

20th anniversary year NEWS SHEET

142

PO BOX 57 BALMAIN 2041

the balmain association

FOUNDED 1965

"20 YEARS ON AND STILL MORT BAY"

REPORT OF LEICHHARDT COUNCIL PLANNING MEETING 12 FEBRUARY 1985.

The meeting opened at 7.07 pm with about 100 members of the general public, mainly from the MORT BAY RESIDENTS' GROUP, squashed into the Council Chambers.

The Mayor announced that owing to the Residents' concern, the Labor majority on Council would later be putting forward a motion that the proposed rezoning of MORT BAY be deferred until further discussion had taken place. However, since there were so many interested people there, he asked for a number of brief submissions on the matter from the Mort Bay Group.

The main points made by the five speakers were:-

1. The short time the proposal was available to local residents for viewing and for comments.
2. A request for an Environmental Impact Study to be carried out, by an independent body, preferably at the expense of the Department of Environment and Planning.
3. Any further discussions on Mort Bay should have included on the Committee:
3 local residents and the Balmain Ward Aldermen, Nick Origlass and Izzy Wyner. It was pointed out that these two aldermen had been kept in the dark about the proposal until a few days previously.
4. Traffic in Balmain is already a serious problem because of the Peninsula and the narrow streets. There have been instances of the Fire Brigade being unable to reach fires, as well as difficulties encountered by the police, garbage trucks and buses. The area simply cannot take any more cars, and to talk of knocking down existing houses to provide adequate access to the new development is ludicrous.

At the request of the Mayor, the Town Planner then made a number of points:

1. A group of 4-6 residents, which could include the two local aldermen, would be invited to discuss the issue with Council's Planning Department.
2. A number of traffic studies had been done in the Municipality and would be brought up one at a time for study. It would seem sensible to discuss Balmain traffic early.
3. While he admitted that Council had perhaps erred in the short advertisement period, in actual fact Council was under no obligation to advertise at this stage. Normally the rezoning would be passed and development plans drawn up before there was any public announcement. The Council had advertised at this unusually early stage to assess residents' feelings.
4. While there was an upper limit of perhaps 450 new dwellings on the Mort Bay site, the Town Planner felt that there would probably be considerably fewer because of the open space factors.

5. Balmain's population was actually decreasing because of lower utilization of dwelling units. There was heated discussion from the floor on this. He did agree that the number of cars was up and that it was a serious problem.

A motion was then put and seconded by the Lilyfield alterpersons that consideration of the zoning of Mort Bay be deferred until 26 March to consider the government report and residents' submissions and that other rezonings in the L.E.P. still go ahead.

Alderman Origlass then made a spirited speech in support of three amendments he was posing to this motion. His main points were:

That the Government says that all open space on the Harbour should be regional open space and that as it was not local open space, the Council should not be involved at all. The Government had paid for Peacock Point Park and the new work near the Dawn Fraser pool, and should pay for Mort Bay also. It was prepared to expend vast sums at Darling Harbour, where there are few residents, so it should follow its own policies and support Open Space in Mort Bay, particularly as other promised open space in Balmain had been given to the Housing Commission. Three times this land had been zoned as open space by Council.

His three amendments reiterated points made by the residents; namely that there should be interested residents and the two local Aldermen involved in any decisions on Mort Bay; that the Council should seek to have the State Planning Authority finance an Environmental Impact Statement and that this should be available for public comment; all of which would take considerably longer than the Council's proposed deadline of 26 March, and that the Council ask Mr. Peter Crawford, our local State Member, to use his influence on the Government to defer the rezoning.

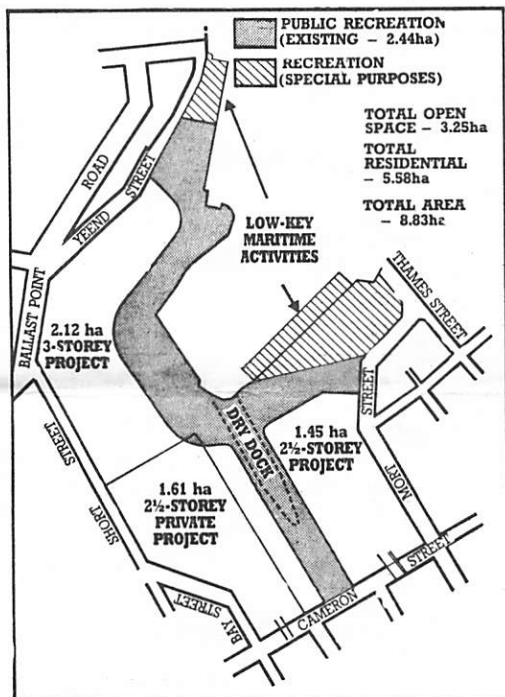
Alderman Wyner then spoke in support of Alderman Origlass and made the following additional points:

