

My Fellow Members..

Elections over, the relative lull in developments is likely to end. In addition to continuing controversy over proposals such as those for 170 Beattie St. and the Howard Smith site, residents will have to face the impact of the redevelopment of even bigger sites such as Unilever, the power stations, Monsanto and Ampol. Much of this land is currently lying idle, so any development will generate activity and traffic, which may cause serious problems in this congested part of the city. Acknowledging this is realistic, not "anti-progressive".

The positive side of the imminent changes is that there could be an aesthetic improvement on most of these sites. Residents should insist on this, and lobby for maximum dedication to public open space and for strict controls on residential density, traffic generation and movement, and on the use of hazardous materials in any new industry.

The Balmain Association is always prepared to take an active role on behalf of the community, but we would like to point out that our resources are strained by the sheer volume of issues arising, and we urge members to come to our meetings and to encourage neighbours and friends to join and participate. We particularly want people to know that we cannot do much about any issue unless we are given maximum notice of it. Recently, for example, we were asked to comment on a proposed new building in Rose St. Concern had been expressed that the planned, modern house would be visually out of character with surrounding houses. The matter certainly warranted attention, but it was a complex issue of aesthetics rather than specific law and we were contacted too late in the development process to be able to respond effectively.

Bring local issues to our attention promptly, and bring your energy and ideas to our monthly meetings!

Jane Ward

* BIRCHGROVE OVAL *

Some 80 Birchgrove householders responded on Monday 7th March to an invitation from the Leichhardt Municipal Council for an on site inspection and discussion on their proposal for Birchgrove oval improvements.

The meeting was to gain approval for the recommendations which will be considered at the Ordinary Meeting of Council at 7pm Tuesday 22nd March.

Proposals:

The oval inner picket fence to be retained.

Reduce the height of the outer picket fence.

Retain a Caretaker for the oval.

Restoration of the Caretaker's cottage.

Repair retaining wall, Louisa Rd. side.

Landscape area with provision for car parking.

Designate fenced free-run area for dogs.

Improve children's playground equipment.

Mrs. Pascol of Grove St. asked about the whereabouts of the memorial gates that were removed about 30 years ago. These were situated at the Snails Bay end, near the wharf, where say North Sydney football teams and supporters would arrive by ferry. The gates were given by Mrs. Deloitte in memory of her husband. Information and photos of these gates would be welcomed by the History Room at the Watch House. Contact Kath Hamey on 818 4954.

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THANKS

We would like to thank Bob Nicholls for the wonderful job he did as our News Sheet Editor, and we welcome Val Hamey into that arduous spot. We hope he survives the transition and the trauma of chasing up and collating our contributions.

With much pleasure we welcome Margaret Jones to the position of Correspondence Secretary - a volunteer whose help will be well appreciated.

HOWARD SMITH SITE DEVELOPMENT

A recent meeting of the Leichhardt Municipal Council unanimously rejected the development plan for 45 town-houses on the Howard Smith site. Additions to the Development Control Plan require the developer (Mr. Robert Hampshire) to reflect the scale and character of the adjoining streets in the design. Views of Parramatta River for Residents on the opposite side of Birchgrove Road are to be protected by spaces between the proposed buildings and the arrangement of the rooflines. Vehicular traffic should be dispersed between Gow and Water Streets. The foreshore should be set aside as open space with pedestrian access.

There is little doubt that the development will eventually be referred to the Land and Environmental Court.

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UPDATE

As we hinted in our last issue, Mr. Sheahan, the Minister for Transport, made a pre-election announcement cancelling the proposed Rozelle Bay Marina. The Balmain Association supports other residential and environmental groups seeking a firm commitment that the area will now become public parkland.

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Two local children were recently injured outside Balmain Primary and Birchgrove Schools. Community pressure is mounting again for strict traffic management schemes near schools. The Balmain Association wants the current initiatives to be more fruitful than past ones, and we ask members to notify us of any other traffic problems in our area.

