

the balmain
association
incorporated
news sheet

The Peninsula OBSERVER

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Planning The Bays Precinct

The Bays Precinct, consisting of foreshore area around White Bay, Glebe Island and Rozelle Bay, is one of four precincts within the City West Region. The precinct comprises large sites of predominantly waterfront land owned mainly by the State Rail Authority and the Maritime Services Board, currently used for port, rail and mixed industrial activities. A number of these sites will become surplus to government needs and available for redevelopment over the next ten to twenty years.

The 1990 City West Urban Strategy initiated by the State Government proposed that within the precinct, Glebe Island and White Bay would be developed to include a mix of residential and employment uses and that Rozelle Bay would provide for recreational and maritime activities. The Department of Planning has commissioned a detailed study of land use, port activity, transport,

waterways, heritage, urban form, open space and environment. It is anticipated that the draft plan for the precinct will be available for public exhibition by May.

On 8 March at the Annandale Neighbourhood Centre, Balmain Association representatives, Val Hamey and Bob Nicholls, attended a meeting of local interest groups designed to provide input to the social impact study currently being conducted by consultants.

Originally the MSB planned to move all commercial port activities to Port Botany but it is now clear that Glebe Island and White Bay Nos 1 to 4 will continue to handle cargo into the next century and White Bay No 5 & 6 until 1996. Moreover, the SRA intends to retain the Rozelle Yards and links with the port berths. The MSB estimates 20 million tonnes of cargo per year. This means that there is little opportunity for residential development in the area.

Our main concern is with separation of port and local traffic. To this objective it is imperative that the old Glebe Island Bridge should be retained. A further advantage would be the segregation of large craft from Blackwattle Bay. Once the new bridge is completed in 1996, the Roads & Traffic Authority wants to demolish the bridge because of the \$300,000 annual maintenance cost. The estimated cost of demolition is \$2.5 million and the net present cost of retention \$4.5 million. The problem is to spread the cost over a number of authorities representing users. Consultant, Alf Lester, (Lester Firth Associates), has proposed that eastbound Balmain traffic be routed through a link avoiding Victoria Road over the old bridge. Port traffic from White Bay and Glebe Island would be isolated and brought out at the old bridge.

The industrial leases in Blackwattle Bay have options for renewal in 1995 but there should be an opportunity to redevelop them in 2001. The one ship servicing the cement plant is the reason promoted by the MSB for the height of the new bridge which begs the question of why the leases couldn't have been relocated on Glebe Island to save the additional \$90 million.

Val Hamey will continue to represent the Association at regular Section 22 meetings dealing with the Bays Precinct. Full community consultation will be obtained when the draft plan is exhibited.



Heritage Pub Crawl
2.30pm Saturday 3 April
Depart from Watch House
179 Darling St. \$10 per
person

Photographic Exhibition
Pubs of Balmain & Rozelle
27 March through April
Balmain Library

MSB Workshops

The Association was represented at a workshop held recently to discuss the Maritime Services Board study for the development of their ports in the Sydney area. The aims of the study are to outline the future directions for port growth and activity in the two ports.

The workshop, one of three, was attended by thirty representatives of organisations involved with the maritime use of the ports. Altogether there were about 100 people from associations such as ours, State, Federal and local government and commercial users.

We were divided into groups of about eight to explore the issues contained in a MSB study paper. These were grouped under headings which included the use of land and water, navigation problems in the two harbours, land transport—road, rail and pipeline, the environment and port facilities. Also included were the issues involving government policy and initiatives, and the users of the two ports.

The options ranged from rationalising port assets by either selling off all surplus land and developing Port Botany for all port activities through retaining all land for any as yet unspecified use, for no development at all, to do nothing except to respond to external pressures when they arose.

Although the workshop was held in MSB Headquarters the Board played no part in the discussions, which meant that the Board was unable to influence any of the discussions.

In a plenary session at the end of the workshop the working groups presented their conclusions and recommendations. Given the wide range of interests involved, the majority of their conclusions were remarkably unanimous.

The representatives considered that the study would have been better undertaken by a higher level. It was felt that the MSB had reacted to the proposals of the City West scheme and had failed to take into account the interrelation of a great number of features. Principal among these was the crucial part that land transportation played in the operation of the ports and the control of pollution. It was also felt that the commercial aspects of the use of the ports had not been adequately addressed in that the ports had to be economically viable or else trade, and jobs, would go elsewhere. It was also considered that the closing of Sydney Port for commercial use was not possible from a strategic viewpoint.

The next stage in the process will be for the MSB's consultants in the commercial and environment fields to examine the results of the workshops and prepare a draft strategy for the Board to finalise later in the year.

Bob Nicholls

Who Knew Louise Mason?

