

Policy Options For Council Elections

Leichhardt Council will be changed radically at the elections to be held on 14 September because it appears that only five alderpersons are offering for re-election.

The Balmain Association, under the terms of its constitution, cannot endorse any candidate. In any case it wouldn't be equitable as there is a member of the Association in nearly every group vying for support. However, we can enunciate a number of issues which the candidates could address in their policy statements. Some space can be allocated in our next issue if they wish to respond. A public meeting is scheduled for 23 August.

Although the Association continues to strongly support the general concept of Open Council, precinct committees, the mechanisms for its successful operation are not yet in place. At present residents' rights to be heard are limited, time-wasting and often too late. Site inspections are reactive, short-term operations which usually involve only a small number of residents on a single, isolated issue. Precinct or locality committees are pivotal in promoting public participation in planning and decision making. Without them open council is a debating society. Precinct committees allow residents the chance to voice their concerns and solutions in familiar, uninhibiting surroundings before the issue goes before council. Lack of resident consultation brings resident action.

We advocate the reintroduction of a ward system to decide our council representatives as a more representative method and a less costly way of conducting by-elections.

Intensive traffic calming, using more efficient devices, is urgently required in the municipality, particularly in Glebe and on the Peninsula. In this concern the Leichhardt Council is lagging behind other Sydney municipalities. It should be done in area-wide schemes otherwise the problem is merely transposed from one street to another. At the public hearing on rezoning we submitted a scheme for staggered angle parking for the Darling Street shopping area as a way of improving the streetscape and calming traffic.

Resident parking restrictions should be established in problem areas. The specific allocation of parking spaces is necessary to discourage the number of vehicles. We oppose parking meters.

Council should immediately consult with the Maritime Services Board to arrange for heavy vehicles to exit from the White Bay Terminal by way of the road through Glebe Island. The vehicles could pass under the Coal Loader to Somerville Road to relieve the congestion in Roberts Street which should be closed off from White Bay during peak hours. Semi-trailers should be banned from Mullens Street at all times.

The application of heritage values to streetscapes is of concern to most residents in an established area such as Leichhardt municipality. Some examples of modern buildings do not complement the existing structures which have been, in many cases, lovingly restored.

We urge Council to investigate improvements to public transport in a policy of reducing the dependency on private vehicles. We believe that measures should be taken to instigate light-rail systems in the municipality. The existing goods line is electrified from Rozelle to Hurlstone Park and a passenger service could connect Lilyfield with Leichhardt Marketplace which is only two blocks from the railway line.

Efforts to add open space should be continued but as finances are lacking section 94 contributions should be required where possible.

The maximum density of development should be within the range of net residential floor space ratios 0.7:1—0.8:1.

Leichhardt Council should intensify its recycling policy to include source separation of waste. Residents will separate cans, bottles, plastics and newspapers if given encouragement.

Governor Opens History Trail

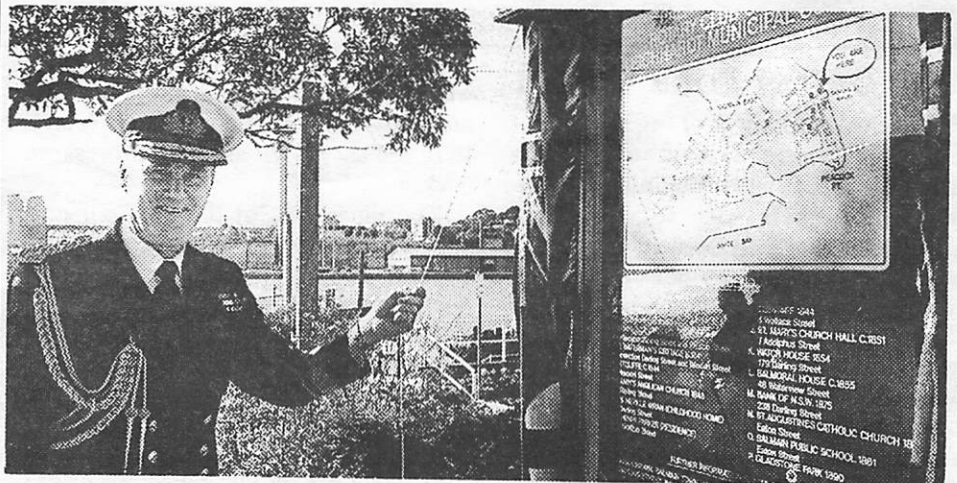
The NSW Governor, Peter Sinclair, officially opened the Balmain History Trail Directory on Sunday 21 July at Thornton Park. He arrived by launch with Mrs Sinclair and was greeted by Dawn Fraser, who had arranged and financed the visit, the Mayor, Ald Brady, members of Balmain Association and Balmain Rotary Club.

