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newsletter of the Balmain Association

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Callan Park

Dangers averted locally but threat remains

by Hall Greenland

Callan Park has once again been in the state government's sights but thankfully its plans have misfired.

Without any public warning the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Bill, introduced into parliament at the beginning of November, included a section stripping away vital protections in the Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002 and opening up the site to privatisation and commercialisation.

The Friends of Callan Park, local MP Jamie Parker and the Inner West Council quickly responded with thousands signing a petition, hundreds emailing Rob Stokes, the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, and nearly 200 local households exhibiting 'Hands off Callan Park' corflutes. The Friends letterboxed 15,000 leaflets explaining what the mooted changes would mean and both the

local MP and the Mayor Rochelle Porteous held Zoom meetings for concerned residents.

The result was that the state

Kirkbride, Broughton Hall and the Convalescent Cottages. Now the site is reserved for community and not-for-profit uses with some scope

for commercial arts and culture events. Council will remain the consent authority.

The recent battle has been something of a surprise as the current Planning Minister has committed \$14 million to upgrading the foreshore areas of Callan Park as the first instalment on the Landscape Structure Plan that aims to demolish some of the worst buildings from the 1950s and '60s to open up the parklands.

Unfortunately, the rest of the Bill remains intact and it is a dangerous piece of legislation.



Jacaranda and war memorial, pic by Frazer Hunt

government backed down and agreed to amendments moved by Jamie Parker that restored the protections and barred privatisation.

The Bill had proposed commercial leases of up to 50 years for

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Open again

The magnificently repaired Dawn Fraser Baths are finally open for us to enjoy.

Thank you and congratulations to our Councillors, Inner West Council and community campaigners. We are very lucky to have such a fabulous recreation community heritage place in our restored to this level in these times of little regard for the old and anything non-profitable in monetary terms.

As reported previously there has been a compromise in that in rebuilding the southern pavilion it was decided it was necessary to raise it by one metre.

This was done but without raising the central tower so, for the observant, some integrity has been lost. This has also meant that the Swimming and Water Polo Club's Archive room has a raised floor but not a raised roof.

The archival material was retrieved from storage in the Balmain Library but we have yet to arrange display with a much reduced wall area. We have 'lost' our special cabinets in the process.

Hopefully we can gain some grant funds to assist us in restoring our archives display so we can share and celebrate the history of the oldest Swimming and Water Polo Club in Australia.

The work resulted in the upper timber lattice being replaced with metal lattice, something I would certainly objected to had I been aware. I doubt, however, that the metal lattice will be obvious to many.

There is also now an accessible change room but with the raising of the deck access to the water itself is more difficult for the physically challenged. I hope this will be addressed in the near future as well as the access from the park down to the Baths. The work on this was included in the Masterplan but has not yet been done.

Sadly, the upper level of the northern pavilion has now been closed to the public due to 'safety' concerns. This pavilion was restored nearly 30 years ago now, with recycling of all possible timbers, so much of the timber is now 100 years old. Work on this pavilion will need be the basis of a future campaign. The struggle to retain our built heritage is never ending.

Despite these minor negatives, it is time for us to celebrate this wonderful special place and even if you don't wish to swim, go down and see what has been achieved and enjoy the magic!

by Carolyn Allen

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Covid 19 update

Please note that art exhibitions and other events mentioned in this newsletter will be subject to any Covid 19 restrictions that may apply at the time.

Callan Park

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The Greater Sydney Parklands agency is at present a government agency inside the Department of Planning and charged with management of Centennial and Moore Parks, Parramatta Park, Western Sydney Parklands, Fernhill Estate and Callan Park.

The Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Bill seeks to make the Trust into a corporate entity which will raise revenue from the parklands under its management. As a corporation it will have all the usual powers to make contracts, subcontract its functions, outsource and so on.

Under the Bill, community input is limited to advisory committees called 'community trust boards' whose members are chosen by the Trust and can be dismissed by the Trust without any requirement to give reasons. A framework for these community bodies will be published in the next 12 months for public comment. Not that anyone should hold out much hope that this public input will have much effect if recent experience is any guide. A number of local Councils complained that they were not informed of this Bill and appealed for an extension of the regulation 28 days to make a submission. They were refused point-blank.

