



the balmain
association
incorporated
news sheet

The Peninsula OBSERVER

Vol 38 No 6 Issue 286

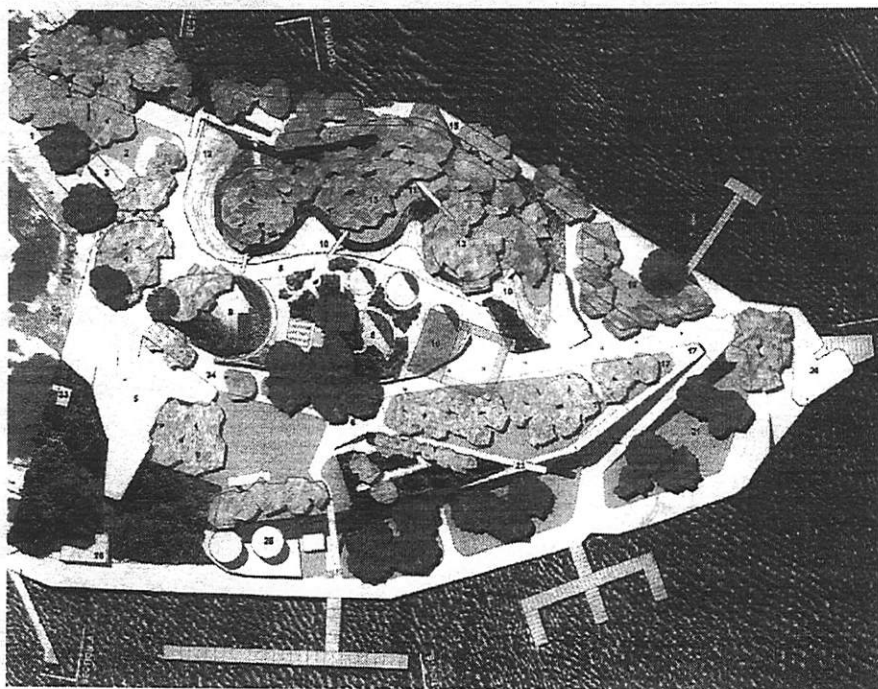
Founded November 1965

December 2003

Ballast Point Park Concept Plan

The Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority (SHFA) has exhibited a concept design for the park on Ballast Point. The main objects are to create a sustainable design in a green parkland setting with a strong tree canopy of fig trees and Angophora, recognition of the historical layers that have shaped Ballast Point including natural, industrial and maritime heritage and creation of a park that is accessible and safe for users of all ages.

The plan features an industrial interpretation garden on the exposed sandstone ridge with a shade canopy identifying the location of Menevia. Two tanks on the southern side will be lowered for storage for the maritime refuelling depot.



Parking is on the previous site in Wharf Road and in Yeend Street. More information is available on SHFA website: www.shfa.nsw.gov.au

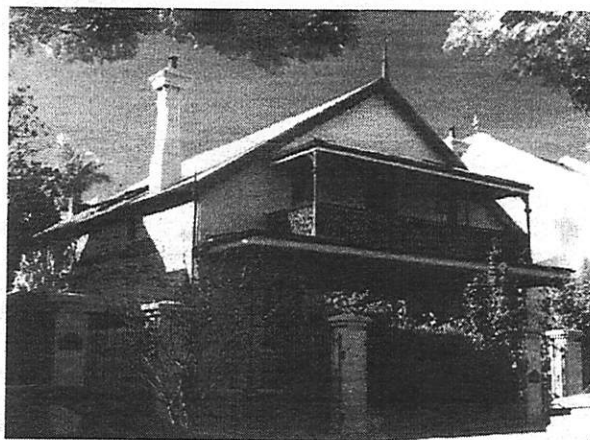
23 Ballast Point Rd, Birchgrove

Percy 1881 (Photo right)

The History Group of the Association sometimes attends house auctions when the house or some family importance to Balmain had lived there, and this happened with the above address.

I went mainly because a member of the Mort family lived there for many years. John Mort, grandson of Thomas Mort co-founder of Mort's Dock in the 1850s, lived there from 1915 to 1965.

The former Dock site is now a park and housing and as I grew up knowing the dock, I was very interested in the house. At least three of his children were born there, Thomas, Charles and twin brother Erskine, always known as Laidley, and a daughter Phyllis, born in Tasmania. Two other children were born but I do not know the place of birth.