Balmain in the 1860s was already a busy municipality when the Ward family came here in unusual circumstances. Mary Ann Ward was an Aboriginal who had attracted the attention of the British Government when she was 5 years old. When she was 27 the Legislative Council attempted to take her case to the Supreme Court and the Governor, Sir John Young, interceded on her behalf.

Mary Ann, the future Mrs Ward, was born on a farm belonging to the Australian Agricultural Co in 1834. This company was a British pastoral investment which employed convicts as shepherds. Mary Ann's mother was an Aboriginal and her father was a ticket-of-leave convict. Their relationship became the centre of attention after the company was reprimanded for its lack of discipline of convicts and the British Govt threatened to withdraw free convict labour from it. The company reacted by forcibly separating the parents and moving Mary Ann, aged 5 and her brother John, aged 3 to the Orphan School in Sydney.

At this time the Myall Creek massacre of 1838 still concerned the Governor who received advice from Britain on the "welfare" of Aborigines. Public attention was drawn to the case of Mary Ann, although no action was taken to redress the damage to the family.

Mary Ann was schooled for "domestic service" but in 1848, at the age of 14, she was permitted to marry a shepherd, Edmund Baker, whose child she was bearing. The Bakers moved to Mudgee where she worked for the Garbutts who were related to the Wards. Frederick Ward (pictured) was a drover and horse breaker in the area. Some time in the 1850s both families were involved in horse stealing. Imprisoned for receiving stolen horses, Fred Ward and James Garbutt were sent to Cockatoo Island for 4 years.



Cockatoo Island was described in the *Empire* by Henry Parkes as a "hot bed of vice" and a select committee was told of deplorable overcrowding of prisoners causing near suffocation in the cells.

By 1860, Fred Ward had returned to Mudgee and married the widowed Mary

Ann. He was required to report regularly to the district office and in 1861 he stole a horse to reach the office on time. He was arrested and returned to Cockatoo Island for 3 additional years of hard labour. Two weeks later Mary Ann gave birth to his daughter.

Ward's attempts to escape on at least three occasions were punished with solitary confinement in a hole cut into the rock. One such confinement lasted 21 days. Meanwhile Mary Ann changed her name to Louise Mason and moved into domestic service in Balmain. From there she organised Fred's escape and swam to the island to leave food and files. On 11 September 1863, Fred Ward slipped into the harbour with another man called Britten. Leg-irons and clothing were left behind and Mary Ann provided a light to guide the swimmers to Balmain. It was the only successful escape from Cockatoo Island.

Fred and Mary Ann were fugitives and poverty probably drove them to bush-ranging. Fred became known as Captain Thunderbolt and was often accompanied by Mary Ann dressed as a man — sometimes known as Mason. She was an asset to him, an excellent rider and quick-witted. However, when her third pregnancy kept her at home, the police took her and her children as hostages. Since the police were unable to catch their man, they had Mary Ann sentenced under the Vagrancy Act and her two older children were taken from her because she had 'no visible means' to support them.

This action came to the attention of the Legislative Assembly where it was argued as a "perversion of justice... [from] which the Aborigines were especially exempt". The case was submitted to the Governor who released her. She was subsequently watched and charged with stealing (7 yards of unbleached calico and 5 1/2 yards of derry) but was acquitted when witnesses said that she had paid for the goods.

Throughout the remainder of her brief life, Mary Ann assisted her husband, dying of tuberculosis at the age of 34. It will be interesting to discover what the Aboriginal Oral History program of the University of Technology is adding to the genealogies of European settlement. Fossicking in family histories will surely lead us to the true story of Mary Ann's stay in Balmain or to those who knew Louise Mason.

Frances Heathfield

(With acknowledgment to RAHS Dec 1992—"Thunderbolt's Mary Ann - An Aboriginal Bushranger" by Jillian Oppenheimer). Editor's Note: Balmain History Trail Plaque N0 46 at Ellington Park mentions Frederick Ward's escape. In his career as a bushranger he never shot a victim or any of the police who pursued him. His grave is at Uralla near where the police shot him in May 1870.

