



the balmain
association
incorporated
news sheet

The Peninsula OBSERVER

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Too Late

Many candidates in the Leichhardt Council election pushed a policy of restricting residential development. Unfortunately they are one or two elections too late. Apart from Ballast Point there are no major sites left. Many decisions of the Land & Environment Court have allowed developers almost as much as they desired. Public opinion can be fickle and only reacts after the event. One often hears the cry, "Why wasn't I told?"

There have been calls for revues of planning policies. I wonder where these people have been for the last five years of the Town Plan (waiting nine months to be gazetted by NSW Government) gestation period. There were not many candidates at the planning meetings I attended. The new plan properly administered has all the required provisions. The new councillors have some homework to do to get acquainted with the planning policy and details.

Sydney Harbour Federation Trust

The Minister for Environment, Senator Robert Hill, released on 15 August a draft bill to set up the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust to manage the transfer of defence force land for public use. He is inviting public comment on its provisions. Friends of Cockatoo Island believe the draft is fundamentally flawed. They have serious concerns with five major deficiencies.

1. The draft bill does not specify the sites to be handed over to the Trust although these have been named many times by the Minister and the Prime Minister - North Head, Georges Heights, Middle Head, Woolwich and Cockatoo Island. It is difficult to understand why they have not been identified in the draft.

2. There is no guarantee in the draft bill of continuing ownership of the lands by the people at the end of the Trust's ten-year life. It does not anywhere say that lands will be transferred to New South Wales for inclusion in the Sydney

Our real concern is the development of single dwelling sites. Pressure is on the Council to allow demolition of small cottages for the owners to cover the site with unacceptable new dwellings. The new town plan has strict controls over overshadowing, building height, floor space ratios and private open space. The whole of the peninsula is a conservation area and heritage must be defended.

Some councillors want to lobby the Government to amend the Environment and Planning Act to limit the judiciary to questions of law and allow councils to determine policy. It has been said that as soon as the case judge and assessor are known the result can be forecast. The Minister for Planning still has the power to alter Local Environment Plans.

There are seven new councillors, none of whom were involved in formulating the Town Plan. While they acquaint themselves with the detail we have to be vigilant.

Val Haines

Harbour National Park. The Explanatory Memorandum says "Some land may be identified ... as unsuitable for park or community use and sold."

3. The Trust is required to establish a 'suitable financial base' for its operations. Since there is no guarantee of continuing Commonwealth funding there are serious dangers of some parts being sold or leased to sustain the Trust.

4. The Minister has enormous and overriding power. He could direct the Trust to dispose of sites to someone other than NSW Government. He is only required to mention his direction in the next annual report of the Trust. The Trust will not easily be able to act independently.

5. Although the bill emphasises that co-operation with NSW Government is sought and explicitly requires that State planning, design and building standards be applied the environmental, natural and cultural heritage is excluded.

The Friends believe that the bill should be completely recast. It does not address the vision that the Prime Minister and others have for the Harbour and

Back to Balmain Day & Balmain Regatta

Old Tigers once again will renew old friendships in Elkington Park on Sunday 31st October 1999.

Schools open for inspection 9-noon: Balmain Primary, Birchgrove and Rozelle. Bring your school photographs along and try and identify your old school mates.

10am: Ecumenical Church Service at St Andrew's, Darling Street and Curtis Road.

Noon: BYO picnic at Elkington Park, Glassop Street.

1pm: Leichhardt Municipal Band and followed by dancers from the Honeybrook School of Dance.

2pm: 150th Anniversary Balmain Regatta off White Horse point, Elkington Park. A dress parade of boats will precede the Regatta. The starter's boat will be the ex-Navy patrol boat from the National Maritime Museum.

Come and enjoy an old fashioned picnic in the park. Steak sandwiches, ice creams, soft drinks will be on sale. Enjoy a swim in the Dawn Fraser Pool and visit the Archive Room. There may be a photograph of you or a friend.

The Association will be on site to chat about 'the good old days'. Donations of photographs are most welcome and local history publications will be on sale.

Vale Reunion

The reunion of members of the Vale family on Saturday 30th and Sunday 31st October 1999 is to be held at St Mary's Church, 85 Darling Street Balmain.

there is the distinct possibility that these precious sites could be sold into private hands and permanently lost to the people of Australia. All the land is important and all of it belongs to the people. It must be included in the Sydney Harbour National Park.

