at all". Other allegations are the purchase of cranes for which the P.T.C. had no use and machines designed for the maintenance of railway sleepers wider than those used in N.S.W.; the failure to make public certain details of P.T.C.'s accounts such as contracts with large freight companies at rates highly favourable to the companies.

The object of calling for this enquiry is not to find particular people to blame for mistakes of the past, but to discover what steps have been taken and what further steps need to be taken to ensure that mistakes are not repeated.

Further details can be obtained from Don Morison (95 5731) or Kevin Eadie (290 4687 (W): 81 4268(H)).

N.S.W. B.L.F.

Do you remember Joe Owens? And the "Green Bans"? Joe Owens has written to the Association telling us that he intends publishing a book dealing with the takeover of the N.S.W. B.L.F. by the Federal B.L.F.

The book will include details of the emergence of the "Green Bans", the industrial activities of the union and the confrontations which occurred at The Rocks, Woolloomooloo, Waterloo, Victoria Street and the Expressways.

Money is needed to research, type, edit and subsequently publish this book. Members wishing to contribute should send their donations to "B.L.F. Book Fund", c/o Joe Owens, 334 Bulwarra Road, Ultimo. N.S.W. 2007.

AID TO THE SOLOMON ISLANDS

Summer clothes are requested to help villagers in the Solomon Islands. Many of these people exist below the poverty level and are desperately in need of clothing (men, women or childrens) in reasonable condition. Please phone David McCann (Ph. 827 1179) or deliver the clothes to 4 Carisville Street, Balmain.

HISTORY GROUP.

The History Group, convened by Peter Reynolds, meets on the first Monday of each month (next meeting 4th April) at the Watch House at 8.15 p.m.

After the successful launching of Peter's book HALF A THOUSAND ACRES - BALMAIN. A HISTORY OF THE LAND GRANT, the group is gathering its forces together to start on their next venture. Anyone interested in historical research, publishing, writing, editing and layout is invited to attend the informal meetings.

JUST WHAT WE NEEDED!

The following article has been taken from the Annandale Association Newsletter for April.

"In response to whispers that Leichhardt Council has produced a 100-page glossy booklet on itself, we made enquiries to see if we could obtain a copy. Well, yes we were told, a Year Book has been produced. However, sorry it is not available to the public. Well, could we see a copy. No, no more are available. We were then told that one copy was available in the library. The Town Clerk would take our name and forward a copy should one be available in the future. A few observations on the library copy. One would first expect that the community would be invited to be included; that there would be both broad and detailed examination of the work Council had done; and that it would be a practical guide to people wanting to utilise Council services. But no, full of staff photos and aldermen; superficial descriptions of departments and ads by most of the municipality's most conspicuous industries. Thrown in are some historical pieces from industries with historical ties in the area; there is also some material on the local area that can only be described as being in the sensational style of journalism. What the purpose can be one can only guess at, but if it is meant to be a historical document we fear people of the future might easily get the wrong impression. For instance, it says of one alderman: 'Has served on every committee of Council during this time with an extremely active interest in pollution of the environment caused by noise, smoke and traffic.' Well, one could imagine the publisher has got his Councils mixed up. This could not be Leichhardt Council could it? But yes - the picture above this bibliography and name is definitely that of Mayor Les Rodwell."



BARON BOLLIGREW AND THE DRAGON by Robert Bolt
(author of "Man for All Seasons")

After the success of "Winnie the Pooh" last year the Group has decided to try and perform a children's play each year. This is a very witty play set in Mediaeval Times and has a large and varied cast including knights, peasants, the rascally Baron and his dull-witted offsider, Blackheart, two Magpies, a Wizard and, of course a Dragon. The play is being directed by Shirley Sheppard (who directed "Little Murders" at the end of last year). The play does not require a set and depends on colourful costumes and properties for its effect. Rev. A. Soos has very kindly allowed the Group to use the Church itself for this production and this will greatly add to the atmosphere of the play. The Church Organist has also agreed to participate and will not only play introductory music but also provide quite a number of sound effects throughout the play. The play is to be performed over three weekends during the May school holidays: Sat. 7th May, Sun. 8th May, Fri. 13th May, Sat. 14th May, Sun. 15th May, Fri. 20th May, Sat. 21st May, Sun. 22nd May. Friday performances are at 8.00 p.m. and Sat. and Sun. performances at 2.00 p.m. Place: Presbyterian Church, Campbell St., Balmain. Bookings: Bray's Bookshop, 268 Darling St., Balmain. Bray's phone no. is 82 5613, and phone bookings may be made between the hours of 10.00 a.m. and 6.00p.m. from Monday to Friday. Because this play is one which can be readily enjoyed by adults as well as children the Group has scheduled two evening performances. Tickets cost \$2.50 for adults and \$1 for children and pensioners.

SOCIAL CRICKET.

The Balmain Association, after donating two of its players to the opposition, managed to score the highly respectable total of 132 runs against a motley assortment of friends, relations and passersby. They were dubbed "The Rest" in the official score sheet, which conveniently has been lost.

