

NEWS SHEET

103

PO BOX 57 BALMAIN 2041

the balmain association

FOUNDED 1965

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 20 AUGUST 1980 BALMAIN TOWN HALL



ON THE WATERFRONT

In Balmain

As predicted by the 4-Shores Committee redevelopment on the Balmain foreshores is increasing. Because of this the campaign to return the foreshores to the people is now critical.

WESTON STREET: In 1979 the State Government bought this site and handed it over to Leichhardt Council to be incorporated into Peacock Point Park. Council, however, intends to pull up the wharf - Balmain's favourite fishing spot - on the grounds that it is unsafe for elephants and bulldozers and other stresses for which it was never intended. On the Weston Street side they intend to widen the street and put in a large car park.

BOTH THESE PROPOSALS WILL GREATLY REDUCE THE SIZE OF THE PARK. RESIDENTS MUST PROTEST.

HOSKING STREET: The 26 3-bedroom town houses have now been built on the site. Under the local Government Appeals Tribunal decision permitting them to build on the site IBA Pty. Ltd. was required to landscape and then to dedicate to Council a 10-metre strip along the waterfront. The landscaping has taken place but the transfer to Council has not. **RESIDENTS BE VIGILANT.**

DICKSON PRIMER: This site is presently zoned "Waterfront Industrial 4 (c)". The owning company however wants the land rezoned "Residential 2 (b2)".

The latest intention is 40% open space on the waterfront (25% by PEC resumption and 15% offered by the developer) but the 4-Shores Committee proposal is:

- 40 to 50% open waterfront space for the public
- the remainder to be rezoned "Residential 2 (b2)" or lower
- The developer to make a contribution of public open space (or cash equivalent) at the rate of 2.83 hectares per 1 000 persons by which the site population is increased.

MORT BAY: The ANL site at Mort Bay is owned mainly by the MSB but part of it is owned by the Australian Coastal Shipping Commissioner - a Commonwealth statutory body. The Defence Minister wanted the site for the Army's maritime unit but the Premier and Cabinet in NSW have made it clear that they want the site largely for waterfront public open space with some housing for low income earners.

This is also the wish of residents' groups and Council. **THE SITE IS VACANT AND THE FUTURE IS ANYONE'S GUESS.**

SYDNEY SLIPWAY SITE: This site is divided into 38 building blocks. The slipway itself has been filled and the buildings on the site demolished revealing a pleasant vista of Mort Bay and Ballast Point.

That view will slowly disappear again behind the residences to be built on the site.

Public open space on the site has been obtained on the site by the application of the 2.83 hectares per 1 000 extra people rule.

The result has been 20 metres along the waterfront and the land below the Avenue being reserved as public open space.

The Application of the rule by the Council is a **BREAKTHROUGH** forced by those pressing for an increase in public open space in the Municipality.

The Public open space is concentrated on the area below The Avenue and is joined to public open space on the Canefields. **A PLEASANT FOCUS PARK WILL THUS BE CREATED.**

THE CANFIELDS: After a long fight Lot 1 has been handed over to the Council as public open space and this will be joined to the Slipway focus park.

The foreshore building line on the Canefields makes lots 2 and 3 unbuildable.

Leichhardt Council has commendably refused to alter the foreshore building line to make lots 2 and 3 large enough for building upon.

IF THEY ARE ADDED TO LOT 1 HOWEVER MORE BADLY NEEDED OPEN SPACE WILL BE GAINED FOR THE CANEFIELDS.

GRAFTON STREET: The residents have had a victory. Leichhardt Council had refused to approve the development of the waterfront site between Ewinton and the container wharf.

The developer unsuccessfully appealed to the Local Government Appeals Tribunal on 7 July 1980. His appeal was lost on a technicality.

NO DOUBT HE WILL TRY AGAIN!

In Rozelle

Rozelle is cut into four sections by the intersection of Darling Street and Victoria Road. These busy traffic corridors make it difficult for the children to cross freely into other areas for recreation.

THEY TEND TO STAY IN THEIR OWN QUARTER.

ROZELLE VALLEY: One of these four parts is very badly in need of breathing space in the form of a park.

This is the Rozelle Valley between Mullens and Evans Streets. Except for two tiny reserves there is nothing which can properly be called a park.

THE BALMAIN ASSOCIATION IS FOR PEOPLE IN BALMAINBIRCHGROVE**ROZELLE**

An ideal site would be the old H.H. CUSH timber yard which is now a blackened ruin. It could be turned however into a very valuable asset for the people of Rozelle IMMEDIATELY.

