

the balmain
association

NEWS SHEET

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Plugging On For Precincts

As you know, the Balmain Association has proposed the adoption of a precinct committee system in the Leichhardt Municipality to facilitate community involvement in local government.

Precinct committees, as developed in the highly successful North Sydney model, are a part of a comprehensive range of structures and processes for democratic, decentralised government. As the formal, ongoing base for interaction between residents and Council, they are the pivotal and principle mechanism for public participation in planning and decision-making.

We were therefore surprised to read an argument from Leichhardt Council against the establishment of such committees in our municipality (Glebe, 17/1/90 p.6). Formal neighbourhood committees were described as "artificial", unsustainable and not necessary because

of Council's "present precinct arrangement", namely Works Committee Inspections which were held when there are objectors to a development proposal.

It is true that these inspections are a vital stage in participatory decision making, but they are an end-of-the-line, limited, conflict-oriented part of the development process and in no way an adequate substitute for precinct committees and their flexible range of interaction with Council at all stages of planning and development. Works Committee Inspections are reactive, short-term operations which usually involve only a small proportion of residents on a single, isolated issue. Precinct committees, on the other hand, are intended to involve all the community on a regular and continuing basis in Council matters, especially at the pro-active stages.

North Sydney Council includes Works Committee Inspections and Site

Inspections (held on Saturdays) in its extensive series of policies and methods to implement direct democracy and "loosen its bureaucratic structure", but it stresses that "the most significant of these policies has been the creation of the precincts system, a system of local neighbourhood committees covering the whole municipality."

Setting up a precinct system requires care and public consultation so that boundaries are defined sensitively in terms of geography and local issues. It is significant that of the 25 precincts established in 1980 in North Sydney, 24 are currently active.

We are impressed by several of North Sydney's publications detailing the workings of their system. As we are eager to work with Council on this issue our next step is to ask Leichhardt Council to respond and clarify their position.

Jane Ward

Mayoral Minute on the Painters & Dockers

It has come to my notice that the NSW Branch of the Federated Ship Painters and Dockers union is proposing to wind up its affairs over the next 12-18 months prior to being absorbed by some other union or unions and that part of the process may involve the sale of the Union's property at 36 Mort Street, Balmain.

I refer members to my research undertaken some years ago into the early history of the Union and its association with the Labor Party, published under the title "With Banner Unfurled". This work established the fact that the Union, under its founding name the Balmain Laborer's Union, was instrumental in the formation of the oldest (and still extant) political organisation in Australia, the ALP, under its founding name, the Labor Electoral League.

I admit to some sadness at the projected disappearance of the Union with which I have been a member

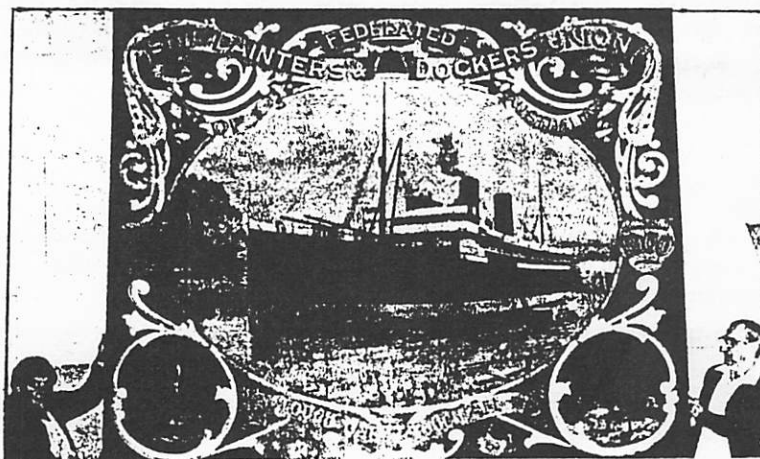
since 1939, and in which I held from time to time, every representative position from job delegate to Branch Secretary and Federal President. There may be some who would suggest that this makes for an unjustified prejudice

towards seeking to preserve something of the organisation for posterity.

