



the balmain association

FAMILY PICNIC

followed
by

MUSIC and MERRIMENT

SUNDAY
JULY
6th

--B.Y.O.
EVERYTHING

ELKINGTON
PARK
BANDSTAND

V.I.P. DATES

Jot them down now! (Or as some people would say: "Diarise them immediately" !)

Sunday July 6th Family Picnic, Music and Merriment at the Elkington Park Bandstand. 12.30 pm onwards. Come and meet other members.

Tuesday, July 8 - Balmain Association General Meeting. 8.00 p.m. Watch House, 179 Darling Street.

Wednesday, August 20 - Annual General Meeting. 7.45 p.m. Lower Meeting Room, Balmain Town Hall.

Thursday, Sept. 11. - Hear the Candidates Speak. Lower Meeting Room, Balmain Town Hall. 8.00 p.m.

Sunday, Sept. 28 - Balmain Garden Walk. Details later.

live music?

One of our members recently had occasion (actually several occasions) to ring Balmain Police re the extraordinary level of noise (music?) coming from a nearby pub.

The police were very sympathetic and helpful, but explained that it could be a while before they could call at the pub as their car was currently at another pub on similar business!

It seems then, and the police confirm this, that the problem is widespread on the peninsula. (Perhaps the idea is to drive us to drink?)

OBVIOUSLY IT IS TOTALLY UNREASONABLE THAT PEOPLE SHOULD BE DEPRIVED OF THE REASONABLE ENJOYMENT OF THEIR HOMES BY SUCH SONIC INVASIONS - DAY OR NIGHT !

Action is called for!

First let the Association know if you are affected -
Please tell us:

1. The pub.
2. When the sonic blasting occurs.
3. How far you live from the pub.
4. Any action you have already taken.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS. SEPT. 20.

Following our usual custom, the Association is inviting all the candidates for the Balmain and Rozelle Wards to speak at a public meeting to be held in the Ground Floor Meeting Room, Balmain Town Hall, at 8.00 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 11.

Come along and meet the candidates, find out what their policies are and ask your questions.

BALMAIN GARDEN CLUB

MAKE SOME COMPOST.



Small households sometimes feel that they do not have sufficient material to make compost, but it seems a pity to discard anything that could be used for the garden's betterment, increasingly surrounded as we are by synthetics, with less organic waste.

If you have a couple of handfuls daily of vegetable and fruit peelings, tea leaves or coffee grounds, dead flowers etc, these can be wrapped in damp newspaper. Dig small holes a few inches down in a vacant part of the garden. Sprinkle with sulphate of ammonia, and fowl manure is a good addition, before replacing the soil. If kept damp, all this will soon rot down.

It is not necessary to buy those very large, expensive compost bins. Probably a couple of ordinary plastic garbage bins with the bottoms cut out, would be big enough for small households.

Actually, if sufficient bare space is available in the back of the garden, that is the best. Select a sunny spot if possible. Mix thoroughly (do not keep in layers) anything suitable, like leaves, grass cuttings, old spent annuals, soft weeds with no seeds, vegetable and fruit scraps (not meat or fat), stale bread, old woollens such as cardigans, jumpers, felt hats, hessian bagging, sawdust in small quantities, with the addition of some sulphate of ammonia, thoroughly wetted and torn up newspapers and cardboard. (These last two may have to be soaked with water as they are difficult to wet in the compost heap.) Add some wood ash or lime, a few handfuls of general mixed fertiliser and a layer of poultry or cow manure. Thoroughly dampen the whole heap. (Not soggy).

Put a little soil on the top if it can be spared. Cover with black plastic to keep in the heat and keep out the rain. Turn over every few weeks, and make holes with a large stick in the pile to get air throughout.

All compost heaps seem to take longer to rot down than the text books say. (Slower in winter of course).

A very successful heap I once had was made from old woollen carpet discarded from a nearby house, with the jute underlay. After thoroughly dampening and slashing with a sharp knife, it was covered, and rotted completely in six months.

Better not added to compost heaps are: eucalyptus leaves, pine needles, camphor laurel leaves, wandering jew, perennial weeds such as onion weed and nut grass, rose leaves, large quantities of sawdust, nylon material and cotton (too slow rotting), and hard woody stems. The woody bits are better burnt and used as wood ash.

