

the balmain
association

NEWS SHEET

Vol 24 No 6 Issue 182

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Balmain Needs Activists

As President of the Balmain Association, I recently attended the launch of the Main Street Program where we were told that "Glebe Point Road will be the site of the Department of Planning's first Sydney pilot scheme of the Main Street program, a process bringing together town planning, heritage and conservation, business development and improved community facilities."

The Government's initiative is being enthusiastically promoted by the Glebe Society and the Glebe Street Fair Association. I was particularly impressed by the large number of people ready to be involved with such a function on a cold, wet evening. Would Balmainites support so strongly a similar scheme here?

In our last issue Debbie Nicholls raised the question of current local apathy towards community events and issues. It is undeniable that attendance at public meetings has been dwindling in recent years, whatever the issue. A notable exception was the meeting about the continuation of the Balmain Market, but many involved were not locals. A meeting about a heritage paint scheme was poorly attended and not many people were prepared to come to yet another meeting about deficient open space, an issue that affects a majority of residents. It may be that the local population is becoming more transient and less interested in long term issues. It is definitely the case that residents are more politically cynical and disillusioned about the usefulness of resident activities. In many cases inactivity is justified on the grounds that others are

doing "a great job" in canvassing and advocating residents' views.

The reality is that many current issues are not "bad dreams that will go away." Sustained and broad-based resident intervention is essential to safeguard and improve our local quality of life. For what it's worth, I think community spirit is still strong despite the decline of traditional methods of expression like public meetings. Consider, for example, the wonderful response by residents to Council's garbage recycling program. That community effort and energy is there to be tapped on all local issues.

Association members are urged to join other residents in action on issues of particular concern — traffic management, heritage conservation, community services, air traffic, pollution, open space and development control. Contact us if you want advice on the most effective expression of your concern, but remember, above all, the value of a short letter on any matter — to Leichhardt Council, the State Government and the media.

It is important that energies are not dissipated on spurious matters that are easily squelched. The recent suggestion that Balmain, as a 'light industrial area', is suitable for prostitution is an obvious example of kite-flying. Another unwanted and unlikely prospect is that of a 60 car parking area in White Bay to service a skateboard riding area. This was alluded to in last week's Mayoral Column in the local press. For the Peninsula that would be a huge complex (by comparison, Woolworth's carpark holds 71 cars). The land concerned is needed for local hardcourt sports and is far too precious to be used for parking. Planners should not encourage cars into the area.

Since our last issue, Leda, the prospective owners of the Unilever site,

have had meetings with several White Bay residents who are working on responses to the plans for a commercial complex and housing for 350 new residents. Serious concerns have been raised about traffic management, inadequate open space and architectural compatibility with the area. If you want to be involved, phone me on 818 1454. **Residents are glad to have some knowledge of the proposals before they go to Council. Unfortunately, this is not the case with the adjacent sites, which must be considered as a whole in planning terms.** If a large new resident population is to be introduced into White Bay, will a new suburb be formed with its own services and infrastructure? Or will the new residents be oriented toward the existing shopping centre, schools, etc? What system of public transport can service such an orientation? What routes will be used?

For those who have been asking, Unilever still employs about 80 people on the 6.3 ha site. Approximately 40 are office staff, 30 work in the laboratory and 8 (2 at any time) are employed in the detergent base (sulphonation) plant which runs 24 hours, 7 days a week and will be operating until the end of the next year. The two large, coal-fired boilers stopped functioning in November last year, so Unilever say they can't be blamed for any fallout local residents still experience!

Unofficial sources say that the Grain Terminal will be demolished in about a year's time and that the Coal Loader will be used for another 5 years. Oh, and the Ampol site will be mostly light industrial with some housing, and not all housing as had been previously indicated.

Jane Ward

Airport Lobbying

Groups opposing the expansion of Kingsford-Smith Airport have supplied the following phone numbers for the use of concerned residents.