The founding meeting of the Labor Party was held in Balmain on 4th April 1891, under the Chairmanship of the Union's President, Mr Charles Hart, after whom Hart Street, in Balmain, is named.

From its inception, the Union has retained a close affinity with, and an uninterrupted residence in, Balmain.

(continued on page 2)



ONE of the union's early banners

Have You Forgotten?

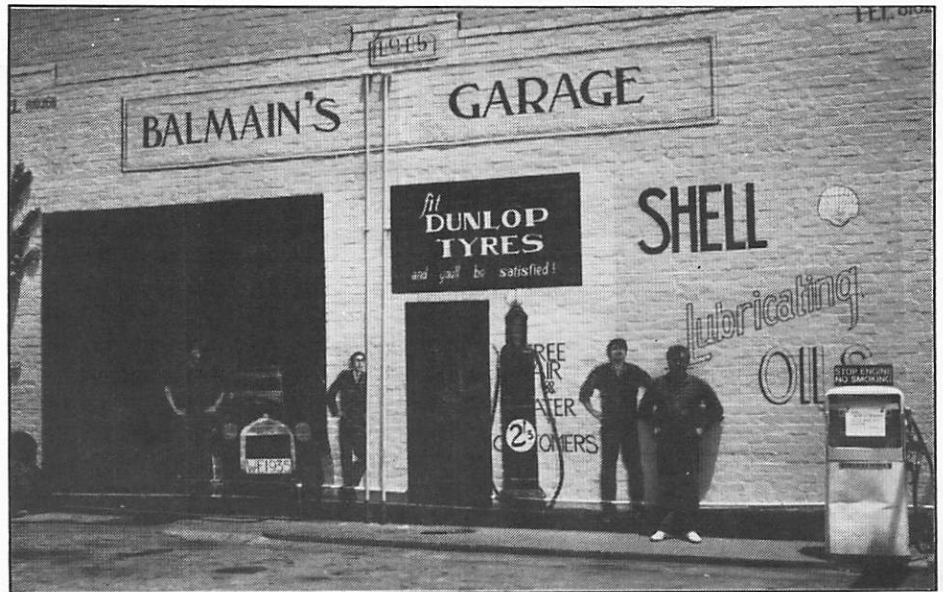
Last chance for a few to
renew their subscription
before being dropped from
the list!
We don't want to lose you so
please hurry.

GOURLIE'S CORNER

In the 1930's there were 3 petrol and oil companies in Balmain, they were AMP (Ampol), Texaco (Caltex) and Atlantic (Esso).

All petrol was imported and small ship tankers could be seen discharging their fuel at these companies wharves. Their road tankers had a steel chain dangling onto the road from the back of the truck and this acted as a lightning conductor. Service stations (were known as motor garages) had their hand operated pumps at the edge of the footpath near the gutter. Multiple selling of all brands of petrol was seen.

The first "motor garage" began business in Balmain in 1915 at 418 Darling Street with Gordon Gough, proprietor. From 1918 to 1927 Gough Bros., 1929 to 1933 Balmain Motor Service, 1942 Holland's, 1947 Buckley & Hollebone. The bowser plates from the original building, which was rebuilt in 1954, can still be seen near the footpath.



Can you pick the real Bill Evans from the two figures on the right?

Recently celebrating his 20th year as proprietor of the Balmain Auto Port, still at 418 Darling Street, Bill Evans had an interesting mural painted on an adjacent terrace wall depicting a motor garage c.1925. The artist Glenda Jones

has included Bill and his employees in the picture.

Bills garage is the only remaining service station in Balmain and is included in the Balmain History Trail Booklet.

St Marys Parish Records at Watch House

The Association proudly announces the acquisition of micro fiche copies of the Parish Registers of St Mary's Balmain, together with a microfiche reader.

