

the balmain  
association

# NEWS SHEET

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## Balmain "Village" Threatened!

Over \$1 billion of development are proposed for the Balmain Peninsula and there is widespread concern amongst residents. Many action committees have blossomed as the rezoning applications mount.

Opponents of the developments claim that an extra 5,000 to 7,000 people would come to the already densely settled area, an increase of about 30% in the population.

However, Mr Terry Watson, Leichhardt Council's strategic planner, says the figure is closer to 1,000. In any case it is clear that the character of Balmain could be irrevocably changed because the majority of the plans involve waterfront sites with the threat of up to 500 marina berths. These would undoubtedly attract traffic from

outside the peninsula. Between 1971 and 1981 residential traffic increased by 36% while trips by non-residents on the Peninsula increased by 115%. Careful scrutiny is needed of applications for more office space. Balmain should not be allowed to become an extension of the CBD.

Balmain is not a museum. It is a very desirable place to live that has some how retained some of its better features during its gentrification. It is not uncommon to have a worker's cottage adjacent to a mansion. The historical mix of industrial waterfront and surrounding residential is about to disappear completely and the residents are responding to a new threat to their unique "village" character.

The Balmain Association is advocating the adoption of precinct committees

so that the voice of the people is not submerged but strengthened.

Last week officers of the Department of Local Government were critical of the Leichhardt Council's operations. They believe that the Council was more concerned with development rather than building applications. They recommended greater delegation of authority to its officers. We acknowledge the pressure to which the aldermen are being subjected and reaffirm our support for open-council. Governments are never pleased to have active residential groups and would rather have local affairs run by non-elected professional officers but the constituents are determined that their voice be heard. A public meeting is overdue to discuss the implications of the impending developments.

## Pubs Exhibition

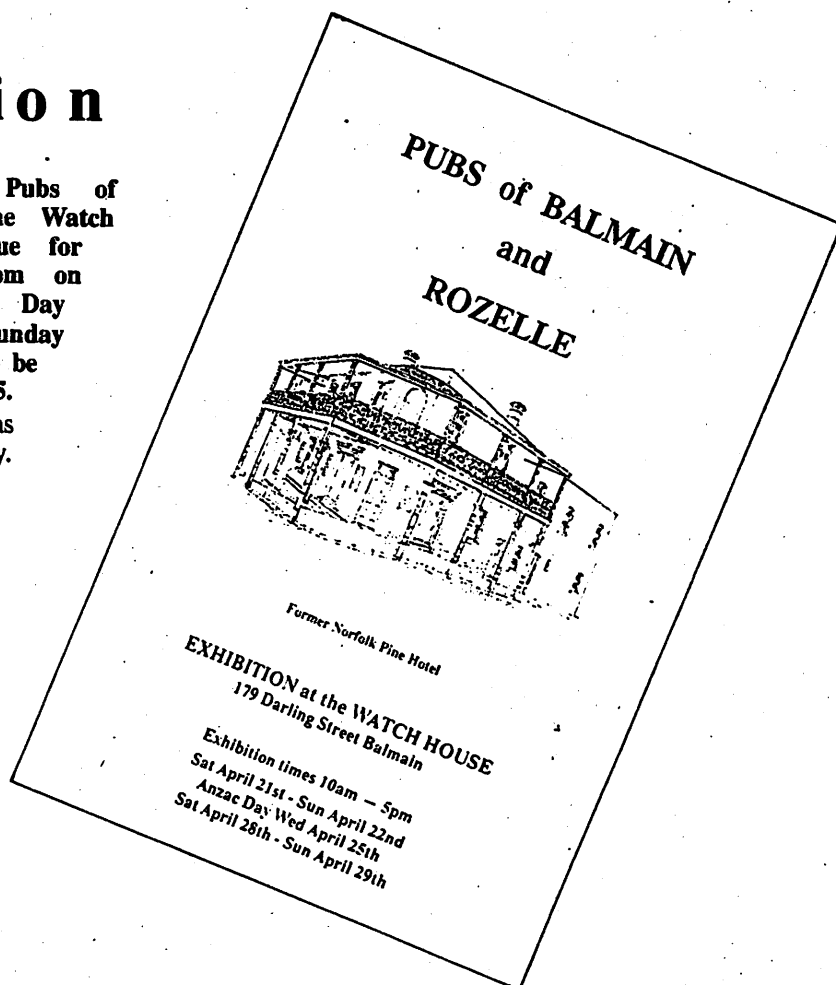
In Heritage Week, April 21-29, the Pubs of Balmain & Rozelle Exhibition is in the Watch House and there is a pictorial catalogue for \$2. Exhibition times are 10am until 5pm on Saturday 21st, Sunday 22nd, Anzac Day Wednesday 25th, Saturday 28th and Sunday 29th. Attendant assistance would be appreciated on any day. Ph 810 5185.