Copies of the bill are available from Community Information Unit, Department of Environment & Heritage, GPO Box 787, Canberra ACT 2601. Tel 1 800 803 772.

It can be viewed on website www.environment.gov.au/harbour.

Sir Henry Parkes and Federation

Henry Parkes was the youngest child of a Warwickshire tenant farming family. An ivory turner by trade, he arrived in Sydney on 25th July 1839 and over the next 50 years became a powerful figure in forging the Australian nation.

He established the *Empire* newspaper in 1856 which lasted only two years, but in which he could voice his ideas of free trade between the colonies and gain support for his goal of federation for Australia.

In 1854 at the age of 40, he was elected first to the Legislative Council and then to the Legislative Assembly. In and out of parliament over the next 30 years he was five times Premier of New South Wales. However, he was known as the 'Father of Federation' and he held always to the view that Australian colonies should be united.

Throughout his life he was continually plagued by financial difficulties and these forced him to resign from Parliament on four occasions. During his parliamentary career he had held the seats of Sydney City, Cumberland, East Sydney, Kiama, Mudgee, Canterbury, Argyle, St Leonards and Tenterfield. In all he was Premier and Colonial Secretary six times, over a span of 20 years.

He first became Premier and Colonial Secretary in 1872 until his Ministry resigned in 1875. He was Premier again in 1877, when he was knighted and again in 1878-1883. In January 1887 he formed his fourth ministry and his ministerial salary helped him through his

third bankruptcy but his Ministry resigned in January 1889. Once more he was invited to resume leadership in 1891 and served 8 months.

Sir Henry had sold his family home at Faulconbridge, as well as other property, to help alleviate his expensive debts, no doubt contributed by his 15 children at that time. His wife of 50 years Lady Clarinda died on 2nd February 1888 and shortly after Sir Henry moved to *Hampton Villa*, Grafton Street, Balmain. On 6th February 1889 he married Eleanor Dixon and two more children were born while at *Hampton Villa*.

On 24th October 1889, Parkes made a widely publicised speech at Tenterfield, calling for Australian governments to consider the need for federation. A

eral government met in Sydney on 2nd March 1891. 'The Commonwealth of Australia' was chosen as the name of the new nation.

The Sydney Morning Herald of 30th March 1891 reported that the Premier of Queensland, Sir Samuel Griffith as chairman of the Federal Constitution Bill Drafting Committee, had held an important Cabinet meeting on board the Government paddle steam ship *Lucinda*. The cruise went along the coast as far as Broken Bay, so in absolute privacy and quiet the final draft of the Bill could be prepared.

There were to be for years many preambles to the Constitution and so in 1897-8, the colonial delegates met again and finalised a new draft. Two referendums were held- 1898 and 1899. The Commonwealth Act was passed on 5th July 1900 and received the Queen's assent on 9th July and on 17th September the Queen proclaimed that on 1st January 1901 the Australian Commonwealth would come into existence with six colonies as States of the Federation.

Sir Henry Parkes did not live to see the Federation government as he died in April 1896, one month short of the age of 81.

It was interesting to read in the Sydney Morning Herald, that as part of the recent refurbishment of the Sydney

General Post Office, the clock will again ring out the hours. The biggest bell, Big Henry, was named in 1891 for Sir Henry.

Source: From Colonies to Commonwealth publish by Bay Books. Australian National Maritime Museum Library.

Kath Hamey



Sir Henry Parkes at his desk in the Colonial Secretary's Office 1891

meeting was held in Melbourne in February 1890 of representatives of all six Australian governments and New Zealand, where a firm resolution was passed for 'the union of the colonies, under one legislative and executive government, on principles just to the seven colonies'.

The first National Australasian Convention to draft a constitution for Fed-

keel of the first boat to be built for the Balmain New Ferry Co.-Balmain, 26th October 1891. The mallet can be seen at the Watch House display cabinet.

At the age of 18 years she met and married Frederick Halford Napier, (no relation) a Bachelor of electrical engineering. There was no issue from the marriage.

In 1922 the couple began an electrical business and Ruby became an astute businessperson. There were to be five stores in various Sydney suburbs but with the unfavourable circumstances of the 1930s, the company was

forced into liquidation. Ruby and her husband suffered much hardship. Eventually, her husband suffered a stroke that left him partially paralysed and Ruby nursed him until his death in 1947.