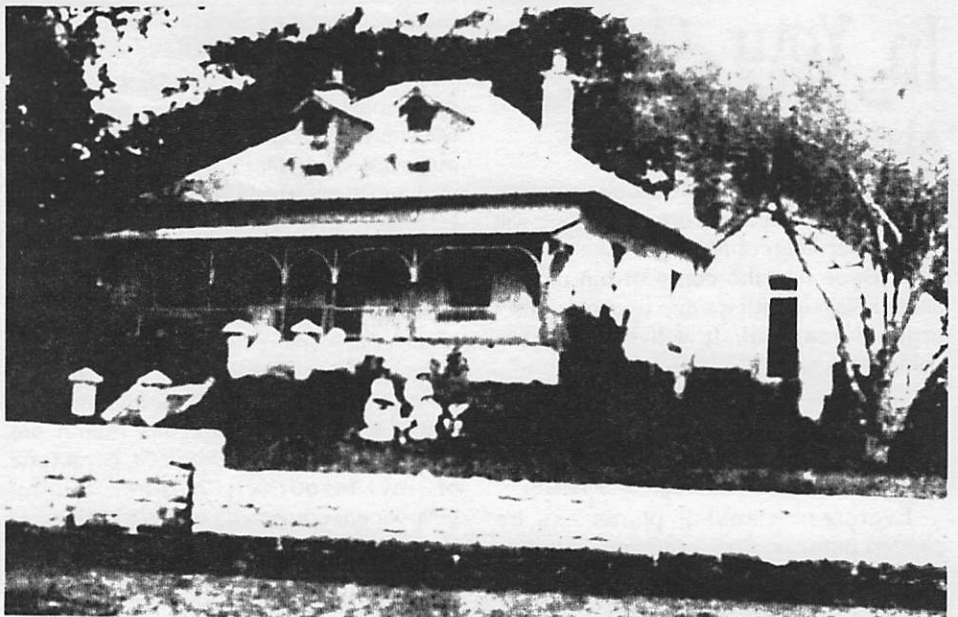
Balmain Personality

The Degotardis

Johann Nepomuk Degotardi was born on the 26th September 1823 in Laibach, Austria. The Degotardi's were Catholics. Johann was named after his father, who was a printer based in Graz, Austria. Johann Jnr. married Minna Frankel in 1852 and they sailed in the *Pantha*, arriving in Sydney in December, 1853. Johann's passport describes him as "of average height, brown hair, high forehead, brown eyes, average nose and mouth, brown beard, pointed chin, oval face, healthy complexion."

By June 1855, Johann now John Degotardi & Co., Engravers, Lithographers and General Printers, had his business address at 20 York Street Sydney. Degotardi bought Lot 10 of the Peacock's Estate in 1859 and lived in Edward Street, Balmain East from 1861 to his death in 1882. From 1868 he is listed in directories at 287 George Street, Sydney as a photographic artist. He is credited as being the author of the first book published in Australia on printing in 1861, and the founder of a photographic dynasty. "Photography will be handed down to posterity as the truest and most lasting monument of the combined powers of man, art and nature." One of Degotardi's eight children was a son also named John, who followed in his father's footsteps. John Jnr. lived most of his life in Balmain except for a few years at Paddington.

The use of the historic photograph, notably by social and art historians, but also by architects, planners, geographers, and anthropologists, has expanded to the point where the photographic record is frequently an indispensable aid to data collection, interpretation and analysis. The source of many references are the Sydney City Council's Demolition Books and the Department of Public Works "Plague Photographs of 1900", the latter containing some 600 photographs. John Degotardi Jnr. was employed as a photographer by the Public Works Department from 1874 to 1920. A member of the family relates "As an officer of the Department of Public



26 Grove Street



John & Sidonia with sons Charles & John

Works, he was not allowed to print his name on the photographs he took." Further examination of the Plague photographs details the same man appearing nineteen times. The likeness is to the moustached John Degotardi, holding or smoking his S-shaped pipe.

John Degotardi and wife Sidonia nee Berthold, lived at 26 Grove Street, Birchgrove from 1911 until the 20s when they separated and Sidonia continued to

live there. When their daughter, Daisy, married Harold Brown they took up residence with her mother until 1946. Degotardi died in 1937. Archibald McLean, sea Captain, had built the residence at 26 Grove Street, in 1864 and remained till 1881. The house was originally built as a four square plus two (four rooms as a square, with two more projecting off one of them.) The sandstone was said to be quarried from Ballast Point. The timbers were pit sawn and the nails were hand forged. A ballroom was added later which was in use in the time of the Degotardis. The house is now demolished and replaced with an apartment development.

The Degotardis of Balmain have indeed contributed to our understanding of their Sydney of the 1900's.

Joan Parsons nee Brown and her sister Lorna Faulkner recently visited the site of their old home. Peter and Yvonne Kendall, who reside at the *Edgewater* apartments, entertained the sisters and recorded memories of their happy childhood, schooldays at Birchgrove and the years of World War II.

Kath Hamey

Source: Max Harris Photofile. Joan Parsons.

Another Webster REP

After his defeat in the Supreme Court because of lack of consultation with the Leichhardt Council, the Minister for Planning, Mr Webster, promised to set up a section 22 meeting to discuss the issues of open space and density as well as traffic management involved in the five Peninsula sites. He offered the Council three positions on the committee but did not reply to the Mayor's request for the names of the other members.

He has now instructed the Dept of Planning to prepare another Regional Environmental Plan (REP) rather than consider the Local Environmental Plans (LEP) that Council submitted to him last year. The Mayor, Ald Larry Hand is disappointed with this approach.

