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MOSMAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER - October 2016

Our last speaker meeting was on 14th September when Pam Clifford talked about **Northbridge: Building a New Suburb**, also the title of her 2014 book. Northbridge received its name in 1913 from a picturesque sandstone bridge but its history is much more than that. There were many amusing anecdotes in Pam's stories of Northbridge and the rivalry with Mosman. Were the roars from lions in Sir Edward Hallstrom's private zoo really just cows?

The AGM was held, reports presented and committee re-elected unchanged for another 12 months.

We proudly report that one of your committee members, Phillipa Morris, has just been awarded a Royal Australian Historical Society Certificate of Achievement.

NEXT SPEAKER MEETING
Wednesday 9th November at 7pm
Downstairs at Mosman Library

Unfortunately, Guy Cooper, former Director and Chief Executive and currently Executive Patron of the Foundation of Taronga Zoo, can no longer be our presenter because of a clash with The 2016 Mosman Address, also commemorative of the centenary of the zoo at Taronga, officially opened on 7th October 1916. Guy has instead been invited to speak to us in 2017.

However, we have organized a mixed bag of special treats starting with a screening of the short film **Celebrate Mosman – Then and Now**. This will be followed by 3 short illustrated talks on 3 of the landmarks featured in **Lost Mosman**, presented by the authors of those articles.

The website www.lostmosman.com is a MHS initiative and a treasure trove of information about some of Mosman's fine and interesting constructions, now demolished. The most recent additions to the website are *Footbridge, Mosman Bay* and *Bangoola, 16 Parriwi Road*.

This is also our last speaker meeting of the year so be prepared to linger afterwards for a **glass of wine, Christmas fruit cake** and other festive goodies as well as the usual tea and coffee. See attached flyer.

HISTORY AND SNAGS
Daylight saving evening walk and BBQ
Wednesday 16th November, 5.30pm

History and Snags at Allan Border Oval and Nearby will go for about an hour before John Dansie's famous sausage sizzle. Bring your own drinks and picnic if desired. Meeting place is outside the steps to the council chambers. See attached flyer.

Local Studies at MOSMAN LIBRARY

Leahys' Real Estate is only the latest addition to **Mosman Faces**, the library's history of Mosman in film. It joins several other films of interviews with Mosman identities. For instance, MHS member, Robert Bagnall, about his lifetime living at Balmoral and the importance of The Balmoral Beach Club to him in childhood and now. Numerous old photographs are included. See <http://www.mosmanfaces.net/> or downstairs at the library with guidance.

ST MATTEWS ANGLICAN CHURCH, WINDSOR Bicentenary 11th October 2017

The bicentenary of an existing building is a rarity in Australia. Donna Newton, RAHS Librarian, has written about the drama which led to Francis Greenway designing this church whose foundation stone was laid by Governor Lachlan Macquarie on the evening of Saturday 11 October 1817 (RAHS E-Newsletter Oct 2016). This is an excerpt:

Macquarie deposited a 'Holey Dollar' coin under this sandstone cornerstone in the southern wall of the building and pronounced 'God prosper St Matthew's Church' before gently striking the stone three times with a mason's mallet. This coin was stolen that evening and the procedure repeated two days later by the Rev. Robert Cartwright and once again stolen several nights later. The theory of the time being that an indigent convict employed by the Public works may have helped themselves, the culprit never found.

On 4 Apr 1817, Governor Lachlan Macquarie issued a Government Order that a new church be constructed at Windsor on the already consecrated public burial ground site. Tenders for building contractors were advertised in the Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser through August 1816 from Captain John Gill, Acting-engineer of the 46th Regiment. The contract, worth £2200 was awarded to architect and builder, Henry Kitchen. After lengthy delays, Macquarie sent Greenway to investigate: the building was found to be inferior, demolished and Kitchen sacked and paid only a fraction of his contract. After a redesigning of plans, Greenway directed the rebuilding of the church himself, carried out by a team of bricklayers, masons and carpenters.'

NORTHERN NURSERY SCHOOL - Wyong Road

An 80th birthday celebration will be held on Sunday 23rd October and memorabilia is sought. Contact Jessica Keen on 0404 024 474 or jessicakeen@tpg.com.au

BALMORAL.....What might have been

In its history, Balmoral has had its fair share of unsympathetic additions, and over the years other controversial plans have been put forward for the area. Most were rejected by Council after objections from residents, but Balmoral would be very different today had these gone ahead.

