

the balmain
association
incorporated
news sheet

The Peninsula OBSERVER

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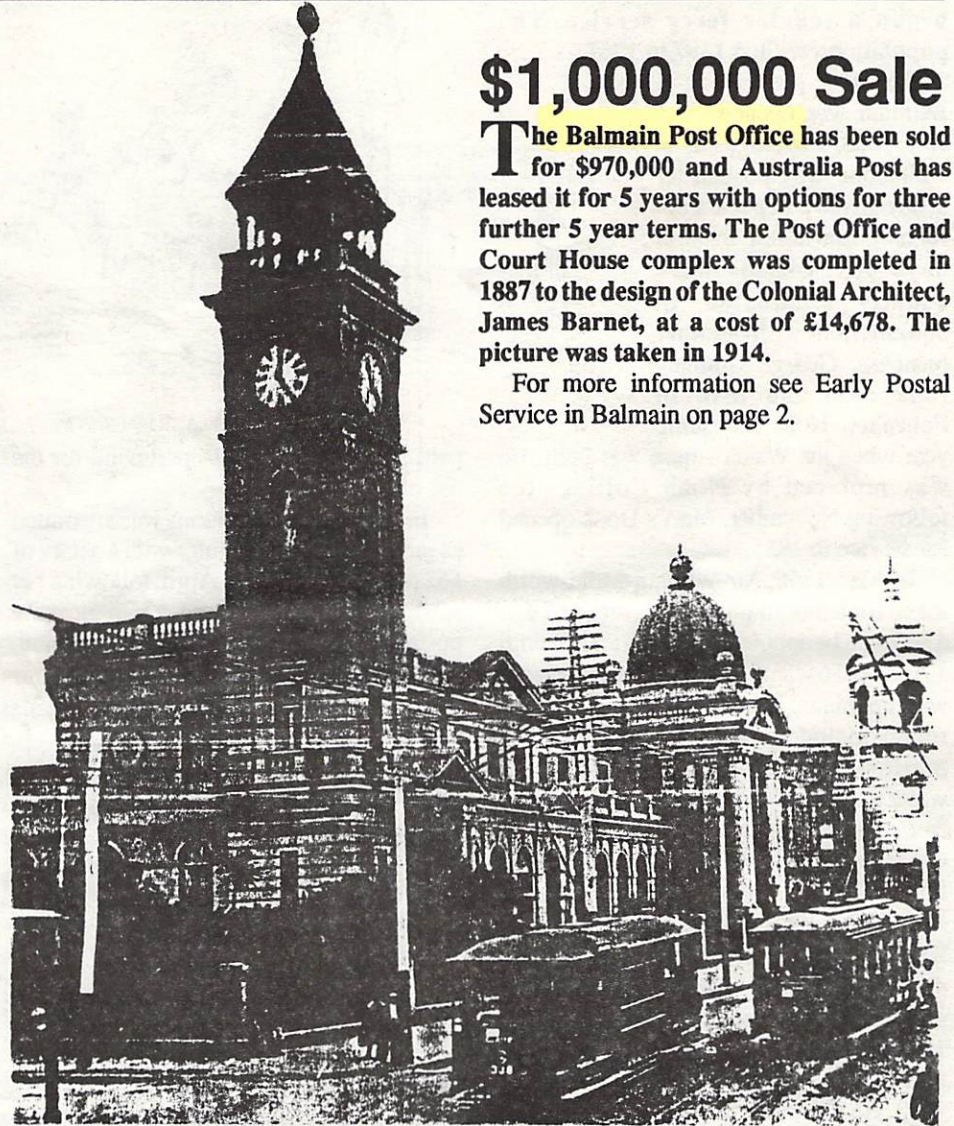
Enterprise Planning

The Report has been released of the findings of the Commissioners enquiry into the affairs of the Leichhardt Municipal Council commenced over a year ago. In their view, "the challenge facing the Council is how best to efficiently and effectively manage a Local Government administration under what is known as the 'open council' system".