The Sydney County Council bought this land in December 1978 and is planning a new depot on the site.

This means more industry for this already beleaguered part of our municipality.

RESIDENTS SHOULD FORM A COMMITTEE TO GET THIS PARK.

WATCH EASTON PARK: This oasis of public open space is to be FLOODLIT and later FENCED as a training ground for the Balmain League Club.

What kind of public access will be possible when this occurs ? NOISE, CARS AND NO PARK FOR THE PEOPLE.

O'CONNOR RESERVE: \$75 000 to be spent by the Council to upgrade this left-over piece of tramway land.

In the 1890s the steam trams puffed their way up the steep slope from The Crescent to enter Victoria Road (then Weston Road) at this point.

IT WILL BE MONEY WELL SPENT.

COOK STREET RESERVE: What is happening to this piece of land which has been fenced by Council ?

WHEN WILL IT BECOME A PARK OR PLAYGROUND ?

POWERHOUSE PARK ? A first-class regional park could be established along the Iron Cove foreshore by continuing King George Park under the bridge to take in ALL the POWERHOUSE site and absorb ALL the MONSANTO land up to the High School.

This would return the right to use the waterfront to the people who live and work in the area. A park of such fine proportions would add considerably to the welfare of residents in this particular part of Rozelle.

White Bay Another part of our Municipality that is already owned by the people could be turned into a very pleasant park.

This is the "INFAMOUS CHEMICAL TANK FARM" along the White Bay side of Donnelly Street between Booth and Stephens Streets.

This land is owned by the MSB and is either vacant or occupied under short term leases which the White Bay residents say have terminated.

Part of it is used as a terminal by Esso which must eventually move.

The importance of this site as a buffer to the monstrously out of scale container shed cannot be overstated.

A park here would be a "PAYBACK" for "PILCHER'S PADDOCK" which natural waterfront playground disappeared in the bulldozer's maw in the late 1960s.

THE AMPOL SITE: The site temporarily occupied by Ampol (Batty, Reynolds and Buchanan Streets) should be rezoned public open space since a park in this area would be a buffer between Lever and Kitchen, the Coal Loader and high-density housing.

BUFFERZONE PARK TO BE PLANNED FOR!

The old cycle of houses being demolished for industry is gradually being reversed in our area where industrial sites are being sold for housing.

PUBLIC OPEN SPACE MUST REPLACE FACTORIES!



PUBLICATIONS REPORT



Balmain in Time is now out of print.

Half a Thousand Acres \$ 9.95

Gilchrist Map and Booklet \$ 10.00

Set of 4 photographic cards of old Balmain and Rozelle - good value 4 for \$ 1.00

Contact Rita Wise 82 1702

HISTORY GROUP REPORT

Publications

Register of First Landholders ready for publication. Story-boards on the history of the postal service in Balmain and Rozelle will be published later in 1980. Street Name Index continuing.

Leichhardt Historical Journal No. 7 has been re-printed.

Research

Balmain Council Minutes (Mitchell Library): 1860-1890 read.

Secondary Landholders title search (Register General) almost complete for each lot from the MSB Depot on Jubilee Bay around the water to Clayton Street and up to Curtis Road.

Family tree of persons whose surname is Balmain in hand. Index to Balmain Cemetery Register did not begin as a typescript copy was found in the Mitchell Library. The original has been computer-indexed by the Church of the Latter Day Saints.

Activities

Provided tour guide for the "Golden Eagles" Womens Group visit to Balmain - funds raised \$56. The History Room has been refurbished to allow safe storage of the Collection.

The Collection is being catalogued - item by item. Questionnaire returned to Heritage Council on our conservation activities for the State Conservation Plan. Rozelle Public School visited for lecture and walk on Rozelle history for 6th Class.

Assisted Rozelle School in producing a slide/tape set "All in Together" and a booklet Gathering the Strands... Participated in an In-service Conference for 40 teachers at Rozelle School - "Education through Local History". Balmain High School visited to inaugurate a local area study for Year 9 students.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 20 August 1980

The time is approaching when all Management Committee and Executive positions are declared vacant and new elections conducted.

You can now take an active part in the running of your Association by nominating for one of the positions of President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer or Management Committee member.

Remember this is not an elitist group and new blood is always welcome to make the Association an active body of concerned residents.



Gladstone Park Bandstand

This fine Bandstand was built in 1918 by the Water Board. Its remains are to be seen in the octagonal "brickhenge" opposite the Hospital. Peter Reynolds wants to know when it was demolished and why ? Phone 827 3560

Uncovering Our Past



From Pigeon Ground to Park

Pigeon shooting began in Balmain on land opposite the Town Hall "where some exciting matches were held" in early days.