The glorious winter sunshine attracted a throng of residents to witness the Governor unveil the Directory Board. Bob Nicholls responded on behalf of the

Association, Rotary and the residents. Later His Excellency unveiled a plaque commemorating the occasion in the gardens of the park.

Most of those attending followed the official party when it visited the Watch House before proceeding to Elkington Park where morning tea was served to the sounds of Leichhardt Municipal Band.

We must acknowledge the spirit and persistence exerted by Dave Ramsay in initiating the visit. The late Sir David Martin was unable to accept the invitation last year. Photo from The Glebe.



Traffic Calming

The quality of urban life can be improved significantly by adopting methods of reducing the impact of road traffic on residential streets. Leichhardt Council engineers have up to now employed relatively inexpensive devices—mainly speed humps—with limited success and acceptance. Mosman and Canterbury municipalities have been more active in quietening local streets.

Traffic calming should foster a peaceful coexistence between different transport modes aimed at improving the social and physical environment which have deteriorated through excessive allowance for the car. In this context it can also assist in urban regeneration and beautification schemes.

The Dutch Woonerf illustrated last month suffers from requiring the rebuilding of entire streets and relocation of services. Dutch authorities have since moved towards less expensive methods.

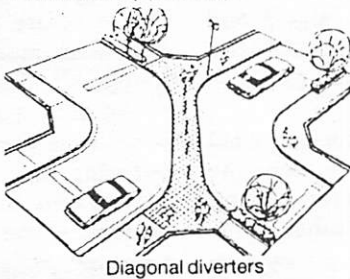
In Germany the original pedestrian malls tended to exclude vehicles but it was realised that pedestrian and cycle traffic could be successfully mixed with buses and other types of motor traffic. New street design in residential and mixed-use areas restrict through-traffic by removing vehicle carriageways; resurfacing of the streets with materials of attractive colours and textures; clearly identifiable areas for children's activities, landscaped islands and sidewalks and specific locations for clusters of residents' and visitors' parked vehicles. Often, parallel parking on two sides of a street is converted to angle parking on alternate sides separated by chicanes.

It was soon recognised that to be really effective and to not just shift traffic problems from one area to another, traffic calming must