Before the 1988 elections the organisation was organised on corporate lines which allowed the staff, under a general manager, wide delegation to implement policy. The open council policy resulted in the dismissal of the Town Clerk but the service departments continued to function in the accustomed manner.

Open council is well established and is strongly supported by residents so it is useful to examine how it could be strengthened. The Commissioners have made several recommendations which deserve support. They call for the clear definition of the role of the various departments under the policy of open council and the streamlining of the processing of development and building applications. The cost-effectiveness of the day labour system should be considered against the contract alternative. The personal conflict in the last council has been dissipated by the removal of three main antagonists and the more democratic management of the Council meetings. The Commissioners claim that "the authority and coordinating role of the Town Clerk and his department were severely reduced". There is now a need for the strengthening of the Town Clerk's coordinating role with the service departments. There are other proposed administrative changes but we want to concentrate on general policy.

We have heard of staff disagreement with aspects of the resident consultative approach adopted by the Council on the rezoning of the five sites. Distrust of public opinion on professional matters is understandable. The imminent establishment of precincts (advocated by the Association over two years ago and recommended by the Commissioners) will challenge the



\$1,000,000 Sale

The Balmain Post Office has been sold for \$970,000 and Australia Post has leased it for 5 years with options for three further 5 year terms. The Post Office and Court House complex was completed in 1887 to the design of the Colonial Architect, James Barnet, at a cost of £14,678. The picture was taken in 1914.

For more information see Early Postal Service in Balmain on page 2.

ability of the professional to come to terms with these new committees.

Fremantle City Council's experience in the two decades 1970 to 1990 has some useful lessons. They were able to develop their 19th Century heritage in the face of building pressure for the America's Cup. The earlier conservatism based on 'keeping everything as it is' was gradually replaced with a conviction that this generation, too, has something to contribute. They were not bogged down by bureaucracy, or data gathering but were able to allow the life of the city to dictate priorities. There had to be agreement on directives between the elected representatives and the professional staff. Most importantly the planner had to have sufficient authority to pursue complex

strategies through negotiations that had the confidence of the Council. Our Council should adopt a similar long term approach to management of the municipality based on strategic planning, direct intervention, negotiation rather than regulation and a commitment to innovation.

Previously we have called for an overall plan for the Peninsula but what is really required is an overall strategy. Plans have to be consciously open-ended without compromising the strategy. The Peninsula is completing the transition from an industrial working-class suburb to one with a more varied social mix. We must be careful to maintain those old but valued aspects while recognising the dynamic nature of the community.

Early Postal Service In Balmain

When the first houses were built in Balmain in 1836 the post was transported by rowing boat from Sydney. S Elliott was appointed the first postmaster in 1843. Mail was carried by boat to Sydney at twopence per letter. The following year Henry Perdriau began a regular ferry service. The population reached 1397 in 1851.

The first post office in Balmain was opened on 1 July 1853. Mr Augustus R Hollebone was postmaster and received £10 per annum for his postal duties. In those days post offices were usually conducted in conjunction with another business. George Chidgey took over the task in February 1854 the same year when the Watch House was built. He was replaced by Noah Collier the following November. Mort's Dock opened for service in 1855.

In May 1856, Mr William Molesworth asked for a morning letter delivery and that a postman be appointed. He had to wait until 1 April 1856 when a letter carrier (postman) was appointed to Balmain. His delivery round included "all that portion bounded by the water and a line extending from the dry dock along College Street, William Street, Darling Road and Jane Street, to Johnston's Bay". Local people were dissatisfied with Collier's service as postmaster so in 1857 Alexander Chape was given the job for £15 per year. He operated a post office agency from his grocer's shop at the corner of Queen's Place and Waterview Street (now the Post Restaurant).

The Balmain Council was incorporated on 21 February 1860 and by the following year there were 3482 residents for the postman to service. By 1865, Balmain had two letter receivers which were cleared daily. One, at the corner of Darling and Nicholson Streets was cleared at 2.45pm, while the other at the corner of Mort and John Streets was cleared at 3pm.