If your Observer came in a renewal form wrapper your Annual Subscriptions are yet to be paid.

New

Leichhardt Historical Journal No 17 by Peter Reynolds. Contents include details of A W Young's Subdivision, **Balmain**: 1847. Part 1: From Adolphus St to Stephen St. **Leichhardt**: The Excelsior Subdivision, Part 1 (Parramatta Rd, Norton, Marion & Renwick Streets). **Annandale**: Hunter Baillie Church.

Introductory price \$12.00.

As well we have Nos 3 & 4 Reprints. Each priced at \$7.00.

In Your Garden

April Gardening

There will be no mistaking autumn. Every time you go outdoors there will be another heap of leaves to rake up. Put all of these into the compost bin or in a heap, in layers with garden refuse or other organic material. It will be valuable compost in spring.

The now bare area under deciduous trees can be prettied up by planting a few bulbs of scilla, tritelia or grape hyacinth or a sprinkling with some seed or alyssum.

Evergreen climbing plants can be planted out now. *Rosa banksiae* "luted" is a fast growing climber that produces

masses of pretty yellow flowers in spring. Roses, fuchsias, dahlias, sasanqua camellias, chrysanthemums, canna and nerines will also be flowering well so you will enjoy working in the garden. Any of the bulbs listed for March can be planted as well as hyacinths. Using an all-purpose fertiliser, give fortnightly feedings to established seedlings.

As we come to May this seems to be clean-up month but as it is much cooler it is easier to work in the garden. Don't leave it any later than early May to plant the spring flowering bulbs. Other bulbous type plants to plant or repot this month are sprekelia, cyrtanthus, brodiaea, clivia (one of my favourite), astilbe, lillium, belladonna, convallaria and eucomis.

The early japonica camellias will be blooming. If weather conditions are not providing adequate moisture, give plants a deep watering adding some liquid seaweed. Watch that the azaleas and rhododendrons do not become dry or their flowering could be affected. Thick clumps of buds on camellias could be thinned if you want bigger blooms. If roses are to be planted during the winter, prepare the soil with organic material and pelletised manure.

Bonnie Davidson

The Observer is now printed bi-monthly with 6 issues yearly.



ARTS BALMANIA

It's on again this September. Last year was a resounding success. Lucas Blacker of Golden Canvas Gallery had seen the success of Community Arts Festival in England. On his return to Balmain he organised last year's gallery walk. Fifteen galleries opened on the Saturday with up to 50 or 60 people an hour visiting the galleries. Later people went on to sample the local fairè with most restaurants being booked out that evening.

Lucas is again co-ordinating this year's festival. We hope to expand the festival to include music, drama, poetry or any other form of art practiced in Balmain.

Could you help? Maybe you could organise or sponsor an activity, enlist the help of people you think could assist, or suggest ideas we could use to make this year's festival a real community event. I would particularly like to hear from any writers, playwrights, actors or poets who would like to perform their works during the festival.

I can be contacted on 810 1411.

Steve South

Congratulations to David Samson and staff of the Balmain Library for the success of the Book Sale last month. On April 29th they celebrate the 15th anniversary of the Library. During Heritage Week we have provided them with a photographic display of the pubs of Balmain & Rozelle

What's On

Exhibitions at the Watch House

- **Open Bite Printmakers**
Apr 3-4
- **Jean Buettel** - Apr 9-11
- **Imma Thiel** - Apr 17-26
- **Dimity Jones** - May 1-9
- **Leonard Matkevich** - May 15-30
- **Tom Mravcic** - Jun 12-14
- **Ilija Majdanizic** - Jun 19-27

- **Heritage Pub Stroll**
from Watch House
at 2.30pm Sat 3 April

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Apology

In our last issue one vital word was missing from the article on indigenous people which could have implied that the Balmain Sailing Club destroyed Aboriginal drawings on the site. The sentence should have mentioned the site **near** the Sailing Club. Our apologies to George McGoogan, Hon Secretary, who wishes it to be known that he and local residents were disgusted by the demolition of the cave to make way for the River Street apartments.

Computers to Canvas

Allambie artist, Jean Buettel, will hold the first public exhibition of her work this Easter, just 12 months after leaving a successful business career in the computer industry.

Specialising in flora and fauna subjects which reflect her love of the Australian bush, Jean is mostly self-taught but over the past ten years has received tuition at the ANU and Mitchell College, Bathurst.

More than forty of her works, mostly watercolours, pastels and mixed media, will be on display in the Watch House from Friday 9 April to Sunday 11 April. Jean will donate the sale of one to the Wildlife & Information Rescue Service of NSW.

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 realisation of the above

The Watch House is open every
Saturday from 12 to 3pm

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/fax 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.

Annual Subscriptions:

Household \$16, Pensioners &
Students \$7, Organisation \$21.