If the compost is to be used for camellias and azaleas, omit wood ash or lime.

One cannot use too much compost in the garden and for the best results, it is still necessary to use some mixed general fertiliser in addition. I know the organic purists will not agree with this, but no matter, I am just stating what has worked for me over many years. Certainly, if only mixed general fertiliser is used for years, with no compost or animal manures, the soil will become very depleted.



J. Murray.
BALMAIN GARDEN CLUB

Balmain Garden Walk. 28th September.

If you are willing to open your garden for public inspection, DO get in touch with the organisers of this Walk. You will have plenty of time to make the most of your garden and have the satisfaction of knowing that all moneys raised will go towards the maintenance of the Watch House.

Attendants at the houses on the day are also needed.

Ring in the evenings either Jessica Murray (827 1727) or Margaret Dobson (82 2774) and tell them how you can assist.

MOTOR MOWER WANTED

Our Watch House Warden would like to obtain free of charge or cheaply, a motor mower in working order. Such an implement is needed to reinforce the Warden in his battle with the marauding grass in the Watch House yard.

Can anyone help?

EMBARRASSMENT

We are embarrassed! Following our none too subtle appeal for "letters to the editor" in our last issue, we received one. And lost it!

Apologies to Mr Fricke, our correspondent, and thanks for strongly supporting our criticism of thoughtless and dangerous parking habits.



'EWENTON' IN FLAMES (The house is best seen from the end of Grafton St)
 Photograph by Max Hearne

'EWENTON' BURNS

"Ewenton's" tragic history of neglect and vandalism reached a climax on 17 May, 1980. The tranquillity of Jubilee Bay was disrupted by smoke, flames and fire engines when the old mansion caught fire. A fire tender pumped water from the Bay and extension ladders enabled fire hoses to pour high pressure water on to the flames.

The fire appears to have started in the 1850s section which was gutted and the roof partially destroyed. The 1872 wing, however, seems to have been saved by the prompt action of the local Brigade. Except for blackened walls and gaping roof, the outside of the building is not much different from the derelict house that we have known for the last fifteen years. The stone walls not only withstood the fire but also the force of the firemen's hoses.

The question in most people's minds is, "Can the building still be restored?" The short answer is, "Yes!"

Fortunately, Peter Cusick and Vincent de Lorenzo, students of the School of Architecture UNSW, had just completed a detailed "measure-up" of "Ewenton" as part of their studies. Their drawings, when completed, will be a very valuable resource for any future building work as well as a permanent record of the house's condition just before the fire.

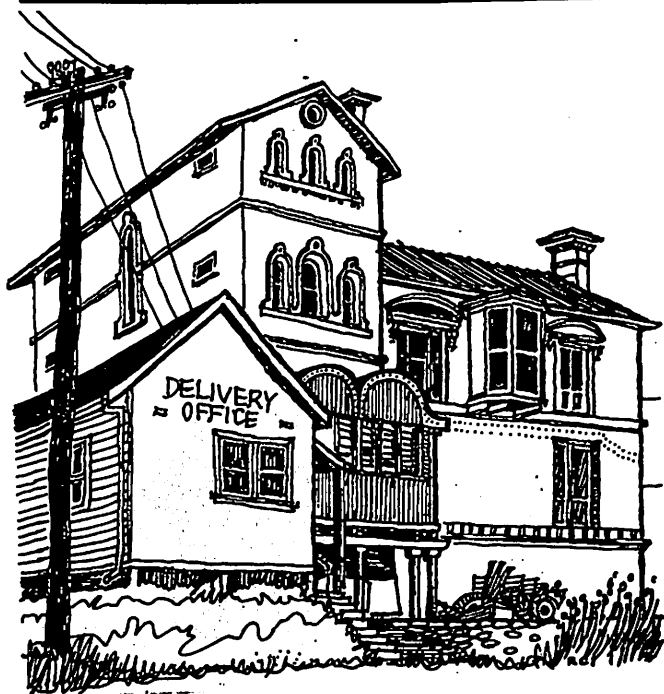
The interior of the 1850s section would have needed gutting anyway as the lath and plaster walls, ceilings and timber floors were badly rotted by years of neglect and weather damage from the leaking roof. The 1872 wing was in very good condition and still seems to be. The most significant factor in restoring "Ewenton" is that the stone work, great chimney and exterior detailing have survived the fire thus providing a wonderful starting point for a restoration project.