Money order facilities were extended to Chape's office in 1866. He died in 1870 and his widow, Catherine, became postmistress. She established an agency of the

Government Savings Bank on 1 October 1871 and by the end of the year there were ten accounts. There were now 6272 people in Balmain. Her son George Alex Chape was appointed postmaster on 16 June 1873. Her post office became an official Post and Telegraph Office on 11 August 1873 and she was paid £60 a year, half of which was



THE MAIL SACKS ARRIVING AT A BALMAIN WHARF

paid by the Telegraph Department, for the use of her premises.

In 1874, William Jenkins was appointed as junior telegraph operator with a salary of £52 per annum and on 1 April, following her son's illness Mrs Chape again became postmistress at a salary of £120 per annum.

In February 1881 there were four postmen employed at Balmain and mails

July 1882 the Borough Council wrote to the Postal Department requesting a new post and telegraph office.

Six postmen, two telegraph operators, one mail boy and four messengers were employed in Mrs Chape's office to run the postal service in 1885 in a room 14 feet by 18 feet. She retired and A Melville took over the Queen's Place post office.

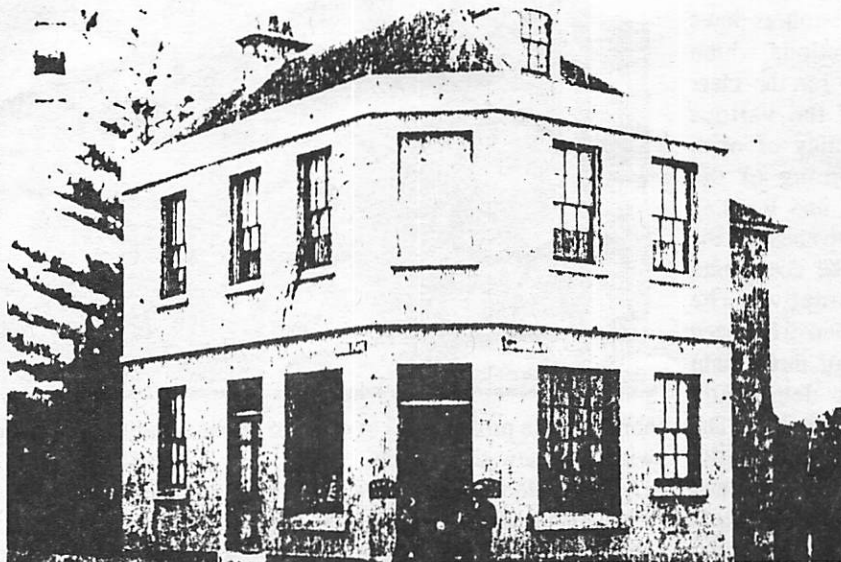
Eventually the Postal Department purchased seven blocks of land at prices varying from £9 to £12 per foot. Lots 1 to 5 were allocated for the Court House and lots 6 and 7 for postal purposes. Tenders for the construction of the new buildings were called in 1885. On 22 June 1885 the Department accepted the tender of Mr G Langley for the erection of the post office and court house complex for £14,678 to the

design of the Colonial Architect, James Barnet. The building's dual functions are expressed by the clock tower and the dome which seem to suggest a touch of India in antipodean Sydney.

The tower clock, supplied by Mr A Tornaghi, was set in motion on 21 June 1887. The complex was formally opened on Saturday, 20 August 1887 by His Excellency the Governor of NSW, Lord Carrington. The pyramidal roof of the tower and the dome are significant parts of the Balmain skyline. The pyramid was removed in 1957 because it was unsafe. A replica was lifted in place on a wet and windy October day in 1978.

In 1890 a post office agency was located near the corner of Darling and Johnston Streets, East Balmain. Miss Emma Dargan was the first postmistress.

Research by Peter Reynolds.



were despatched to the GPO four times daily and two deliveries were received. The postmaster's salary was £150 per annum, the telegraph operator received £104 and the messenger £39.

