



the balmain
association
incorporated
news sheet

The Peninsula OBSERVER

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Kirkbride College

The staff of the Sydney College of Arts are excited by the prospect of moving to the historic Kirkbride buildings on the Rozelle Hospital site. After five years of lobbying they have been granted a 99 year lease of the heritage listed buildings. The NSW Government is committed to the maintenance of the buildings while the University of Sydney will contribute \$180,000 annually to the college budget.

The College is currently operating on four separate campuses - three in Balmain and one in Glebe. It will move into Kirkbride in 1995/6 after a \$19 million refurbishment by the Public Works Department. The Federal Government will contribute \$12.6 million of this amount. Old hospital rooms, built in 1840, will be converted into specialist facilities, workshops, lecture halls and student spaces. The complex, with spacious parklands, will be able to house 500 students who will study a range of

visual art, craft and design courses.

The land on which Kirkbride is built was part of the original 50 acres fronting Iron Cove, called *Fairlight*, granted to Luke Ralph, labourer, on 22 November 1821. The land was included in John Brennan's Garry Owen Estate in 1840. On the advice of Frederick Norton Manning, Inspector of the Insane, the Government became aware of the need for a new mental hospital for the Sydney area but it was the Colonial Architect, James Barnet, who chose the site, now called Callan Park. In 1879, a contract was awarded to Low and Kerr for £250,000. The first stone was laid on 22 April 1880 and the vast complex was completed in January 1885. The main group of buildings were named after the eminent American, Dr Thomas S Kirkbride, who had published ideas on the design of mental hospitals. Four fifths of the stone had been obtained from the actual building site during excavations for two underground water tanks, each of which was to hold a million gallons of water.

Balmain Plans

Planning and Housing Minister, Mr Robert Webster, intends to exhibit the draft REP on the five peninsula sites in late October. It is hoped that the plan will follow the extensive and constructive consultation through the Section 22 advisory committee involving State and local governments, land owners and residents.

Development control plans have been prepared by working parties on each of the five sites. It is expected that the plans will be exhibited at the Leichhardt and Balmain town halls with provision for public comment.

Leichhardt Council recently rejected a development proposal from the MSB for 95 town houses on the No 2 Buoy site in Cameron Cove.

Back to Balmain Day

For the past four years Back to Balmain Day has attracted old Tigers from all parts of the country. On Sunday 31 October, former Pigeon Ground School students will have a reunion at 9am and a ecumenical service will be held at St Andrews at 10am. Elkington Park is the venue for a picnic day from 11am. A stall will have steak and sausage sandwiches, soft drinks and ice creams. The Leichhardt Council Band will play in the rotunda from 2pm.

Pubs Exhibition at the Watch House. Knowing that his school was to close, he was inspired to write a book about this first Christian Brothers School in NSW. The invaluable help given by Bonnie, Kath Hamey, Peter Reynolds with historical expertise and Klin Sullivan's beautiful paintings contributed to the enormous success of the pictorial history.

Brother Warner will be remembered, not only by *Visions, Dreams and Memories*, but also by his tireless efforts in providing the very best he could give to his students.

June Harris

Brother Warner 1939-93

Many members of the Association would have been shocked to hear of the sudden death of Brother Michael Warner, the last Principal of Christian Brothers High School, Balmain. He died suddenly on 23 August after suffering a stroke whilst on a school excursion with his students from St Dominics College, Penrith.

Brother Warner entered religious life in 1957 after leaving the Christian Brothers School, Lewisham. On completing his training at Strathfield, Bro Michael's teaching career began at Mt Isa in 1961. In February 1967 he was transferred Papua New Guinea where he served for ten years. His next

position was Year 10 Boarding Master at Waverley College in 1977.