"Ewenton's" history has been documented in Leichhardt Historical Journal, No. 8 1979, and is featured in Balmain in Time.

DEVELOPER'S PROPOSAL: The new owner of the Dickson Primer site had planned to build town houses, dedicate a strip of waterfront land for public use and to repair "Ewenton" to a "lock-up" state. Negotiations with Leichhardt Council, for re-zoning from industrial to residential, have been underway for many months but no conclusion has been reached. The first move to repair "Ewenton" was scheduled for 17 April 1980, when it was intended to clean up the area around the house and cart away the tons of paper, rubble and junk which had been allowed to accumulate inside.

However, this work did not begin because resident action aroused the intervention of the Planning and Environment Commission.

P.E.C. INTERVENTION: The P.E.C. is considering the resumption of the site with the intention of handing it over to Leichhardt Council. The



EWENTON BEFORE THE FIRE
Robert Irving's drawing

Council could use this site for, perhaps, open space or low-cost housing, depending on Council policy at the time. The P.E.C. will be unable to restore "Ewenton" before the site is passed to Council.

It seems unlikely that Council will be able to grant money for restoration and their reputation for caring for historic buildings is highly suspect when we recall the fate of "Clontarf". However, a new Council or a different Council policy may give fresh hope for "Ewenton".

"Ewenton", stark and blackened, waits meanwhile for its fate to be decided.

Membership

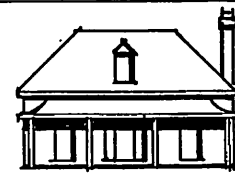
New Members: We are delighted to be able to welcome an encouraging number of new members. Of course, the more the merrier, and stronger, we are.

Your Neighbours: Are all your neighbours Members? Why not ask? See the back page for an invitation to give them - extra copies available at Brays Books.

Change of Address:

Members in general and Newsletter Distributors in particular, are requested to please let us know when you change your address. Newsletters and subscription reminders are distributed according to the address appearing in our records.

Uncovering Our Past



100 YEARS OF BOWLING IN BALMAIN: 1880-1980.

Many times the question has been asked: "Which is the oldest surviving Bowling Club in N.S.W.? - Parramatta, City or Balmain?"

Specifying the oldest club really depends upon what is meant by the beginning of a bowling club. Is it the date of the first meeting or of the first match? What are the respective clubs' claims?

Following the tradition of the village pub greens in England, the first N.S.W. greens were laid alongside hotels as an attraction to customers. One of the earliest was at the "Woolpack Inn" in Parramatta Road, Petersham, in 1845. The "Boundary Stone Inn" at Surry Hills, in the same year, offered quoits, boxing and cock-fighting as well as the more dignified game of bowling. At Botany, in 1854, the "Sir Joseph Banks Hotel" provided its patrons with one of Sydney's earliest greens.

These entertainment-type greens were less important than the private greens laid by the well-to-do on their own estates for their leisure as well as social activities. Among these private greens was that of A.T. Holroyd, Master in Equity of the Supreme Court, who laid down fine facilities at his residence, "Sherwood Scrubs", in 1872.

The development of the game as a competitive sport stems from Holroyd's publishing the rules of the game in 1874.

In 1877 a green was laid in the Botanical Gardens around which a select body of politicians, public servants and leading citizens formed the Sydney Bowling Club. Forced out of their premises by

the erection of the Sydney Garden Palace in 1878, the Sydney Club moved to a new green near Railway Square, but by 1880 their resources had dwindled and the Club was disbanded.

Before the Sydney Club declined, Parramatta was a flourishing centre of bowling. Here, in 1868, the first real club grew from a Parramatta green at a hotel, also called the "Woolpack Inn". The popularity of the sport also led the regulars to form the Woolpack (or Parramatta) Bowling Club in 1870. By 1880 there were three rinks and the Club had a reputation for the most vigorous and skilful bowlers in the Colony. This Club closed in 1886.