It is therefore now possible for interested members of the public to come to the Watch House to examine these records for family history or other research or simply out of curiosity. We are asking for a donation of \$10.00 for each viewing, however, to help us defray costs of purchasing the microfiche reader and having the records copied.

The acquisitions were made with the invaluable assistance - yet again - of Rotary Club of Balmain, and with the cooperation of the Rev John Cashman of St Mary's Church. Copies of the records were presented to the Anglican Church Diocese of Sydney for the Diocesan Archives, much to the pleasure of Mrs Georgina Hart who took possession of them in December. She has written a letter to say how impressed she was with "the wonderful work you are all doing to make the 'people' history of Balmain available."

The Balmain Cemetery records can also now be viewed at the Watch House and provide some fascinating insights into the history of the peninsula.



Mrs Hart with Debby Nicholls, Tikwis Begbie and John Willis of Balmain Rotary

(Mayoral Minute from page 1)

When the Union was reorganised in 1900, a public meeting was held under the chairmanship of the then Mayor, Ald. H Mills. Among the speakers at the meeting was Ald. W W Williams, who was made its first President.

In its earliest years, the Union held its regular meetings, like most other unions, in hotels. The Balmain Laborers' Union, thus, referred to its "union rooms", at Dick's Hotel (formerly Lean's) and the Exchange Hotel. (*More interesting facts at our Pubs of Balmain/Rozelle Exhibition in April-Editor*). For a time, however, the union leased the old Adelphi Theatre, next door to the Unity Hall Hotel and this was the "union rooms". On the 31st January, 1900, shortly before the name was changed to "Painter and Dockers Union", the "union rooms" were at the Royal Oak Hotel. This continued to be the official headquarters for some years, until funds permitted it to acquire a piece of land in Mort Street on which the present Union Hall was erected in 1915.

The Union Hall still stands but, in 1963, the Union acquired the next-door property some time after the owner, a Union member, died in the fire which gutted the cottage. On this additional land, the present offices and boardroom were built and tied to the old building.

Suffice it to say, therefore, that the Union Hall holds some of Balmain's history and heritage and, in fact, should be regarded as having national significance as well.

Issy Wyner

Town Clerk,
Leichhardt Municipal Council,
PO Box 45, Leichhardt 2040

Dear Sir,

Re: PROPOSED PRIVATE MARINA AT HOWARD SMITH SITE

I wish to have my objection to this proposal included in Council's comments to the Maritime Services Board. I object on the following grounds.