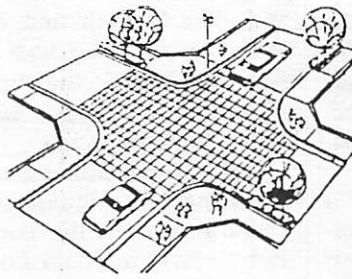


Parking slots indented into sidewalk, Rijswijk, the Netherlands

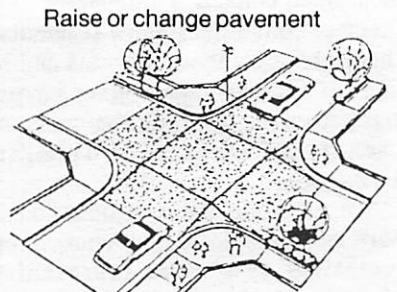
Prevent easy passage



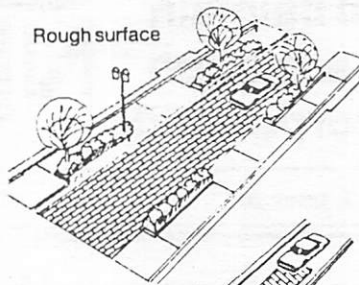
Diagonal diverters



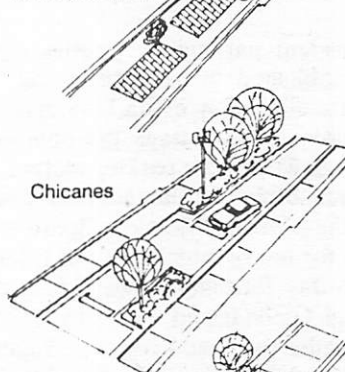
Block pavement



Raised intersection

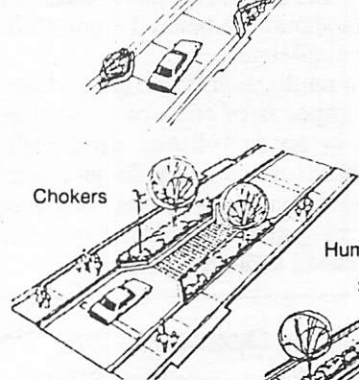


Varied pavement

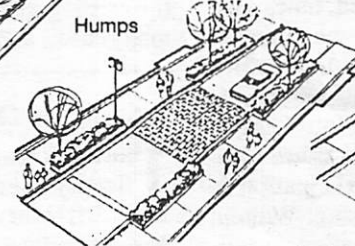


Chicanes

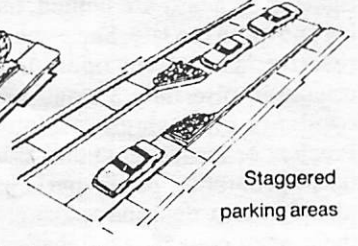
Forts



Chokers



Humps



Staggered parking areas

Raise or change pavement

be applied more on an area-wide basis. This required attention to major through roads and particularly roads which handle a lot of traffic in shopping areas. Some roads were reduced from 6 to 4 lanes or 4 to 2 lanes to enable easier pedestrian crossing with safety. Landscaping deliberately reduced drivers' forward view to force a lower speed.

The implementation of traffic calming is not just a technical process but a wide ranging community process whereby local residents can have a strong input into identifying the problems and helping to find solutions. Public consultation and involvement is essential to the widespread acceptance of traffic calming schemes. It is particularly helpful in bringing together typical antagonists such as motoring organisations, environmentalists, local action groups and business people. Everyone has to be a pedestrian at some time.

Balmain's narrow streets with continuous kerbside parking do not allow for high vehicle speeds but the visual impact of 19th century streets clogged with motor cars straddling footpaths is not desirable. Some sections of Darling Street are in desperate need of attention to reduce the speed of motor vehicles.

The accompanying illustrations have been reproduced from an article in "The Wheel Extended: A Toyota Quarterly Review". They show some of the available methods of controlling traffic speed and on-street parking and encouraging cautious driving at intersections.

Win Some! Lose Some!

The Commissioners of Inquiry report on rezoning in the main supports the Leichhardt Council's planning department proposals with some amendments. We have only been able to briefly appraise the findings before going to press. The town planners' suggested floor space ratios have been accepted except for the Caltex site which they have increased from 0.7:1 to 0.8:1.

Some of the Association's recommendations have been endorsed namely, the open space provision of 21 m²/person

which is the Peninsula average and significantly more of Ballast Point (about 1/3 of the site) is set aside as a foreshore park.

The time scale of the developments should allow some Council action to counter some of the effects of the expected increase in population.

Residents' submissions have made an impact and have served to modify the more extravagant proposals. This approach should be maintained without adopting a negative "not-in-my-backyard" stance. Considering Mr Webster's

commendation of the report we have to recognise that development will take place on the basis of the Commissioners' report. It is necessary to press for extensive remedial measures requiring contributions from developers as well as State and Federal Governments. The Commissioners recommend more intensive traffic calming to counter the increased traffic from the rezonings that would "adversely impact on the existing environment". Residents will need to campaign more effectively for a better public transport.

GOURLIE'S CORNER

The Golden Days of Radio

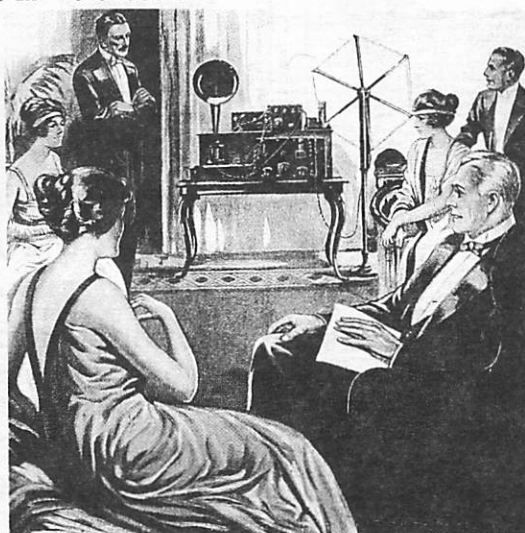
Broadcasting began in Australia when 2BL Sydney went to air on 13 November 1923. Listeners had sealed receivers set to 2BL and the owners of the receivers paid their licence fees directly to the station.