It is through the efforts of one man that bowling became the game that it is today. John Young, a prominent Sydney builder and businessman, was not accepted by the exclusive Sydney Club and was de-

terminated to lay down a green where "any ordinary decent man could have a game within easy distance of the city".

At his famous Annandale estate, "Kentville", Young laid down his green in 1877. He made the green available to the Annandale Bowling Club on its formation in December, 1878. By 1880, the flourishing Annandale Club had 70 members and was the only active club in Sydney because the Sydney Club was dying out and the Parramatta Club was a long way out in the country.

John Young's promotion of bowling led to the first inter-colonial match, between Victoria and a local N.S.W. team, which was played at "Kentville" in April, 1880. The widespread publicity from Young's very successful activities caused the formation of other clubs in Sydney.

Almost simultaneously in 1880, Rose Hill, Balmain and a new City Bowling Club were formed.

Which of these three clubs is the oldest? Without doubt "Parramatta Bowling Club", founded in 1870, was the oldest but this Club closed in 1886 and is not the present Parramatta Club. Disregarding this disbanded Club, each of the three surviving historical clubs had two definite foundation events. Each had a first meeting where interested players gathered to propose a club and each organized a first match when the greens were ready to play.

On the basis of first meetings, the Rose Hill Club was the first past the post, with its meeting on 6 May, 1880. Four days later, The Balmain first meeting was held on 10 May, 1880. The City Club did not meet until 16 August, 1880.

Regarding first matches, however, the City Club played its opening game on 12 March, 1881. Balmain was close behind on 2 April, 1881. Rose Hill came in a bad last on 25 October, 1881. (Rose Hill took the name Parramatta Bowling Club in 1886 after the old Parramatta Club closed in 1886.)

Balmain seems to have been pipped at the post on both occasions.

Bowling in Balmain was founded by those who could afford the time to play the game and the money to buy the necessary equipment. The working man's six-day week of long grinding hours made time a luxury and the 1878 price of a pair of bowls at one guinea was well beyond his means. It was therefore the middle-class merchants and business and professional men who got the game of bowls underway in N.S.W. as well as in Balmain.

Wealthy wine and spirit merchant, Thomas Robert Allt, became the Balmain Club's inaugural president with Dr. O.S. Evans and H.S. Hawkins as vice-presidents. W.D. Cruikshank "overlooked the treasury department".

The Ewerton estate had just been subdivided, so in 1880 the Balmain Bowling Ground Company Limited bought land in Darling Street overlooking picturesque Waterview Bay. This land was once part of the garden of "Moorfield", Allt's own family



*Moorfield 6 Charles Street Balmain
First meeting place of the
Balmain Bowling Club in 1880*

home, where the first meeting to form the Club was held.

By August 1880 the levelling of the green was underway and construction was well advanced on a "handsome pavilion" which contained a bar, a spacious billiard room and shady verandah. Mr. Clayton of Petersham had contracted to complete the building for £700. With the addition of gas-lighting, the Clubhouse became "the favourite resort of an evening for the Balmainites".

The bowling green was 120 feet long and 65 feet broad, giving room for four rinks. When planted with shrubs it was "one of the finest in the Colony", despite its enclosure by a 9 feet high corrugated iron fence.

At the end of the first decade of its existence, the Club had expended some £5,000 upon improvements and the greens were often the venue for the inter-colonial matches. Contemporary press accounts refer to the Balmain greens as being "the finest lawns in Australia". They were tended with such care that they had the appearance "of being covered with a cloth rather the coarser texture which nature provides." Not even a worm was allowed to intrude upon such hallowed ground.

As well as these trim greens and the conviviality of the Clubhouse, the players enjoyed the well-laid out paths and gardens. As well as bowls and billiards, facilities were available for tennis, a skittle alley and quoits. Because the greens were close to the Darling Street and Stephens Street ferries, the city was only fifteen minutes away and membership numbers swelled.

The "very pretty view of the beautiful harbour" and the pleasant grounds made the spot a magnet for all desiring to play the game of bowls.

