



the balmain
association
incorporated

NEWS SHEET

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A Chance To Get It Right

Balmain residents achieved another victory when Mayor Bill Brady agreed to hold a public hearing into planning of the Peninsula. On March 19th Council approved the mayoral minute with amendments asking for the hearing to be held in Balmain with only Aldermen Spedding and Smith dissenting.

Residents should be aware that the attitudes of the Government and the Mayor have not been changed by the successful challenge in the Appeals Court. They are both anxious to approve the rezoning without the preparation of a strategic plan for the Peninsula. Until we can get the Council to do this our main object should be to limit the impact of the rezoning with less density of development, greater allocation of open space and pledges of contributions for necessary roadworks from both the Government and the developers.

We need to point out the Council's failure to take into account the relevant section 117 of the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act which requires an environmental study under section 57 of the Act.

The entries in the Balmain Development Trust's Design Competition have opened new aspirations as the accompanying sketch from Russell Olsen indicates. Should we accommodate the motor car in the strategy or should we limit its use on the Peninsula? How can this be done? The traffic calming measures set out in the Traffic Study Stage 2 are only palliatives. A more extensive approach is required. It is not enough to react to threatening development. It is time we thought about improving our amenity.

Messrs Simpson and Carleton from the Office of Commissioners on Enquiry for Environment & Planning will commence the hearing on Monday 13th. The Association is confident that the residents can impress the commissioners of their concerns and their proposals for an overall strategy for the Peninsula.

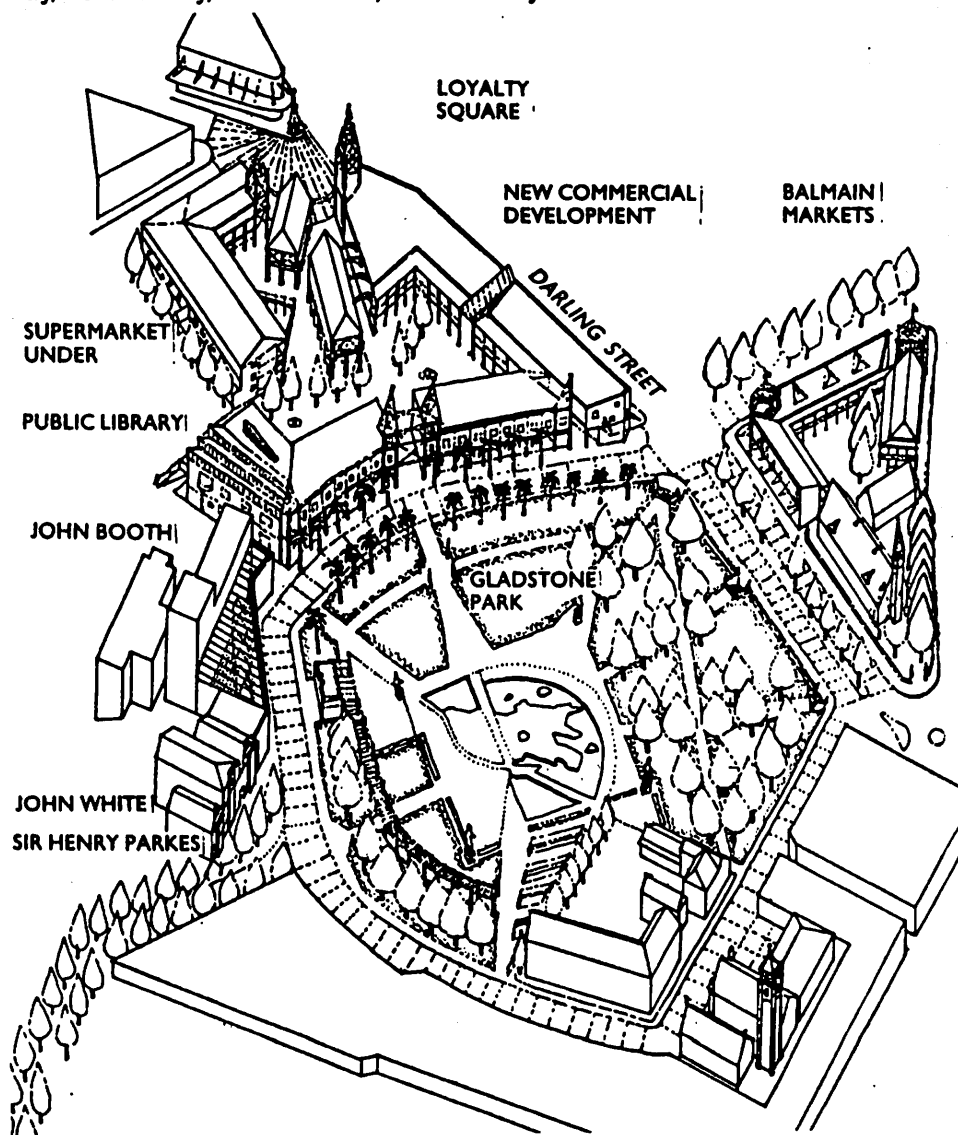
If a favourable report is the result, the Minister for Planning, Mr Hay, will be under much greater pressure to act sympathetically and to support our requests for Government involvement in essential roadworks, amenities and general in-

