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MAY, 1987

NEWS SHEET 160

PO BOX 57 BALMAIN 2041

the balmain association

FOUNDED 1965

It's Entirely up to You

Thoughtful readers of our most recent news letter will recall that we wrote to the Minister of Local Government after we found out that the Leichhardt Council had applied to her for permission to abolish the Wards in our Municipality. This would do away with the present practice whereby each Ward elects their own Aldermen to serve on our Council.

The Minister recently replied. A precis follows.



NEW SOUTH WALES

MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Dear Mr Bull,

"...Recently, the Municipal Council submitted a proposal for the abolition of the Wards of the Municipality. The proposal accords with the Government's guidelines and so, in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act the prescribed notice of the proposal was published in the Government Gazette today with a notice to be published in the local press in the near future.

"This notification will give an indication of public reaction to the proposal. Any representations for or against the proposal must be lodged with me by 11/5/87 in accordance with the provisions in the notice.

Yours sincerely,

JANICE CROSIO "

True to her word, the notice was published in the 8 April edition of the GLEBE. Here it is.

MANAGER

SELF MOTIVATION

You have the capabilities to change your life. I have the knowledge and experience to show you.

Call now M.T. 536

Notice of a proposal to abolish the Wards of the Municipality of Leichhardt was published in the Government Gazette on 3rd April, 1987.

Written representations with regard to the proposal may be made to the Minister for Local Government by the Leichhardt Municipal Council or any elector of the Municipality. Any such representations must be made to the Minister by 11th May, 1987.

JANICE CROSIO
Minister for Local Government

ATTENTION

Susan blonde 23 year old, I'd like to hear from you, please write again. P.O. Box 2045, Haberfield 2045.

damaged dolls, teddy bears, cameras, scientific instruments, WAR souvenirs, badges, uniforms etc. OBLIGATION FREE OF offers.

FOSSICKERS ANTIQUES

519-6280 or 331-119

COLOUR AND VIDEO RECOPI

Working or not take a

CONTACT TEL: JB ENNORS NEWTOWN.

516-119

ALL USEFUL FINDS

You will be forgiven, however, if it escaped your attention, as it appeared on page 53, buried in the small ads, surrounded by a self-motivation announcement, a request for information about a motor accident, an ad for used TVs and a plea for blonde, 23-year old Susan to write to a P.O.Box in Haberfield.

If you feel that doing away with your local Alderperson is a good thing - or otherwise - we're sure the Minister is waiting to hear from you. The 11th May isn't all that far off though, and we'd hate you to miss out on the opportunity through not having spotted the announcement.

Finally, Mrs Crosio's staff omitted the address of her office on her letterhead. Here it is;

37th Floor, Legal & General House,
8 - 18 Bent Street,
SYDNEY NSW 2000. Telephone: 221 3244.

EXHIBITIONS AT THE WATCH HOUSE

Our next exhibitor at the Watch house will be Richard Davey. He can perhaps best be described as a relatively "new" artist, as he started to exhibit only twelve months ago. However, at his first show, which was in Newtown, he sold 28 of his 35 paintings. He has since held shows in Carlton and Sefton. His style is varied and interesting and is characterised by the use of vivid colour. Best though, come and see for yourselves.

Richard's show will be on at the Watch house from Saturday 9 May to Sunday 17 May inclusive. Times: Saturdays 12 - 6, Sundays 1 - 5 Monday to Friday 5 - 8

We were very pleased with the success of our Heritage Week exhibit. Some of the photographs from the Association archives were on display for the first time; all of them created a great deal of interest in the viewers, as did the Schofield's more modern interpretations of the Watch House. We are very grateful to them and to Rosemary Francis-Skinner whose dolls house and collection of dolls drew vast admiration. We would also like to thank Izzie Weiner for providing opening remarks on the Friday night.

Thanks to the efforts of Norman Bull and Steve and Michelle South, the Charge Room and two cells now possess picture rails which make it much easier to hang exhibits. All exhibits profit, too, from being displayed against the new paintwork as well as from the improved lighting which has been installed.

NEXT MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION WILL BE ON WEDNESDAY 5TH MAY 1987, 7.30PM AT THE WATCH HOUSE 179 DARLING ST BALMAIN.

ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES

In the last news sheet we said that we were sending several of our members on an all expenses paid course so that they could learn about taking care of our archives. One of them, Kath Hamey, sent this progress report on how they are getting on spending our money.

"The aim of the workshop is to provide custodians of archival material with both theoretical and hands-on experience in its care.

"Our first demonstration was in the cleaning and repairing of a very tattered book page, using acid-free glue and mending tissue. A steady hand and nimble fingers were necessary here.

"We then tried removing adhesive tape from paper using a little eucalyptus oil, although the stain from the tape remained. The skill used in unfolding a tightly folded document was demonstrated and we were captivated by encapsulation - a method used to display photos, documents etc. contained in a non-toxic perspex envelope which is heat-sealed. Many of the photos in our archives, several of which were on display recently, would benefit from this method of preservation.

"In addition we used a microscope to examine the texture of different types of paper, ranging from repair tissue to newspaper.

"The first session of the workshop is highly recommended should you wish to preserve any family records"

There are two more sessions for Kath and her companions to go to, and we hope to be able to let you know how they get on with these as well.

The themes of the workshop: cleaning, repair and encapsulation of books, newspapers, photos and documents.

Bookings essential. Phone Helen Price. 697 2399



Yes, that's all very well, but where's the money coming from?

We thought you might be interested in a description of where your subscription goes. Now that we have changed the date of payment we are getting a better idea of our membership numbers and from those numbers the income that we can expect to receive from you for our operation during the year.

Taking everything into account, and at the end of the day and in the fullness of time as Sir Humphrey would say, your subscriptions only pay the costs of publishing this news sheet and cover the water and power bills for the Watch house. It also pays for the insurance on the place.

What your money doesn't pay for is the work of conservation of the building and its contents. We are continually on the look-out for grants which would enable us to make a start on the urgently needed work but hen's teeth are plentiful by comparison. While we battle with bureaucracy for grants we also rely on our own fund-raising activities to help us. These efforts fall into two main kinds - the use of the Watch house as an exhibition venue and selling our publications. An account of what our efforts achieved in this direction appears elsewhere in the news sheet.



...like here:

Item...At the Macquarie Street Fair, John Morris sold \$90 worth of books and pamphlets.

Item...At the Vintage Yacht Regatta, Kath Hamey did a roaring trade of \$120!

Item...Profits from the Heritage Week Exhibit were \$80 (and we enjoyed wine and cheese too!)

But in addition to fund raising, we need help. For example, now that we have learned about conservation methods, we need volunteers to encapsulate or mount our photographic collection, sort newspaper articles, and make boxes. Working parties are planned for Saturday afternoons, so if you would be interested, ring Debby Nicholls on 810-7391.

Can You Help?

The Ranfurly Library Service

- collecting books to combat illiteracy.

The following request for help has been received from the Balmain branch of Rotary.

The idea of collecting unwanted books and sending them to places where resources to buy books simply do not exist was a stroke of genius.

The Countess of Ranfurly established the service in Great Britain more than 30 years ago, after discovering the desperate shortage of books in the remote islands of the Bahamas, where Lord Ranfurly was Governor at the time. She wrote back to England appealing for books, and received a tremendous response. Volunteers sorted and packed books and sent them in batches of 200 to the islands -- and this is what the Ranfurly Library Service is doing 12 million books later!

The Australian unit of the Ranfurly Library Service was established at 14 Jane Street Balmain in June 1986 as a project of the Rotary Club of Sydney, to collect and distribute books to the South-West Pacific area and Papua New Guinea. In the first six months about 6500 books were sent to Fiji, Kiribatu, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Is., Thursday Is., Tuvalu and Western Samoa.

As in England, there has been a great response to the call for books -- indeed service has had to find extra storage space until some of them can be processed.

Now the most urgent need is for helpers to sort the books into categories and to stamp them prior to packing.

Any retired person, or anyone with time to spare and who likes to help others will surely find some satisfaction in spending a few hours with the Ranfurly Library Service, either occasionally or on a regular basis. It is not heavy work -- the lifting and carrying can be done by the more able-bodied and agile members of the community.

While it isn't a particularly glamorous activity it is probably more appreciated by the recipients than many grand and expensive development projects.

It is not difficult to imagine the effects of the recent cyclones in the Solomons, Cook Islands and Vanuatu on the local school libraries -- even if they had one anyway -- when we hear of whole schools being completely destroyed.