Council had blatantly ignored the Balmain Aldermen and the wishes of the Balmain people on the matter of Mort Bay. There were factual errors in the Government report relating to the dry dock, so he wondered what other errors were in the report, as there seemed to be no supporting documentation. The comment was made in the report "that open space was a traffic generator" so he felt the Council is already repudiating the concept of open space. The Department of Environment and Planning already has misgivings about the amount of Open Space as it constitutes 45% of the land reserved for public housing, but it ignores the fact that there is none in the private land designated as Open Space. The plan divides the open space into recreational and special purpose, 6(d). If it is 6(d), then it should be regional Open Space. Much comment has been made about the cost of the land. So far, it

NEXT MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE WILL BE ON WEDNESDAY 3RD APRIL 1985
7.30 P.M. AT THE WATCH HOUSE, 179 DARLING STREET, BALMAIN

has involved paper transfers only between various government entities. Alderman Wyner felt that the Council should stand with the residents and fight the State Government.

Amid some uproar, the amendments suggested by Alderman Origlass were put and lost, and the original motion was then passed by the Labor majority that the matter be deferred until 26 March, 1985.



MORT BAY ACTION GROUP

Progress since Leichhardt Council meeting on 12 February 1985.

At the time of writing (26 February) there has been no real progress with the Council.

A meeting of residents represented by the Mort Bay Action Group, the Balmain aldermen and the Council's Planning department was scheduled for Thursday 21 February but cancelled by the Council. A meeting is now scheduled for Thursday 28 February, in the Council Chambers in Wetherill Street. Time will tell if in fact it takes place or is constructive.

In the meantime we are convening the various action and fact-finding groups that will be needed for the on-going campaign. A list of group Convenors, and of the Mort Bay Action Group Co-ordinating Committee, will be on display in the Balmain Library, together with our latest newsletters. New members and input will be welcomed. On the political front, the Premier was seen inspecting the site on 16 February, but who can tell what he thought? The final decision will be his, and the best we can hope for from the Leichhardt Council is support in our opposition to any plan which will effectively destroy our environment.

Jean Lennane,
for the Mort Bay Action Group.

BOOKS.....Old

A varied collection of old books has been placed on the shelves of the Charge Room of the Balmain Watchhouse. Most of them seem to have belonged to the von Sturmer family, whose tastes included Victorian novels, American thrillers, sermons, books of hymn music and Malthusian theories as well as an informative text on How to Live in Australia.

The books are not in good condition, so we would welcome the services of any interested member (either present or potential !) in preservation efforts. And of course you are all welcome to browse during our standard opening hours.

BOOKS.....New

Allen and Unwin have recently published a collection of photographs of the Sydney waterfront taken in the second half of the last century and the first two decades of this. The collection, the combined efforts of Graeme Aplin and John Storey, is entitled 'Waterfront Sydney 1860-1920.', and contains over 100 photographs. These have come from the standard sources for much of our material of this nature, the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, the Archives Authority of New South Wales, the Macleay Museum, University of Sydney and the New South Wales Government Printer. The quality of photographs used is high, but the scholarly and comprehensive captions add considerable interest to the publication for the professional and amateur social historian alike.

In selecting the photographs there has been a deliberate bias towards those which show commercial views rather than images which dwell on the picturesque or recreational. The authors believe that in showing us Sydney as a commercial port city they are showing us an aspect of Sydney's character that is often understated. Thus in a section of the book which covers West Darling Harbour they give us many illustrations of Pyrmont, Glebe Island, Cockatoo Island and of course Balmain. In the latter case, proponents of the restoration of the Mort's Dock areas may care to ponder the scenes of industrial activity which obtained when the site was operational as a shipyard.

'Waterfront Sydney' is available at a rrp of \$24.95 or so, which represents good value for a thorough review of what a major part of the last century and the first part of this looked like through the eyes of contemporary photographers and the pen of a modern knowledgeable historical geographer.

VACANCY - TEMPORARY RELIEF TREASURER.

Richard Norman, current Treasurer of the Balmain Association, is departing for overseas for 4 months.

WE NEED A VOLUNTEER to take over his position until the Annual General Meeting in August. The duties are not onerous - no more than an hour or so a week paperwork and attend a monthly meeting.

ALL POTENTIAL TREASURERS please telephone Frances Heathfield on 818 2307.