Having no home of her own, Ruby became a 'lady's companion' in 1960 for a couple of years at the age of 78. Ruby was a lady of quality and is remembered for the love she gave despite personal hardships. She died in January 1972 aged 90.

Her niece Mrs Dorothy Davis wrote this eulogy and generously donated the mallet to the Association.

Ruby Alice Napier 1882-1972

Ruby Alice Napier was born in Melbourne on the 12th February 1882, the daughter of Captain Thomas and Ann Napier. With her parents, she moved to Balmain, where her father became the chairman of the Balmain New Ferry Service. The family lived at 80 Darling street from 1890-1893 then at 11 Vincent street, 1896-1912.

When Ruby was nine years old she received a ceremonial mallet inscribed: Presented to Ruby Napier the daughter of the Chairman of the Company by G W Ellis, on the occasion of her laying the

The last roar of the tiger

On Saturday 14 August 1999, the Balmain Tigers Leagues Club played their last match as the Balmain Tigers at Leichhardt Oval against Parramatta. The weather joined in the lament as the night was cold and pouring with rain as 15000 fans cheered when Balmain won 20-10. The Tigers are to combine with Western Suburbs Club and are to be called West Tigers. This is ironic, as some 91 years ago it was Western Suburbs that Balmain met at their first Rugby League match.

At a meeting of over 600 local citizens at the Balmain Town Hall on January 1908, the Balmain Rugby League Football Club came into being. Local MP John Storey, a future Premier of NSW, was chairman of the meeting which led to the newly formed Club deciding to affiliate with the New South Wales Rugby League.

The playing colours of black and gold were adopted by the Balmain Club in 1908. One popular theory suggests that the Club's colours were derived from the native flower that gives its name to nearby Blackwattle Bay.

However, it is also stated to have been adopted because champion rower Bill Beach rowed for a local club and when he defended his world Championship in England, he noticed that the English rowers wore jerseys. Grabbing the nearest one, which happened to be black and gold stripes, he carried the colours to victory and the district later

adopted the combination. The jersey became popularly known as 'tiger stripes' and the cheer "UP the Tigers" soon followed the Club's players onto the playing field.

Balmain secured Birchgrove Oval or 'the Grove' as it was often called, as its home ground. On Saturday 4 April 1908, the first game of Rugby League was played on the oval when Balmain conducted a 'Possibles vs Probables' trial match to determine the First Grade representatives.

On the 20 April 1908 the Tigers began a proud tradition when the Club's first Rugby League match met in the inaugural round of the Sydney competition and won 24-0, with Alf Latta the first person to score a try for Balmain.

A memorable event in August 1915 saw Junker Robinson run knickerless against Souths. His

knickers had been torn off in a tackle. No underpants were worn then. He didn't score a try but his dash resulted in a shot at goal.

There were heady days of the 1915-20 when five Premierships were won; the Depression Years of the 1930s; the Championship era of the 1940s; the tireless pursuit of the mighty Dragons in the 1950s - 60s; the magical win over Souths in 1969 Grand Final; the inevitable let-downs, followed by renewed hope for success in the 1980s-90s.

The alliance is exciting and making history going into the new century. Good Luck to all players and their brilliant careers.



FOUNDED 1908

President's Report

In my report last year I feared waking one morning to find the peninsula sinking into the harbour under the weight of excessive new development and the associated traffic. Well, we are still above water. Another year has seen the Balmain Association continuing to maintain the historic Watch House and working for our broader aims.

It requires exhausting vigilance and protest for the Association to live up to its reputation. We are forced to be involved in this process of watching carefully and acting in protest against the neglect and possible destruction of this historical area of Balmain, Birchgrove and Rozelle.

A demonstration that this place is special is the crowd that gathers in October in Elkington Park to celebrate Back to Balmain Day. People who have lived, worked and played here have great memories of the time and come to share their experiences with those friends that remain here. There is an opportunity to visit their old school along with other former pupils. Many visit the Association's stall to talk with the members who run this stall and pass on snippets of information and old photographs that help in the preservation of history. Another attraction is the Balmain Sailing Club's Regatta.

