

the peninsula Observer

newsletter of the Balmain Association

Vol. 58 No. 2 Issue 366

Founded November 1965

June 2023

Where there's smoke ...

by Malcolm Garder



The new shopfront at 285 Darling Street, Balmain (original style shopfront seen to left)

Pic: Malcolm Garder

A new tobacco shop opposite Woolworths in Balmain has prompted concern among Balmain Association members due to the shop's change of usage.

Enquiries at Inner West Council made by a Balmain Association committee member revealed the original heritage shop front and use of the building had recently changed despite there being no record on Council's DA register for a change of use or approval for

demolition and alterations to the building.

The building prior to the recent demolition had a traditional shop front and entry door to the street. The property now opens directly to the street and is secured by a boundary-to-boundary industrial style roller door.

The shop's prior use was children's clothing when it operated as a Bonds store. The present use is children's sweets and lollies, cigarettes and tobacco lines including vaping products.

The shop seems to have been designed to attract children with packets of sweets and lollies at the entrance and sweet soft drinks sold next to the tobacco and vapes. The vapes are displayed in cabinets in a variety of brightly coloured packaging, sizes and shapes with alluring names such as "Cocaine".

The matter was brought to the attention of Council on the September 19, 2022.

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Glasshouse reopens



The photo above is of Balmain Association members in front of the Balmain Glasshouse that is now named in honour of Kathleen Hamey who fought for many years to preserve and renovate this historic item adjacent to the Town Hall.

In 1977 the Leichhardt Council were planning to replace the Glasshouse with a carpark. That proposal was defeated but it took another 26 years of protest and complaining to Council to have the Glasshouse renovated.

At the forefront of this struggle was Kathleen, never once flinching in her determination to see the Glasshouse restored.

Ross MacKenzie

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In November 2022 it was confirmed that there had been no development application lodged and action would be taken. The change of use, however, did not appear to be an issue.

Further inquiries with Council's Heritage Planner elevated the matter and we were advised that a notice for the restoration of the heritage shop front had been lodged.

Council notice expired on March 20, 2023, having apparently been ignored.

Council's Compliance Team has recently advised us that the Tobacco shop owner has now lodged a Building Certificate presumably to get approval for works already done.

It is disappointing that the NSW Health Department and Police seem to be lagging way behind public concerns and comments on this matter.

It would be interesting to know how members of the Balmain Association feel about the action taken by the committee on this matter. Please send any feedback to info@balmainassociation.org.au.

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

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Balmain Rozelle Food and Art Festival

by Diana Garder



The Balmain Rozelle Festival

hosted by the Balmain Rozelle Chamber of Commerce and supported by the Inner West Council opened on April 20 at the

White Bay Beer Co in Mansfield Street, Rozelle.

The Committee of the Balmain Association was invited to attend the opening and a number of us took the opportunity to visit this venue and enjoy the hospitality of the Chamber of Commerce.

There was a good crowd who all enjoyed the chance to taste some of the extensive beer list, all brewed on site. And wine was available for non-beer drinkers!

A grazing table, laden with antipasto, all types of cheese, meats, salads followed by a choice of pizzas cooked in the pizza oven

on site, was the centrepiece of the night.

Inner West mayor, Cr Darcy Byrne opened the Festival and there were a number of councillors there including John Stamolis and Kobi Shetty, the recently elected Member for Balmain.

It was good to have an opportunity to chat with these two councillors. We also met Team Darling, Annelie and Belinda, who are the driving force behind the magazine, *Darling*.

The Festival was celebrating local art and music at different venues. On Saturday, April 22 at Loyalty Square there a number of bands (some Oompah bands!) playing at different times and some buskers.

Jazz in the Park, always a favourite, was held in Gladstone Park on Saturday, April 29 but unfortunately the weather wasn't kind so the numbers were down on previous years.

Industrial vandalism

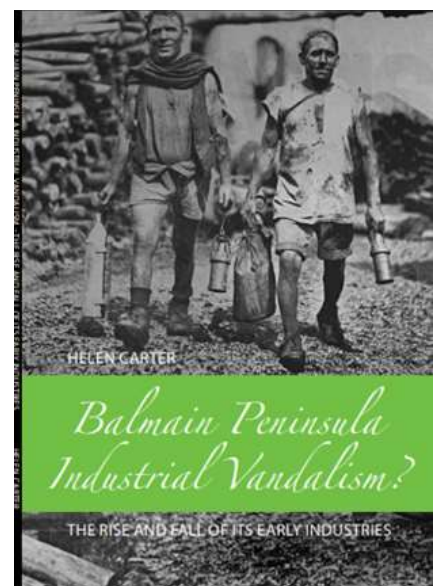
by Helen Carter

This 140 page publication by Helen Carter, *Balmain Peninsula Industrial Vandalism?* chronicles the rise and fall of early industries on the Balmain Peninsula.