When those allotments were built on, the "principal pigeon matches were shot off" on what is now Gladstone Park. The name "Pigeon Ground" passed into general usage and is still used to describe the Park and the Balmain Public School.

The cruel sport of pigeon killing ceased after the owner of the site, Emma Louise a'Beckett, subdivided it in 1872 into 83 small lots averaging 22 feet wide.

At the time the land was bounded by Darling Street, Booth Street, Darvall Street and St. Augustine's Church. The first sales were to the Balmain Working Men's Club in 1874 and to the Council of Education in 1875 for the new School.

The a'Beckett subdivision created Elwin Street (later called EATON STREET) and a central avenue named a'Beckett Street. This street cut the site into two equal parts.

Balmain Council offered to buy the unsold portions in 1879. No agreement was reached with Mrs. a'Beckett however and the sales proceeded.

Balmain's leading citizens agitated for the land to be set aside for a park whilst others proposed a post office court house and police station complex.

A deputation to the Premier, Sir Henry Parkes, led to the whole of the land being resumed, including the sold portions, for a park. The block already sold for the School was unaffected by the resumption which was made law in 1883.

Trustees responsible to the government were appointed and the "Pigeon Ground" officially became "Darling Park" on 5 April 1890.

GLADSTONE PARK: Nobody knows when the name was changed to Gladstone Park. Probably named after the British Prime Minister, W E Gladstone, the name was curiously used well before the "Darling Park" naming ceremony and always after that event.

Ridiculously meagre funds caused the Park's development to take place over a number of years and the public could not get full access. When £75 was granted in 1889 there were cries of "spend some of it on a few trees". The local cricketers were said to be "pining for a game on the oval".

The stringency of the public's access was demonstrated in 1891 when the Park Keeper "ejected ladies from the Park without any apparent reason".

As a little more money became available sections of the Park were used by the public but even as late as 1905 it was still being referred to as "an offensive tip" and a "dusty heap of stones". In 1902 the white-painted picket fence was in such urgent need of repair that it was thought that the Trustees "must be waiting for the tariff to be taken of timber" before work could begin.

During all this dissatisfaction, the Council had been striving for permission to take full control out of the Trustees hands. Agreement was reached in 1911 when the Government vested the Park in the Council on condition that it remove the troublesome fence and make no objection to any enlargement of the School's grounds.

GLADSTONE PARK BOWLING CLUB: Not all of the "prettily situated Park was badly neglected however. At the turn of the century a visitor noticed the "bowling oasis: amid the incompletd landscaping.



Excavation for Gladstone Park Reservoir : c1917

The Gladstone Park Bowling Club was formed in May 1898 from members of the older Balmain Bowling Club. The new Club received a portion of the Park on condition that members of the public has free access to the grounds and could watch the matches being played. The Club contributed to the upkeep of the Park as well as maintaining its own grounds.

Bowling however was limited to the members only. William Moffatt Burns, one of the Gladstone Park Trustees became the Club's first president.

By July 1899 a new pavilion had been built and the green enclosed with a "tastefully-erected white picket fence" at a height that "even the juvenile portion of the community may view the bowling".

THE BALMAIN RESERVOIR: The idyllic setting of the new Club was disrupted however by measures taken to satisfy Balmain's need for a permanent water supply. Throughout the years following the foundation of the Balmain Council in 1860 water was always in short supply.

Springs were tapped for public use - the main one being at the corner of Beattie and Elliott Streets. Council water carts delivered water for one shilling per load.

By 1881 the Sydeny water supply system had been laid on to Marrickville, St Peters, Leichhardt and Balmain. The steep Balmain terrain made constant pressure impossible and in very dry weather, the mains were often empty.

A reservoir was the only solution but news of its construction was received with mixed feelings by the Balmain Observer of 4 October 1884:

As I could not realise the Council forming the place into a decent square I was curious enough to enquire what they were doing and to my horror I learned that they were making a survey for a water reservoir. Was it true - can the government do this? Is it a hoax?

The reservoir was shelved for a time and Balmain received a better water supply in 1892 when the mains were connected to the Potts Hill line which fed the new West Ryde Pumping Station. The pumps forced the water up the top of Ryde hill 234 feet above sea level and then a 9" main carried the water to the heights of Balmain.

As population increased the new main failed to cope with the demand and in the drought of 1916 parts of Balmain were without water. A decision had already been made to proceed with an underground reservoir at the high level Gladstone Park.