Memorabilia and early photographs as well as information on the publicans will be on display. Klin Sullivan will also show some of her paintings of Balmain Pubs.

On Anzac Day a 'View the Pubs Walk' - a type of Pub Crawl - will start from the Watch House at 4pm.

The Heritage Week culminates in the Balmain Vintage Yacht Race around Cockatoo Island on Sunday 29th. The vantage point is Elkington Park where many food stalls will be set-up.

Framed copies of the painting by Slade of the 1854 Balmain Yacht Race are on sale for \$20 at the Watch House.



## Balmain Personalities

Excerpt from the Illustrated Sydney News, May 1864.

**F**ew men have been carried away from amongst us whose name has been so intimately associated with the colony as that of the Rev. John Joseph Therry. The difficulties which he had to overcome in his earlier labours, and his successful advocacy of the claims of the denomination to which he belonged, are matters of historical record, and have erected for him a more imperishable monument than "funeral urn or marble shrine."

On the Queen's birthday he attended the levee at the Government House; after leaving there he returned to his residence at Balmain, and up to the time of retiring to rest betrayed no symptoms of illness. About midnight he was attacked with spasms, and a messenger was despatched for Dr. Gilhooly, but before medical aid could be obtained the venerable clergyman had breathed his last.

The deceased was born in the city of Cork in 1791, and was educated at Carlow College under the Rev. Dr. Doyle. At the age of twenty four he was ordained at Dublin, and appointed to a curacy in his native city. In 1818, having made the acquaintance of the Rev. Mr Flynn, who had previously



*Father J. J. Therry.*

visited Sydney on a mission tour, the Rev. Mr Therry formed a resolution to visit Australia, and having overcome the obstacles thrown in his way by the then ruling powers, he commenced his pastoral labours in a small wooden chapel in Pitt Street. His congregation steadily increasing, he removed to the old Court-house, and subsequently to St. Joseph's Chapel, which at present forms a part of St. Mary's Cathedral, the foundation stone of which he laid on the 29th October, 1829.

In 1838 Father Therry went to Tasmania, and for several years laboured incessantly for the reformation of the

convicts located there. Shortly after his return to this colony he was appointed to the pastorate of St. Augustine's, Balmain, where he continued to officiate for nine years until his decease.

During the afternoon of Wednesday, 25th May, the body of the deceased was removed from his private residence to the St. Augustine's Church, and on Thursday to the transept of St. Mary's Cathedral. On Saturday morning high mass having been celebrated, the body was borne to the hearse, open at the sides, the coffin being covered with the purple Pall used in solemn services for the dead. The funeral procession of the Archbishop Polding and other church dignitaries, the parishioners of St. Augustine's Church and many other colonists of various denominations proceeded in six mourning coaches and nearly 200 carriages to the old Roman Catholic cemetery in Devonshire Street (the site of the Central Railway).

Editor's note. In 1901 Father Therry's remains were placed in the crypt of St. Mary's Cathedral which also contains the tombs of the Archbishops of Sydney. An excellent portrait of the Rev. Therry is on display along with other memorabilia in the Cathedral's museum in Prince Albert Road. Guided tours of the Cathedral and the Crypt are held each Sunday. Terry Street (Therry St. in earlier days) was named after the Archbishop. The Balmain History Trail includes a plaque for St. Augustine's and Father Therry.

## Easter Means Spring

**E**aster falls in spring in the Northern Hemisphere and the name derives from the Teutonic goddess of spring. It celebrates the first warm and bright sunshine after a long, dark winter.

With each new spring it was common for all homes to be cleaned from top to bottom. This useful activity reflects a pagan-inspired ritual of purification. The custom of buying new clothes in spring can also be seen as an ancient act of renewal.

One custom which has gained in popularity since the Middle Ages is that of eating a huge meal on Easter Sunday. This ceremony was very significant when people had to observe a forty-day fast for Lent.

Eggs are common symbols of new life and the practice of decorating and exchanging eggs is common in many European countries. The hare became a feature of Easter around the world. Even today, in some villages in Germany, France and Czechoslovakia, children love to believe in the legend about the white hares visiting their

garden on Easter Night. The hare has been prominent as a symbol of fertility but has been replaced today by the well-known (chocolate) Easter rabbit.