Letters posted weekly 255
Telegrams per annum 4880
Money orders per annum 1789
Bank transactions per annum 2141
Annual revenue £563/15/10

It became evident in the early 1880s that the building was too small to cope with the increasing population of Balmain and in

Our thanks to those members who have responded with their annual subscriptions.

If you haven't yet sent your cheque we would be pleased to accept it now.

Balmain Personalities

James Yeend and Family

James Yeend was a resident of Balmain in Darling Street East as early as 1843. In 1857, when he was a Sydney innkeeper, he bought *Inglefield House* (c. 1843) in George Street (now Waterview Street), Balmain from Zachary Ingold. In the early 1860s he sold a 20 ft wide strip of his land to the Balmain Council to allow construction of Wells Street.

He became a prominent Balmain citizen and Yeend Street, Yeend's Wharf and Yeends Terrace are all named after him.

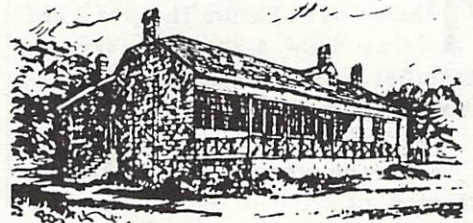
James Yeend married Ann Knowles Moore at St James Church, Sydney on 8 January 1832. They had five sons, James John b.1832, Robert b.1834, Charles b.1836, Alexander b.1844, Benjamin b.1845 and one daughter, Margaret b.1844. He retained the name *Inglefield House* and after his death in 1864 his widow, Ann, stayed on until 1880. The house was sold to Mr William Ariell, who renamed it *Louisville* after his wife, Louisa. The house is one of Balmain's oldest.

The eldest son, James John, owned the freehold of twenty three hotels from Circular Quay to Central including the

centrepiece of the Yeend pub empire, the *George and Dragon* in Pitt Street where the Hilton stands today. In the 1880s there were eleven Yeend families living in Balmain. James John lived in the *Hermitage* in Wharf Road from 1867 to 1877 when he sold it to Capt Quentin Deliotte, who gave it the name of *Wyoming*, which is still standing. James John was an alderman on the Balmain Council 1870-72.

Charles Yeend bought his home at 19 Trouton Street in 1880. This lovely waterfront house on Mort Bay was a single

INGLEFIELD HOUSE (LOUISVILLE) c.1855.



storey structure called *Inglefield* later *Inverfield*. He added a second floor. He died there in 1897 and his wife remained for a few years in the home which is still standing.

The Yeend family had also owned *Clontarf Cottage* in Wallace Street and sold it in 1908. This has been restored by Leichhardt Council for community use. Alexander Yeend lived in *Wandsworth Cottage*, Wharf Road in the 1880s. Margaret Yeend married Ellis F Leathwick Robinson at St Marys Church, Balmain on 18 March 1868 but most of the Yeends were married at St James Church, Sydney and baptised there. Many are buried at Rookwood Cemetery. Truly a very successful Balmain family.

Source: LHJ No 10. Researched by Bonnie Davidson and Peter Yeend.