24 hours complaints	211 4570
Kingsford-Smith Airport	667 3808
Airport Control Tower	667 9876
Federal Airport Corp	667 9111
Qantas Mascot	236 3636
Qantas Engineers	957 0111
Pollution Control Com	267 5152

NOTICE OF AGM

THE 1989 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE BALMAIN
ASSOCIATION

WILL BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 2ND AUGUST

IN THE WATCH HOUSE

179 DARLING STREET

TIME: 7:30 PM

REFRESHMENTS AVAILABLE AFTER MEETING - ALL WELCOME

GOURLIE'S CORNER

A two storey residence, with the office in the front room, was situated at 19 Jane Street, Balmain, and this Registrar was conducted by Mrs. Muriel Taylor for many years with marriages conducted there also. Up until a very old age, Mrs. Taylor played the organ at St. Andrews Church.

"Ladies and gentlemen, we are gathered here today to solemnise the marriage ...". For 25 years from 1941, Mrs. Taylor performed more than 2000 weddings in her terrace house. "It's a girl's most important day," she said, "wherever the wedding is held and I do all I can to add a little personal touch." The picture shows the residence as it is today

During the war years, local housewives would earn a welcome 2/6 as witness to a serviceman's wedding prior to embarkation.

The small room which served as an office was filled with bowls of flowers,



framed family photographs, mementoes and relics that she treasured over the years, a piano, a large desk and some old but comfortable furniture and a modern stereogram on which she played her recording of the 'Wedding March'.

A Balmain identity still remembered in high regard, Mrs. Taylor, over 25 years, had either married or recorded the birth or death of at least half the citizens of Balmain.



DESIROUS OF FURNISHING YOUR ABODE IN THE MANNER APPROPRIATE TO 1864?

The following is the second part of the inventory for Heathfield House, once situated off Grafton Street but now part of the site of the Container Terminal. This inventory was compiled by Robert Thomas Ford, member of the Ford family who created among other almanacs the 1851 Ford Directory:

HALL

Hat stand; Barometer; Lamp; Floor Cloth; Mats; Stair carpeting with brass rods; Table; Blind to Staircase Windows

LARGE BEDROOM

2 Mattresses; 3 Blankets; 2 Counterpanes; 4 Pillows; Mosquito Curtains; Dimity Curtains; Chintz Curtains; 2 Chest Drawers; 2 Dressing tables; 4 Bedroom chairs; 1 Basket Chair; Nightstool; Towel Horse; Large Wardrobe. 2 Looking glasses; Double Wash Stand; Ewer, Jugs, Basins; Soap, Sponge & tooth) complete brush dishes etc.) Fender, fire irons & dustpan; A round table; Bath Slop pail & Water Can; 2 painted? Tin Boxes; Carpet & Hearthrug.

A pair Holster pistols; Small Cutlass. Pictures: a demode figurehead; 2 devotionals; Head of our Saviour

FRONT BEDROOM

Iron Bedstead; 2 Mattresses; 3 Blankets; 1 Counterpane; 2 Pillows; Mosquito Curtains; Window Curtain pole; Washstand; Dressing table; Chest of Drawers; Looking glass; Ewer, Jug, Basin; Towel horse; 2 Chairs; 1 Camp Stool; Carpet.

Pictures: The Great Eastern; HMS in a squall; Emigrants first letter; HMS Freetrader in a Hurricane; Scene with Cows, etc.

BACK BEDROOM

Bedstead; Mattresses; Blankets; Bolster; Pillows; Mosquito Curtains; Chintz Curtains; Washstand; Ewer, Jug, basin; Dressing Table; Looking Glass; Chairs; small round table; Clothes Basket.

Mantelpiece: Bust of the Queen and Shade? a few shells.

PASSAGE ROOM

Couch; 2 Pictures.

KITCHEN & ADJ. ROOM

Range; Dresser; 2 tables; 2 chairs; 1 Large Seat; Cooking utensils complete; Pit? Lamp; 6 Dish covers; Sausage machine; 8 day Clock; Set of Cups &

Saucers, Dishes etc; Plated chamber Candlestick.

In China Closet

2 Breakfast & Tea Services; 1 Dinner Service - White & Blue; 1 Dinner Service - White & Gold; 1 Dessert Set; 2 cut glass dishes; 1 round cut glass dish; 6 small cut glass dishes; 2 Claret Jugs; Tumblers & Wines Claret & Champagne; Custard & Jelly glasses; Large table cover; Cooper Kettle & Stand; 2 plate Baskets; a Set of Trays; Bed pans?; Metal Teapot & Coffee Pot; A Set of Book shelves.