Throughout the past year members attended meetings on environmental issues. I represent the Association on the Community Liaison Committee of the Northside Storage Tunnel Alliance and am most impressed with their efforts to inform residents of their activities and attention to complaints. If only this could be said of other bodies with whom we must deal in environmental and heritage issue.

I am pleased to report that the William Balmain memorial plaque has been installed in St Giles in the Fields Church in London on May 19 last. If you are over that way be sure to visit. Some members have reported that the plaque is in an excellent position. Thanks to all who supported the project.

Exhibitions in the Watch House is a major means of fund-raising. When there are no exhibitors and in Heritage Week our impressive collection of historical photographs is on display. Many visitors comment on the excellent preservation of the building. If you have not already done so please come along and bring a friend.

Ann Bastock

The Balmain Association Finance Statement

Statement of Income & Expenditure for the year ending 30 June 1999

Income

Donations	489.00
Book sales	4673.50
Members dues	1852.00
Photo prints	872.50
Exhibitions	10270.68
Research fees	486.00
Tours	174.00
Walks	1212.00
Interest	732.25

Total 20761.93

*Includes \$5251.97 for Balmain Memorial Tablet in St Giles Church London

Bank Account Balance

Cheque	9260.75
Term	14000.00
Petty cash	49.90

Expenditure

Maintenance	10185.13
Miscellaneous	442.48
Furniture	1354.00
Photo prints	1729.05
Publications	2636.75
Subscriptions	150.00
Insurance	185.00
Historical	5452.37*
Utilities	623.60
Telstra Index	76.50
Tax	35.95

Total 22870.83

Liability

Snails Bay Group	600.00*
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*Held in trust

In Your Garden

Sunburnt Flowers

The merciless Australian sun creates real problems for garden plants. Believe it or not, plants actually do sunburn, some very badly, and this can lead to sickness and the death of the plant.

The sun also causes rapid evaporation of moisture from the soil making life hard on the poor plant's roots as well. Fortunately there are many techniques that are useful for minimising these problems.

Water. It's been said before but I think it needs repeating, watering is the single

most difficult part of gardening. Don't stand outside each night with the hose—this is bad for the plants. Water once a week with a good quality sprinkler such as the Nylex Gardenia Rainwave. Your plants in pots will need to be watered everyday in hot weather and make sure you see water coming out of the bottom of the pot. It helps if you add some Wetta Soil to pot plants. See that your pots are in some shade over summer, particularly ferns, fuchsias, azaleas, maples, camellias and daphnes need the extra protection.

Do mulch all of your soil. Choose from mulches such as compost, leaf litter, woodchip, bark, mushroom compost or even straw or seaweed. Ideally the mulch should be about 75mm to 100mm thick. This will cut down on moisture loss and keep the soil far healthier.

Hibiscus, bouganvilleas, frangipannis and acalypas are a few plants that love this time of the year. Fertilise hibiscus every couple of months with Nitrophoska or Citrus Food. A small amount will do—a heaped desertspoonful for a 2m tall plant. Don't forget to water at least once a week.

Bonnie Davidson

hibiscus



What's On

Watch House Exhibitions

- Anne Garbutt 2-10 October
Photographic Workshop
- Oils, portraits, nudes
Louise Beck & Yolante
Dejardine 16-17 Oct
- Group Photo Exhibit 23-31 Oct
Marie Summersgill
- Kings Cross 1949-1999
Nado Milat 6-7 November
- Lilyfield Watercolour Group
Gail Hewison 13-14 Nov
- Denise Barry with French artist
Michelle Gaubow 20-28 Nov
- Warringah Printmakers
4-5 Dec
- Sue Wildman & Althena Hay
11-19 Dec

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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 of the area and keep a permanent collection of historical interest; seek the cooperation of everyone concerned in the realisation of the above.

The Balmain Association meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 7.30pm in the Watch House 179 Darling Street Balmain. The Watch House is open every Saturday from 12 to 3pm. Our editorial phone/fax is 02 98184954. Email: valham@value.com.au. Our Web site: <http://member.rivernet.com.au/swsouth/watchhouse.htm>

Interested artists, potters, sculptors, etc who would like to organise an exhibition in the Watch House are urged to contact Steve South on 02 9810 1411 or on email swsouth@rivernet.com.au.

Annual subscriptions:
Household \$16, Concession \$7,
Organisations \$21.