I was there on open day and imagine my surprise when the estate agent told me that a Mort was also looking over her old childhood home. I was so thrilled to meet a member of the Mort family. Phyllis Miller was coming off the front upstairs veranda, when I spoke to her. During the conversation she said that they never used the veranda when she was a child as it was always so dirty from the works and the area was called Balmain not

Birchgrove. We had a lovely chat about the old home and sent us a lovely photograph of her father John for our archives. Phyllis took some photos of the house for a keepsake. The next Sunday saw me return with my camera and I also have taken photos for our archives. All in all this was a wonderful experience for me that brought back many childhood memories of my growing up with Mort's Dock.

Bonnie Davidson

Subscriptions

If you received a renewal form with this issue your subscription is due for renewal.

Please post the form to PO Box 57 Balmain.

George Weston and *Horsley*

During December and January the Watch House will present an exhibition showing some early Balmain land development maps with photographs of street name personalities. One early land owner was George Edward Weston of Weston Street, near Darling Street Wharf, Balmain. Weston purchased Lot 3, an area of two and half acres in the first land sale in October 1836, at a cost of £60 per acre. Weston's friend Captain James Pearson bid in his own name to save Weston the long trip from his home, *Horsley*, near Liverpool.



George Edward weston



Mrs Blanche Weston

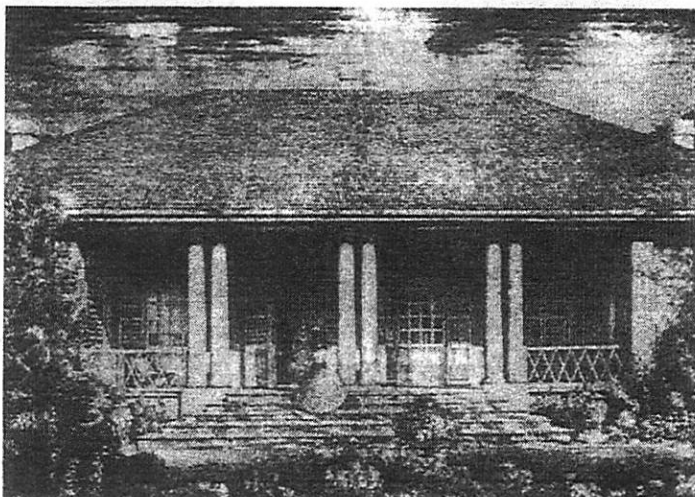
Lieutenant later Captain Weston of the East India Company's Bengal Army arrived in Sydney in 1829. After a short time, he proposed to Blanche Johnston, second daughter of Colonel George Johnston of *Annandale*. Johnston Street, Balmain and Johnston's Bay was named in his honour. The couple were married in May 1829 at St James Church, Sydney. Weston took his bride to India for two

years where three children were born, one dying in infancy.

In 1806, Colonel Johnston had received a 2000 acre grant near Liverpool, from Gov King. Johnston called the area *King's Gift* but preferred to live at *Annandale*, later to become the Sydney suburb *Annandale*.

Blanche Johnston inherited *King's Gift* on the death of her father in 1823 and on the return of the Westons to Sydney in 1831, they moved to the property where they lived in a large marquee tendered by many Indian servants until their house was completed in 1834. George Weston named the house *Horsley* after his birthplace in Surrey, England. The area then became known as *Horsley Park*.

The house is still standing and was built by convicts from bricks made on the estate and faced



A 1916 drawing of *Horsley* by architect William H Wilson

with plaster. The design was similar to bungalows in India, containing seventeen rooms, with a stone-flagged verandah with Doric columns and shutters with folding casements between. All internal fittings are of imported Indian teak and the Eastern influence was enhanced by punkahs hanging from the ceiling of the grand dining hall.

Weston also received a grant of land at Yarralumla Plains. When he died in 1856, his widow and eldest surviving son, Edward Henry inherited the Balmain land. Because Weston died intestate, it was not until 1861 that Lot 3 was subdivided into twelve lots, although an access road from Darling and Weston Streets, had been cut through lots 4 and 5 in 1841 to Weston's lot 3.

Blanche Weston lived at Horsley for 70 years to the age of 98 years, when it was said that she had become the oldest Australian born person in the country having lived through the terms of twenty governors, including her father. The early Weston's are buried in a vault at the old St Bartholomew Church, Prospect Hill.

After Blanche Weston's death in 1904, the property later became the home of Mrs J C Perry, a descendant of the original guarantee Colonel Johnston. The estate had its own school. A building was donated by Mrs Perry to the Education Department to establish a school for the children residing on the estate.

George and Blanche Weston had nine children. Son Edward Henry married his cousin, Emily Johnston, and settled at Albion Park on 1500 acres called Macquarie's Gift.