PANTRY STORE-COOL ROOM

A Large Safe; 4 Harness? casks; 2 Wire meat Covers; 2 Paste Boards; a Large Dresser; a churn; Milk dishes; Butter tub; A Set of Scale & weights.

SERVANTS BEDROOM

Wooden Bedstead; 3 Blankets; Looking glass; 2 Pillows

SERVANTS BEDROOM OVER

Stretcher; 2 Mattresses; 2 Blankets; 2 Pillows; 1 Chest drawers; 1 Wash stand etc; 1 Chair; Looking glass.

KITCHEN STORE ROOM

Large Jars & ?Jugs; Large Cedar chest; large Screen

STORES

1/2 jar White Sugar; 1/2 jar Brown Sugar; 1/2 jar Arrowroot.

BOATSWAINS LOCKER

An assortment of Nails, blocks?; Carpenters tools, bolts etc.

PAINT? LOCKER

A Lot of garden tools

WASHHOUSE

Wash tubs; Irons Stretcher etc.

1 Cow; 1 Sow; 1 Cock; 8 Laying hens; young fowls. A little Hay, Bran, Pollard, Maize, Biscuit.

[The Association wishes to thank Mr. C. Ford, descendant of the original Ford family, for supplying us with the information about his family.]

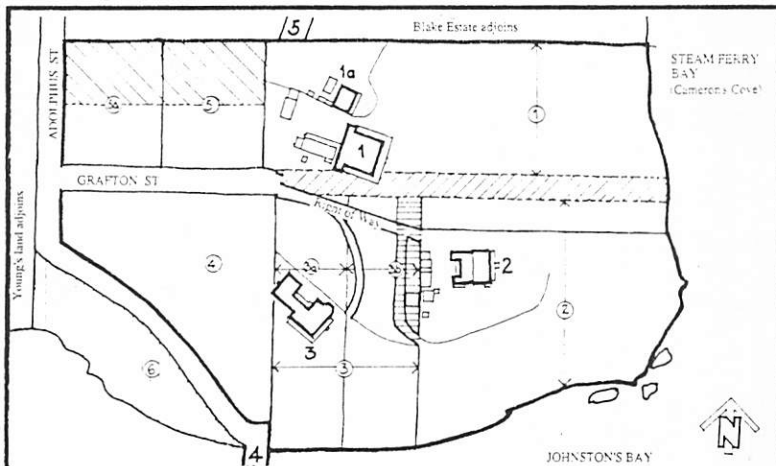


Diagram of Heathfield site (2) before excavation for the Container terminal. Other sites are (1) Hampton Villa and (3) Bleak House. The circled numerals are lot numbers. ref page 55 LHJ No 15

COCKATOO ISLAND AND NAVAL SHIPS

Although it had been a convict prison for many years before, it is not generally known that Cockatoo Island has been associated with naval ships and shipbuilding for 140 years.

In 1851 the NSW government ordered a dry dock to be built on the island by the convicts who had been there since 1839. The construction of this dock, named after Gov Fitzroy, took six years of convict labour to hew out of the rock of the island. When it was completed the convicts did the labouring work connected with the ships of the Royal Navy's Australia Squadron using the dock. This included scraping off barnacles, cleaning the hull and painting it—all very unpleasant work.

The New South Wales Harbour and Rivers Department took over the running of Cockatoo in 1870 and ten years later Sutherland Dock, much larger than Fitzroy, was constructed. In the early 1890s the government expanded the engineering plant and workshops in an effort to keep up with the rival dock and shipbuilding companies such as Mort's Dock & Engineering Company.

Cockatoo undertook the assembly of one of the first ships of the Royal Australian Navy. This was the Torpedo Boat Destroyer HMAS *Warrego*. The ship had been built and bolted together in England then taken apart, put into packing cases and shipped to Sydney to be reassembled. This not very efficient method had been adopted by the Australian government so that workmen could get some experience in building warships before they made a start on one of their own.

After *Warrego* was completed the keel was laid in 1912 for a 'Town' class light cruiser. This was HMAS *Brisbane*, which was completed after the beginning of World War I. Before the outbreak of war in 1914 though the yard became a Commonwealth government defence establishment. While the *Brisbane* was under construction three more destroyers, HMA Ships *Huon*, *Torrens* & *Swan* were built.