Alexander
Charles

James John

Benjamin
Robert

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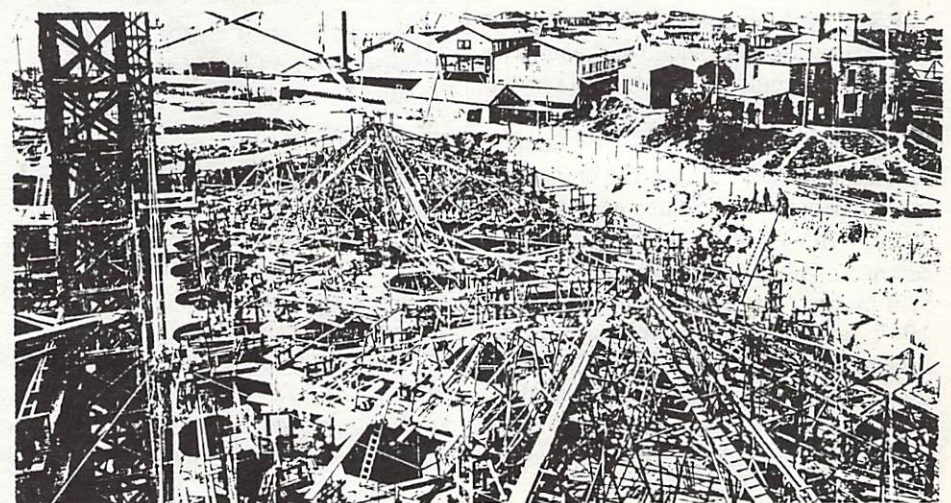
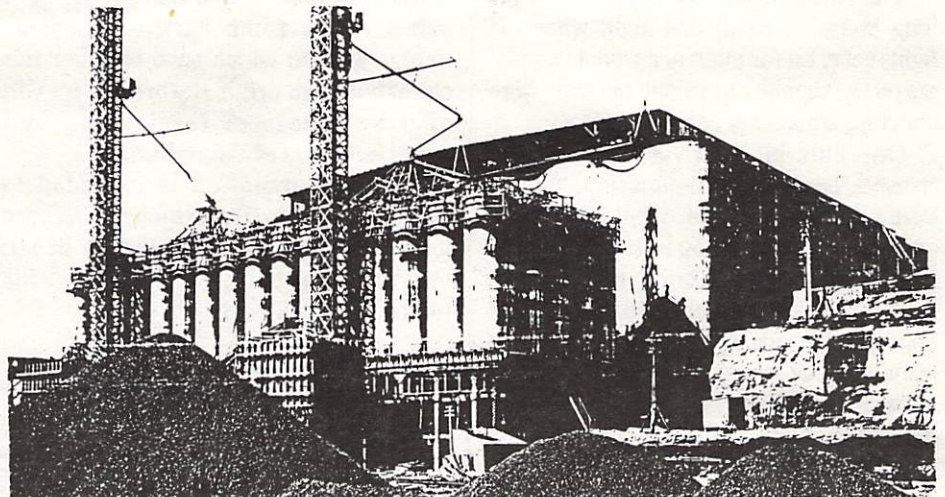
The Glebe Island Grain Silos

Since their opening in 1921 the Silos on Glebe Island have been used by the NSW Grain Corporation and its predecessors for grain storage and a ship loading terminal. These operations were transferred to Port Kembla in 1990.

Australian Cement Ltd has been granted use of part of the complex (16 silos) as a terminal for bulk cement mainly sourced from Korea. An application has been received from Manildra Harwood Sugars to use another section for storage of bulk sugar. There are dangers of flammability associated with the storage of sugar as well as the possibility of the cement and sugar being mixed. The applicant has to show methods of control.

Most recently permission was sought by Mr John Boyd for the erection of signage on the elevations to promote Sydney's bid for the Olympics in 2000. This would comprise a series of painted murals (Grecian columns?) at regular intervals on the southern and western elevations facing Victoria Road.

All the leases are for a maximum of 7 years and extensions depend on the City West Urban Strategy. Our pictures show the complex during construction in 1919.



Letter to the Editor

The article on Picture Theatres in last issue drew a response from a member, Mr T McGuire of West Australia, which we will share with you.

Dear Editor,

I read with interest about the old picture theatres of Balmain and Rozelle and thought I could add a little bit of trivia, especially with regard to the old Kings on the corner of Birchgrove Road. I have quite good memories of attending there in the mid-thirties when it was called the Roxy and Saturday night was Vaudeville night. I was about 17 or 18 at the time and my mate and I had a permanent booking in the second front row so we could try and give the chorus girls the glad eye (not very successfully I might add). The seats were prime seats at 1 shilling and 2 pence.