Music, dance, masks and costumes go naturally with this animated festival of new life. Throughout Easter the Powerhouse Museum hopes to enrich your holiday with activities which will include traditional egg decoration workshops, a 'Rabbit and Egg Trail' for young children, Celtic Easter rituals and an Easter Choir performance.



## Free Bowling

**T**he Balmain Bowling Club is the oldest existing club in Australia. It was founded on 10th May 1880 at a meeting in Moorfield, 6 Charles Street (the oldest brick house still standing in Balmain). The first green was constructed on land that was once Moorfield's front garden and was opened on 2nd April 1881.

To celebrate their 110th birthday the club is offering free coaching classes with all equipment supplied (excepting soft soled shoes without heels). They are also waiving the joining fee for new members within the next 3 months.

Further information can be obtained by telephoning the Club on 810 1071.

**A** timely piece for East Balmain residents. The time ball on the top of the Observatory's tower once more drops at precisely 1pm every day, following a tradition begun in 1858. Check your Rolex.

## GOURLIE'S CORNER

### Balmain Hotels

In addition to selling spirits, bulk wine and bottle beer, publicans used to fill quart bottles with draught beer, the cork tied with string. These were returnable bottles and worth a penny each and each publican would put on their own label. Most hotels would put on a counter lunch between 5pm and 6pm as in the 1920-30s most workers would not finish work until 5pm (48 hour week). The meal consisted of potatoes, cooked dried peas, sausages, small meat pies and sausage rolls. This service finished upon the outbreak of World War II.

Trading hours for hotels were 6am until 6pm, Monday to Saturday. In those days, it was not unusual to hear someone either singing or playing of a musical instrument outside the hotel, with his hat on the footpath to earn a few bob to live on. Many of these men were former stage or vaudeville people, but age had caught up with them.

### Beleaguered Bats In Balmain

The illegal felling of a tall, stately, century-old, Moreton Bay Fig tree on the Unilever site has devastated two communities.

The human community has lost a local environmental landmark which also played a critical role in maintaining an already fragile but beneficial relationship between indigenous wildlife and an urban, human community. It was a quiet joy of many local residents to see the flying foxes descend in the evening to feed in the valley and to know that an inner city environment could help sustain a species of animal which plays a vital role in pollination and seed dispersal for NSW's rainforests.

The flying fox community has suffered an even greater loss, because their feeding sites are generally diminishing and their overall numbers are declining. They are particularly dependent on figs when rain has reduced supplies of nectar and pollen. Flying foxes, which have been a protected species in NSW since 1986, do not reproduce prodigiously, and their numbers are continually depleted by destruction of their feeding environment and exposure to hazards such as electrical wiring, trapping and shooting.



There were two wine bars in Darling Street, one on the Booth Street corner (Caldwell's Wines), the other opposite in Mort Street (McWilliams). Both bottles or glasses of wine were served over the counter, with a wooden partition about three feet inside the doorway so that no one outside could see who was inside.

Does any reader know how many former hotel buildings in Balmain and Rozelle are being used today for other purposes? ..... How many hotels are there trading in the area today? .....

Come to the Pubs Exhibition this month and check your answers. See the front page for details.

The animals which fly from the maternal roost colony at Gordon into White Bay to feed at night have already experienced a serious degradation of their local environment with the installation of 8,000 watts of electrical lighting on Punch Park Tennis Courts and the recent increase in night play with its added noise and disturbance for the bats.

Leda Pty Ltd, the developer responsible for the latest human act of destruction, must be made fully to bear the cost of restoring without delay the local feeding environment.

Fully mature native figs can be transplanted. A company called Civic Trees dug and transplanted a 70 year old Ficus rubiginosa to Darling Harbour. Other native flora acceptable as food for bats and birds can be planted. Electrical wiring can be put underground. The local open space can be re-ordered to better isolate noisy, invasive, human activity.

The community must work with Leichhardt Council to secure a safer, improved pocket sanctuary for our nocturnal friends. This would be part of a wildlife corridor to attract native fauna into our metropolitan area, an objective advocated by the Nature Conservation Council, Friends of the Bats and the Urban Environment Coalition.

Jane Ward

## Family History Centre In Kiama

Are you related to a convict, a bushranger or maybe even one of Australia's first governors? The Family History Centre in Kiama exists especially to help you find out.

As its brochure will tell you, this is an exciting new centre for the use of everyone. It has a comprehensive in-house microform and data inventory plus modern equipment and friendly staff. Entry into AGEMICS, the International Database of Archive References, is available through the centre. In addition, it provides educational kits and will organise excursions of up to three days. A particularly useful feature of the Centre is the fact that it is open seven days a week from 9.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.