Huge amounts of rock were cut out of the Park for the 180 feet long by 105 feet wide reservoir. Piles of debris clouds of dust and ear-shattering noise made enjoyment of the Park impossible.

By 1915 the reservoir had been formed to a depth of 18'6" with top water-level at 128 feet above sea-level and a capacity of 2.4 million gallons of water.

Work then began on roofing the reservoir a concrete slab to re-establish the Park. When this was completed in 1918 the Water Board fulfilled its promise to build a bandstand as compensation for loss of amenity during construction.

The bandstand was opened by the Mayor D.H. McKenzie on 19 April and was dedicated to Balmain men killed in W W I.

* * * * *

The remains of the octagonal bandstand are still to be seen but it is hard to imagine that a reservoir is beneath the well-kept Park.

The best way to locate it is to stand in the middle of the tree-less space - then you will be above the centre of the reservoir.

PETER REYNOLDS



Hear the Candidates speak before the Election



Ask your questions and hear the policies of candidates for the Balmain and Rozelle Wards in the September LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS.

A public meeting will be held on THURSDAY 11 September in the LOWER MEETING ROOM, BALMAIN TOWN HALL at 8.00 p.m.

Public Meeting against Loss of Park Land

The Joint Residents Associations of the Leichhardt Municipality have called a public meeting to protest at the insidious alienation of PUBLIC OPEN SPACE by local and governmental authorities.

THE PROTEST MEETING will be held at the old ANNANDALE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, Johnston St Annandale on WEDNESDAY 10 SEPT at 7.30 p.m.

stop press

Sand terminal for Balmain

DANGER * * * SAND MINING



The Association wrote to the Minister for Planning and Environment, Mr Bedford, on 30 July as follows:

The Balmain Association has noted with great concern the proposal by Consolidated Goldfields of Australia for off shore dredging of sand in Broken Bay.

The Association believes that the dredging itself is an operation requiring much greater attention to environmental factors than appears thus far to have been given.

In the event that it can be shown conclusively that the dredging would not be environmentally dangerous, close consideration would need to be given to other aspects of the proposal.

We note that the Company's proposal calls for onshore terminals at Pyrmont or Balmain and that such terminals would be serviced by 200 heavy truck movements each day.

Both Pyrmont and Balmain contain a mix of residential, commercial and industrial uses and this is considered desirable by the Association.

However, the streets of Pyrmont and Balmain are narrow, hilly and winding. They are unsuitable for continual heavy truck traffic, which is utterly destructive of residential amenity.

Consequently, the Balmain Association wishes to register its total opposition to Consolidated Goldfields' proposal and seeks your assistance in this matter.

Mr Bedford's reply is awaited with great interest...



WATCH THESE DATES

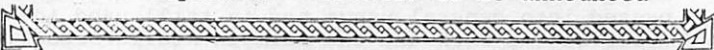


PROTEST MEETING AGAINST ALIENATION OF PARKS
Wed 10 SEPT. 7.30 p.m. ANNANDALE COUNCIL CHAMBERS.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - BALMAIN ASSOCIATION
Wednesday 20 AUGUST 8.00 p.m.

PUBLIC MEETING - HEAR THE CANDIDATES SPEAK
Thursday 11 September 8.00 p.m.
LOWER MEETING ROOM BALMAIN TOWN HALL

BALMAIN GARDEN WALK BALMAIN GARDEN CLUB
Sunday 28 September - details to be announced



The Band in the Park



The Association has not given members much return for their membership lately so, at some expense (\$150), the Management Committee hired the Waverley Brass Band to play in Elkington Park on Sunday 6 July.

The weather proved kind and about 100 people turned up to listen to an old-fashioned band concert in the Band Rotunda.

So far we have only had favourable reports about the venture.

Incidentally Leichhardt Council has assured us that there are no plans to demolish the Rotunda. In fact repairs were carried out last year.

JOIN the balmain association

meaning BALMAIN**BIRCHGROVE**ROZELLE

OUR AIMS ARE TO:

- * improve the living working and recreational amenity of our area
- * maintain all features having natural architectural and/or historical value
- * compile and record the history of the area/keep a permanent collection of items of historical interest
- * seek the co-operation of everyone concerned in the realization of the above

For further information please contact:

PETER REYNOLDS

827 3560



MEMBERSHIP FORM

the balmain association

179 darling street balmain postal po box 57 balmain n.s.w.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

TELEPHONE..... (HOME)..... (WORK)

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