Indeed, the Balmain bowling ground was likened to that historical green on Plymouth Hoe where Drake bowled as the Armada attacked. In drawing a parallel to that occasion, a newspaper recorded in 1890 that were "the Russians to invade the waters of Port Jackson, there would be found coatless heroes in broadcloth and slippers to insist upon finishing a game before shouldering their rifles and throwing their souls into the fight as they had into the sport".

Peter Reynolds.

The main source for the above is Alan Roberts' definitive article "An Ancient Game in a New Land: Bowling and Society in N.S.W. to 1912", in the Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society, Vol. 65 part 2, September 1979. The Journal is available from the Society to non-members for \$3.50. I am grateful for Dr. Roberts' permission to extract portions of his article.

References to the Balmain Club's land purchases and stone retaining wall construction can be found in Leichhardt Historical Journal, No. 8, 1979, p.5, pp.22-23.

VALE HARRY HARPER.

The Association would like to thank Mr. H.C. Harper for his help during his years as Secretary of the Royal Australian Historical Society.

Harry retired earlier this year and his place has been taken by Mr. W.O.C. Roberts. We welcome Owen and wish him well in his new job.

COMMITTEE

After a difficult transition period, part expected and part not, the Committee has settled down.

Present at the last meeting were:

Peter Mc Ewen	(President)
Frances Stone	(Hon Secretary)
Jeanette Kitto	(Hon Treasurer)
Richard Norman	
John Engle	
Rita Wise	
Philip Bray	
Margaret Dobson	
Gladys Chanter	
Peter Reynolds	

The last three mentioned have been co-opted to the committee. They are all "old hands" and we welcome them back to activity with great pleasure.

A LOOK BACK

Items culled from the first 100 issues of our newsletter.

CHEMICAL STORAGE TANKS

The following is from our Feb. 1968 newsletter:

"Balmain is in a ferment over Leichhardt Municipal Council's decision to allow Swift & Co Limited to install liquid chemical bulk storage and handling depot in Balmain.

Balmain people have shown that they do not want dangerous chemicals stored in their suburb!!

Recent history has shown that accidents happen too frequently, despite reassurances from such agencies as the Mines Department that it couldn't happen here.

Leichhardt Council's decision to allow the application is a puzzle. Four aldermen spoke against the proposal (Ald. Origlass, Wyner, Lewis and Turner) and only one for it (Ald Casey) yet when the vote was taken there were seven votes for the application against six.

For their pains in speaking and voting against their colleagues, Ald Origlass and Wyner have since been expelled from the Labor Party."

Also from the Feb. 1968 Newsletter:

A FEW FIRSTS

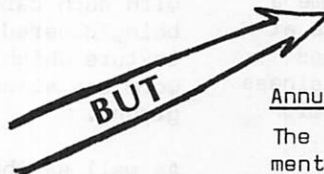
- * The first Balmain Council Meeting took place in 1861. The site is believed to be the loft of Capt. Rowntree's stone store.
- * The first Labor Party meeting took place in Balmain in 1891.
- * The first Roller Skating Rink in N.S.W. was established in the old School of Arts Building on the Dickson Primer site, Darling and Ewerton Streets, Balmain.

new blood needed

Annual General Meeting. 20th August, 1980.

The time is rapidly approaching when all Management Committee and Executive positions are declared vacant and new elections are conducted. You can now take an active part in the running of your Association by nominating for one of the positions of President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer or Management Committee member.

Remember, this is not an elitist group and new blood is always welcome to make the Association an active body of concerned residents.



POWER PLAY

It seems that the currently held and popular fears that White Bay Power Station is to be rekindled, are without foundation. Recently there has been much activity about the power station at White Bay, the coal dumps that used to service the power station are being resupplied, and there is activity in and about the mechanics of the station. The fears were that drain on the New South Wales Electricity grid brought about by the commission of aluminium smelters in the Hunter Valley would cause marginal power stations, like White Bay, to be brought into operation.

However, the Commission has informed us that the aluminium smelters in the Hunter Valley will not become operative until the end of the 1980s, and that in any event the size of White Bay would preclude it from consideration in any such eventuality.

The explanation for the activity around the White Bay Power Station is that every couple of years all power stations are refurbished and fired up to ensure that, should there be a malfunction in one of the large stations, that the marginal stations, like White Bay, can be brought into the system at short notice to provide emergency supply.

