



the balmain
association
incorporated
news sheet

The Peninsula OBSERVER

Vol 35 No2 Issue 264

Founded November 1965

April 2000

Ballast Point Master Plan

Two and half years ago, Caltex and Walker Cor. made an agreement for the sale of Ballast Point dependent on mediation. In 1998 they approached Leichhardt Council to prepare a master plan but Council refused to participate because of their commitment to 100% open space for and not to rezoning the site from waterfront industrial until this could be achieved.

On behalf of Walker Corp, Demo P/L proceeded with community consultation to formulate a draft master plan for industrial use of the site. The plan involved massive excavation to provide warehousing facilities. When Australand took over Walker Corp in December 1999 they passed the site on to McRoss Developments P/L (a company owned by Lang Walker). Delmo P/L for Lang Walker have requested that Council participate in the preparation of a new master plan instead of presenting the draft plan for industrial purposes.

The site is identified under SEPP 56, Sydney Harbour and Foreshores and Tributaries as being of strategic significance on the harbour and therefore requires a master plan before any

development can be approved. Council will discuss this latest move on 28 March. The recommendations are:

1. That the Council resolve that in principle it is prepared to participate on a Steering Committee for the development of two further master plans for open space and for residential purposes on Ballast Point.

2. That Council representatives meet with the Dept of Urban Affairs & Planning in order to determine the responsibilities and operation of the Steering Committee and a reference group.

3. That following the meeting with DUAP the matter be reported to Council for further consideration.

To know the result of this meeting go to the next Ballast Point Campaign meeting at 8pm on Monday 3 April in the Balmain Town Hall or phone Roger Parkes 9810 8978, Fergus Fricke 9810 1179, June Lunsman 9810 6885. The Ballast Point Campaign Committee meets each first Monday of the month in the Town Hall.

All residents are welcome.

June Lunsman

Heritage Festival

Here are a few ways for you to enjoy Heritage Week 2000 devoted to Our Sporting Heritage. We are also celebrating the Bicentenary of the Balmain Grant.

Saturday 1 & 8 April

Exhibition of Old Balmain Photos
Watch House 11am - 4pm. Entry free..
Includes photos of Balmain's sporting heroes and personalities.

Saturday 1 April.

Sports Walk. A 2 hour guided walk visiting venues of rowing, swimming, sailing, tennis, cricket and football.
Depart 1.30pm Balmain Post Office.
Cost \$12. Concession \$10.

Wednesday 5 April.

Spectacle Island Tour. Depart 9.45am sharp for boat at Drummoyne Sailing Club Wharf. A 3 hour tour of the Naval Historical Collection. Cost \$12, con \$10
Bookings 9818 4954.

Saturday 8 April.

Bicentenary Walk. Depart 1.30pm
Watch House. Cost \$12, con \$10.
Bicentenary Book Launch.
Watch House 6.30pm.

Until mid April in Town Hall Glass House. Old Balmain Photos.

Heritage Concepts

Urban consolidation threatens conservation areas in Balmain. Planning objectives are at odds with heritage policies because they threaten existing streetscapes and the scale and form of historic development.

The diversity of the dwellings creates difficulties in determining the the significance of the whole as well as each property. Not all parts of the area have equal value but most will contribute to the overall worth. It is important to understand the particular value of a place and that some places are more important than others.

David Logan, of Godden Mackay Logan heritage consultants, in a recent edition of the Sydney Morning Herald said, "We have to keep the evidence of history, but not just because the build-

ings are nice pieces of architecture. If a building has already been so compromised that it no longer provides evidence of history, and it now detracts from the area, it can be pulled down."

"A new home in a conservation area needs to fit in with the neighbouring properties - using so-called 'infill' principles of sympathetic scale, form, character, materials, orientation and setback. We don't want people to design fake heritage buildings but they should reinterpret the detail of neighbouring houses in a contemporary manner," Logan says.

He believes there are few examples of 'infill' that have been done well. Getting something wrong can destroy not only the heritage value of a particular house, but of the whole streetscape. "If a house has a cohesive character, people will pay more for that. So doing it badly

destroys not only the heritage but the financial value."

Changes made last year to the Heritage Act give exclusive control of local significant areas to councils. The NSW Heritage Council looks after places of State significance. Local councils will soon be delegated powers to make interim heritage orders lasting one year. Twelve months allows time for more research to be done on places thought to be important. If necessary a local environmental plan can be altered to incorporate a new heritage item.