The book will be launched by the Inner West Council at 6pm on July 19 Meeting Room, Balmain Town Hall. It is a comprehensive work of research covering docks, sawmills, sheds, warehouses, factories, power stations, gas works and a coal mine.

The book features 68 industries from two phases of industrialisation and includes stories about their owners, the workers and what happened to these industries.

The publication is a companion to *Death by Demolition*, published 2022 by the author. A copy of *Industrial Vandalism* will be available for purchase on the night (\$50) or it can be ordered on the Balmain Association website. www.balmainassociation.org.au.



Rozelle MURDERS

by Duncan MacAuslan

I originally planned to write about Kedrick's Rozelle maternity hospital but gave up after my Trove search proved fruitless. I was, however, intrigued by the number of entries relating to murders in Rozelle in the early years of the 20th century. While not as deadly as television's *Midsomer*, there were, nevertheless, some interesting cases.

In October 1915, Thomas Carrington Tansley was charged with shooting his brother Herbert Leslie Tansley and Isaac Martin. The shooting occurred at the railway deviation works near the White Bay Hotel. Martin was not an intended target and Tansley expressed regret for shooting him.

Tansley's shooting spree had started that morning when he shot his sister Lillian in the eye at their Marrickville home. The shootings were inspired by a family feud that had left Tansley believing he had been wronged. Both Herbert and Isaac suffered injuries but survived. Tansley was charged with, and found guilty of, intent to murder his sister and was sentenced to

death in March 1916.

Edward Keen was charged with the murder of John Moran, a fisherman, in Red Lion Street in December 1919. Despite being shot in the chest, Moran refused to give police any information about his assailant.

Moran had been drinking in a local hotel, probably the Red Lion

reduced to manslaughter at Keen's bail appearance in January 1920 and he was granted bail. At the hearing in March that year Keen was found not guilty.

In bed on the evening of May 8, 1926 William Lochfyne Parker, a labourer living in Goodsir Street complained of severe stomach pain. Agnes Davies, who lived with



Red Lion Hotel, early 20th century

and after closing he and a few others went to a house in Red Lion Street to carry on drinking. He claimed that as he left they "got him". Keen, in a statement to police, said he was with his landlady in the house when Moran and others arrived to demand drinks and were ordered out. His landlady was assaulted and Keen fired his revolver in self-defence and in an attempt to stop the fracas but his bullets hit Moran. The charge was

him, gave him some castor oil and within minutes Parker died.

A bottle containing strychnine was found in the bedclothes. A coroner's inquest on 20 May found that Parker committed suicide due to financial worries. After certain information reached the police, however, Davies was charged with wilful murder and the Coroner's verdict was overturned in the following September.

At her trial Davies said she and

Parker and their two children had lived together for seven years during which time he had treated her brutally. She had left him but had returned at Parker's request for her to come back and accompanied by a promise to treat her decently. According to Davies, Parker once more began to ill-treat her. The jury found she had acted under great provocation and found her guilty of manslaughter but the judge said her crime had to be severely punished and sentenced her to seven years in prison.

In October 1926 the Coroner was investigating the death of Ellen Egan, also known as Helen Butler, of Mullens Street, Rozelle. Ellen and her husband Thomas Butler were admitted to Balmain Hospital on September 16 with their throats slit.

Helen died that evening but Thomas survived and was later charged with her murder. Harriet