If you can help, please get in touch with the Secretary, John Willis, 810-2941, for more details

HISTORICAL QUESTIONS, ANSWERS & NOTES

Barbara Van Den Broek is seeking further information on 15 HAMPTON STREET, believed to have been built circa 1880 with possibly a stable at the back.

THE PATTEN/HARDIMAN FAMILIES IN BALMAIN AND
THE BELLAMY/DAWSON FAMILIES IN ROZELLE &
LEICHHARDT c 1876 -1910.

Jean McDonald of Canley Heights wants information about a Soccer Club called "NATIVE ROSES" which was active in Balmain around late 1890s and early 1900s. Her father, Henry James Patten (called Danko), played with this group and won a cap and tassle and a gold watch etc. Jean understands that there was a lot of soccer played at that time around the waterfront, but there do not appear to have been any records made re soccer in the early days.

THE LONGFIELDS & SIDEYS OF BALMAIN c 1850-1860s.

Mrs. Black of Belmont (News Sheet No: 159) has written again describing the Association's book 'Around Balmain' as "a gem and it has made me more determined than ever to find out where my early milies lived." Appreciative Mrs. Black has provided some additional information of her family history. Her great grandfather's second wife was Henrietta Van Hooganheyseur who, according to Mrs. Black's father's notes, was Lady in Waiting to the Queen of Holland and was in Brussels on the eve of the Battle of Waterloo.

Of John Longfield's six daughters and three sons: Elizabeth married Joseph Jeffcoat at St. Mary's in 1859, Grace married Elias Laycock, Mary married Dr. Belisario (Ford's Sydney 1851 shows a John Bellisario, surgeon dentist, 171 Elizabeth St. South); Margaret married Outram Anderson, and finally, Mrs. Belmont's grandmother, Patience, who married Robert Sidey. The Sidey's were great friends of the Morts and one son, Dick, worked at Morts Dock.

If you recognise any of these names or think you can help please contact the Balmain Association, P.O. Box 57, Balmain 2041.

THE BALMAIN GASWORKS

Following on from the last News Sheet:

The Gasworks was established in 1873 on land purchased from a Donald Brown, engineer and Alex Brown, shipwright. The company paid £250 for a site of two roods thirty six perches. The Gasworks was built by the Australian Gas Light Company in 1874, distributed gas for private use in 1875 and lit the streets for the Balmain Council from 1876. The works was situated on the north western shore of White Bay opposite Glebe Island and in the section of Mansfield Street between Smith and Rumsay Streets. From the map of the Municipality of Balmain (published by Higinbotham, Robinson & Harrison - 1883) can be seen the Company had by this time reclaimed part of the tidal mud flats that no longer exist.

This works was built because it was the cheapest way to take gas to Balmain with the technology available at that time. To take mains from the supply sent out from Darling Harbour would have cost considerably more than building a small works in the district itself. Planning for this works was begun by the Company's Engineer J.N. Wark who started a works at Bathurst in 1873 but the construction was carried out by his successor J.W. Fell who left the Company's services in 1875 to begin his own gas company on the North Shore.

Although no photographs of the Balmain gasworks are available it was quite small and undoubtedly resembled the works Fell built at Neutral Bay in 1876 and that constructed at Parramatta in 1881.

Balmain gasworks was closed in 1887 when mains from the Company's new manufacturing centre at Mortlake were completed. After that it seems that the site was used as a coke depot for some years. The gas company's street lighting contract was terminated on the 31st December 1911.

As for the employees who worked for AGL in the 19th century, regrettably no staff records remain from that time and although some workers are mentioned in the Board Minutes the few individuals who worked at Balmain were never discussed.

LIBRARY ACQUISITION

The Association book collection now contains a copy of the publication entitled "Captain Hovel - His Australian Years" produced by Rosemary Boyces of Albury. The link between this great explorer and Balmain is that one of Captain Hovell's grandchildren, Mrs. Sophia Wray, was born at 26 Darling Street. From this house she was married and subsequently died in the same home in 1956.