Heritage studies need to be done every 10 years to update because views change about the value of certain places or features. He says a heritage listing should be seen as a flagging device. It doesn't mean that everything has to be retained in perpetuity. The building can still be altered, but sympathetically.

Vince Blackburn, Boxer

Vince was one of the greatest bantamweight boxers Australia ever produced. After winning the Championship in 1916 he held it until defeated in 1920. He also fought in the Philippines, England and America.

Vince was the second of eight children of Arthur Samuel and Margaret nee Gallagher and born on 4th August 1895 at 1 Creek Street, Balmain.

Their father tutored his older brother Lal and Vince as youngsters in the art of boxing. The two little Blackburn boys were hardly able to peep above the middle rope. The boys attended St Joseph's Catholic School and the Christian Brothers School close by in Victoria Road, Rozelle.

Vince was a small person and fought at a height of 167cm and weighed 53kg, suitable for the bantamweight class although at that weight fought first and won the Feather Title Championship. Throughout his fighting career, Vince lived in Balmain with his parents at addresses in Waterloo, Harris and Moore Streets, until his first marriage to Ada Priestly on 8th November 1913. His address 1916-1917 15 Dick Street, 1918-1921 14 Donnelly Street. Two daughters were born, Eileen Ada on 13th January 1914 and Mavis Carrington on 21st

August 1915. Ada Blackburn died suddenly age 22 years at Balmain Hospital on 19th July 1918. Grandmother Priestly took the little girls into her care while Vince continued with his career.



Vince Henry Blackburn

During 1919 Vince spent eight months in the Philippines winning the Bantam Championship of the Orient. During his eight months in Manila, he lost only one of his six fights. In September of that year Vince was back in Syd-

ney winning several matches. In London in 1920 for two fights, losing on points in the 20 round events. He then moved to America where he won his first fight although he had broken a hand in the second round. On the strength of this showing, he was offered \$2,000 to fight Bud Ridley but he refused because of his hand. Back in Sydney in October when he lost to Eugene Criqui and decided to give the game away. Vince was persuaded to have a few fights and over the next few years fought eight times the last in Newcastle in 1923.

The hotel game called Vince and it was a good choice as he was a non-drinker of alcohol. He had a very successful business life, no doubt due to the assistance of his second wife Elizabeth May Weston. They married on 19th June 1923. The hotels were 1925-1933 Royal Oak, 25 Erskine Street, Sydney, 1934-1935, Town Hall, 23 Oxford Street, Paddington, 1937-1940 Bellevue, 54 Regent Street, Redfern.

All through the years Vince tried to reunite with his daughters but due to family concerns the reunion was not successful.

Vince Blackburn died 25th November 1960 and was buried at Botany Cemetery. Vince had 50 professional fights resulting in 26 wins, 11 losses, 5 draws, 7 k.o. 1 no decision.

Colleen (Blackburn) Wright

War Memorials

Congratulations to all concerned who contributed to the Save Our Monument appeal. Due to the efforts of Bill Orton, the president of the Balmain and Rozelle RSL and the local Village Voice monthly newsmagazine, who collected the pledges, the restoration of the memorial should soon be completed.

Heritage Services of the NSW Department of Public Works has been engaged to proceed with the restoration.

The memorial in the then Unity Hall Square was unveiled by a former Mayor of Balmain, Alderman Henry Swan on 23 April 1916. It was one of the few memorials erected during WW1 and bears the date of the first ANZAC Day. No other campaign of the war is commemorated. The 38 names on the four tablets are of those of 'Balmain fallen heroes' of the Dardanelles campaign. The intersection was renamed Loyalty Square from that time.

To raise money by public subscription is not new to Balmain. In 1919 a foundation stone was laid for a Soldiers Memorial Hall. The hall remains today in Darling Street, beside the St Andrew's

Church. On the foundation stone is the following inscription: *This Hall is erected to the memory of Capt T R MacNee, Capt H J Henley, Sgt W H Burlace, Pte W G Henley, Pte A R Rae, Pte J L Shepherd, Pte C D Butler, Pte E Bolus, Pte G W Gilberthorpe who laid down their lives for liberty and truth in the Great war 1914-1919. This stone was laid by Commander E C Boyle. V C commanding HMA Submarine Flo-tilla, 30 August 1919.*