Pymont A Power Station is however, operating. It has been estimated that at full capacity this station would give out as much smog-causing nitrous oxides as 40,000 cars running continuously.

If the dust collectors at Pymont are 99% efficient, about 1.5 kg of fine dust is emitted every minute. If the collectors break down, then dense white clouds of fly-ash appear. Fly-ash contains poisonous and carcinogenic materials.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Certainly you should ring the State Pollution Control Commission (phone 212 3769) whenever Pymont gives out dense white smoke.

Why not also write to Premier Wran expressing concern about the effects of coal-fired power stations operating in the inner city area.

MEETINGS

COMMITTEE MEETINGS: All members are welcome to attend and contribute to discussion at committee meetings. They are held at The Watch House at 8.00 pm on the second Tuesday of each month.

HISTORY GROUP: All welcome. At The Watch House on the first Monday of each month. (Public holidays excluded).

TO COUNCIL

The Association has written to the Town Clerk of Leichhardt:

"I write to you in relation to a rumour circulating to the effect that the bandstand in Elkington Park is to be demolished.

Could you please inform me whether or not there is any substance to this rumour. If so, could you indicate the reasons behind Council's decision."

LOCAL CLUBS/GROUPS

PALMAIN THEATRE GROUP

The Balmain Theatre Group was formed in February, 1971 by members of The Balmain Association's Drama Group and other interested people.

Since then the Group has been one of the most active and highly praised amateur groups in Sydney. Among their many successful productions have been: "Arsenic and Old Lace", "Ten Little Niggers", "East Lynne", "A Man for All Seasons", "Coralie Lansdowne Says No", and "The Adventures of a Bear Called Paddington".

In addition to several productions each year, the Group holds workshops for those who wish to "learn the ropes".

New members are always welcome. If you would like to join, write to P.O. Box 37, Rozelle, 2039, or ring Richard Norman on 81 1797 (8.30 - 4.00).

EATING OUT

Harvest Restaurant, on the corner of Evans Street and Mansfield Street, Rozelle, offers gourmet vegetarian meals at budget prices.

The menu changes every week and offers soup, pate, choice of main courses and choice of desserts. B.Y.O.G. or stick to Harvest's fruit juices.

You could just about make a meal out of the soup, bread and pate if you're on a tight budget, but you will find it difficult not to be tempted by the sumptuous desserts and the superb combinations of flavours and textures in the main courses.

We have taken died-in-the-wool steak and chops people to Harvest and they have come away delighted and amazed. Recommended.

AN INVITATION....

TO JOIN THE BALMAIN ASSOCIATION

The Balmain-Rozelle peninsular is a very special place. Anyone who has lived here, whether all their life or just for a few months, knows that!

The Balmain Association was formed in 1965 because the Balmain we like so much was being threatened by almost uncontrolled flat development and obnoxious industrial development.

The Association has seven aims listed in its constitution. All of them are summed up in the first, "To improve the living, working and recreational amenity of Balmain."

WHY NOT JOIN?

You can help the Association, and the Balmain Peninsular, simply by joining. The more members we have, the more that Councils and Governments have to listen - and the more we can achieve.

Of course, should you wish to be not just a silent member, but to be an active member, that is even more welcome. You can be active by attending our social functions - the more people know each other the stronger our community becomes! Or, you could join one of our committees, deliver newsletters and generally be involved in the nitty gritty of running the Association. The choice is almost entirely yours.

WHY NOT JOIN NOW?

Simply fill in the form below and drop it in to
Brays Books at 268 Darling Street, Balmain or
post to: The Hon. Secretary,
The Balmain Association,
P.O. Box 57,
Balmain. 2041.

membership form

I/WE wish to open/renew my/our membership
with The Balmain Association and enclose
\$ * subscription.

Name:.....

Address:.....

.....

Telephone:.....

*Current Annual Subscription Rates Are:

Single	\$ 3.00
Family or Household:	\$ 5.00
Pensioner (per household):	\$ 1.00
Student:	\$ 1.00
Organisation:	\$10.00

(The above rates include the newsletter,
hand-delivered in Balmain and Rozelle.
For delivery by post, please add \$2.00 to
the annual rate).