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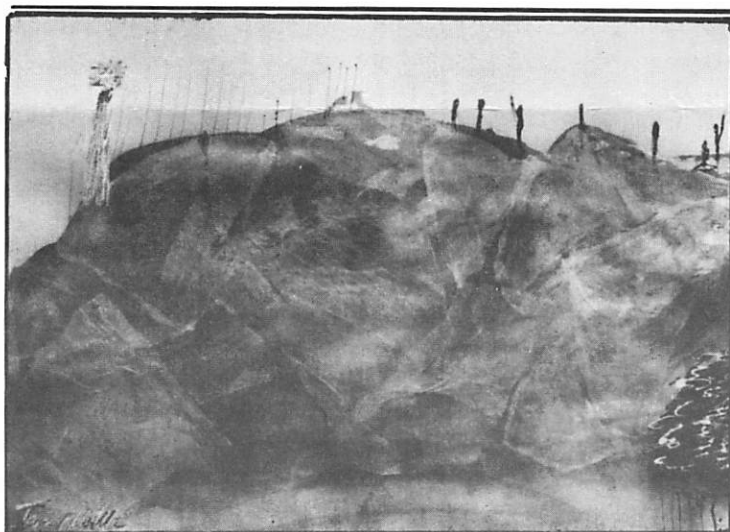
Can You Help?

Mrs. Jennifer Williamson is seeking further information about a MR. CARTER, a grocer of PARK STREET, ROZELLE. Mr. Carter fostered her grandfather, MICHAEL CHARLES DAL(EY). Michael was fostered out at the age of 6 in 1887. As was the law, Michael only stayed with his foster parents for five years. Mrs. Williamson's sources regarding the fostering of her grandfather were Youth and Community Services and the Benevolent Books at the Mitchell Library.

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Mrs. Warren of Norah Head has supplied us with two photographs taken in the 1940s. The first one is of an old anchor which was in a paddock at the end of Ewenton Street in Grafton Street (now a container wharf). She has no knowledge of its history but thought that there may be a story attached to it.

The second photograph of a house and tennis court taken in the same area shows the rear of what appears to be Hampton Villa, which is currently being extended and renovated. The tennis court, she says, now has two houses built on it.

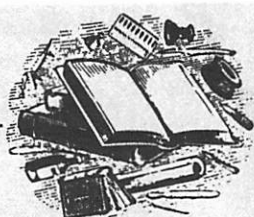


"Of Spirit and Rocks"

EXHIBITION AT THE WATCH HOUSE

On 11th to 13th March local artist Jan Melville had a successful exhibition of recent works in mixed media. Pictures that generated great interest were "Of Spirit and Rocks", in which she employed a collage of tinted tissue to enhance the textural qualities, and "The Great Ferry Race", using airbrush and pastels. The superb miniature "The Arrival" attracted many buyers but was eagerly snapped up early on Friday.

Jan was so excited about the reception that she is planning a combined exhibition of art, sculpture, and crafts for the Watch House.



The Association's next meeting is on Wednesday 6th April, 7.30pm at the Watch House 179 Darling St. Balmain

HISTORICAL QUESTIONS, ANSWERS & NOTES

Mrs. A. McCaskie has further information on MRS. CATHERINE HALIBURTON McCASKIE and the story below was written by Catherine's grand-daughter, Mrs. D. Beattie of Berkely Vale.

Extracts from reminiscences by Catherine McCaskie (nee Neillans) in an early edition of the Sydney Morning Herald.

"RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT"

"I was engaged on the emigrant ship (the "Aden", which arrived in Sydney on 8th October 1842) by Mrs. Lowe and taken out to Bronte far in the bush.

One day after I had been six months as personal maid, Mrs. Lowe told me they were going to fine the Master for feeding his servants badly [this was apparently known as the "Sour Bread Commission"] and I was to give witness to the contrary.

I went to the court in the Barouche and I was proud to sit next to Mrs. Lowe in her beautiful silk dress and elegant cloak.

My mistress was well known to all the gentlemen of the court, and when we walked in everyone was very polite to her, but when she bade me step forward and said "this is a proof of how I feed my people" and my cheeks got red with shyness to be looked at by so many gentlemen, there was a cheer in the court and Mrs. Lowe was congratulated upon the care she took of her domestics.

She brought me a new bonnet as a reward for behaving as she wished. But if I was well fed as a free servant there were many who had no sugar, fresh meat, milk or fresh vegetables.

My heart aches now, even as an old women, to think what privations those poor assigned servants had to undergo, also their wives and families in those "bad old days", that seems now so long ago.

A dinner party at Bronte was a great event, though no ladies were present, partly because it was difficult of access and the gentlemen attending rode their own horses. Dinner was at five o'clock and many of the guests left before darkness set in.

The topic of the day was "Responsible Government", Mrs. Lowe, who was the only lady present, expressed her opinions in a way that few women were able to at that time.

It was the time when everything was served at the table, Mr. Lowe would carve a homegrown saddle of mutton, while his wife carved a fine turkey, also grown on the estate.

My mistress looked quite regal in a trained velvet gown of deep sea green or black.

I wore lilac and white and hovered around to see that everything came in properly, being called only by my surname as if I were the Housekeeper".