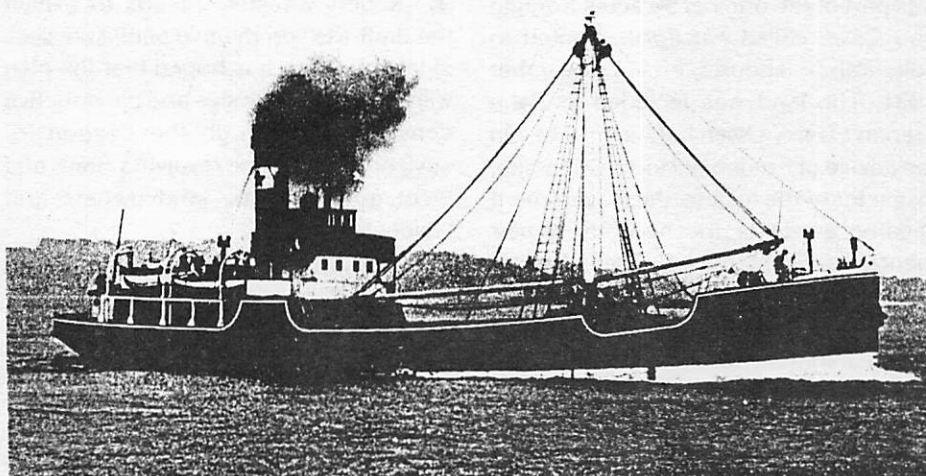
At this point one of his outstanding qualities, which surfaced many times in ensuing years, became evident. At the time of the Luna Park tragedy, Michael's great compassion and care for his students earned him the love and respect of countless people and parents.

From 1982 to 1987 Brother moved from Wagga Wagga to Gosford in the position of Assistant Principal and then in 1988 he was transferred to Balmain as Superior/Principal. It was during this time that his relationship with the Balmain Association began. He met Bonnie Davidson and was impressed by the



Birchgrove Park Sunk.

At 3am on Thursday, 2nd August 1956 the 640-ton coastal collier *Birchgrove Park* (pictured) capsized and sank 7 miles south of Broken Bay, while on her way from Newcastle to Sydney. The ship carrying 500 tons of coal, listed badly to port for some hours and turned over and "sank like a stone" when struck beam-on by a huge wave. Of the fourteen crew on board only four



survived. The dead included the ship's master, Captain Lawrence Lynch, of Wollstonecraft and David Waltanen, first mate, of Pashley Street Balmain.

Mr H Goling, signal-man on duty at South Head signal station, received a frantic SOS flashed from the deck of the stricken ship. Mr Gosling said the signals were flashed through a Morse lamp at a rate too fast for him to read "I only got a letter here and there", but he raised the alarm, notified the Harbour Master. Immediately word of the disaster was received, officials of the R W Miller and Co Pty Ltd, owners of the *Birchgrove Park*, directed the ship *William Macarthur* to go to the scene. The pilot ship *Captain Cook* was called to the area as was the coastal ships of the Miller Line, *Canopus* and *Teralba*. The Navy had been alerted and soon after 8am the boom defence vessel *Kookaburra* and the mine sweepers *Cootamundra* and *Wagga* began to search the area for survivors. Two crew members of the *HMAS Wagga* risked their lives to save Kenneth Fabian of Randwick. The submarine *Thorough*, dispatched from Balmoral, joined in the search at 10am. Two Neptune long-range reconnaissance bombers took off earlier from Richmond RAAF station. They dropped flame floats to mark their positions and directed a Naval ship to the wreckage. The majority

of the men who died were family men with young children. A graphic account of the tragedy was published in Sydney Morning Herald, Friday 3rd August 1956.

The most famous and well recorded shipwreck off Port Jackson is the *Dunbar*. The *Dunbar*, "a safe Family Ship" left Plymouth on 31st May 1857, bound for Sydney under the experienced command of Captain James Green. There were 63 passengers, 59 crew and general cargo. The voyage was

uneventful, with no sickness, no births or deaths and mild weather until sight of New South Wales, when gale-force winds and heavy seas followed the ship all the way up the coast. At midnight on 20th August the ship was hurled broadside on to the rocks between the South Head lighthouse and the Gap and quickly disintegrated. The passengers and crew had little chance of surviving in the pitch black darkness and tremendous seas. Only one man escaped, Able Seaman James Johnson, a young Irishman, who had sensibly divested himself of most of his clothing as the ship broke up: "I hove everything off: boots, trousers and pea coat - when the alarm was given, leaving only a shirt and cinglet".