The Parish of St John's Church, Balmain had 255 men enlist for the war and 57 paid the supreme sacrifice. Families in remembrance of the young men whose lives were sacrificed gave a number of memorials in the Church. An Alter Cross was given to the Church in remembrance of Sgt Grant Ward who had died in 1915 at Gallipoli. In the early part of 1917, the new Rectory was dedicated as a memorial to the soldiers who had died in the war. In August 1918 an honour roll was unveiled, which is at the right of the sanctuary and is superbly carved out of Tasmanian Oak. The workmanship was by Todd & Co. with the cost of £20 donated by parishioner Mr George Chidgey. One of St John's young men survived the war only to die

of disease in 1919. His memorial is in St Woolas Cemetery, Newport, South Wales, UK. The wording on the gravestone: *William G Sommerville, Late 4th Engineer, Troopship Parramatta, Eldest son of A W & G A Sommerville, Town Clerk of Balmain, Sydney, Australia. Died 22 February, 1919.*

The honour board at St Mary's Church, 85 Darling Street, Balmain, has 112 names of those who served in the Great War, including five Howell-Prices. The minister at that time was J Howell-Price. Six of the 21 memorial tablets in the church are for those who died in the campaigns of Gallipoli, Pzierses, Belgium, and 'somewhere in France'. St Mary's parishioners shared in the grief around Australia for some 60,000 young men killed and countless thousands physically and emotionally maimed.

A significant memorial with some 50 parishioner's names is in the Campbell Street, Presbyterian Church.

In the former Smith Street Public School building can be found a memorial with 155 names of local men, of these there is a star attached, signifying killed in action. The ornate memorial has the added inscription, (next page)

White Bay Power Station

The Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority is finalising acquisition of the 4ha site from Pacific Power, under an arrangement which could see it refurbished as a museum, film studio, retail centre or even a concert hall, bringing to an end uncertainty the heritage building.

The chief executive officer of Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, Mr Greg Robinson, said the commercial potential of the site would be balanced with the need to preserve its industrial heritage. Unlike other power station conversions, it will be a requirement that the power station buildings be retained, including the massive turbine hall, which is of similar size and scale to the Queen Victoria Building, with the plant and machinery to be displayed, showing the entire process of power generation.

The National Trust has described White Bay as one of the most significant and intact systems of power technology in Australia and supports its rebirth as a museum or public space. The site is zoned for power and employment and cannot be used for residential purposes and public access will be a requirement of any development.

Once the transfer has been finalised for an expected price of \$4 million, a masterplan will be completed for the site, which will cover guidelines for its development. Asbestos has been removed from the buildings and it is expected that further remediation and some restoration work will cost \$15 million. There have been other masterplans for the site, in 1988 and 1992.

White Bay Power Station, left idle for 15 years on Victoria Road and Robert

Street, Rozelle, was the longest serving power station in Sydney. It had 70 years of continuous service within the one building, compared with 64 years at Ultimo and 60 years at Balmain. Although the Pyrmont Power Station was in service longer, 79 years, the building was completely superseded. Both Pyrmont and Balmain Stations have been demolished and the sites now have redeveloped with residential buildings.

1923-1928. Work again on the third phase in 1945-1948. On 1 January 1953, the White Bay Power Station was transferred to the Electricity Commission New South Wales, along with all other rail power stations. Some sections were used only in emergencies after 1958, while other units were decommissioned in 1975 and 1984.

An excerpt from "Gourlies Corner, Growing Up In Balmain" by Wal Gour-



Turbine Generator - White Bay Power Station

The NSW Railway Commission was one of the pioneers of electricity generation in Sydney. After the completion of the Ultimo Power House in 1899, tramway usage increased rapidly and the construction of a new electric City railway, it was essential to establish more power generation.

In June 1912 the first phase began at White Bay but it was not until May 1917, that it became fully operational, with the building extended in the second phase

lie: "It cost a penny to go to the baths but a good alternative was the canal that White Bay Power Station used to pump in salt water for cooling. Upon its return to the bay, the water was warm. The canal was fenced in with palings and barbedwire, but that did not deter the boys. Many a quick 'skinny dip' was enjoyed by the boys with one keeping 'nit' in case girls came on the scene".