frastructure. Up to now they have been reluctant to accept this responsibility and seem to be eager to play off the residents against the developers. The Government Property Services Group have the aim to maximise the return from the Balmain Power Station site with as little expenditure as possible. Some of the windfall should be returned to the Peninsula.

The Department of Planning's subservience to urban consolidation is a major obstacle to sensible and sensitive planning in Balmain. Their planning record is dismal and opportunist. Leichhardt Town Planner, Allan Coker, in a report on the City West Strategy as it applies to White Bay/Rozelle Bay/Glebe Island, states

"The aim to allow for a residential population of up to 10,000 people could not be achieved in the plan as shown. ... The Strategy does not have an explanation as to how the estimated population figures are obtained". Balmain is threatened with high density not medium density as is claimed. What is medium density? The Victorian Dept of Planning defines it as 15 dwellings to the hectare which is villa development.

Submissions will be received at Leichhardt Council no later than April 12th and members are advised to check the announcement in the local press for details. To avoid repetition of proposals it may be useful to advise the Association.



Balmain Personality

Captain W Marshall

A young Scot engineer, Captain William Marshall, arrived in Sydney in 1839. His cousin Entwistle resided in Balmain so William decided to open a ferry service, particularly for weekends when the city people could spend a few pleasant hours amongst the wild flowers and fruits, for which eastern Balmain was famous in those days.

With a capital of only a few hundred pounds, the service was commenced with one small steamer and by 1844 it was fully established as a paying proposition. Soon, two vessels, *Fairy Queen* and *Gypsy Queen*, were necessary to cope with the increase in traffic.

William Marshall acquired land, the top section of Datchet Street and at Peacock Point where a wharf and a large engineering shop was used for repairs to the ferries. Larger steamers, *New Moon* and *Rainbow*, opened up trade with the Manning and Macleay Rivers.

This trade increased so rapidly that the fleet was augmented with *Fire King*, *Black Swan*, *Phoenix*, *Cygnets*, *Magellan Cloud* and the steel-plated *Luna*.

Marshall sold his Balmain Ferry Service to Messrs Perdriau & Hunt to con-

centrate on the North Coast. Marshall's friend, John Booth, persuaded him to try his hand at mining. Together they purchased a mine at Sunny Corner, NSW, which they named *Black Prince*, but this



venture was a complete failure, the experience costing them each £30 000.

Ship-builder John Stewart of the *Nambucca* had built many vessels for Marshall was also given an order for a barque, *Royal Tar*, a name recorded in Australian maritime history as the largest sailing ship ever built in NSW and was later used to transport William Lane's famous New Australia movement. (see article below)

Marshall had married Mary Ann Ternen in 1847 and they had six children. After Mary's death in 1871, Marshall married his sister-in-law, Lavinia Ternen. His two eldest sons were drowned in the wreck of the *New Moon* when returning from school holidays at the Manning River. As insurance rates on all vessels crossing the Bar Harbour were prohibitive, no insurance was carried on this or other vessels of his fleet. The loss of the steamer, added to the loss of his two sons, was a staggering blow to Marshall.

During the last years of Marshall's life he traded in the *Royal Tar* between America and Sydney. Returning in 1882, he took ill and was landed in Fiji. He recovered enough to return to Sydney but died soon after at his Balmain residence *Burbank* (site 67 Darling Street) in May 1887. Marshall Street off Campbell Street is named in his honour.

Leichhardt Historical Journal No 14.

Utopia, Limited

In July 1893, the *Royal Tar*, a 600 ton barque, with 241 men, women and children on board sailed from Sydney to a new settlement in Paraguay which should point the way to a cure of the social and industrial sickness with which Australia at that time was acutely afflicted. The world had seen nothing like it since Moses set out with the Israelites for the Promised Land.

William Lane conceived the idea of starting a new cooperative society wherein labour would be idealised; want, hate, greed and vice conquered and peace on earth established. The promised land was a free grant of 45,000 acres of agricultural and grazing lands in Paraguay.

