



the balmain
association
incorporated
news sheet

The Peninsula OBSERVER

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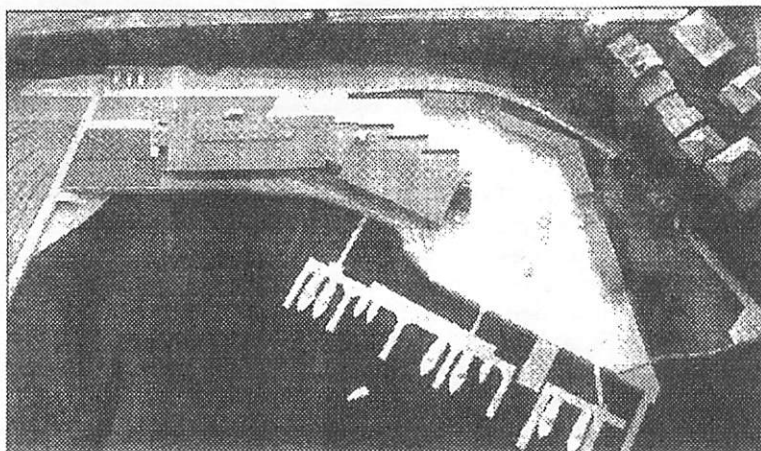
Founded November 1965

February 2001

Cameron Cove

The Minister for Urban Affairs, Dr Refshauge, has seized control of the Cameron Cove site and has placed the development proposal on public exhibition. Originally, it was only available in Pymont and Leichhardt centres. At our request the information is now shown in the Balmain Library for the convenience of local residents. The proposed relocation of the Water Police on the 1.7 ha site has been bitterly opposed by residents.

Almost two thirds of the area will be dedicated as parkland with an isolated section linked by a promenade to improve access. There is contamination of the site as a Maritime Services Board depot there left significant levels of lead, copper and zinc. These will require a concrete cap to be laid before work can begin on the two-storey headquarters and an eleven berth floating marina. The revised application does not include maintenance operations that were originally proposed near homes at the end of Datchett Street.



Written submissions will be received by 21 February by the Director, Sydney Region Centreal, 26-32 Pyrmont Bridge Road Pyrmont 2009.

Interim Sydney Harbour Trust

The Trust has been established by the Commonwealth Government to act as an advisory body to Senator Robert Hill, Minister for the Environment, to commence the preparation of Plans of Management for former Defence lands on Sydney Harbour. The sites are Artillery School, North Head, Middle Head Georges Heights, Macquarie Lighthouse, Woolwich Dock, Snapper Island and Cockatoo Island.

Throughout the planning process the Trust will be using a newsletter, public meetings, workshops, exhibitions and publications. Membership of the committees represents a wide cross-section of people with skills and enterprise relevant to each site.

The key discussion points for the future of Cockatoo and Snapper Islands must reflect their past. Key goals are access, heritage and harbour amenity:-

The importance of involving the Aboriginal community.

The islands should remain in public hands with maritime uses (e.g. boat building, storage, training) recognising the working harbour concept.

Cockatoo Island offers extraordinary places for civic events - studios, workshops, etc.

Critical mass is an issue - getting enough activity through diversity that attracts a range of visitors.

Undistinguished buildings could be of use and should not be demolished peremptorily.

A maintenance strategy, linked to planning, is being developed to secure buildings and get the services and powerhouse working.

Tenders are being sought to survey infrastructure services.

Guided tours of Cockatoo Island are planned to start in 2001.

In November 2000 the Trust launched the publication, Reflections on a Maritime City, that included stunning illustrations and thought provoking text and posed questions about how the future of the six sites should be decided and discusses the need for a unique planning processes to weave these lands back to the life of Sydney.

Contact the Trust on 8969 2100 for information about a committee in your area or for a copy of Reflections on a Maritime City (cost \$16.50). PO Box 607 Mosman 2088.

Town Plan Approved

Urban Affairs & Planning Minister, Dr Andrew Refshauge, has finally signed the Leichhardt Town Plan and it is now a legal document determining the development of the Municipality.

First discussions for the draft plan were held in 1990 and went through several tortuous amendments before the government took nearly two years to accept its provisions. One may conclude that it is now time to think about the next plan.