Despite the board of the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust being dominated by his allies from the finance, legal and development sectors, the Minister retains reserve powers that will enable him or her to intervene on almost any matter to do with our parks.

Opposition to this Bill, which has now gone to the Upper House, is being coordinated by the Alliance for Public Parklands which includes resident groups concerned about

the fate of each of the parks controlled by the GSP Trust.

The Alliance is proposing an alternative model to the centralised and overly commercial model that the Bill proposes. This alternative would be a federated model based on Trusts for each of the iconic parks and including strong and accountable local representatives

February on current expectations. This will give local residents, Councils and environmental and heritage organisations a chance to have a real say in the form that future management of our iconic parks takes.

Finally, the inquiry will give the western suburbs a forum to make their case for a better management



as well as experts in environmental planning and park management. It is a model advocated by the late Tom Uren who advocated such a structure when the Parramatta Park Trust was set up and encountered pressures for commercialisation and privatisation of that park.

The Upper House has referred the Bill off to a public inquiry which will convene at the end of

of Parramatta Park, the Western Sydney Parklands and Fernhill Estate at Mulgoa. To date the focus has been on Callan Park and Centennial Park but the changes in the Bill threaten the parks in the west as much, if not more, than the inner-city ones.

Hall Greenland is president of Friends of Callan Park

berthed at PEACOCK POINT

by Duncan MacAuslan

This would have been the case if the Sydney Harbour Trust had completed its plans.

The Sydney Harbour Trust (SHT) was formed on 1 November 1900 as a direct result of the bubonic plague outbreak which, in January that year, had killed over 100 people in inner Sydney. To prevent further outbreaks the SHT acquired all the run-down and rat-infested private wharves around the harbour. Many of them, mainly around Darling Harbour, were demolished and the land cleared.

The SHT was also responsible for planning for the rapid expansion of the port and by 1913 it began to construct a 30.5m wide roadway around the coast from Millers Point to Darling Harbour, today's Hickson Road. This supported the 16.8 kilometres of wharves already built and would support the 3.66 kilometres under construction. There were 91 berths in Darling Harbour, but it was not enough for the rapidly growing trade to the port. Ships were loaded and unloaded manually, there was no containerisation, or bulk goods handling and ships were in port over a week.

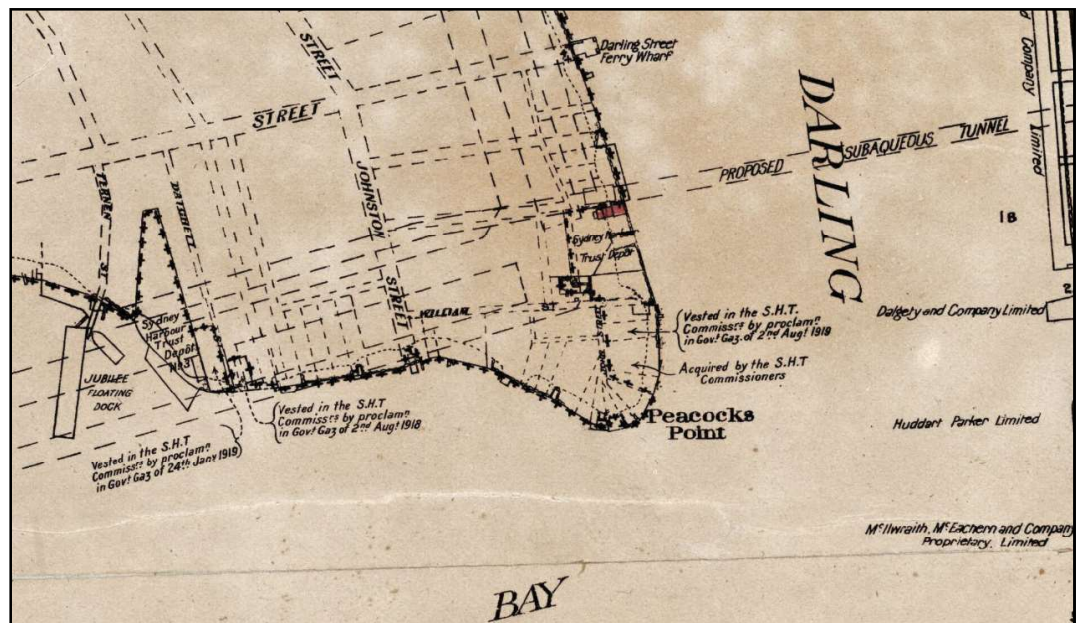
They planned to extend the wharves to Johnstons, Blackwattle and Rozelle Bays providing another 12.8 kilometres of

wharves capable of berthing 71,183 metre long ships.