A start was also made on a second light cruiser, *Adelaide*, but she was so long building that she was called HMAS *Long-delayed*. She was followed by the Navy's first collier, *Biloela*. This was the first major ship to be built in Australia entirely from Australian made materials.

The 1920s were a quiet time for Cockatoo, with the Navy's seaplane carrier HMAS *Abatross* being the only ship built there. In 1929 the lack of work led the government to try and lease the Island but there were no

takers. Eventually, when the numbers employed there had dropped from a post World War I total of about 3500 men to about 200, a lease was arranged with the Cockatoo Dock & Engineering Co. and it was guaranteed work of £40000 per annum by the government. This was about the amount that would be charged for docking HMA Ships.

Things started to look up in the middle 1930s, when an order was placed for a naval sloop, HMAS *Yarra*. This was followed by further orders for sloops and a couple of boom defence vessels, HMA Ships *Kangaroo* and *Koala*. The cruiser *Adelaide* was modernised and other work such as the conversion of a merchant ship to an armed merchant cruiser was started.

The outbreak of war in 1939 found Cockatoo Dockyard well prepared. The Australian government had ordered three destroyers of the British 'Tribal' class. Two of these were completed during the war—HMAS *Anunta* in early 1942 and HMAS *Warramunga* later that year. The third ship of the class, HMAS *Bataan*, was laid down later and was completed at the end of the War. Other ships built included eight corvettes, two frigates and two comparatively large merchant ships. In addition Cockatoo supplied a high percentage of the engines for ships built in other yards in Australia during that time.

An important task carried out by the yard was the conversion of the luxury liners *Queen Mary*, *Queen Elizabeth*, *Mauvetania* and *Aquitania* to carry troops. The conversion of the *Queen Mary* to carry 5000 troops was completed in fourteen days!

However, what was perhaps the most important role undertaken by Cockatoo was the repair of Allied warships damaged in action in the Pacific. These included fifteen ships of the United States Navy and nine ships of the Royal Navy. Four British aircraft carriers were returned to active service after having been hit by Japanese Kamikaze suicide aircraft. Cruisers and other

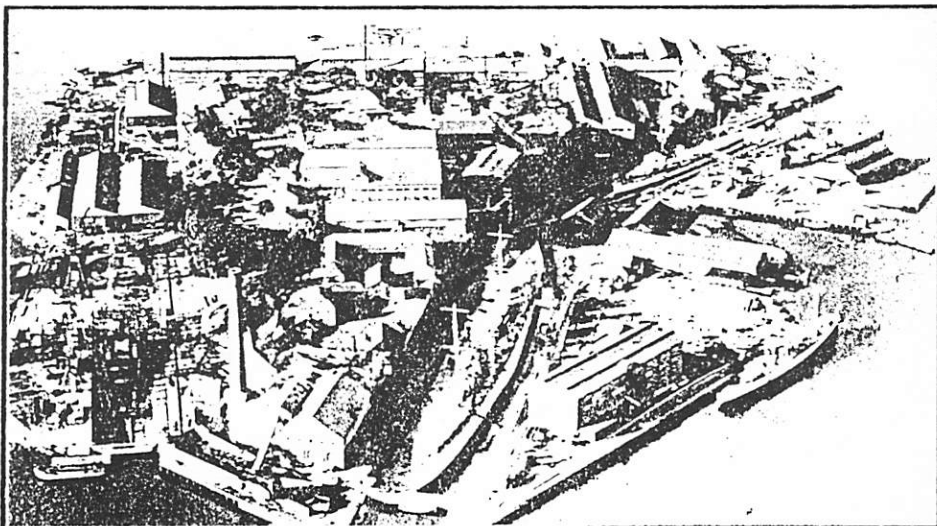
smaller ships of the RAN were naturally among the 1350000 tons of naval shipping repair and overhauled between 1919 and 1945.

In the period following World War II and up to the mid-80s, Cockatoo continued to build and refit HMA ships. Among those built were the destroyers HMA Ships *Tobruk*, *Voyager*, (later sunk in collision with the carrier HMAS *Melbourne*), and *Vampire*. Of these, *Vampire* will form part of the floating collection of the Australian National Maritime Museum when it opens in Darling Harbour. The frigates HMA Ships *Paranatta*, *Stuart*, & *Torrens* built between 1961 and 1971 are still in service, as is the destroyer tender HMAS *Stalwart*.