Most critics dwell on the residential floor space ratios of 0.5:1 for Leichhardt/Lilyfield, 0.7:1 for Balmain/Rozelle/Glebe and 0.6:1 for Annandale. They believe that the new limits will stifle home alterations and they should only apply to multi-unit apartments. There are no sites left in Balmain large enough for that sort of developments. The Town Plan is five years too late. Our main concern is for the preservation of small cottages that contribute so much to the heritage of Balmain. This is what visitors to the Watch House always comment upon and how much they appreciate them.

The next step is surely reform of the Land & Environment Court to make them more accountable for the horrors they have approved against the efforts of Council and residents.

Petitions 1841-2001

Petitions are still a means of appeal to those in high places and often seek the help of the Legislature in ameliorating the environment or in preserving the amenity of the surroundings.

A petition dated 29 March 1841 and signed by 53 landowners and residents of Balmain and Annandale was presented to Sir George Gipps, ninth Governor of New South Wales, 1838-1846.

'We the undersigned Inhabitants of Sydney and its Vicinity understanding that the Sydney Toll gate on the Parramatta Road is about to be permanently fixed by your Excellency - We beg leave most respectfully to submit that the site of the present Toll gate is injudiciously placed, in as much as it cuts off what must be now considered a part of the Town of Sydney, namely the Balmain lands on the South West side of Darling Harbour, upon which many extensive Buildings have lately been erected, consisting of private residences, Stores, Wharfs, Ship building Establishments and retail shops - And the road commonly called 'Balmain and Birch Grove road' is the only communication by land now open between this rising portion of Sydney and the North East side of the city on the banks of Darling Harbour - Although the distance of this connecting road is considerable yet the Geographical position of Sydney renders such an extension of road Toll Free not only justified, but as it is obvious that a judicious extension of the Town of Sydney must be on those promontories which form the peculiar features of our locality - And we submit that the Roads connecting those promontories being

Toll free would considerably tend to encourage the building of Villas adjacent to the Town, which is an object much to be desired in a climate such as we enjoy, would beautify our capital and ensure a Vigorous and healthy population - The absence of Floating Bridges and their supposed inexpediency, as regards our Shipping, to connect the portions of our City on opposite Shores of our harbour, is an additional argument in favour of Land communication free of Toll - We therefore most respectfully request that your excellency will be pleased to order that the Toll Gate be placed at the Parramatta side of the Balmain and Birch Grove road, that is, beyond Mr Nortons entrance gate on the Parramatta road.'

Although well - stated, the appeal had little effect on the Governor. His terse reply '...I regret very much I cannot see sufficient reason why the Toll Gate should not be restored to the situation in which it lately stood on the summit of the Hill at Grose Farm' (Sydney University site)

Road travellers to Balmain were forced to pay toll for use of little more than 800m of the old Parramatta Road, before turning off to 'Balmain Road'. Had the Governor agreed to re-locate the Toll Gate at the next hill, the Johnston Street corner, this imposition would then have been avoided. Perhaps the Governor's decision was influenced by a real estate blurb of the day advertising land for sale at Balmain as being '...only ten minutes distance from George Street...' (by water of course!)

A petition is now circulating January 2001, by the Friends of Callan Park, for support to the proposed Callan Park Trust Bill. The Bill is modelled on the legislation that protects Centennial

Park and the Royal Botanical Gardens. We believe that Callan Park is also important enough to be given special protection.

Essentially the bill would set up a trust, formally appointed by the Government, which would administer this public land and be charged with facilitating current uses, including the Rozelle Hospital, protecting and restoring its heritage values and managing the open space. New uses could be allowed if there is no conflict with these over-riding objectives. The Bill will be presented to parliament at the first sitting when it resumes in 2001.

A copy of the proposed Callan Park Trust Bill can be viewed at the Watch House and petition signed. Membership to the Friends of Callan Park: 17 North Avenue, Leichhardt. 2040. \$20. Contact: 9810 2511.

Wild Life on Cockatoo Island

The following letter was written to the management of Cockatoo Island by Mrs Lillian Izatt who lived on the island with her husband, Bill, who was Ambulance Officer from 1930 to 1940s. Sheep and goats were kept to keep the grass trimmed in vacant ground and parks. A few sheep was also employed for that purpose on Birchgrove Oval in the 1930s. Many homes had a pet goat that wandered the streets feeding of the grass.

Thanks to nephew Bob Izatt and Kevin O'Keefe for the copy of the letter.

