

PO BOX 57 BALMAIN 2041

NEWS SHEET

the balmain association

OCTOBER, 1987

165

FOUNDED 1965

INSIDE, THE MONORAIL PICTURE THEY DIDN'T WANT YOU TO SEE - EXCLUSIVE TO THE ASSOCIATION

My Fellow Members..

YOUR PRESIDENT CONTINUES...

Myths and exaggerations abound in Balmain - that it is full of basket-weavers, that it is a large area with an abundance of under-utilised parks and facilities, that the gentry have driven out the working class and that the current, trendy residents are responsible for Sydney's urban sprawl by appropriating Balmain and stopping the rest of the population from living here.

Balmainites don't mind a good joke at their expense, but they should baulk when such stereotyping and scapegoating distorts or prevents a rational and realistic discussion of sociological and urban issues.

By seeking and stating the facts, the Balmain Association can puncture harmful myths and facilitate constructive debate. To this end we ask members to send in to us any accurate information about demographic and historic change. For example, can you help with case histories of rental residents displaced in the past or currently under threat? What is the owner/occupier history of your property?

To show our sense of balance, we also request contributions to our Bicentennial Register of Basket-weavers. Our President confesses that, although she has lived here for fifteen years, she has yet to meet a basket-weaver or to understand why in popular demonology basket-weaving is notorious or sinister.

Jane Ward.

Notice.

THE DOCK RESTAURANT corner of Church and Cameron-streets, being now under entirely new Management, the Proprietor begs to notify his Friends and the Public generally that they can get a Good Square Meal at this House.

15s only for Board & Residence per Week.

W. MATTHEWS, Manger.

COUNCIL ELECTIONS

The Balmain Association congratulates Mayor Origlass. We look forward to establishing a harmonious relationship with the new Leichhardt Council.



BOOK FAIR

The Total Environment Centre's

CHRISTMAS BOOK FAIR

is on again from

Saturday 21 November

to

Thursday 24 December.

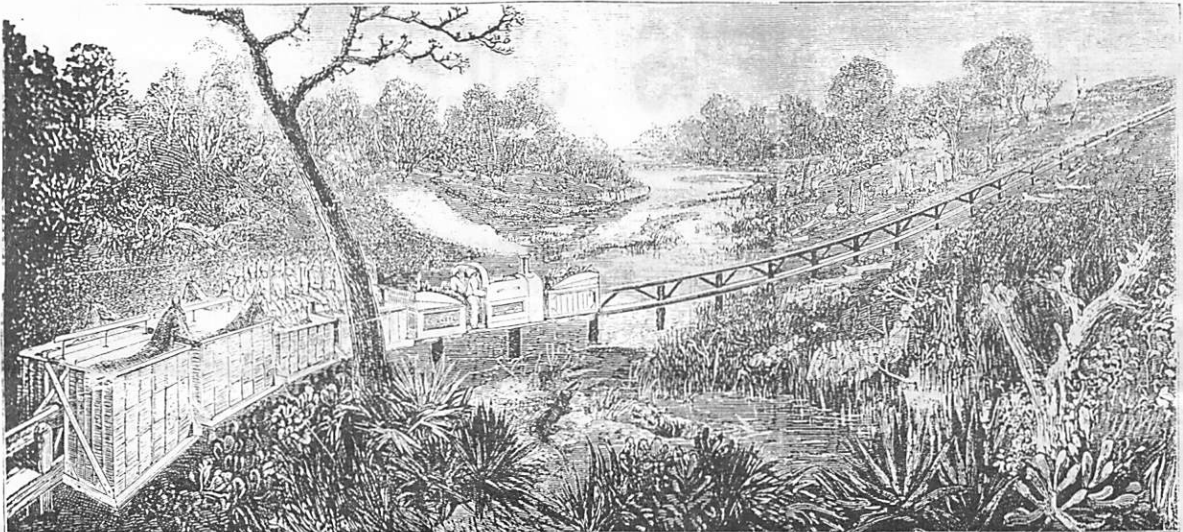
The TEC is on the third floor, The Argyle Centre, in the Rocks, and they are open on weekdays from 10.30 to 4.00 and weekends 1.00 to 5.00pm. Their phone number is 27 4714.

