



NEWS SHEET

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PO BOX 57 BALMAIN 2041

the balmain association

FOUNDED 1965

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The Leichhardt Council has a collection of interesting photographs which it has saved from the neglect of earlier times. Some of the people in the photographs are unnamed, and would possibly be known to their descendents in the municipality. Would you like to see them?

The Balmain Association is planning an open day at the Watch House to coincide with National Heritage Week. The date is Saturday April 14th.

On this occasion, we will provide drinks and cheese and biscuits for a small fee, and give visitors a tour of the Watch House. The council has offered to lend as many photographs and pictures as we choose to display.

We expect this to be a pleasant day of social intercourse and exchange of information.

Distribution of Newsletters.

Our thanks to Jenny Porter for her long and conscientious service as the distribution organiser. She is now enjoying a trip overseas, and Tim Davis has taken on the job.

If you have time, approximately once a month, to help to deliver the Newsletters, please contact Tim Davis on 810 6033.

Bigger and Better.

The Glebe Society's secretary, Edwina Doe suggests an exchange of information with the Balmain Association and the Annandale Society (secretary, Ruth Rafferty) and that we also contact other such organisations in the municipality - to share our coming events and co-operate more closely. We welcome the approach with enthusiasm, and will soon be able to publish news from the other societies.

Reminiscences.

David Liddle has been preparing a book of photographs showing people of Balmain (what makes this area 'tick'), and on 24th January, he collected six past presidents of the Balmain Association - John Power, Bill Haesler, David Porter, Peter Reynolds, Margaret Dobson and Bob Irving to be photographed at the Watch House.

The adjournment session in the London pub was an exciting meeting for the current president (who got into the act) and the place was alive with talk of old issues.

I, personally, liked the account of 200 people meeting in the Balmain Town Hall to discuss the painting of park benches and other little issues as well as big issues such as Morts Bay container terminal.

Issues.

These are with us wherever we look, and the Leichhardt Council's Bi-centenary Committee is a well-represented collection of issue-makers, and organisations with ideas.

Within Balmain's interests are groups concerned with the unsightly telephone exchange; Morts Bay and the Balmain Power Station; where to launch small boats on our water ways (without using marinas) and maps of walks for all parts of the municipality.

We invite any groups to send representatives to our meetings where we may be able to give them a hearing, and perhaps the sort of support they are needing.

Frances Heathfield.
President

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HAWKESBURY SHIRE COUNCIL

in conjunction with
MACQUARIE TOWNS PRESERVATION SOCIETY
presents a two day Seminar addressing the topic

ADAPTATION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS TO NEW USES

to be held at
Windsor Community and Cultural Centre
Dight Street, Windsor

on
7 and 8 April, 1984

Further information on this seminar is available from the Watchhouse or Julia Brown at Hawkesbury Shire Council on (045) 77 4822.

NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD ON 7TH MARCH 1984 AT 7.30 P.M.

MORT'S DOCK

My father, the late Charles Robert McArthur Allt, who was born in Balmain in 1863, related to me the derivation of Mort's Dock as it is known today.

The dock was founded by my great-grandfather, the late Thomas McArthur and was originally known as Thomas McArthur & Co. - reference is made to this company in the John's Notable Australians 'Who is Who' in Australasia, 1908 edition under the name of Thomas R. Allt, who married Mr. Thomas McArthur's daughter Jane McArthur.

To enable the establishment of the company, a number of associates invested money in the dock, among those were Captain T.S. Rowntree, Captain James Neill Creer and his twin brother Mr. Patrick Creer, who was an engineer, also Captain W.J. Johnstone, Captain Trouton. In later years Thomas Sutcliffe Mort invested money in the dock, enabling an expansion of the dock. Mr. McArthur then took Mr. Mort into partnership and the dock was then named McArthur & Mort. Tragedy befell Mr. McArthur when he drank water from the roof of the dock which contained lead-oxide, killing him at the age of 49 years.

Even in those early years Mr. McArthur had plans for a bridge to be built over the Harbour. No known date was ever recorded of when the dock was built, but it was thought to be before 1830.