The Vaudeville was run by Les Shipp and one week the show would be led by Ike Delevale, who had a similar appearance to Mo. The other week would be led by Joe Raymond and the main singer was Stella Lamond, who I am pretty sure is the mother of Toni Lamond and her half sister Helen Reddy. The entertainers and audience had a very good relationship and at every opportunity the audience was brought into the act.

The Amusu was very aptly named the 'bug house'. I recall one night when the lights came on for interval a woman tapped me on the shoulder to tell me the bugs were crawling around my collar.

One little bit of trivia about the old 'Nash'. During the depression, money being very scarce, it would be quite common for anything up to 10 or 12 young fellas would be able to scratch up only about 2 shillings among them and they would approach the manager after the show had started and he would let them all in seeing as there would only be a handful of people in there anyhow.

T McGuire

Scarborough WA

P.S. I do look forward to getting the News Sheet as I do regard Balmain as a drug. I never could get it out of my system.

Editor's note. A development application is being considered by Council for the old Amusu Theatre. The proposal is for refurbishment with three new levels of offices with parking for 60 cars in the basement. Value of the work is estimated at \$5.6 million. The building was erected in 1917 and used by Amusu Cinema Productions until 1951 when Cinesound used it as a motion picture studio until 1971. More recently Greater Union has stored theatre supplies with associated offices and workshop.

Flowering Potplants

Nothing is quite as welcoming as a pot brimming with colourful flowers. No matter what season, you can change potted plants so that those in full bloom have pride of place and those that have finished flowering can be put away for replanting for follow-on colour impact.

Courtyards and balconies make best use of potted colour. The choice of container is important so that your collection has unity. A courtyard full of a mixture of plastic, wooden and ceramic pots look untidy and fragmented. Terracotta is popular for this reason. There are many styles of terracotta pots and careful selection of various sizes and shapes can look good.

Baskets can be used for pretty effects, particularly with combinations of plants, lovely blue lobelia with cineraria and primula in the centre. You can use many plants that suit your taste. Be wary of hanging plastic pots with saucers attached.



I nearly always remove saucers to allow the pot drain freely.

Plants growing in containers need special attention to watering and feeding. They dry out quickly in dry windy weather—baskets in particular. Fertilise them with a slow release granular fertiliser such as Osmocote for safe, gentle feeding. Make sure pots have large drainage holes and elevate them on a stand.

Bonnie Davidson

Watch House Exhibition

Open Bite, a group of printmakers originating from the Kuring-gai Community Art Centre, will exhibit original prints at the Watch House on Friday 19—Sunday 21 March. A special feature will be a montage of lino-cut prints of the Luna Park — Harbour Bridge area to which each member has contributed an original work. There will also be prints of fascinating and historical parts of Balmain.

A warm invitation is extended to everyone to view the exhibition between the hours 10am and 5pm. Further details may be obtained from Julia Cain 417 2788 (w) or Jan Farrell 428 2688 (h).

Photo Competition

Michael's Place is celebrating five years in Balmain in March. The Balmain Association in conjunction with Michael announce a photo competition on the theme "Looking at the Future as the Past" in two grades, High School and Primary School students.

Prizes are Michael's Place Gift Vouchers
High School Primary School
1st \$100 1st \$50
2nd \$50 2nd \$25
3rd \$25 3rd \$10

In addition a Book from the Balmain Association or an enlarged print of winning entries from Photel.

There will also be a Competition for a Poster for the Balmain Association with similar prizes. Details at Michael's Place.

What's On

Watch House Bookings

- Feb 22—Mar 1 Carmen Hagen
- Mar 19—21 Open Bite
- Mar 28—Apr 5 Renata Fisher

Meetings

- Feb 6—7pm Balmain Town Hall Special Council Meeting Rezoning Five Sites
- Feb 7—5pm Birchgrove Oval Park Improvements
- Feb 8—8pm Barbecue Friends of Dawn Fraser Pool
- Feb 12—7pm Balmain Town Hall • Site Rezoning Proposal MSD Cameron Cove

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.
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.

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