The Total Environment Centre is a voluntary organisation which relies on the generous support of friends and conservationists generally. The book fair is an important fund-raising event for some of their annual income.

On sale this year will be children's books on conservation and wildlife, posters and the Gould League's children's diary, all lovely Christmas gifts.

As well they will have their usual wide range of environment books on Australian flora & fauna, rainforests, wetlands, pollution and of course their 1987 calendars and wilderness diary.

NEXT ASSOCIATION MEETING - WEDNESDAY 4 NOVEMBER - THE WATCH HOUSE, 179 DARLING ST. 7.30 pm.



Shown here in dramatic detail are troops of the Marrackville Militia training in moonlight for their planned coup against Balmain and Rozelle and using the recently-extended monorail spur which runs across the bicentennial park at Rozelle Bay.

Remember, you saw it first in the Association's News Sheet.

ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES

From Watch House to Police Station

When Police Constables Stapleton and Hudson walked into the Watch House cells recently, their comment was that nothing has changed in their basic design. Even the thick stone walls, they said, were to be found within the Balmain Police Station.

We pressed for an invitation to see for ourselves, and eventually nine of us (including three children) spent an hour the following day examining cells, the dock, the fingerprinting section, the inner sanctum of the detectives and the various-purpose rooms upstairs and downstairs.

The cells did contain a mattress and blanket and there was a 'loo', but they were very grim and forbidding, while the exercise yard was just big enough for two games of hopscotch - the children provided the correct dimensions. Fortunately the cells were unoccupied: 'People die on Sundays' we were told in explanation.

Apart from finger-printing the children and showing us a gallery of photos of average-looking inoffensive citizens - 'all crooks', the police had a great deal to tell us about the district. Sergeant Warren Jeffers showed us a map of subdivisions under his care in which particular members of his force patrol regularly making themselves thoroughly familiar with the activities and special character of their sub-division. They hope that this familiarity will become reciprocal, and by encouraging Neighbourhood Watch and the Safe House schemes they are already active.

'Neighbourhood Watch is great because neighbours are now talking to each other, and having street parties,' said Sergeant Jeffers, reflecting his enthusiasm for community co-operation.

Our contact telephone number is: 810-7391
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We were shown a chart on which crimes committed each month are plotted over a mapped area. I was excited to see that my own car which had been stolen and subsequently recovered was correctly recorded. The chart shows that over a period of time patterns tend to form and this helps police to alert residents in a particular area to the likelihood of certain crimes occurring at particular times on specific areas.

In spite of the near-100 years that the 'modern' Police Station has stood in Balmain, with its manual typewriters, draughty rooms and overcrowded working areas it houses a very active organisation (for example there are 18 detectives). I could not help but contrast the sole police constable of 1854, called by a knock on the door at any hour and between times writing up his reports by kerosene lamp - no telephone, certainly no computer - and one wonders about the 'loo'.

Frances Heathfield



One of our members Nancy Jeffery, who lived in Short Street, died recently. She left her collection of paintings of Balmain to the Association. They are stored at the Watch House, where members are welcome to look at them.



HISTORICAL QUESTIONS, ANSWERS & NOTES

NOAH COLLIER

Mrs. Scott of Balmain is searching for information on a Noah Collier. Noah Collier was the third Postmaster in Balmain (1.9.1854) as mentioned in the recent Balmain Post Office Centenary leaflet, however the Post Office has been unable to provide any further information. Mrs. Scott is not sure whether this is the person for whom she is looking but has been unsuccessful in locating any other Noah Collier. Since all the family came from Balmain she feels that it may be the person they are looking for. Her brother intends to write a book regarding the family history, so perhaps you may be able to help solve the mystery?

DR. ROBERT ARCHIBALD WILSON

Information is sought on Dr. Robert Archibald Wilson, Honorary Consulting Medical Officer with the Balmain Hospital from 1890 until his death in 1914.