Mr. McArthur died intestate; and upon his death, Mr. Mort divided his share among the employees of the dock. Mr. Thomas R. Allt maintained that Mr. Thomas McArthur was one of the most brilliant engineers ever to come to Australia.

After Mr. McArthur's death, Mr. Thomas S. Mort renamed the dock MORT'S DOCK.

THOMAS ROBERT ALLT

Thomas Robert Allt was born in Greenwich (Eng.) in 1837 and came to Australia as a young man twenty years later. He was a very prominent citizen in Balmain and resided at "Minevia", situated on Ballast Point, and fronted by big iron gates. It later became a boarding house, but now the site of this old homestead is occupied by Caltex Oil Refinery. Mr. Harold Fraser, the well-known actor who was born in Balmain, remembers the home and told me it was a tragedy that the National Trust did not preserve it. Miss Enid Deloitte, whose family were also associated with Balmain, told me she had stayed in the big old home "Minevia".

Mr. Allt, whilst living in Balmain, set up business as a Wine & Spirit Merchant, having his first office in 1856 in premises opposite the old burial ground. With the advance of time that portion of Sydney changed and the old burial ground passed away, upon its site being the now fine Town Hall which is such an ornament to the city. From George Street Mr. Allt moved to York Street and then to Pitt Street. Mr. Allt was the first person to introduce Wolff's Schnapps into Australia.

Mr. Allt owned a considerable amount of property in Balmain and was a very keen bowler and formed the Balmain Bowling Club.

After leaving Balmain Mr. Allt moved to "Brundah" in Enfield, when he entered the shipping business, thus forming the North Coast Shipping Company. Mr. Allt formed the Strathfield Bowling Club and was playing up to the Saturday before his death.

"Brundah" is now Leigh College, a training college for Methodist Ministers.

This information has been submitted by MADELINE ALLT, the grand-daughter of Thomas Robert Allt and the great grand-daughter of Thomas McArthur.

Further references to Thomas R. Allt may be found in "Larrikin Days" by Tony Stephens and Annette O'Neill, on pages 11 and 21.

BALMAIN THEATRE GROUP.

The Group (which originally was formed from the Association's Drama Group in 1971) has just had notice to leave the old R.S.L. Hall by 31st March 1984, as the R.S.L. Sub Branch has decided to use the Hall for a Youth Club.

It will be a shame to see the Group (Balmain's major Amateur Theatre Group) wind up or move out of the Balmain area.

They are appealing for anyone who can help find a space that they can use as a Theatre and space that can be used for storage.

Please contact RICHARD NORMAN (Tel: 569 3277 Work) if you have any ideas.

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A MEMBER'S "BLEAT" FOR HELP!

Bob Nicholls has acquired - via Santa Claus - a cast iron doorstep in the image of a merino sheep. At the moment it is painted a dingy off-white.

Can any member assist with an authentic colour scheme (he has seen a cow in the same series, painted black and white with yellow horns, standing on green grass) for this antique-ish artifact?

Please call 810-7391 if you can assist.

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NOTICE to the PUBLIC and MEMBERS:

It is proposed to change the OPEN DAY at the WATCH HOUSE from Sunday to SATURDAY from the first SATURDAY in MAY 1984, namely 5th May.

JOIN the balmain association

meaning BALMAIN BIRCHGROVE ROZELLE

OUR AIMS ARE TO:

- * improve the living working and recreational amenity of our area
- * maintain all features having natural architectural and/or historical value
- * compile and record the history of the area/ keep a permanent collection of items of historical interest
- * seek the co-operation of everyone concerned in the realization of the above



the balmain association

MEMBERSHIP FORM(OPEN/RENEW)

PO BOX 57 BALMAIN 2041

NAME:

ADDRESS:

TELEPHONE: (HOME) (WORK)

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION (including News Sheet delivery in Balmain Birchgrove Rozelle)

Single	\$ 4.00
Family or Household	\$ 6.00
Pensioner or Student	\$ 1.00
Organization	\$12.00

Add \$3.00 to above rates to have News Sheet posted. Cheques made payable to "The Balmain Association".