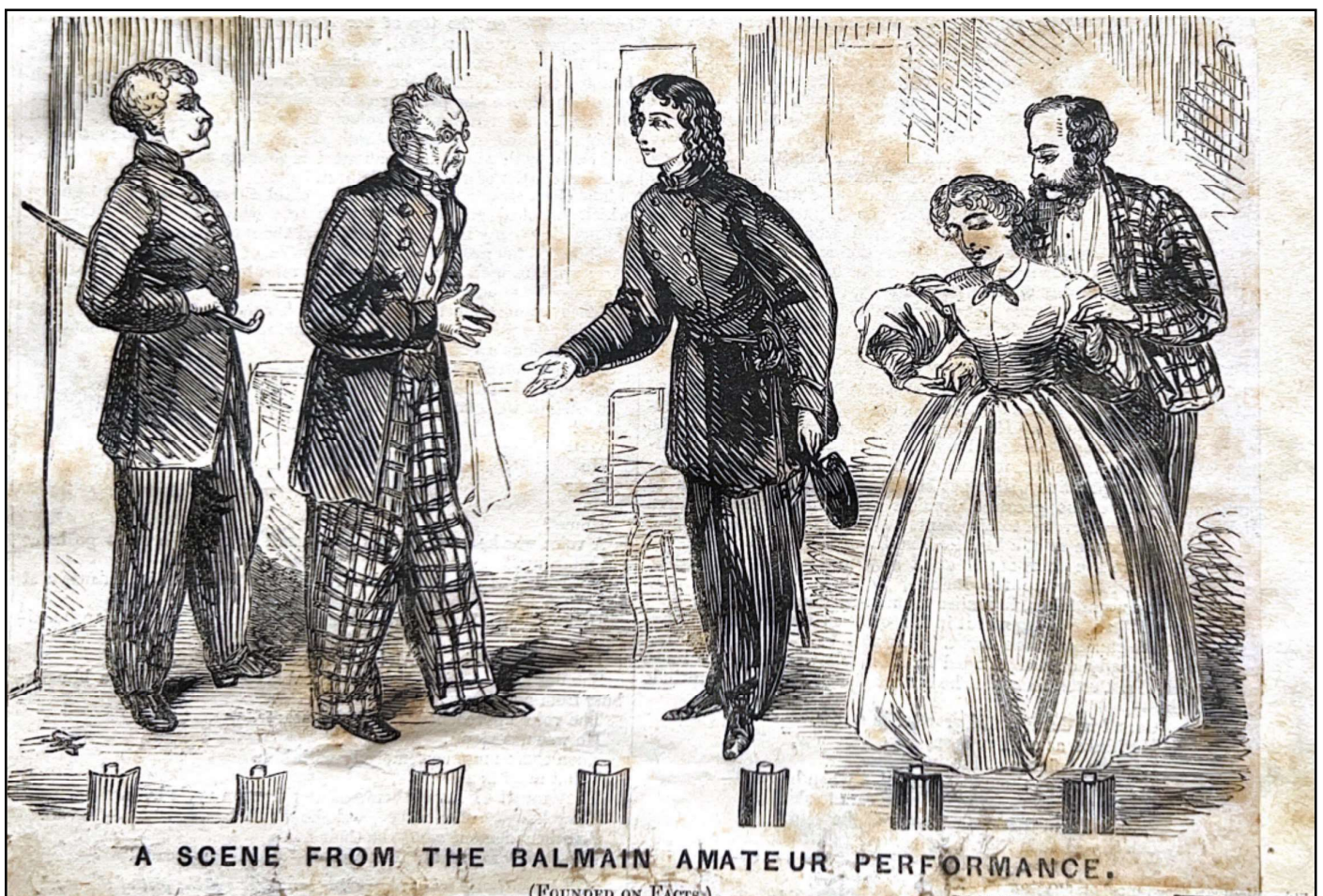
Rowe, their neighbour, gave evidence saying she heard Thomas forbid Ellen to go out on a Sunday night. She then heard Ellen running down her front steps crying out "Oh Rowie, Rowie, look what he's done. He has cut me throat." Rowe claimed "I don't know anything about it. I have been drinking since Friday". Butler was found guilty and sentenced to death.

Religious mania was blamed when Martha McNeill, of Bruce Street, cut her nine year old son's throat, early on September 22, 1928. Brandishing her husband's razor, she had woken him causing him to cry "oh mummy, don't, please don't" before inflicting a shocking gash to her son's throat. Her husband and other son struggled with her but it was too late and John staggered into the street where he collapsed and died.

A former inmate at Gladesville Asylum, Martha had been restless

and troubled the night before the incident. After her arrest she was asked by the police why she performed such a terrible deed and she responded: "God wanted him, and Jesus wanted him, and he is better with them than here". The Coroner's verdict was that John McNeil was killed by his mother while she was insane.

There were many more incidences of violence in the suburb including armed robberies and street fights. What fascinated me was the availability of pistols, the poverty of the families and the preponderance of alcohol related assaults. For many the good old days were not great.



What's on at the Watch House

Over to you

Opens Friday, June 23 from 7pm

Continues Saturday 24 and Sunday 25, 10am to 6pm.

Richard Sercombe returns to the Watch House with a new exhibition and works at reduced prices largely in mixed media and watercolour, in a wide variety of differently sized works.

His 'florally inspired works' continue to feature.

Please come along any time over the weekend to view the exhibition and join us for a wine or soft drink and light refreshments.



... where the hART is

Saturday, July 8, 10am to 4.30 pm.

Sunday 9th July 10am to 4pm.