THE ROYAL OAK HOTEL

In "With Banner Unfurled - the early years of the Ship Painters and Dockers Union" by Issy Wyner there is a mention of a meeting on 31 January 1887 in Clifford's Hotel on the corner of Curtis Road and College Street. "(Clifford's Hotel was probably the forerunner of the present Royal Oak Hotel.)"

However another source states that it was called the Coates Family Hotel from about 1888-1900 after it opened about 1879. The name the Royal Oak was apparently acquired after Toth's bought it in 1900.

Can anyone supply any additional information as Mrs. Martin of Wollongong thinks it may have been the old family shop?

EXHIBITION BONUS

The recent exhibition of photographs of drawings and watercolours of Balmain by GEORGE PENKIVIL SLADE held on the 12th & 19th September proved highly successful. A special note of thanks to Phil Schofield who kindly did the mounting of the photographs.

As a result of the considerable interest generated, we are pleased to say that copies of the photographs will be available for sale by the Balmain Association. HOWEVER, as yet, we do not possess the negatives. Let us hope fervently that it will not be another three years before we receive them since they must come from overseas!

Notice of the arrival of the negatives will be given in a future News Sheet if you are interested in obtaining copies.

In the meantime, if anyone missed the exhibition, call in at the Watch House any Saturday afternoon between 1 and 3 pm and ask to see the Slade photographs available from our Photographic Files.

EXHIBITIONS AT THE WATCH HOUSE

HOW THE BALMAIN ASSOCIATION IS MAKING

AN EXHIBITION OF ITSELF

Norman Bull writes...

THE ELDERLY, and these days somewhat battered - that is battered meaning beaten up, not battered as in fish and chips - Balmain Watch House is now being recognised as one of Sydney's up and coming galleries for up and coming artists. In addition to the building's other credentials, including being the first cop shop in Balmain, having an outside 'loo' designed by one of Australia's best known early architects, and above all being the meeting place of the Balmain Association it is now also a popular choice among those of the creative fraternity who need somewhere to have their work displayed without the commercial strangleholds applied by the big-name galleries. In fact the popularity of the Watch House was predicted with uncanny foresight by the Committee of the Association some months ago: so sure were they of their crystal ball gazing that they arranged for the front fence to be partially removed and the front gate widened to accommodate the expected crowds; plus a big brass band and a guest of honour all at the same time.

A BRAVE DECISION, and one which has been proven correct with the success of the current exhibition: on the opening night of "Three of a Kind" something like one hundred and fifty ladies and gentlemen of taste and decorum were present to view a fascinating, emotive and sensitive display of a superlative standard. And that was only the opening night! At time of writing, which is to say the end of the second weekend of this four weekend-long celebration of creative excellence, three hundred appreciative patrons of the arts have thronged through the specially widened front gate to see the old prison cells, once so gloomy and forbidding with untold tales of misery and dark secrets of the forgotten past, vibrating and aglow with colour and the joy of life.

BY THE TIME this humble journal finds its way into the hands of the select few who gratefully receive it every so often (or every so rarely, if some grumbles heard lately are true) this exhibition will be finished.

HOWEVER,

for the benefit of those readers who would like to experience an

EXHIBITION AT THE WATCH HOUSE

here is a list of events planned in the near future.

Saturday 7 November.....Police Week Display

Friday night 13 November....Pottery by John Turvey

Saturday 14 November..... " "

Sunday 15 November..... " "

17 - 25 November.....Paintings by Jan Marsh

11 - 20 December (weekends only)....
Sculpture by David Owen

1988

January..Balmain Bicentennial Photographic Display

February.....Paintings by Richard Davey

BALMAIN GARDEN CLUB

POT PLANTS FOR SHADE

Many houses have very shaded paved courtyards, patios, verandahs and balconies and the question arises of how to make them more interesting.

One way of dressing them up is by having suitable plants in containers. The depth of shade is important as so many plants require a little sun to assist flowering. In deep shade ferns are the most satisfactory. A tree fern planted first will help to make cover for the smaller growers.