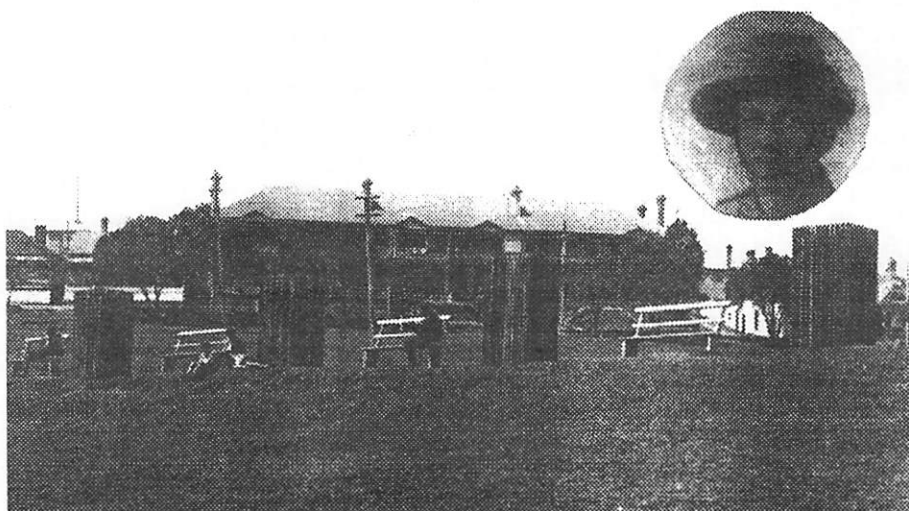
Source: SMH 24 February 2000 and The Observer December 1994.

Continued

The path of duty is the way to glory.
Rabaul, Gallipoli, Egypt and France,
1914-1915.

A report in the The Observer 19th July 1918, reported a ceremony in Elkington Park. In the presence of a few friends and pupils of the Birchgrove Public School, Mr J J Booth planted four trees (now fully grown) in memory of his son John who was killed at Passchendaele. He was a grandson of the first mayor of Balmain, John Booth. Four seats were also donated

*His gallant sword may broken lie
His bones may bleach 'neath an alien
sky
But his soul I know can never die
He marches with the deathless
Army.*



Elkington Park 1919. Insert: John Booth Jnr

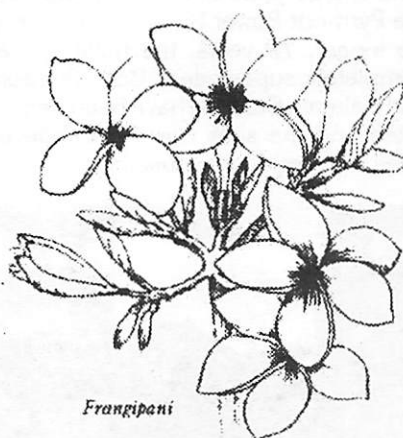
In Your Garden

Add Colour With Bulbs

In autumn, many kinds of brightly coloured spring flowering bulbs may be planted. Some require open sunny positions while others will perform well in shady spots.

Garden borders can look attractive using bulbs with a combination of colours and textures. Bulbs such as freesias, muscari or grape hyacinths, spring star, anemones, ranunculus and lachenalice give colour displays to your garden. Anemones and ranunculus are best treated as annuals but the others may be left in situ to come up year after year. They need full sun, a well prepared bed with agenerous ration of fertiliser added and mulch of compost over the top.

Bulbs for shady spots and under trees are bluebells, muscari, daffodils, spring star and snowdrops. Daffodils planted closely in clumps look very well in any good soil. When the flower buds appear, feed them Thrive soluble fertiliser to get blooms on good long stems.



Flowering bulbs give good value for money as many live on and mutiply from year to year. Now is the time to start planting your favourites and include some new ones.

Bonnie Davidson

What's On

Watch HouseExhibitions

- Heritage Week - 1 & 8 April
Photographic Exhibition of Old Balmain & sport personalities
see page 1 for other events in Heritage Week
- Book Launch 6.30pm 8 April
John Balmain 1810-1884. A Prebyterian Schoolteacher and Goldseeker by Peter Reynolds
RSVP 9810 5185. All welcome.
- Helen Ross - oils & watercolours
15--16 April. With others.
- Ann Miller 6-9 May
Jewelry, Weaving, Paintings
- Patricia Quinn 13-14 May
Watercolor 2000
- Valmai Warby 29-30 May
Mixed exhibition

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Registered Publication PP225832/00001

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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.