The match was played before an enthusiastic crowd of spectators. There were 15 adults who read, discussed politics, religion and other R rated topics, and were roused to fever pitch when one of "The Rest" hit 32 runs off a 7-ball over. (Thanks umpire!) Fortunately the scorer was searching for another can and failed to record relevant details, such as the name of the bowler. There were also hordes of children and 3 dogs--one of which showed (showered) great interest in all unattended belongings.

Minor difficulties, such as finding a soccer match in progress on the ground hired from the Leichhardt Council, led to a late start and possible confusion for very late arrivals. However, there was sufficient time for each side to bat in pleasant conditions on Easton Park, Lilyfield. Notable performances for Balmain included a half century opening stand by Warwick Welch (26) and Rob Scard (31). Other scores in double figures were (Sundries (15), Guy Kendall (10 not out). Thanks to the foresight that required all batsmen to retire on reaching 50, Balmain bowlers were robbed of the opportunity to claim three of the opposition wickets. However, Les Creek, Rob Scard and Warwick Welch were successful--the lost score sheet makes it impossible to record actual figures.



Plans for Next Season.

Several people have expressed interest in playing cricket more frequently during the 1977-78 cricket season. Enquiries have established that there are two local competitions in which the Balmain Association may be able to take part. Alternatively, it may be possible to organise a more regular series of social matches.

The success of the two matches played during the current season has established that the Association has both the numbers and the enthusiasm to support a team. Decisions have to be reached during the winter months so that arrangements can be made if the Association is to take part in a regular competition. If you have taken part in either match this season or are interested in joining an Association cricket team, please attend the planning meeting to be held at the Watch House on Wednesday, May 25, at 7.45 p.m.

If you would like further information, please ring Ralph Catts (82 4350) or John Garret (827 2992).

watch these dates !!!

- 3/5/77 Leichhardt Council Meeting. 8.00 p.m.
3/5/77 Peter Reynolds - Illustrated Address -
"Convicts, Soldiers and Architects",
6.15 p.m. Meeting Room, History House,
133 Macquarie Street, Sydney.
11.5.77 Management Committee Meeting. 8.00 p.m.
Watch House.
11.5.77 Annandale Association General Meeting.
Speaker on Botany Bay development and
discussion on proposed changes to local
government area. Council Chambers,
Annandale. 8.00 p.m.
17.5.77 Leichhardt Council Meeting. 8.00 p.m.
23.5.77 Garden Walk Sub-committee. Watch House,
8.00 p.m. (See details this issue.)
6.6.77 History Group Meeting. Watch House,
8.15 p.m. Plans for publication of
a new book.

MEMBERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRES.

A thanks to all those members who completed and returned the questionnaires. (Sorry the envelope was not enclosed.)

Would those people interested in being involved in publishing another book about Balmain please attend the History Group meeting on 6th June next, when plans and action can be discussed. At the Watch House, 179 Darling Street, at 8.15 p.m.

Garden Walk. The route has to be chosen; gardens selected and owners given at least 3 months' notice. A sub-committee meeting will be held at the Watch House on Monday, 23rd May, at 8.00 p.m. Those wishing to become involved please attend. Ring Margaret Dobson, 82 2774.

Typists. Work will be required to be done for the History Group and for the Garden Walk. A monthly typing exercise will be needed to prepare the News Sheet copy. Contact will be made progressively as the work becomes available. Queries Margaret Dobson, 82 2774 (after 6.00 p.m.)

membership form

I wish to open/renew my membership with the Balmain Association and enclose \$.....* subscription.

Name.....
Address.....
.....Telephone.....

Send to:
The Hon. Secretary, The Balmain Association, P.O.
Box 57, Balmain, 2041.

*Subscription rates: Single membership \$2.00
Family \$4.00
Pensioner / Junior \$0.20

Petitions. The Association is offering help to obtain signatures for a petition from residents to form a Balmain Municipal Council. Contacts will be made when details have been worked out.

new members

Welcome to the following new members:

M/s B. Hornibrook,
14 Nicholson St., Balmain.
Mr. & Mrs. D. West
M/s E.M. Allen,
17/75 Pacific Pde., Dee Why.
M/s N. Crinion,
4/21 Thames St., Balmain.
Mr. & Mrs. D.A. Douglas,
18 Reynolds St., Balmain.
Miss A. Robinson,
14/7 Birchgrove Rd., Balmain.
Mr. W.E. Purser & Family,
17 Adolphus St., Balmain.
M/s E. Birnnett & M. Dean,
238 Nelson St., Annandale.
Mr. & Mrs. C.G. Colman,
95 Short St., Balmain.
M/s K.G. Kolega & Family,
235 Darling St., Balmain.
Mr. & Dr. H.A. Chan,
71 Elliott St., Balmain.
Mr. S. Turner,
c/- 22 Ada St., Oatley, 2223.

We welcome back:

Mr. K.D. O'Reilly,
5 Rose St., Norwood, S.A.

next general meeting

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8, 8.00 p.m.

WATCH HOUSE, 179 DARLING ST., BALMAIN

ALL MEMBERS PLEASE ATTEND

FRIENDS ALSO WELCOME

TEA and COFFEE provided.