3/9/34

Cockatoo Dock & Eng. Co
Cockatoo

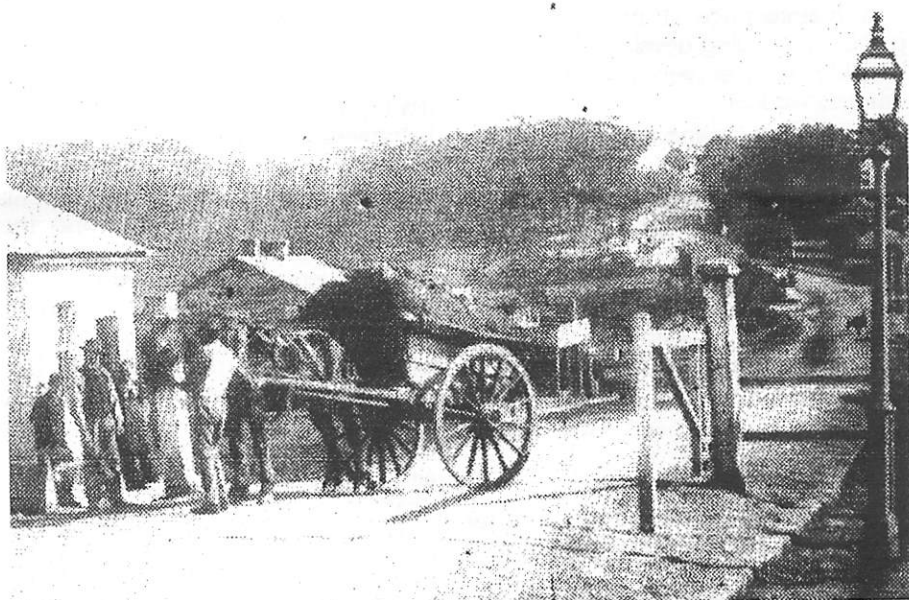
J. Umbrella, 12/6
1 Dog Eggs 1/6
13/10

broken by sheep:

While on my way home from sleeping on Friday night, laden with parcels and thereby unable to protect myself, this sheep started butting me from just a little beyond Mr. Morgan's right up to our gate. I do consider it is just beyond a joke as it is unnecessary for me to say that, seldom do we women

on the Island come on without carrying parcels.

Mrs Izatt



Tollgate. (Holtermann Collection ML)

Federation 1901

The December 1900 issues of the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the local newspaper, *The Balmain Observer*, carried details of the arrangements for the Federation procession and the ceremony to be held at Centennial Park on 1 January 1901. Other events were on 2 January, a Swimming Carnival at Cockatoo Island, a Public School display at the Sydney Cricket Ground on 3 January and on 4 January, a Military and Naval Tattoo at the Agricultural Ground.

The Observer, 29 December 1900, commented on the bunting and flag display on the Balmain houses, the Balmain New Ferry Co. and the Cockatoo Island Swimming Carnival. Special efforts are being made by the Balmain New Ferry Co., in connection with decorations for the Commonwealth festivities. The company's wharf at the foot of Erskine Street, has been gaily decorated during the last few days. The whole of the fleet of steamers are also being decorated and some of the decorations are very prettily arranged.

Another item mentions an unusual scene presented at Fitzroy Dock, Cockatoo Island. Fully 50 men are busily engaged completing arrangements for the carnival to be held on the 2nd. A pavilion stand on one side for the vice-regal party and invited guests and ample provision in being made to meet a large attendance. All the local champions intend competing as well as a number of international swimmers. 11am to 5pm. Admittance, Adults 1 shilling, children 3 pence. Steamers leave from King, Erskine, Quay and Balmain wharves. There were 45 events and the 5 January 1901, SMH, carried the results which took up a whole column.

The Observer of the 31 December 1900, carried details of the special trams to leave Gladstone Park and Elliott Street for the rehearsal for the Celebrations of the '10,000 voices' the Public Schools were to contribute. Some Balmain School children may have been involved.

Let us have a glimpse into Balmain of January 1901.

The Balmain Council's area covered the original William Balmain's 1800 land grant of 550 acres and the George Whitfield 1796 grant of 30 acres, now Balmain, Birchgrove and Rozelle. The suburb was first settled in 1836 and by 1901 there were some 6000 residences and a population of 30,000.