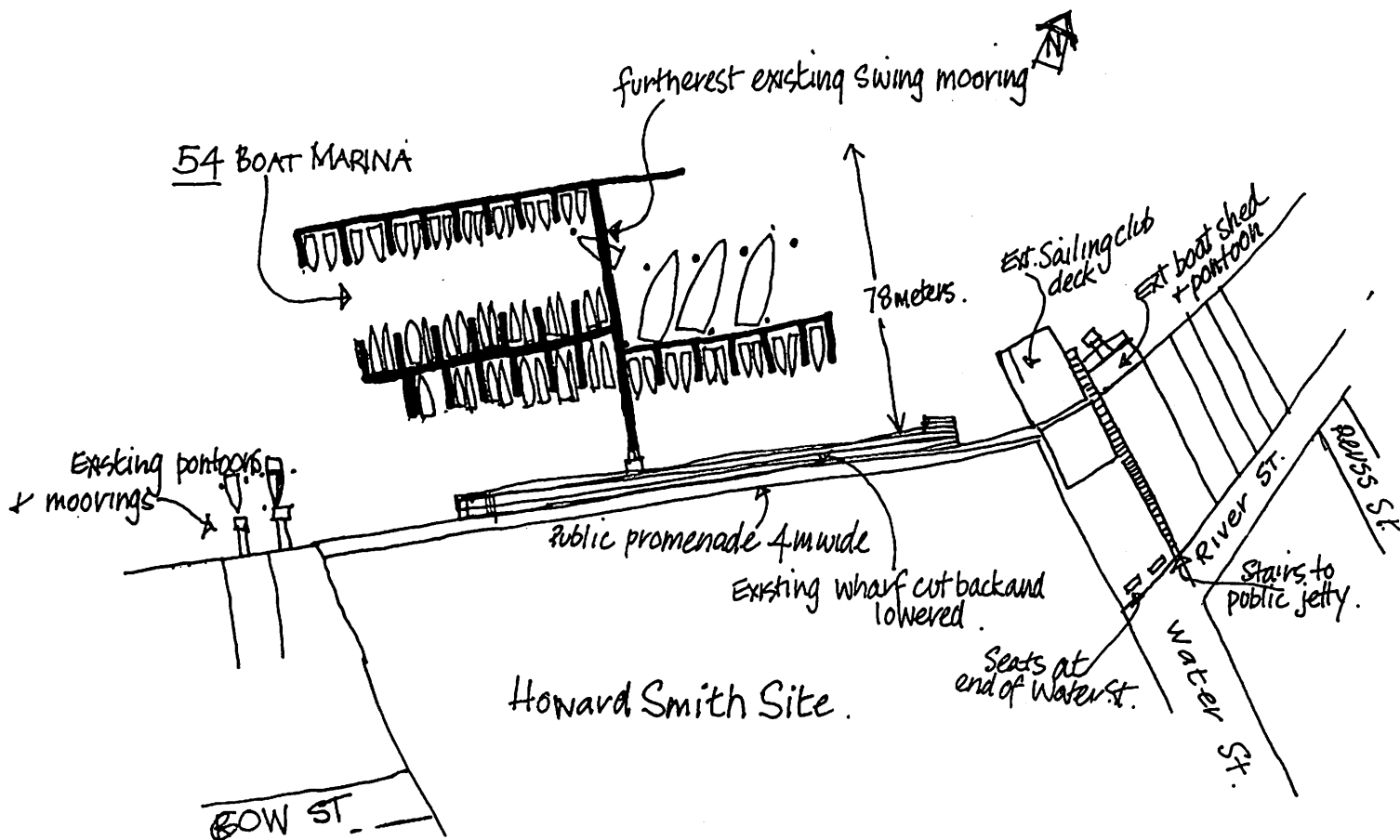
- * The proposal is against the spirit of the Land and Environment Court's order that the public be given access to the waterfront on the Howard Smith site.
- * Sydney Harbour is a priceless public resource. Large areas of the Harbour should not be closed off for private use. This proposal sets an undesirable precedent for future developments such as the Power Station site, Monsanto, and Ballast Point.
- * Moorings on the Harbour are limited, and should be allocated to the public by a fair system. They should not be sold to the privileged few.
- * The applicant has failed to prove that all the berths will be required. Allowing a berth for each of the 54 houses in the associated development is an unnecessary extravagance, and a gross waste of the limited open water on Sydney Harbour.
- * The facility would displace 11 existing swing moorings. If space is available to re-locate these moorings it should be allocated to 11 of the 3000 members of the public currently on the waiting list. It should not be given to the applicant merely to increase the value of their development.
- * Visitor parking for the facility is inadequate. The applicant proposes a ratio of .3 of a parking space per berth, and is providing even less. At the minimum they should comply with the Public Works Department's Marina Guidelines (1987), which specify twice that amount.
- * The noise generated by the facility will be objectionable. The applicant has made no effort to establish effective measures for noise control either during the day, or more particularly at night.
- * The facility is a potential hazard to the surrounding residents. 54 boats, and their fuel, will be moored beyond a locked security gate, inaccessible in an emergency. No competent staff will be on duty. No responsible supervision is proposed.
- * No pollution controls are provided by the applicant, even though the facility is in close proximity to the Dawn Fraser Pool. The Sewage and Bilgewater pumpout facilities will be unsupervised, and there is no guarantee that they will be used. No provision for rubbish collection is proposed.