In 1924 the Government regulated for A and B class stations. Initially A class stations were funded from listeners' licence fees and limited advertising. In 1932 the Postmaster General's Department took over the A class stations and banned advertising. The Australian Broadcasting Commission (now the Australian Broadcasting Corporation) was formed to run the A class stations while B class stations were funded by advertising alone.

In the early 1940s "wireless" ruled the field of home entertainment. Talent quests and quiz shows were highlights of this period. Serials or "soap operas" (so called because they were often sponsored by major soap manufacturers) were addictive listening. The Amateur Hour was sponsored by Lever Bros for 18 years as

well as the Lux Radio Theatre. The Colgate Palmolive Show was also popular. Most adults would remember the Argonaut's Club which was broadcast by the ABC with a content of art, music, writing and other subjects of particular interest to youngsters.

In Balmain radios could be bought from Sherwood's Radio from a cottage at 6 King Street (residence still exists). They sold floor models as well as mantles which were popular because of their convenient size. Repairs were also carried out. The business was well known until it closed in the 1950s.



The College Hall

In 1876 a portion of section 12, lot 1, of the Gilchrist Estate was bought by a blacksmith, Archibald McFarlan. From 1877 until 1896, McFarlan gave his address as Helena Villa, either at Evans or Beattie Street. In 1889 it was 170 Beattie Street. John Cooksy was in residence there for the 3 years from 1896.

From 1899 to 1907, Mr A H Wilhemy had a private school at 170 Beattie Street. By 1901 a hall had been built fronting on Evans Street. The *Balmain Observer* of 21 December 1901 recorded a Christmas Concert there. "The pupils of this well-known educational establishment gave their exhibition on Monday night in the College Hall before a large muster of parents and friends". The concert opened with a Christmas hymn sung by the pupils followed by recitations, piano solos and duets and a violin solo. "During the interval Mr Wilhemy and Miss Murphy were presented by the pupils with handsome presents. Mr Wilhemy read a report stating that the past year had been a very successful one. There was an attendance of 120 pupils. Three pupils had been sent up for the Sydney College of Music Examination".

The second part of the program had more recitations, dancing and "All Good

Night" chorus by pupils. "The singing of the various choruses did credit to Mr Wilhemy's ability to train pupils musically as well in the *three R's*".

In 1908/9 Misses G & T Ripley continued the private school at that address.

Both Thomas Sherland, 1910/15, and John Finn, 1916/26, private residents at the Beattie Street address gave their names to the Hall at 13 Evans Street which was then being used for dances, etc. Tennis courts must have been built there by 1929 as the Rozelle Tennis Court with Clubhouse Ballroom is known to exist until 1934 as was the Rozelle Catering Co in the Beattie Street address.

During World War II, many lively dances were held at the hall and for a short time roller skating. In 1945 Fred Carson began the College Clothing Manufacturing Co with six workers. Fred bought the old hall in the 1960s when he employed 34 workers mostly local women some staying with him for 20 years. Today Mr Carson is self employed there producing mens' trousers.

From 1945 Terry Finn managed 3 tennis courts named the Ashgrove Tennis Club at 170 Beattie Street. These were continued by Mr & Mrs Burdon and then Jack Turner who sold the property in 1990 to the Christian Community Movement for Religious Revival.

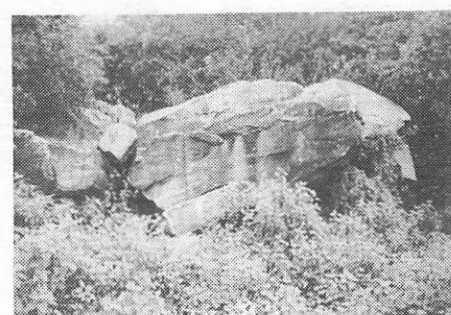
Balmain Bush

The only natural "bush" area left in Balmain can be found at the former MSB buoy site in Cameron Cove. The hilly terrain contains a splendid sandstone outcrop with two caves. There is a sandstone base in one cave and the other has an earthen floor and may have been an aboriginal midden. There has been much disturbance of the caves over time with the overhang falling down the slope and land fill on the shoreline.

Association member, Mrs Margaret Ford, who lives close by, remembers playing in this area as a child. Margaret remembers it as "the green", probably from "The Green" that was in front of the old Burbank Hotel that stood on the rise near Darling Street last century.