By 1914 the SHT had set itself a goal of an unbroken run of wharves from Darling Island to Peacocks Point.

In 1915 it requested the Government to resume the foreshores of these bays which were described as 'natural

Simmonds Point. Peacocks Point was to disappear along with most properties around the foreshore. Ferries would no longer be needed as they proposed a tunnel from the city to what is now the cliff face behind the Water Police depot. This work was expected to be constructed between 1943 and 1948. Balmain's residents were not



Map of part of the water frontage of the Port of Sydney showing parts of the land and wharfage vested in the Sydney Harbour Trust Commissioners. H. D. Walsh, Engineer in chief, S. E. Perdriau, Chief Surveyor, 1919, NLA object 542676776

docks'. By 1917 the southern shore of Rozelle Bay was being transformed into a specialised timber handling facility. The SHT's work was strongly supported by the Government and by 1921 plans were published showing wharves along the north side of White Bay.

As seen in the map it had acquired several properties around Peacocks Point. The dashed lines indicate the planned roadway and berths that continued around to

considered. The peninsula was to be turned over to commercial requirements as had happened in Pyrmont and Ultimo.

World War 2, changes in shipping practice and the development of ports at Newcastle, Port Kembla and Botany Bay meant the work was never finished. The wharves in White Bay reached the west side of Cameron Cove where they stopped.

Missing you Papa Joe

After a three day flight from Rome, Giuseppe Panetta arrived in Sydney in 1964.

Jobs were scarce in his home town in Calabria for a 16 year old and, as a trained barber, he hoped to find work in Sydney, make some money and return to Italy.

However, things did not work out well for Giuseppe, particularly as he did not speak any English.

Fortunately his father and brother-in-law operated a fruit shop in Balmain and now calling himself Joe, he started working in the shop on the corner of Darling Street and Stephen Street.

At the time Balmain was essentially working class with many men working on the wharves and in factories. There was also an influx of Italian and Greek migrants, such as Joe, starting up fruit and grocery businesses.

In 1968 Joe had saved enough money to return to Calabria to visit his remaining family. In his own words, within three months back in Italy he met, proposed to and married his lovely wife Maria, who accompanied him back to Balmain.

By 1969 Joe's cousin Roy had arrived and thus began a long partnership. For many years the shop was called 'Joe and Roy's'.

With Maria's help they expanded the shop into a bright delicatessen and supermarket.

Now with three daughters, Luisa, Romina and Loredana, Maria managed to cook Italian takeaway meals, including her own Pasta Maria.

Joe retired due to ill health so



Joe and Maria's daughter, Luisa, stepped in and became an integral part of the shop introducing some types of produce.

The sale of fresh flowers was also introduced and to walk, or drive past and see the wonderful display of fresh flowers with bees buzzing around is a joy to behold.

So now after a remarkable 57 years mostly working 12 hour days for seven days a week, Joe has finished up at the age of 74 and can now enjoy his family and free time.

When I initially posted a photo of Joe, Maria and Luisa with their retirement news on Facebook the response from the Balmain public was astounding and showed the esteem and fondness the community held for the Panettas.

There were 441 reactions and 109 comments. Here is just a sample.

'Oh no, how will we cope without Luisa's smiles, Maria's cooking and Joe's wry comments about everything?' Lisa Noonan

'A beautiful family who always had, a friendly chat, fresh pasta and those cauliflower fritters.'

Amanda Durham

'I always admired them for shutting down over the Christmas holidays. They deserved it for all the long hours worked.'

John W Drew.