Mrs. Wray's father, Hovell's son, was a sea captain and a story was heard that .. an uncle (a sea captain) of a previous owner used to stay at 26 Darling Street when the ship was in port. While visiting he brought with him his shanghaied coloured workers who, for safe-keeping, were chained in the stair cupboard (which was approximately 2'6" wide). A slightly different version of the same story appears in Rosemary Boyces' publication.

When the house was renovated some years ago, the space under the floor boards revealed a surprising quantity of schnapps bottles, a belt buckle circa the turn of the century, a few pennies, a thimble and a tortoise-shell hair comb of the older variety. Albeit small, just the kind of treasure trove that anyone would be pleased to find. The writer had a similar but not so rewarding experience recently when a fireplace was given a thorough clean. From behind the fireplace came a quantity of old whisky bottles, a clay marble (before glass marbles became popular), an empty child's money box that had been opened with probably a tin-opener, old pill boxes & broken medicine bottles plus sundry pieces of ironwork of an indefinable nature. The basis for a social comment definitely!



Our friends at the Total Environment Centre, at the Rocks, have asked us to announce that The Song Company are putting on a concert with the proceeds going to the TEC. The concert is to be at

Pitt Street Uniting Church
at 8 pm Friday 15 May
1987.

This will be a super opportunity to hear these outstanding musicians in a beautiful setting.

Tickets, including supper and programme:

Phone: TEC 27 4714, 27 2523	\$18 full price
or	\$12 concession
660 3468, 357 1500	(students,
after hours	pensioners,
	unemployed)

My Fellow Members..

Oh, Really?

The new News Sheet editor says it's time that the readers had some 'words of wisdom' to ponder over. As far as most of you are concerned, you hear of us and our doings through our News Sheet. From the viewpoint of the management committee, the production of this modest effort on a monthly basis - or anything approaching a monthly basis - is a continual challenge. The procedure starts with a mad chase for items to go into the columns, goes into a writing and printing phase and ends when one of our volunteer distributors drops the current edition into your letter box. With any luck, the process is repeated about ten times a year too.

What the News Sheet means to people other than the committee members involved in its production is hard to determine as we receive very little feedback. For example, the questionnaire in last month's edition about Rotary's plans for historic plaques resulted in three responses.

* * *

The energies of the management committee and a small core of other active members are expended in day-to-day activities such as;

- keeping the watch house open
- publishing the News Sheet
- organising the hire of the watch house for art exhibitions - we need the money!
- answering historical queries
- attending other functions to sell our publications - see above for the reason!
- niggling at the authorities, and so on.

Perhaps we do our job so well and make it seem too easy, because committee members are frequently advised that in addition they should be;

- organising family picnic days
- organising deputations to government ministers
- protesting to developers
- organising street festivals
- ridding the area's footpaths of dog-poo.

And all on our own too, because those who propose our involvement in these worthy activities never seem to be able to spare the time to get involved themselves. Not, they often say, like it was in the 60s 'when the Association was really good.'

Oh for the same amount of commitment by those same members today as they tell us they used to be able to make.

But what, I hear the remainder of you say, does your Association do (or not as the case may be). A good question, and one that is best answered by reading this News Sheet. And that's why it was written and printed.



We had to hold over until the next edition.....

- * * A contributed article on a possible future use for Clontarf Cottage.
- * * An exciting proposal for adding to our photographic collection.
- * * Jessica Murray's Garden Tasks.
- * * Our day at the Show
- * * Mort Dock Reunion
- * * Vinegar Hill



Phil Schofield has recently joined the Association.

COMMUNITY NOTICE BOARD

For Sale: 3 old doors, in need of TLC before being fit for use. One is an Australian cedar interior 4-panel door, one an exterior 4-panel door ie. suitable as a front door and one is a 30s(?) style interior door. Sizes and prices too tedious to write down, so best you get in touch with keen vendor El Pres., Norman Bull, on 810-1611.



the balmain association
representing
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 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.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Return to: Treasurer, P.O. Box 57, Balmain 2041

NAME:

ADDRESS:

TELEPHONE: HOME:

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION (including News Sheet Delivery in Balmain-Birchgrove-Rozelle)

Please circle ... NEW MEMBER / RENEWAL

- Single/Family/Household \$ 8.00
- Organisation \$12.00
- Pensioner or Student \$ 1.00

Add \$5.00 to above rates to have News Sheet posted.
Cheques should be made payable to "The Balmain Association".