Sources: Leichhardt Historical Journal No 11. Colonial Heritage, F & J Lowry. A History of Fairfield. V George.

Bonnie Davidson

President's Report

Another year has flown by and we have been busy and productive in many ways following the tradition set by the founders of the Balmain Association way back in the 1960's.

There were not as many art and craft exhibitions throughout the past year as it was decided by the Committee that we must make more time available for the historical photographs, including the treasured Charles Kerry's 1909 panoramic shots of Balmain. So, apart from setting aside two weekends during Heritage Week for a magnificent display of ships and boat building, a display in keeping with this year's National Trust heritage theme

We are very fortunate in that we receive for our archives interesting articles, letters and other memorabilia. I was asked to address the Balmain Hospital Auxiliary Group and took along a copy of the 1953 Balmain & District Hospital report which had been sent to us. I was delighted to see that these hardworking ladies saw pictures that brought back memories. One of the group was once a Matron at the hospital; others had either trained or worked there in the past. Like me, they had all demonstrated against the closing of our hospital, and are still dedicated to supporting this local icon.

Apart from lots of Saturday afternoon visitors we have had groups visiting at other times. Mr Wheatley, Cubmaster, brought the Mort Bay Cubs in to learn about the history of Balmain. The young ones and the parents who accompanied them were very impressed especially with our history cell and the big picture of Morts Dock in its heyday.

Treasurer's Report

The Association had another good financial result with increased income from the hire of the Watch House for exhibitions even though we have reserved more time for our own displays. This has allowed a further expenditure of \$11740 on conservation; although this is down from last year. The salt has been removed from the walls using sacrificial plaster and a chemical damp course injected (old buildings had no damp course). There is still work scheduled on this heritage building and sandstone blocks are expensive.. Publication sales were roughly the same as the previous year at \$3800.

Statement of Financial Position at 30 June 2003

Current Assets	2002	2003
Bank Balance	17056.34	23822.36
Term Deposit	15000.00	20000.00
Cash in hand	151.55	6.60
Sundry Debtors	161.40	215.40
Total Assets	32369.29	44044.36
Creditors (Trust Fund)	658.30	658.30
Members Funds	\$31710.99	\$43386.06

Management Committee

President:	Ann Bastok
Vice-President:	Rita Ellis
Secretary:	Trish Mack
Treasurer:	Val Hamey
Public Officer:	Bob Ellis
Archivist:	Trish Mack
Conservation:	Jeremy Arnott
Editor:	Val Hamey
Honorary Auditor:	Tim Potter
Watch House Hire:	
	Kathleen Hamey, Bonnie Davidson
Other Committee Member:	
	June Lunsman,
All positions are honorary.	

Jeremy Arnott has resigned after giving great service as Secretary for over ten years. He will continue his management of conservation work with commendation from the Management Committee..

A group of Nicholson Street School boys and girls came with their teacher Mrs Fotheringham while all our historical photos were on display in September. They enjoyed their visit and I certainly enjoyed having them. They asked lots of questions and were so impressed with what they were able to learn about the history of their local area.

I'd like to take this opportunity to let members know that Jeremy Arnott, our secretary for many moons, has also used his skills and knowledge to make sure a great deal of work has been done this year, this includes new outside signs and the defeat of the rising damp threat.

Also throughout the year we have continued to lend our full support to those groups who are active in trying to preserve our heritage areas. Callan Park, Ballast Point being among these. Of course we all know there's no letting up! Demolition by developers being stopped, demolition by neglect begins.

As President of the Balmain Association I have been approached several times over the last year by local residents who request that for heritage reasons the Association backs up their protest against development applications which, if approved, will cost our heritage suburb dearly.

Committee members and helpers all deserve praise for the effort they put into keeping the Association active and alive and I continue to enjoy my Saturday afternoon voluntary attendance at Our House.

I hope you all remain inspired to renew your membership and encourage others to visit the Watch House and join too!

Ann Bastok

Book Launch

To commemorate the bicentenary of the death of Dr William Balmain you are invited to attend the launch of Peter Reynold's book, William Balmain and John Gilchrist, Family and Property, at Clontarf Cottage, Wallace St, Balmain at 2pm Saturday 6 December

For catering purposes acceptances are desired. Phone 9810 5185

If you are unable to attend the book can be purchased for \$35 inc postage, GST.

*A Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year*

Your Garden

Timely Tasks

Here is a roundup of timely tasks. Check camellia for scale and use white oil for control. Sow seed of primula malacoides and p. abconica to make excellent winter/spring pot plants.

Keep dead-heading roses to extend their flowering period. Jet hose aphids off new buds.