Yours faithfully,

Address:

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A 54 BERTH PRIVATE MARINA has been proposed fronting the Howard Smith site - next to the School on Birchgrove Rd. Access to the Marina will be restricted to owners of houses in the development.

**** PARKING ****

The developers are providing 12 parking spots for visitors to the 54 boat Marina. They claim that visitors can also park in Birchgrove Rd, Water St, and Gow St.

**** NOISE ****

Boats will be able to come and go 24 hours a day, seven days a week. 32 will be motor cruisers and 3 open power boats. The developers' own consultant says in their report: "LATE NIGHT SOCIALISING ON BOATS, PARTICULARLY WITH MUSIC, COULD PROVE ANNOYING UNLESS ADEQUATE CONTROL IS EXERCISED BY THE BODY CORPORATE" The developers propose that one of the 54 boat owners will act as manager to keep the others in line. That's a big job for a brave person!

**** ENVIRONMENT ****

The Land and Environment Court forced the developer to give the public access to a strip of land along the waterfront, with sweeping views of the Harbour.

This will become a sweeping view of 54 boats behind a locked security gate. Was this what the Court had in mind?

** OBJECTIONS ARE DUE NOW! **

Write a letter - or sign over the page - and either send it to Council, or drop it at 4 River St Birchgrove and we'll deliver it for you.

Balmain Personalities

Achille Simonetti Sculptor 1838-1900

Simonetti was born in Rome 1838, the son of sculptor Louis Simonetti and trained as a religious sculptor at St Luke's Academy.

In 1871 at the instigation of Bishop James Quinn, who was visiting Rome, he migrated to Brisbane. An early work of Simonetti's is the Quinn Statue in Brisbane Street, Brisbane.

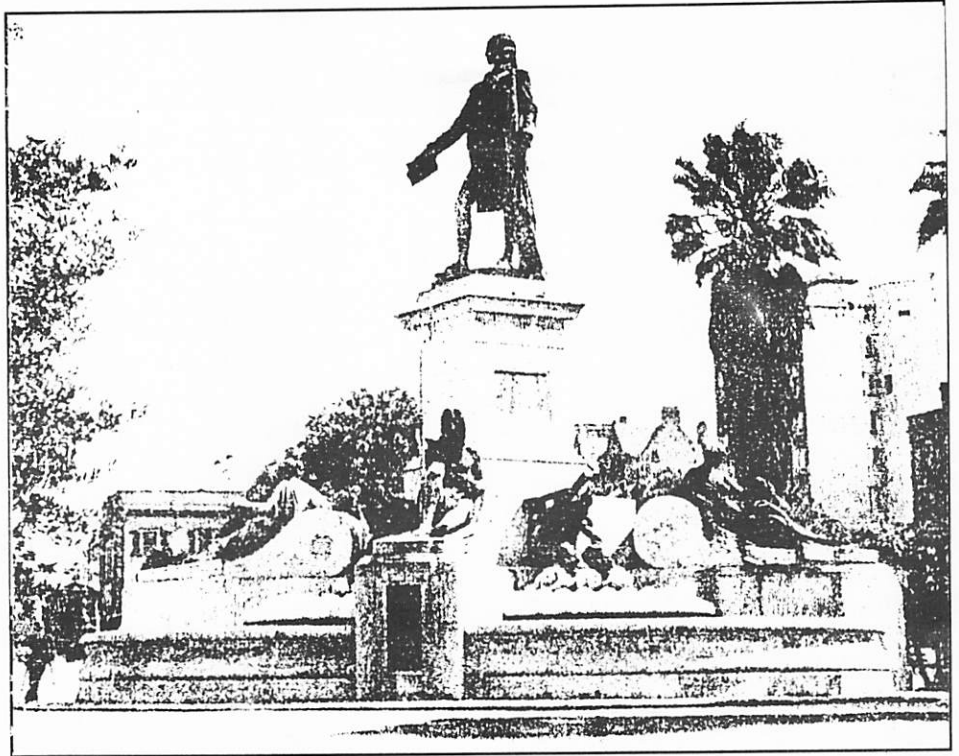
He came to Sydney at the suggestion of Sir Henry Parkes, where he set up a large studio in Rose Street, Birchgrove and worked within the University of Sydney on St John's College.