CLONTARF PARK ACTION GROUP

c/o 22 adolphus st balmain 2041 ph 810 6447

The concern being shown by residents over the plans for the redevelopment of Mort Bay is well justified. Leichhardt Council has, despite election promises, become increasingly anti-park over the last few years and has now openly scrapped its Park Purchase Fund.

As in our fight to save Clontarf Park, and with the dispute over the Rank Kirby site in Lilyfield, residents are again being told that they must choose between public housing and local park.

This is political hocus pocus. Any housing, whether public or private, only increases the need for open space - a need previously identified by Leichhardt's town planners as critical. The argument for housing in place of park is ultimately an argument for creating slums.

With the spectre of huge industrial sites becoming available for large scale townhouse development, Balmain is particularly vulnerable. Its village atmosphere relies on the high ratio of historic housing of mixed character and small scale, and its narrow streets - streets which cannot handle any increased traffic without seriously affecting the environment.

The State Government's plan for Mort Bay is a model of economic expediency, not planning wisdom. Private blocks are being sold to pay for the public housing, with the strip of foreshore parkland almost an afterthought.

Balmain residents have the right to ask for a significant park on the site. What better bi-centennial project could Balmain have than a park commemorating its early links with Sydney Harbour, preserving at the same time, both historic Morts Dock and the integrity of the surrounding landscape.

Clontarf Park still lives - next meeting Watchhouse Monday March 11, 1985 at 8.00 p.m.

THE 1788-1820 ASSOCIATION

On the 20th October a group of visitors from the First Fleeters' Association, organised by Mrs. Phyllis Parmeter, visited Balmain. They came by ferry, and many walked up Darling Street to 'take in' the atmosphere of old Balmain on their way to the Watch House. Here they were revived with cups of tea and biscuits and rested on the terrace outside, exchanging historical information, and generally making the day a very pleasant one.

After looking over the Watch House pictures and walking around the building, they left on a guided tour of Balmain, conducted by Richard Norman. Richard was obviously exposing talents which he was hitherto unaware of, because the group sang his praises and have expressed the wish that he take another group on a guided tour next year.

Among the group were members of the PERDRIAU family, whose association with Balmain goes back to 1844, when Henry Perdriau started the first regular ferry service from Balmain to the city. (See Leichhardt Historical Journal No.10 under Alexander and Waterview Streets, and LHJ No.12 under Paul Street).

Miss E.H. Perdriau asked to see a book in our library given to the Balmain Association by her uncle in 1975. We have not been able to locate this book. CAN YOU HELP? The book by Mr. Perdriau is called "ELUSIVE FREEDOMS".

Please ring Miss Perdriau (498 2764) if you can tell her where she can see a copy. The Editor of the News Sheet has however been informed that the Mitchell Library has a copy, but the Association would be pleased to have their copy returned.

THE NEWS LETTER DOES WORK!

You may remember that two or three months ago Bob Nicholls put a small request in the News Letter, asking for information about local naval men and the Boxer Uprising in China in 1900.

As he stepped into his front door early in December on returning from a trip to China, the phone was ringing. He was offered a unique source of data on the expedition - a sailor's diary.

The diary has now formed a major part of Bob Nicholls' book on the adventures of the colonial sailors.

"A Finer Body of Men" is to be published by Allen & Unwin later on in the year.

THE COMBINED BRIDGE ACTION GROUP

Minutes of the Meeting of the Combined Bridge Action Group held on Tuesday 4 December 1984 have been received by the Association. Of note were the facts that consideration of the future of CBAG be considered at next year's Annual General Meeting, and that an Agenda for that meeting should be sent out in sufficient time for each constituent association to elect representatives to attend the Annual General Meeting. The Financial Report was accepted, and the date of the next Annual General Meeting is to be the first Thursday of July 1985.



NEW MEETS OLD AT BALMAIN WATCH HOUSE DURING

HERITAGE WEEK

As part of the Heritage Week activities, the Balmain Association has the loan of an Osborne computer on Saturday 20 April between 1 and 5 p.m.

As more and more people are investigating their Balmain ancestors and the histories of their Balmain homes, the Association's records are starting to reach bursting point in both physical and mental storage space.

A pilot scheme to put these records into a computer data base system is being undertaken. Therefore, on the SATURDAY of HERITAGE WEEK (APRIL 20 TO BE EXACT), come along to the Watch House with any information you have regarding Balmain's past.

This is also an excellent opportunity to get a really close view of a small computer in action.

AT THE SAME TIME, your children - or you! - can experience the sensation of being charged in the Charge Room and locked up in one of the Watch House cells. A 19th century police constable may be re-incarnated to read the charges and to lead the condemned individual to the lock-up!