Climbing roses that have finished flowering should be pruned now. Take lateral branches back to two or three strong eyes. Old canes and dead wood should be cut out from the base. Plant out green plants struck from cuttings of dahlia. Leaves



as well as roots need watering. Spray heat resisting shrubs and trees with a fine mist in early morning or late evening when the day is hot and windy.

Prepare your garden for the hot months by spreading a layer of mulch over garden beds to keep roots cool and to conserve moisture. You can use a mixture of decomposed leaf litter, compost, decayed animal manure, peat moss and straw. Mulching helps reduce weed growth. If you go on holiday at Christmas time, have a friend or neighbour water your garden at least once a week, more often if possible if you have a lot of plants in pots as they dry out so quickly in the heat.

Bonnie Davidson

What's On

Watch House Exhibitions

- **Each Saturday in December & January 11.30am - 3pm**
- **Balmain Federation Quilt containing over 200 patches designed by school children and families.**
- **Sub-division maps and photos of personalities relating to street names.**
- **Illuminated Addresses from our archives**
- **Jennifer Lavender Art works 7-8 Feb**
- **Katherine Longhurst Artworks 14-15 Feb**

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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 7.00pm 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 :vhamey@tpg.com.au.
Our Web site:
www.balmainassociation.homestead.com

Annual subscriptions:
Household \$20, Concession \$10
Organisations \$30.

A fond farewell for Sam

BY TIM LESTER

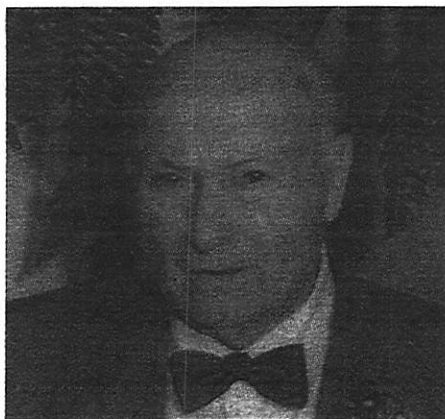
SAVERIO Aliperti, known to many as "Sam", and to many more as "Ralph's Dad", died last month at the age of 83. For over 30 years he served pancetta, prosciutto and a myriad of cheeses to the customers of Balmain's renowned Ralph's Delicatessen.

Sam settled in Australia in 1956, after already experiencing an extraordinary life in Italy.

After getting married to Elisabetta in 1939, Mussolini conscripted Sam and sent him to the Libyan desert.

He was then promptly captured by Australian troops before being interned in a POW camp in South Africa until after the war's end in 1945. On his return to Naples he discovered a war-torn Italy and his wife suggested migration to Australia.

Firstly, he worked for the Sydney Water Board before setting up the family business of Ralph's Deli in 1972. In the 1970s, Sam found himself unable to open the new



An extraordinary life ... Saverio Aliperti electronic till. Frustrated, he wrenched it open with a crobar and it remains helplessly ajar to this day!

The world may, for the moment, seem a darker place for Ralph and his family but we should never forget the light cast on Darling Street by our own Saverio Aliperti.

A loyal friend and honest family man

BY JOHN FORD

SAVERIO ('Sam') Aliperti the Balmain shopkeeper turned many hundreds of his customers into friends in the 31 years he owned the deli.

He decided to open a 'true' Continental deli with his wife Elisabetta and son Ralph in April 1972.

The family began to stock imported cheeses, sausages, olives (virtually unknown in Australia until then) and other European 'deli foods', and in time became the first 'proper' deli in the street. Today, it is the only full deli there.

Over the next 31 years, Sam Aliperti welcomed people as customers and turned them into friends.

All his thousands of customers through the years came to know him as a cheerful shopkeeper, fond of a joke and always keen to help them choose the food they really wanted - and if he didn't have it, he would get it in for them.

Son Ralph, and daughters-in-law Frances and Mirella, gradually took over the main burden of running the business in later years, but Sam made a point of still sitting behind the counter, occasionally serving, and greeting customers, and the family has decided to keep the chair there as a permanent reminder of a young man who came to Balmain and left his honest and cheerful mark on the community.

The funeral service booklet said of Sam: 'Honesty was his ideal, his work of life, his family, his love.'



Peking Terrace Restaurant

BYO

Spacious Open Dining Area

Footpath project of the council has just been completed, so our restaurant can provide a spacious open dining area for you. It's big enough to cater for a party of up to 20 people.

OPEN 6 DAYS

LUNCH

Tues-Sun 12pm-3pm

DINNER

Tues, Wed, Thurs & Sun

6pm-10.30pm

Fri-Sat

6pm-11.30pm