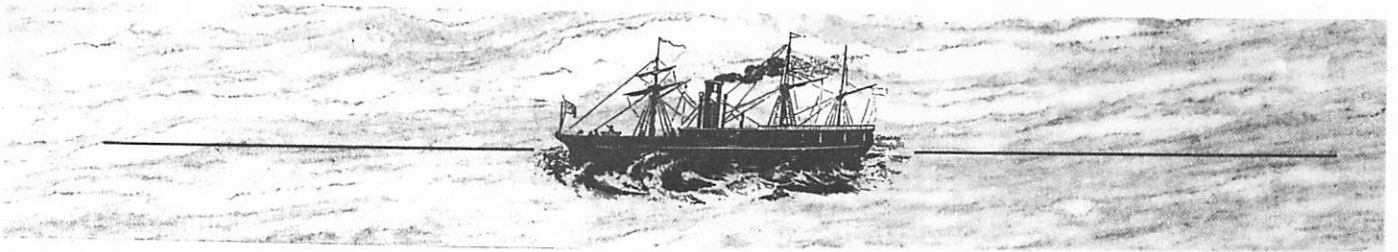
The Lowes returned to England where Mr. Lowe became Lord Sherbrooke.

Catherine married John McCaskie and went from Australia to San Francisco in May 1851 to the California Gold Rush.

"However, Australia appeared to me better to bring young people up in, for the worst kind of people, not only from Australia but from all parts, flocked to the California gold fields. Men were lynched and shot every day. So we returned to Sydney..."

Around 1854 they made their home in what is now Crescent Street, Rozelle.

In 1867 an Indenture signed by 15 year old James McCaskie, Catherine's son, shows him as an Apprentice to William Halley and Issac Clyde in the art of a Coach-smith. For the first year of his apprenticeship he was paid five shillings a week, six shillings the second year, seven for the third, eight for the fifth year and the princely sum of fifteen shillings for the sixth and final year...with all the lost time to be made good!



Coming soon

Celebrate your history with Westpac!

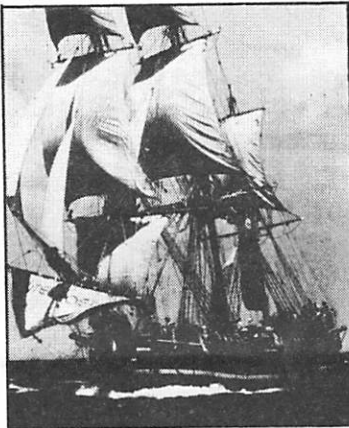
As part of their contribution to the Bicentenary, Westpac has mounted a Travelling Museum of Banking to tour Australia during 1988. They have invited the Balmain Association to add 'local flavour' to this exhibit when it is setup in the Balmain Branch.

Westpac have generously donated funds to cover costs incurred in the preparation of our part of the display, and we wish to extend our appreciation.

Please call in to the Balmain Branch of Westpac from 28th March to 8th April and view the exhibition which we are sure will be of great interest to members.

FIRST FLEETERS

Mr. Dave Ramsay, chairperson of the Bicentennial Community Committee, is happy to inform members of acceptance by the Fellowship of First Fleeters to an afternoon tea at the Watch House. The date to be determined probably in May. All members will be invited to attend and any offers of help will be gratefully accepted. Watch this space in the next issue.



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Heritage Week: 17th to 24th April

Photographic display of iron lace and Balmain houses with a mystery section (from old glass negatives) we hope you can identify.

The Watch House 1pm to 5pm each Saturday 16th and 23rd April.

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BOOK LAUNCH

Committee member Bob Nicholls' latest book

"THE COLONIAL VOLUNTEERS"

to be published by Allen & Unwin Aust. Ltd.

The event will be celebrated at

THE WATCH HOUSE

from 5 to 8pm

on

Friday 22nd April 1988

It is planned to incorporate

A Wine Tasting

into the festivities

All welcome

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FOR SALE

2 X 4 litres Estapol (for offered price)
F.Heathfield Phone 818 2307



the balmain association
representing
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 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.

.....X.....

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Return to: Treasurer, P.O. Box 57, Balmain 2041

NAME:

ADDRESS:

TELEPHONE: HOME:

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION (including News Sheet Delivery in Balmain-Birchgrove-Rozelle)

Please circle ... NEW MEMBER / RENEWAL

Single/Family/Household \$ 8.00

Organisation \$12.00

Pensioner or Student \$ 1.00

Add \$5.00 to above rates to have News Sheet posted.

Cheques should be made payable to "The Balmain Association".