An entry charge of \$2 will include a Devonshire tea, or wine and cheese.

So do make sure you save this day and come to the Watch House to partake in any or all of the activities.



Heritage Week is promoted by The National Trust of Australia (NSW) with the support of the New South Wales Government and Caltex Oil (Australia) Pty limited



BALMAIN GARDEN CLUB.

DAHLIAS

Dahlias originated in Mexico, and were named for the Swedish botanist Dahl. They soon were taken all over the world and achieved acclaim for their ease in growing, giving good results for very little effort by the grower.

Types: very wide range of colours and varieties. Unless one is growing for shows, it may be best to avoid the so-called 'Decoratives', which grow to six feet, with flowers the size of dinner plates. Better types for the home garden are to be found among the Nymphaea (like water lilies), Charms and the so-called Cactus dahlias, Polypompons and many miniatures, of which new varieties come out every year. They can be planted from seed and flower in a few months, or from tubers obtainable in packets from nurseries and supermarkets, or green cuttings taken when the tuber sprouts.

Conditions: Need full sun. Light soil is quite suitable, with small amount of fertiliser added. Needs good drainage. Likes some lime which may not be needed if your hydrangeas have pink flowers, which show soil is already alkaline, but if the hydrangeas are blue, use a half cup of lime to the square metre for the dahlias. Put in stakes when planting, except for the very miniature types. Pick out the tips once or twice to make the plants compact and bushy. Plant from October to January. Will be at their best in autumn. When flowering is finished, the plant becomes scraggy and withered and is ready to cut back to the ground, and the tuber goes dormant. If dead flowers are picked off, should have months of flowering. The miniatures can be grown in pots, if you can stand the sight of a bare pot in the winter. Of course you can move it out of sight then, or plant something else in it. The really good growers take their dormant tubers up, and would be horrified at the thought of leaving them in the ground; but many people do, and though perhaps one or two may rot in a wet winter, most will emerge safe and sound early next summer.

Pests: Snails and slugs just love those succulent stems and will climb right to the top of the plants to get the most tender tips, so Defender or Baysol will be necessary. In rainy weather sometimes get mildew, spray with Benelate or dust with powdered sulphur for this. Small green grubs are best picked off by hand, if seen.

JESSICA MURRAY

"HOUSE SEARCH"

Have you ever been interested in finding out about your house, when it was built, who may have lived in it and what was life like in the days when it was built?

The Trustees of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences published in 1984 a booklet entitled "House Search", which explains just about everything you need to know when endeavouring to find out the "when, where and how" of your house.

The booklet takes you through the meaning of a Certificate of Title, explains what the Register General does and how you go about finding your Certificate; how the State Archives may be able to help; and suggests where else you should look and what else you should read.

This excellent and invaluable booklet sells for the very modest sum of \$1.00 and is currently only available from the Hyde Park Barracks.



THE BALMAIN VINTAGE YACHT RACE 1985

Another event taking place during HERITAGE WEEK is the Balmain Vintage Yacht Race on Sunday 21 April 1985. All yachts are to be of a 1960 vintage or earlier, and period costume of the era is to be worn.

For further details contact Mobile Shipwrights & Brokers, 2 Phoebe Street, Balmain 2041.

The entry fee of \$15.00 is payable to the Balmain Rotary Club as a donation for community charity.

MUSIC 2041

MUSIC 2041 was established in 1979 to promote the performance and enjoyment of music in the Balmain region. To this end MUSIC 2041 has each year organised a concert series and many other events, such as park band concerts, children's music classes and workshops, talks about music and demonstrations of musical instruments. There have been special recitals held and amateur instrumental and choral groups formed under the auspices of MUSIC 2041. An annual scholarship is awarded to help young musicians in our community.

MUSIC 2041 is a group of people from most sections of the community, some are professional musicians, others amateur, and all like hearing good music performed in an intimate environment.

Enquiries should be addressed to:
MUSIC 2041, P.O. Box 132, BALMAIN 2041

JOIN the balmain association

meaning DALMAIN 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



the balmain association

MEMBERSHIP FORM

(OPEN/RENEW)

PO BOX 57 BALMAIN 2041

NAME:

ADDRESS:

TELEPHONE: (HOME) (WORK)

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION (including News Sheet delivery in Balmain Birchgrove Rozelle)

Single	\$ 4.00
Family or Household	\$ 6.00
Pensioner or Student	\$ 1.00
Organization	\$12.00

Add \$3.00 to above rates to have News Sheet posted.
Cheques made payable to "The Balmain Association".