The mayor of the Balmain Council was Henry Mills, boot shop proprietor of 272 Darling Street, Balmain. Former

boilermaker at Mort's Dock, John Storey was Labor MLA for Balmain and draper Sydney Law of Weston Road (now Victoria Road) was Labor MLA for Rozelle.

All the Schools, Churches, Hospital and the main civic buildings such as Post Office, Court House, Town Hall and Fire Station were well established.

Work was available at the many industries. The Abattoirs on Glebe Island, Mort's Dock Engineering, Cockatoo Island, ship building, Elliott Bros. chemical works, Lever Bros & Kitchen soap manufacture, established in 1897, the Coal Mine and the many timber mills including J Booth & Co. The 42 functioning hotels at that time had a steady clientele from the workers of these dirty and dangerous industries.

The gas supply came to Balmain in 1870 and by 1901 there were some 200 street lamps that were lit by lamplighters at sunset and extinguished at dawn, had been replaced by clockwork control that had to be wound once a week. Electricity began operating in Balmain 1909 by the Balmain Electric Light & Power Supply Co on the site of the now demolished Balmain Power Station.

The mains water supply to Balmain was introduced in the 1880s but remained intermittent with parts of the suburb experiencing problems especially in the summer months. Balmain East residents had to rely on their wells and tanks as sometimes supply was for 3 days only a week.

The disposal of nightsoil was by the use of a pan system, which was re-

moved once or twice a week by a night soil man or commonly called 'the dunny man'. The water closets which discharged into a brick cesspit, was less numerous. The outhouse was set well to the back yard and access was by a small lane, the 'dunny lane'. Many such lanes can be still seen in Balmain today.

Horse-drawn vehicles were used extensively for transport, building, home deliveries of bread, milk and ice for the ice box and in the coal mine and the pit ponies were used to haul the coal from the coal face to the mine shaft.

Ferries were extensively used. The first steam trams to service Balmain was in 1892 and the electric service replaced the steam tram in 1902 with line extension to the Darling Street wharf in 1903.

So what might it be like in Balmain in the Federation Bi-centenary 2101?

Kathleen Hamey



Darling Street 1905



In Your Garden

February Gardening

For people living in units and town-houses, making green oases from little spaces may mean that a courtyard or balcony is the only private outdoor area available. Courtyards can be transformed into green extensions of the living space - an outdoor room. These spaces can be intimate with lattice smothered with perfumed vines..

One difficulty facing balcony gardeners is exposure to prevailing winds. Even in shaded spots wind will quickly dry out pots and baskets. Some form of protection will be necessary. For balconies this could be a reinforced glass screen giving



protection without obscuring views. For courtyards a panels of lattice supporting a hardy climber will stop draughts.

The choice of plants will be determined by the amount of sunlight available. The ideal aspect is an easterly one that receives gentle morning sun and is protected from the fierce afternoon heat.

Climbers for courtyards and balconies: The Orange Trumpet vine has lovely coral flowers throughout the winter months. Chinese Star Jasmine produces white starry flowers in spring- a good one for shaded balconies. Potato Creeper (Solarium Jasminoides) flowers nearly all the year round with lovely white lacey blossoms. Happy Wanderer Handbergia has deep violet blooms in winter.

Perfect plants for pots. You can choose from a wide range of plants such as camellia, hydrangea, azalea, daphne, gardenia and fuschia. Perfumed plants should be included where possible. Balconies provide the ideal place for troughs and window boxes overflowing with colourful annuals such as petunias, pansies, lobelia, dwarf sweet peas, marigolds, primula and ivy geraniums that cascade brightly over the railings.

Bonnie Davidson

What's On

Watch House Exhibitions

- Kimberley Paintings
Janet Carter 4-5 Feb 24/25
- Exciting, Bright & Light
Annette Dorahy 10-11 Feb
- Father & Daughter 3-11 Mar
Watercolours, collage & photos
- Naive Art 17-25 Mar
Sandra Warner
- Unique Expressions. Glass,
paintings & mixed media
Heather Wilkinson 31 Mar-1 Apr
- Intertwining - knitting & machine
embroidery 10-13 May
Anne Miller
- Annette Dorahy 19-20 May
- HartStart Studios Annual
Students Exhibition 26-27 May
- Denise Barry 1-10 June
- Jean MacManus 16-17 June
- Nicholas Beckett 23-24 June

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Birchgrove NSW 2041
2001/12

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: hamey@netpro.net.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 \$20, Concession \$10,
Organisations \$30.