Dicksonia Antarctica is the best tree fern for here. Ferns need mulching with leaves etc and they must have a moist atmosphere to thrive; sometimes just bowls of water alongside them in summer helps. Some people make wicks of a piece of cloth leading from plants to the water bowl.

There are quite a number of camellias that will flower without sun and grow in containers which they like to be fairly shallow but wide at the top. Azaleas need similar pots, and, along with fuschias, like a little filtered sun in autumn and spring.

Plants in pots require plenty of water, especially if undercover from rain. Use terracotta clay pots if possible for shade-loving plants as they stay cooler than plastic. Use straight-sided ones or ones sides shaping into the bottom. Avoid those very tall elegant ones with narrow tops or bulges in the middle, as when re-potting may be required it is nearly impossible to remove the plants without breaking the container.

Do not put a small plant in a large container, it looks unbalanced and the soil sours and the plant does not thrive. However, sometimes three or four small plants of similar type look nice together in a fairly large container. To get good drainage, use plenty of crocks in the base, stones, pebbles etc before putting in the potting mix. Pots need to stand on half-bricks - or something similar - to assist drainage and to keep off contact with the ground, where several pests may enter: ants in particular often invade at the base and make a nest inside, which results in upsetting the plant and it dies. Slaters also creep in and out, and strangely even earthworms, though good in the open garden, disturb plants in pots. An occasional dusting around and under pots with something like Derris is required. Take care that Derris does not drain into a fish pond as fish are very susceptible to it though it has no ill-effects on other species. Watch for snails as they appear from nowhere particularly if there is anything moist like hoseas.

Consider Japanese maples or *viburnum opulus* (snowball bush) to put into large tubs, pruning after flowering in late spring. Hydrangeas are easy-care shade plants. Alkaline soil (using a little lime) makes the flowers pink, while aluminium powder or iron makes the soil acid, which results in blue flowers. Prune in February, as this gives a long growing season and the plants should be in their prime near Xmas. White hydrangeas do not change colour.

A plant for consideration is *nandina*, with elegant foliage. (If red berries are wanted several plants will be required, as these plants are male and female.) A *daphne* bush may be planted near a window to catch its perfume (no lime near *daphne* please). *Linum*, with golden flowers in winter, is good. There are many types of flowering

begonias, tall, medium and small edging. *Ixora* (orange flowers), is a small shrub. *Idesia*, also small, has red or white berries and glossy leaves with serrated edges. *Andromeda* (*Pieris*), both plain and variegated is a beautiful shrublet, and there are many varieties of hostas, with mauve or white flowers.

Among the perennials that can be grown in pots in shade are the Australian Violet (no artificial fertiliser), European Violet, different types of campanulas, Japanese anemones in tones of pink and white, *aquilegia* (colombines) in many colours with decorative foliage, Solomon's seal (white), *alyssum* as an edging and the succulent chain of hearts looks nice growing down the sides of pots.

Jessica Murray

Letter to the Editor

Dear Members,

Regards the new Darling Street Wharf.

I would like to thank all the people that helped to replace the old and dangerous wharf and to improve the bus terminus. The wharf is a modern version of the 1880s wharf.

I would like to thank my secretary, Mrs Jill Nordfeldt of our Balmain East Traffic Committee of which I was President. I would also like to thank the following - the various government departments particularly the Maritime Service Board, The Minister, the Hon. B. Unsworth then of the Transport Department and the then Leichhardt Council of the day and last but not least the Balmain Association. The letter writing started in 1984. We asked for the improvement of other traffic matters to make our community safer, these matters I will still persevere. The new wharf I hope will become symbolic of Balmain's place in the Bicentennial year and that the people of Balmain will make it a great and memorable one. Since we have just had a Council election it would be good to remind the new council that most of the needs of the community will be policed by groups of associations and independents such as us who guard the history of Balmain and rights of all honest citizens and that members of that Council do not claim credit for the work of others!

David Ramsay



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
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Add \$5.00 to above rates to have News Sheet posted.

Cheques should be made payable to "The Balmain Association".