The sailing of the *Royal Tar* was a joyous event. Any tinge of sadness there was lay among the members of the second contingent, who had patiently to await the return of the vessel. The 13 year old barque had been purchased from John

Booth of Balmain for £1620. She was immediately taken to Mort's Dock to be fitted out for the voyage. As it had been used in the South American timber trade, new 'tween decks had to be added and cabins, together with berthing accommodation for her passengers. In case of sickness an eight-berth hospital was built on deck.

Thirty members of the New Australia Cooperative Settlement Association were put to work constructing the decks while others scraped the hull which was coppered and the whole of the hold was whitened. Other work was done by day labour by Mort's Dock people and the men were paid 12/- a day while the Association was charged 14/-. In an endeavour to save expense, members of the New Australia venture did part of the work themselves, but a large part was given to the Mort Dock workers, possibly as a condition of using the dock.

Many members of the exhibition, overcome by enthusiasm for the venture, had thrown up their jobs, sold their homes, paid all they had to the Association and moved into Balmain until the ship was ready to sail. Every man had to make a minimum cash contribution of £50. If a member possessed more he was expected to donate more, while the leader, William Lane, contributed £1000.

The New Australians were camped at Balmain. The Beadles, evidently aboard

the *Corunna* with the Hollingsworths, were taken down to the Nicholson Street camp there and Mr Hollingsworth was put on the house committee with a Mr Watson. Their duty was to see that the camps, which were ten in number without the ship hands, had all that they required and were in good health. The *Bulletin* says, "200 people were crowded together into ten houses".

Mary Cameron, whose marriage to William Gilmore in 1897 was the second in the new colony of Cosme in Paraguay, did not sail on the first trip. At the time, she was writing for *The Worker*, and gave her blessing to the first voyage thus:

"The deck was crowded. Ringing cheers sounded all along the waterfront. In the crowd were union pioneers like Spence, Sleath and Head. The banner carried the motto *Each for all, and all for each*. Aloft in one of the lifeboats stood William Lane, his face worn with work and worry, aglow with a sweet unselfish joy. The dreary four years was fulfilling itself. The crowd was eager to believe that the new voyage of discovery would bring gladness and a renewed hope in mankind's future. Three cheers were given for 'Freedom, Lane and Paraguay'. As the vessel sailed from sight, there was not an eye that did not glisten, not an eye that was not moist".

Sources: Daily Telegraph 22 July 1923, 'With Banners Unfurled' by Issy Wyner.



New Australia currency

GOURLIE'S CORNER

Gaslight

During the 1870s gaslighting was sought for Balmain which had many industries and had a population of 8,000 representative of all classes. Though predominantly working class, it had a significant population of merchants, professionals, sea captains and industrialists and a solid representation of the lower middle classes in the form of retailers, publicans, estate agents, small contractors, clerks and teachers.

The directors of the Australian Gaslight Co decided to extend the gas supply to Balmain as there was a close settlement of potential consumers as well as a market for coke for metallurgical purposes. A site was purchased on the north-western shore of White Bay in Mansfield Street (the site of the Sydney College of Arts) for £250 from Donald and Alex Brown, engineers and shipwrights. Estimated cost of works £6,100 and mains £10,000.



The mounted lamplighter of Sydney

The first lights were lit two years later and 50 municipal lights appeared in 1876. By the end of the decade Balmain streets carried more than 200 lamps. Competition from electric street lighting finished the gas lamps in 1911. Lamplighters lit them at sunset and extinguished them at dawn but they were replaced not only by electricity but also by the introduction of a clockwork control that had to be wound once a week.

Penny-in-the-slot meters were introduced in 1897. A penny bought 1,600 cub ft of gas, enough to last three hours. Such meters were still in use after World War II but required a shilling. Free meter installation came with a kit of standard fittings—a bracket and a pendant for lighting and a boiling ring for cooking. By 1898 there were 500 in use in Balmain with applications rising steadily. The number of houses in Balmain/Rozelle in 1898 was 5,250 population 30,000. It was not uncommon for empty houses to be broken into and the meter robbed but normally a company collector regularly emptied the meter and carried the coins away in a leather bag.



Additional material from "First Light" by Rosemary Broomham

Balmain Labor 1891-1991

Balmain in 1891 was a thriving industrial centre with a village atmosphere and a strong mixture of social classes, wealth and ideas. Waterfront industries—ship repairs, engineering, soap manufacture, saw mills, sail making and other services employed local labour and were part of the life of Balmain.

Jacob Garrard, engineer, Mayor and MP for Balmain from 1880 to 1891, fought for improved working conditions for labour, including the introduction of the 8 hour day. MPs were unpaid until 1889 and he worked arduous days at Mort's Dock and attended parliament in the evenings. He later became Minister for Education and then Minister for Labour and Industry. In 1879 he supported residents in their successful action to turn the pigeon ground into a public park—the first recorded Balmain resident action.