Two archeologists from the National Parks and Wildlife Service volunteered their time on a Sunday to inspect the area. Mrs Ford related of the many times in past years of the abundance of crabs caught in Cameron Cove. One could imagine the caves being used by aborigines feasting on the sea food.

The foreshore would be a welcome addition to the Cameron Cove open space with a children's playground near the caves.



Environment Awareness Fair
September 1 at Balmain High School

The Balmain Historical Plaques
Trail booklet is available for \$2
at the Watch House

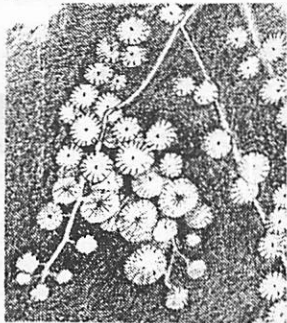
Back To Balmain Day
Sunday 27 October 1991



Wattle Day

Wattles, or acacias, are among the most cheerful winter flowering native plants because their yellow blossoms stand out so vividly on cold, grey days. Selected from more than 500 species, the following will provide winter colour in coastal or inland areas:

Queensland's silver wattle, *acacia podalyriifolia*, is fast-growing and thrives in Sydney or anywhere the temperature falls no lower than 3 deg below freezing. With silvery, round leaves it lights up with the brightest yellow blooms from mid-May until at least August. It will live longer if the branches are pruned by a third immediately flowering has finished.



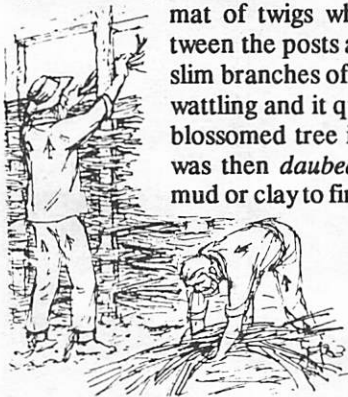
The willowy, pendulous Flinders Range wattle, *a. iteaphylla*, has thin silvery blue leaves and a profusion of blossom from early April until September. It is frost tolerant, grows well near the sea, and prefers a light pruning after flowering.

In early August the green or black wattle, *a. decurrens*, is at its best. This is one of the fastest growing wattles around Sydney, reaching 6m in a couple of years. The Wallangarra wattle, *a. adunca*, is one of the showiest, with masses of fluffy, perfumed flowers. Hardy and unfussy about soil, it grows to about 6m.

A prostrate form of *a. amblygona* called "Australora winter gold" is recommended as a groundcover or for trailing over walls. The flowers are golden with deep green, triangular, prickly leaves. The stunning blue-leaved Cootamundra wattle, *a. baileyana*, is a reliable favourite in gardens and street planting. Always shapely, it is smothered in July with brilliant yellow flowers.

The name wattle is derived from an old way of building used in parts of England called *wattle and daub*. The walls were a thick mat of twigs which were *wattled* (woven) between the posts and rails of the hut's frame. The slim branches of the acacias were easily bent for wattling and it quickly earned the lovely, golden blossomed tree its nick-name. The mat of twigs was then *daubed* (plastered) solidly with thick mud or clay to finish the wall. In 1844 there were, in Balmain, eight *wattle and daub* huts together with five bark, thirteen slab and numerous stone buildings.

Wattle Day is celebrated in NSW on 1 August.



Building a wattle and daub hut.

Wetting the Whistle

Members of the Association's History Division have been spotted disappearing into the local hotels again, all in the good name of research. Debbie, Bonnie and Kath are putting the final touches to a yet unnamed book about the hostelrys of Balmain and Rozelle.

The launch date of the publication is the end of October to coincide with 'Back to Balmain Day'. Bonnie is keen to have an oral history group to meet once a month. June Harris and Kathleen Epple have shown interest, so senior members are invited to come along to a morning tea and reminisce. Contact 810 5185.

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WHAT'S ON

- Paintings — Eve Molnar and others August 1—18
- Aboriginal Art—Community Aid Abroad September 6-8
- Campbell St Presbyterian Church Exhibition at the Watch House. September 21
- Environment Awareness Fair September 1 at Balmain High School
- Share My Phantasy—Writers Aloft 1st Sunday of each month. Readings, critique Supper served.

OUR HOUSE WATCH

The Watch House is open every Saturday from

12 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 inc
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

MEMBERSHIP FORM

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Please circle: ...NEW MEMBER / RENEWAL

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