In August 1926 a syndicate presented a proposal to Mosman Council to construct a pier at Balmoral Beach. It was planned to run in a northerly direction from Rocky Point (The Island), to the northern point of Edwards Beach. A description in *The Sun* on 2/9/26 stated that "the structure would provide a dance hall, restaurant, four shops, a bandstand, bathing accommodation, ferry wharf, and landing stage for small launches, ... and protection against wind and weather. A rust-proof steel shark net would be provided to enclose a bathing pool", which would feature pontoons, rest islands, a diving tower and water shoots. Letters of protest soon flooded the Sydney press, and public meetings held by the Balmoral Progress Association argued that such a structure would be detrimental to their beautiful suburb. Existing businesses would suffer, swimmers would no longer have free access to the beach, and the syndicate would create a monopoly over all beach amusements.

Mosman Council appointed a special committee to investigate the proposal. The representatives of the syndicate were interviewed, the plans reviewed, and the committee ultimately recommended that permission for the project be refused. The application for a pier was rejected.

The next threat occurred in the 1930s. Since 1908 Mosman Council had used the swampy area we now know as Balmoral Oval as the local rubbish tip. By the 1920s the nearby population had grown and the area was popular with visitors arriving by tram and car. The over-flowing, foul smelling tip was an embarrassment. A solution was sought in the form of a garbage incinerator. For some years various sites in Mosman had been suggested – near Bardwell Road, at The Spit – but were rejected as being too close to housing. In December 1933 Mosman Council requested that the Minister for Lands approve a site near the old septic tanks at the southern end of Balmoral, by then used as Cavill's Baths – this site was furthest away from houses and not visible from any part of Mosman. Needless to say, residents objected, and in February 1934 the Minister rejected this site as it was on Commonwealth property. The Government also considered it unsuitable for an incinerator due to the difficulty of access for garbage trucks, and felt that the foreshore should instead be reserved for recreational purposes. Eventually, after much negotiation, agreement was reached between Mosman and Warringah Shire for a joint use incinerator just within Warringah, at Balgowlah, which was opened in December 1936. The Balmoral tip was closed and an incinerator averted.

By 1946 World War II was over and business was getting back to normal. A company named the Sydney

Harbour Enterprises Pty Ltd made applications to build harbourside resorts at Balmoral and Rose Bay, aimed at the overseas tourist market. A site on the corner of The Esplanade and Raglan Street was chosen, with plans for an eight storey luxury hotel catering for 150 guests, at a cost of £200,000. Balmoral residents strongly opposed the idea, preferring instead that the land be resumed for a park, calling for a plebiscite to decide the issue. The plan was eventually vetoed by the Minister for Building Materials, who refused a permit for such a venture. Building materials were in short supply after the war, and until housing shortages had been addressed, hotels and guest houses would have to wait.

In the meantime the Mosman Communist Party branch campaigned instead for a Community Hotel on the site. This concept had been introduced in recent amendments to the liquor laws, these hotels to be controlled by a responsible authority such as the council, with the profits to be used for community purposes. The idea did not take off in NSW and few were built, and neither the tourist or community hotel eventuated at Balmoral.

Forward to 1959, by which time Mosman was allowing the erection of home unit blocks in certain areas, but with a 3-storey height limit. Builder Civil & Civic nevertheless lodged a development application for a site on the corner of The Esplanade and Botanic Road, to build a 15-storey block of 111 units. Eventually they planned a series of such blocks across the hillside, claiming that Balmoral should move with the times and support a denser population. Mosman Council fortunately was more concerned about preserving the beauty and character of the area for residents and visitors. Upholding its building code, the Council withheld approval, and a challenge by the builder to the Land and Valuation Court failed. Instead, several 3-storey unit blocks were built on the site.

Yet again Balmoral had escaped an unfitting addition to its landscape. How different things could have been!

By P. Morris

SMH, 25/8/1926, p.17; 16/9/1926, p.10; 13/12/1933, p.14; 14/2/1934, p.18
The Sun, 2/9/1926, p. 14; 30/6/1946, p.8
Barrier Daily Truth, 31/6/1947, p.1
Tribune, 2/8/1946, p.3,
Souter, Gavin, Mosman; a history, p.210;p.269



The Sun, 31 August 1931, p.1.