Union activity grew in the 1880s. In October 1890 the Trades and Labor Council decided to encourage endorsed Labor candidates to stand for the next NSW elections. Charles Hart of the Balmain Labourers Union convened a meeting on 4 April 1891 (in the Trades and Labor Hall above 294 Darling Street—see picture) to form the first Labor Electoral

League in NSW. In 6 weeks 40 branches were formed in NSW and the Australian Labor Party was formed after Federation.

At the elections held in June 1891 Balmain was notable in returning all four of its endorsed Labor candidates, even defeating Jacob Garrard who had stood as a free trader. The first members (all of whom had left the League by 1894) were; C D Clark—a journalist active in the temperance movement; E Darnley—a plasterer; J Johnston—a boilermaker and W A Murphy—a ship's officer.

In the 1890s Billy Hughes' shop at 16 Beattie Street was a centre of political ideas and literature. Hughes joined (or

started) most of the political parties during a long parliamentary career, was Labor Prime Minister and central to the 1916 party split over conscription.

Herbert Evatt, the leader of the ALP at the time of its major factional split in 1955, and a President of the United Nations, had lived in Balmain and was its MP from 1925 to 1930. Balmain produced two Labor Premiers—John Storey and Neville Wran. Another, Sir William McKell worked there and became Governor General. The late John Kerr, son of a Balmain born boilermaker at Mort's Dock, was Governor General responsible for the sacking of the Whitlam Government in 1975.

Balmain's electoral boundaries have often changed. Between 1894 and 1904 it was divided into Balmain North and Balmain South. With occasional lapses it has remained a Labor seat. Now it has lost its name, but the commitment to solidarity and of taking action to improve conditions is unlikely to be abandoned.

Annette O'Neill





Palm Trees in the Botanic Gardens

The growing of palm trees out of doors in groups is a comparatively new idea; and the Director of the Gardens is entitled to credit for having demonstrated the practicability of their successful culture in this way in the neighbourhood of Sydney.

On the extreme right of the picture there is a noble specimen of the *Caryota urens*, from which the Cingalese extract a kind of coarse sugar known as jagery, and also palm wine or toddy. The pith they utilise sometimes as gruel, and sometimes as bread. A peculiarity of this palm is that no sooner has it sent forth its terminal spadix than growth is arrested; and, although its flowers and fruits afterwards form the axils of the leaves, the process of decay is going on simultaneously from the top. It thus flowers only once in its existence.

Immediately to the left is a fine specimen of the Bangalow palm (*Seaforthis elegans*), indigenous to the eastern coast of Australia, and still to be found in the scrubs on the coast from Illawarra far into Northern Queensland. It grows to a height of 70 to 80 feet and there are some very handsome specimens to be seen in the vicinity of Bulli Pass. In the early days of the colony the trunks of the Bangalow were split up for temporary fencing; but we are glad to notice that this handsome palm has now become a conspicuous ornament in many private gardens.

The loftiest palm in the bed is *Coccothrinax flexuosa*. The specimen is a good one. The fruit resembles the ordinary coconut (*C. nucifera*) in appearance, with the exception that it is much smaller. The tall plant whose foliage resembles that of a banana is the Queen flower of the Cape of Good Hope, *Strelitzia reginae*. The flower of this plant is rather remarkable from its close resemblance to the open bill of a crane.

Among other vegetable growths in the picture may be recognised *Phoenix sylvestris* and *P. farinifera*, the Japanese palm *Chamaerops excelsa* and specimens of Cycads and Bromeliads.

The Sydney Mail Saturday 21 March 1874.



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WHAT'S ON

- **Heritage Week Exhibition**
April 6 -7-12-13 from 11am—4pm
The Beginning and End of Lever & Kitchen
in Balmain 1897-1988
Photographs and Memorabilia
When was Sunlight soap first made in Balmain?
How to use Sunlight soap to wash a tablecloth.
- **Childrens' Colouring Competition**
Prize Presentation Sat 13 April 2pm
Entries on display Sat 13 and Sat 20 April

OUR HOUSE WATCH

The Watch House is open every
Saturday from

12 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 inc
representing
Balmain, Birchgrove, Rozelle

Our Aims Are To:

- 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

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Return to Treasurer, PO Box 57, BALMAIN 2041

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ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION (incl News Sheet delivery in Balmain-Rozelle)

Please circle...NEW MEMBER / RENEWAL
Single/Family/Household. \$10.00
Organisation \$15.00
Pensioner or Student \$1.00

Add \$6.00 to above rates to have News Sheet posted
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