The recently restored Pilots Cottage the Blowhole Park is also open seven days a week, and the town of Kiama itself is of course well worth a look. The kiosk at the Blowhole has been considerably refurbished so it is not essential to take a picnic. Fresh fish and chips are also available on the waterfront.

Two of our members recently found it was a three hour gentle drive south via the F1 freeway, Robertson and Minnamurra, and less than two hours back up the Princes Highway to get home. If sufficient members were interested, we could organise a day trip to include lectures at the Family History Centre.

Debby Nicholls

## Thank You

Many thanks John Leone, Upholsterer, for the restoration of 4 bentwood chairs. Three of them have the official Watch House stamp: VR 1889.

## Incorporation

At a Special General Meeting of the Balmain Association held on 7th March a revised constitution was agreed to unanimously. It will now be possible to apply to the Department of Business and Consumer Affairs for incorporation. This will protect members from the possibility of being sued as individuals. The Department's model rules were used as a basis to ease acceptance by that body.



## IN YOUR GARDEN

### Cottage Gardening

Those who are favourably placed with regard to situation and soil, may be thankful for the possession of such advantages; while those who have to bring into practice a strong arm nerved by a willing heart, will reap all the more solid gratification in seeing from their exertions "the wilderness blossom as the rose."

Under all circumstances—however exposed and barren its soil—any piece of ground may be clothed with vegetation of some kind: even rude unsightly masses of rock, by the aid of a little terracing, may be converted as to soon render a pleasing effect.

Certainly the greatest difficulty to contend with in gardening is an unsuitable site—more especially if it be lofty and exposed. Low lying lands may soon be benefited by proper drainage; but against tempestuous winds, and the unbroken rays of a hot summer sun, but little can be arrayed. To such situations some shelter must be given, either by a substantial high and close fence or stone wall, or by the planting of trees of a rapid, compact growth, and hardy nature. The natural features of some of our most eligible land being of rugged character, brings all the amateur's gardening information and powers of skill and patience into play—for some of the allotments are so perpendicular in appearance, that one is forcibly reminded of a suggestion in *Punch* that the land should be placed completely "on edge" and planted on both sides!

One of the first things necessary to the formation of a garden is to see that your land is completely and effectually enclosed, for without attending to this important point all your after labour will be lost; "it will be in vain that you rise up so early and so late take a rest"—in order to attend to your garden.

This barrier may consist of stone, wood, earth, or evergreen, but in all cases it must be impervious to the inroads of animals and poultry, for nothing is more discouraging and displeasing than to see trim flower-beds converted into so many "dustnests" for the accommodation of a neighbour's fowls—or to find that some vagrant goats (those suburban pests!) have been sharpening their teeth on the bark of your favourite fruit trees, preparatory to dining on your cabbages and cauliflowers.

Stone walls—though the most durable—are at best unsightly, unless matted with creepers, and are, moreover, too bulky and expensive for small plots. Earth or turf walls are not lasting enough for our variable climate. Iron wire trained over vegetation—while being durable, cheap and pretty, has the drawback of being hardly impervious to the inroads of the smaller invaders. Nothing, perhaps, suits this colony better than a well put up close fence of iron-bark paling, hoop-bound, and with the extremities of the posts well tarred.

*From The Illustrated Sydney News, 7th July, 1870.*

**I**t saddens me to tell of the passing of a very gentle man, Larry Lake. Larry, a local resident for more than a decade, worked in the Balmain Children's Library and later did much to support the Nicholson St School and the P & C.

He had been an assistant librarian at the Fisher Library, Sydney University and worked to make Balmain a better place for all. He will be missed.

*Dave Ramsay*

## WHAT'S ON

• Pubs of Balmain & Rozelle Exhibition

April 21, 22, 25, 28 & 29

Early photographs & history.

• Quarantine Station Inspection

2pm Sun May 20 Adult \$10 Conc. \$5

Includes return bus from Manly Wharf

### ART EXHIBITIONS

• May 4-11 Anna Stacey

Prints, Paintings & Drawings.

• May 19-20 Peter Handran-Smith

30 Paintings.

• May 25-27 Brett Smout

4th year Graduation Pottery.

## 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.



Our Aims Are To:

the balmain association  
representing  
Balmain-Birchgrove &  
Rozelle

- 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: .....

.....POST CODE.....

PHONE HOME: ..... BUS: .....

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION (incl News Sheet delivery in Balmain-Rozelle)

Please circle... NEW MEMBER/ RENEWAL

Single/Family/Household. \$10.00

Organisation \$15.00

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