Drinks with the artists Saturday 12 pm to 4pm.

'... where the hART is' is the 26th annual exhibition from Balmain hART stART art studio at the Watch House.

Audiences will be treated with expressive artworks, rich in exploration of colour and texture.

This exhibition is for people who enjoy paintings in modernist styles with strong emphasis on individual expression.

The hART stART studio, running for 26 years in Balmain, practises the hART stART method encouraging mindfulness, personal growth and sincere friendships that flourish between members.

Through modernist methods, all members work in a confident, personal style in an atmosphere of warm and friendly support.

hART stART studio meets for evening classes on Tuesdays in a designated art studio, just a few minutes walk from the Balmain Watch House.

To enquire, phone Gary on 0410 639 819 or view the website at www.hartstartstudio.com.au.

Westerly

Saturday, July 15 and Sunday, July 16, 9am to 4pm

We are having a 'Meet the Artists' event instead of an opening on Sunday, 16 July from 2pm to 4pm. All welcome.

'Westerly' blows into Balmain to showcase the work of artists from the edges of the greater Sydney region. These artists have formed creative alliances through shared studio spaces, encouraging the development of exciting and diverse artwork that continues to gain momentum, reflecting the vibrant communities of the west.

The exhibiting artists represent different cultures and backgrounds, that is clearly evident in their differing aesthetics and interests, yet they have connected as a community with common ground through making art. Over several years they have gathered regularly to support each other's practice, providing feedback, motivation and encouragement. In this exhibition the group came together to deliver a full and dynamic collection of work across painting and sculpture.



Passion to Provenance

Opening night: Friday July 21, 6pm to 8pm, all welcome.

Saturday July 22 and Sunday, July 23, 10am to 4 pm.

The passion of the artists and the magic of mosaic and art is celebrated in this exhibition when mosaicists Gretel Perlstone, Deb Kane and Mollie Pegler combine with artists Fiona Barrett and Chris Beard to showcase their work.

The mosaic group of talented artists are delighted to be again exhibiting their latest works at the Balmain Watch House. Full of light and colour their works reflect the inspiration of each artist draws from the beauty of nature and the world around them.

Painters Fiona and Chris join the group again with a range of abstract and landscapes, watercolours and oils.



Scene in the neighbourhood

Opening night: Thursday July 27, 6pm to 8pm.

Friday, July 28 to Sunday, July 30, 10am to 4pm

From Sydney's distinctive urban neighbourhoods to domestic interiors, this exhibition brings together work from award winning Fangmin (Jack) Wu, local Balmain landscape artist Jane Sankey, and painter NG Malla, known for her 'house portraits'.

Fangmin's paintings – which span themes from the environment to social problems – have been acquired by public institutions including the Australian National Gallery, and have been selected for national and international exhibitions. Jane Sankey's work is coveted by collectors locally and around Australia. She is known for her intuitive approach to colour that enlivens her urban and natural landscapes.

NG Malla's work explores themes of home and neighbourhood. She has been a finalist in several art prizes, most recently the Lethbridge Landscape Prize 2023.

All three artists share a love for the intersections between architecture and the natural environment and their paintings, mixed media, and works on paper, engage with our relationships between people and place.



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.



Blend

Opens Friday, August 18, 6pm to 8pm. All welcome.

Saturday, August 19, 9am to 4pm.

Sunday, August 20, 9am to 4pm.

The Wet Paint Collective is a group of local women artists showcasing their latest work in their winter show, Blend. The paintings are as diverse as the artists themselves and include landscapes, abstractions, figurative works and more. This exhibition is the sixth of its kind for the collective. The title nods, of course, to the mixing of colours on a palette, the combining of different art styles into one show – and also the way each artist blends her art practice into a busy life.

Art Ability

Opening night: Friday, August 25, 6pm, all welcome.

Saturday, August 26 and Sunday, August 27.

Art Ability is an exhibition of works on paper in a variety of mediums by both current and former secondary students from the special/inclusive education unit at Sydney Secondary College, Blackwattle Bay Campus. This exhibition showcases the skills and talent of our students in the area of artmaking.

Themes explored include self-portraits, still-life and cityscapes as well as abstracts in 2D mediums including drawing, painting, mixed media, printmaking and collage.

Our students have thoroughly immersed themselves in the artmaking process and worked incredibly hard to produce an impressive collection of original and distinctive artworks. They are looking forward to showing their work in a real-world art context at the Balmain Watch House.

The artworks included in this exhibition will not be for sale, however visitors will have the opportunity to buy cards featuring all artworks. Proceeds from the sale of the cards will be used to fund further artmaking projects for students in our support unit.