The last ship to be built at Cockatoo for the Royal Australia Navy was the fleet underway replenishment ship HMAS *Success*, the largest Australian built naval vessel. The 17000 tonne ship was launched in 1984 and handed over in April 1986. This brought the total number of ships built for the Navy to more than 30 combatants and 16 auxiliaries.

No account of the history of Cockatoo Island would be complete without mention of the long tradition of the yard with submarines. The RAN has not had a submarine arm continuously in its history. However, in the period from the arrival of the first two boats, AE1 & AE2 in 1913 to the present, Cockatoo has been responsible for all the very highly skilled work required in connection with their refitting. Currently a program of major upgrading of the capabilities of the Navy's Oberon class submarines has considerably enhanced their effectiveness.

Sadly, changing technology makes it unlikely that Cockatoo will again build major ships for naval use. However, this brief account may indicate something of the long tradition that was established over a period of well over a century, when Cockatoo was a proud by-word for naval shipbuilding work.





BALMAIN GARDEN CLUB

ORNAMENTAL FRUIT TREES

This article refers only to fruit trees grown for their blossoms. If you wish to grow summer fruits considerably more knowledge will be needed.

Ornamental Peach trees have poor quality fruit. When the fruit is still small, hard and green knock them off the tree with a rake, thus the tree will not waste its energy growing useless fruit. Another advantage of removing the fruit in the early stages is that there will be no fruit fly on the trees. Fruit fly lay their eggs in nearly ripe fruit.

Peach trees might die in a very cold winter, cherries are a bit more hardy. The dwarf prunus, the flowering cherry has small double flowers in either pink or white. All spring flowering trees sold at present are grafted, so be careful not to prune below the graft; that will result in a reversion to single flowers. Deep, very rich sandy loam is best for these plants. Don't forget good drainage. Pruning is done immediately after flowering to form a good shape. Be sure to cut away all dead or diseased wood.

On 20th May last, the Club had a very well attended meeting in the interesting old house which is the rectory of St. Thomas Church, Rozelle. Both buildings are over one hundred years old and very well preserved.

Our host and hostess, the Minister and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Lousanda provided morning tea. The guest speaker, Mrs. Simenoff, is an expert on the subject of landscape gardening. Afterwards, we all inspected the garden and wrote down the changes she advised, together with a list of suggested plantings.

Margaret Ford

Special Purchase

'The Balmain Book' by David Liddle
Sale price \$10.00 at the Watch House

The History Division of the Balmain Association is "into pubs". Yes, much behind the bar research is going on, sorry, ongoing.

Desperately seeking a photo of the Warwick Castle Hotel, demolished in 1963. Site: corner of Darling and Mort Streets now occupied by the Commonwealth Bank.

Contact 818 4984
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The Balmain Index

The Index covers name, occupation, premises and address from 1844 to 1880 in Balmain, Birchgrove and Rozelle



\$5.00 per name plus s.a.e.

The Balmain Association
PO Box 57
BALMAIN 2041

COMING SOON

Sunday 23 July at 1pm

Tank Stream Inspection

followed by afternoon tea in the Botanic Gardens

Adults \$10 Concession \$6 Children free

An extra 15 places are available due to demand.

Contact 818 4954

Afternoon Tea with Sister Johns

Saturday August 19 at 2pm

September 17 - Spring Heritage Walk

Woolwich - Kelly's Bush

OUR HOUSE WATCH

The Watch House is open every Saturday from 1 to 3pm

Call in for coffee

The Balmain Association meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 7.30pm in the Watch House, 179 Darling Street, Balmain.

Send mail c/o PO Box 57, BALMAIN. 2041

Our editorial phone is 818 4954

Interested artists, potters, sculptors etc. who would like to organise an exhibition in the Watch House are urged to contact Steve South on 810 1411. The Watch House can also be made available as a meeting place for local organisations.



the balmain association
representing
Balmain-Birchgrove &
Rozelle

CURAIMSARETO:

- improve the living, working and recreational amenities 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 cooperation of everyone concerned in the realisation of the above

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Return to: Treasurer, PO Box 57, BALMAIN 2041

NAME:

ADDRESS:

.....

PHONE: HOME: BUS:

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION (and News Sheet delivery in Balmain-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