Signor Simonetti, as he was known, was appointed modelling instructor at the New South Wales Academy of Art.

Achille Simonetti's main Sydney work, is on the highest point in the Botanic Gardens. The statue of Governor Phillip, perhaps the most imposing piece of ornamental sculpture in Sydney, with a furled flag under one arm, the governor gazes down the sweep of "the most beautiful harbour in the world, where a thousand sail of line may ride in perfect security".

Around the base are bronze deities, ships prows, shells, dolphins and base reliefs in stone and metal. S N Hogg claims that Simonetti borrowed Q L Deloitte's naval uniform and sword as the model for Phillip's statue. On the 22nd June 1897 the statue was unveiled by Governor Hampden for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee celebrations at the cost of £13 000.

Befriended by (Sir) Saul Samuel, Simonetti became the most fashionable sculptor in Sydney and modelled busts



Simonetti's statue of Gov Phillip in the Botanic Gardens

of the city's notables. He was commissioned by the government to carve six allegorical figures for exterior niches on the Colonial Secretary's Department building.

Talented and industrious, Simonetti won many awards and prizes for his sculpture and became Instructor in Sculpture at the Academy of Art in 1875. Examples of his work are owned by the Art Gallery of NSW, the Legislative Council and the University of Sydney.

He lived in his house in Rose Street (now 36) from 1879 until his death, aged 62, on 23rd March 1900 and was buried in the Catholic section of Rookwood Cemetery. He was survived by his wife Margaret (nee Doherty) and

a son and daughter. His wife remained in the house until 1915.

Here is a list of some of his works:-

Busts of Archbishop Roger Bede Vaughan, Sir Henry Parkes, Commodore Goodenough, Sir Alfred Stephen, John Fairfax, Sir William Macleay, William Charles Wentworth, William Bede Dalley and Lord Carrington. Statues of Sir Hercules Robinson and John Henry Challis.

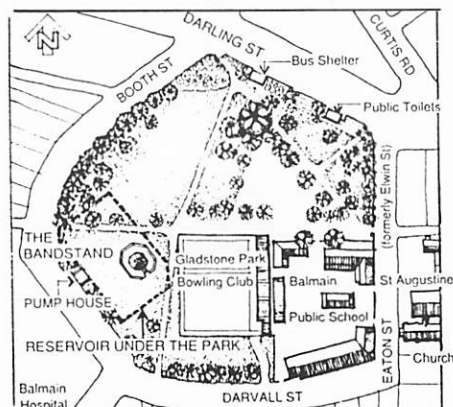
Sources: Leichhardt Historical Journal No15 - Peter Reynolds. Australian Dictionary of Biography - Bede Nairn. Discover Sydney - Geoffrey Scott in Sydney Sunday Mirror 1966. The History Division has not been able to find a photograph or likeness of Simonetti.

Gladstone Park

In earlier days the principal pigeon matches were "shot off" on land owned by the a'Beckett family since 1853 which locals called the Pigeon Ground, but officially known as Gladstone Park for 100 years on 5th April.

In 1872 the land was subdivided into 83 small allotments but only 14 were sold. The citizens of Balmain did not want the Pigeon Ground to be used for building. Jacob Garrard, Balmain's first MP, lead the campaign to have the land declared open space. Sir Henry Parkes influenced the Government to buy the rest of the land in September 1882. Development of the park was slow due to lack of funds. Even in 1905 the land was a "dusty heap of stones".