'A beautiful shop. Arrivederci Joe, Maria and Luisa.'

Richard Bastian

Now being run by new owner Chris Montel, Papa Joe's will no doubt continue to offer the same excellent service to the Balmain peninsula for many years to come.

by Jennifer M. Burton

What's on at the Watch House

Please check the Balmain Association website www.balmainassociation.org.au for up-to-date information on art exhibitions.

Art of Sorts

Saturday, March 5 and Sunday 6 from 10am to 4pm.

Art of Sorts is an open community arts group set up by the Inner West Council in 2017.

It is supported by the Inner West Council through the provision of facilities at the Jimmy Little Community Centre in Lilyfield.

It allows the participants to explore their artistic abilities in a range of mediums such as watercolour, acrylics and oils.

Art of Sorts aims to allow a group of amateur artists to work in a mutually supportive and relaxed self paced environment to improve their skills, be more creative and to contribute back to the community.

It is supported by the Inner West Council through the provision of facilities at the Jimmy Little Community Centre in Lilyfield.

We're amateur artists working in a range of mediums such as watercolour, acrylics and oils. In a mutually supportive and relaxed self-paced environment we improve our skills, and contribute back to the community.



Our Beautiful World

Opens: Friday, February 11, 2022 from 5pm to 8pm.

All welcome.

Saturday 12 and Sunday 13 from 10am to 7pm.

For further details refer to *The Peninsula Observer*, September 2021.

From Easels with Love

Opens: Friday, February 25, 2022 from 6pm to 8pm.

All welcome.

Saturday 26 and Sunday 27

from 10am to 4pm.

See BA website for more details.

The Magic of Mosaic and Art

Saturday, March 12 and Sunday 13 from 10am to 4pm.

For further details refer to *The Peninsula Observer*, June 2021.

Sculptural Horizons

Meet the artists: Saturday, March 19, 2022 from 2pm to 4pm. All welcome.

Friday 18, Saturday 19 and Sunday 20, 10am to 4pm.

For further details see

The Peninsula Observer, June 2021.

Journeys

Meet the artists: Saturday April 2 at 12pm. All welcome.

Friday 1, Saturday 2, Sunday 3 and Saturday 9 from 10am to 4pm and Sunday 10 from 10am to 3pm.

For further details see

The Peninsula Observer, June 2021.

What's on at the Watch House



Autunno

Opens: Friday, March 25, 2022 from 6pm to 8pm. All welcome.

Saturday 26 and Sunday 27, 10am to 4pm.

Autunno is a collaborative exhibition of work by Janice Ralph, Janet Cheetham (both painters) and Elisabeth Thilo (sculptor).

Although every season has its unique charms, autumn is a sustained colour explosion and a season for the soul, that is reflected in the works of the artists.

In Italy, a place much loved for travel by all three artists, it is also season for harvest and celebrations.

The exhibition is aimed at celebrating the beauty and fragility of our local environment and more broadly of the human connection to nature.

Both Janice and Janet's art is about colour, the vibrancy and intensity and the emotions they evoke. Their works are inspired by their travels, from the many moods and spirituality of the Australian outback, the intricate plays of light of the coastline and to as far away as exotic markets in India.

With their travel wings clipped in recent times, other paintings included are from their more immediate surrounds but encapsulate the joy of colour, life and seasonal change.

To complement their paintings, Elisabeth's sculptures are concentrated on her passion for nature, its beauty and humanity's impact on it.

The Balmain Association Inc. representing Balmain, Birchgrove and Rozelle

Since 1965 we aimed 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.

Members are welcome to attend the Balmain Association meetings at 6pm on the first Wednesday of each month at the Watch House, 179 Darling Street Balmain.

The History Room at the Watch House is open every Saturday from 11:30am to 3pm and every Tuesday from 11am to 1pm.

Website: www.balmainassociation.org.au

Postal: PO Box 57 Balmain 2041

Material from this newsletter is not to be reproduced without acknowledgement.



Balmain Association Christmas Party 2021

December 18 between 4pm and 6pm

Enjoy a drink and a chat with other
members while perusing the
latest offerings.

Feel free to bring a friend or two.

Balmain Watch House
179 Darling Street, Balmain