Beneath the park lies the old Balmain reservoir. The rock was excavated in 1915 and covered by a concrete slab on which an octagonal bandstand was erected. Only the foundation of the stand's ornamental fence remains. (From Gladstone Park by Peter Reynolds).



HANDY

MEN

UP TOP

Written & published by Bob Nicholls the booklet describes the adventures of the NSW "Navy" mission in China during the Boxer Rebellion. Available at the Watch House for \$4.95.

The Sydney Quarantine Station.

The May activity for Members and friends is a tour of the Quarantine Station at Spring Cove, North Head, Manly.

The Station opened as a quarantine area from 1828 to 1984 when the Commonwealth government handed the area to the state government. The Station now forms part of the Sydney Harbour National Park.

Before European settlement, the area of Spring Cove was occupied by the Kameragal people, who spoke the Guringai language. In the area of the Quarantine Station there are a number of Aboriginal sites which include shell middens, axe grinding grooves, rock engravings and occupation sites.

The public tours of the Station include a walk through the historic buildings and an audio-visual program with scenes and stories of immigrants who were quarantined following outbreaks of diseases such as small pox, cholera and typhus during the long voyage to Australia.

Join the Balmain Association group on Sunday May 20th, 2pm Hospital Bus Stop Manly Wharf.

Cost including return by bus (no parking at Station) Adults \$10. Concessions \$5. Bookings 818 4954.



IN YOUR GARDEN

Gazania

A low growing plant with long dark green leaves and single daisy flowers in red, orange and yellow, often marked near the centre with black.



Gazania, a native of South Africa, flourishes in dry, sunny positions

They are perennials which grow about 30cm (12in) high. Flowering from early summer to autumn, Gazanias are best grown in a sandy, loamy soil, but will succeed almost anywhere. They must however, have a position in full sun and should not be watered too much. It is desirable to break up the clumps at least every other year, as new plants will give better results, reasonably free of diseases and pests.

Bonnie Davidson.

Pubs Raffle

Dick's Hotel have generously donated a \$100 dinner voucher as 1st Prize in our Pubs Raffle. Thank you Robert.

There will also be 2nd and 3rd prizes and the tickets will sell for \$0.50. Drawn 29th April at Pubs Exhibition.

Leichhardt Historical Journal No 14 is now in stock at \$12.00. It includes the history of Rozelle Hospital and Callan Park, research from Johnston Street to Cameron's Cove, overview of the suburbanisation of Balmain East.

WHAT'S ON

Pubs of Balmain & Rozelle Exhibition

April 21, 22, 25, 28 & 29

Early photographs & history

Quarantine Station Inspection

2pm Sunday May 20th

Adults \$10.00 Concession \$5.00

Includes return bus from Manly Wharf

25th Anniversary Dinner

To be announced

OUR HOUSE WATCH

The Watch House is open every Saturday from 1 to 3pm - Call in for coffee

The Balmain Association meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 7.30pm in the Watch House, 179 Darling Street, Balmain.

Send mail c/o PO Box 57, BALMAIN. 2041

Our editorial phone is 818 4954

Interested artists, potters, sculptors etc. who would like to organise an exhibition in the Watch House are urged to contact Steve South on 810 1411. The Watch House can also be made available as a meeting place for local organisations.



**the balmain association
representing
Balmain-Birchgrove &
Rozelle**

Our Aims Are To:

- improve the living, working and recreational amenities 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 cooperation of everyone concerned in the realisation of the above

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Return to: Treasurer, PO Box 57, BALMAIN 2041

NAME:

ADDRESS:

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.....**POST CODE**.....

PHONE. HOME: **BUS:**

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Single/Family/Household. \$10.00

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Cheques should be made payable to The Balmain Association