The next morning, about 7.30, Capt Wiseman of the steamship *Grafton* reported wreckage surrounding his ship as it entered the harbour. A further search soon revealed the remains of the *Dunbar* and her gruesome entourage. Dozens of mutilated bodies - the sharks had left few whole - were swirling around in the still heavy seas and piling up on the rocks, a collection of timber planks, broken casks and cargo bales, spilling out their contents of soft goods - calicos, prints, clothing, silks and carpeting, felt hats, shirts and candles, even a piano-forte and a sofa were observed floating near the wreck, while more bodies many

of them children were being tossed up to the rocks. There were several private funerals but for the unrecognisable majority, internment at St Stephen's cemetery, Newtown, in a common grave. All work in Sydney ceased for the funeral, thousands gathered at the burial place to honour that single grave.

Tragedy struck again on 24th October 1857 at 3am, when the ship *Catherine Adamson* travelling from England, was wrecked on North Head with 20 lives lost. A memorial was erected at Government expense to the memory of the people who lost their lives in the *Dunbar* and *Catherine Adamson*. The inscription reads: *Within this tomb were deposited by direction of the Government of New South Wales such remains as could be discovered of the passengers and crew who perished in the ships Dunbar and Catherine Adamson, the former of which was driven ashore and foundered when approaching the entrance to Port Jackson on the night of the 20th August, the latter after entering this port on the morning of the 24th October 1857. On the anniversary of the Dunbar disaster, a memorial service is held at the grave site in the old Camperdown cemetery that surrounds St Stephen's Church, Newtown.*

Sources: Sydney Morning Herald, 22nd August 1857 and 26th October, 1857. The State Archives hold a number of records relating to shipwrecks such as: Papers relating to inquiries conducted by the Maritime Board of New South Wales and Court of Maritime Inquiry 1872- 1989. Papers about the *Dunbar*, with a list of crew and passengers lost, and a three volume series of books entitled, *Australian Shipwrecks 1622-1900*.

Kath Hamey.

Balmain Armada

On Saturday 18 September a ferry, 20 motor vessels, a dozen rubber duckies as well as kayaks were in a rally against the Pyrmont heliport. Sandra Nori, MP, announced that she would prepare legislation to stop the State Govt approving the heliport. The Mayor said that Commissioner Simpson had cited a report from UK expert, Dr J B Ollerhead, but had omitted its findings. A graph in the report showed that helicopters had a greater impact on urban environments than fixed wing aircraft.

LinkUp

Sydney Public Transport Conference

Some 200 people made their way to Granville TAFE on the weekend of August 22/23 to attend a conference about the transport network that connects the people of Sydney and the human links needed to improve that network". LinkUp, which is a group composed of environmental, community health and transport groups around Sydney, has produced a transport plan with a series of light and heavy rail, ferry services and cycleways designed to improve mobility while at the same time reducing our dependence on the automobile. LinkUp believes that Sydney's transport systems should be based on the following principles:

Equal access to all regardless of age, geography, income and language, and ensuring safety from assault and harassment; Ecological sustainability; Community cohesion, health and safety; Integration of modes and routes of transport, with community groups involved in planning, and between types of transport, land use and social infrastructure.

Associate Professor of Murdoch University, Peter Newman, who addressed Balmain residents two years ago, was one of the major speakers at the conference. He restated much of what he said here about light rail and about traffic calming that was another aspect of planning to be included in the conference literature.

The main purpose of the two days was, however, to encourage wider community input so that Sydnesiders could all come together and build on their own transport solutions and strategies". Conference members divided into ten workshops to exchange ideas on these solutions and strategies. The workshop attended by Balmain Association members heard the disturbing news from the Light Rail Association that the Government's plan for the northern beaches network could involve needless expenditure of millions of dollars on tunnels and possible destruction of existing reserve land.

Lack of funding has meant that conference papers are not yet available. Any interested readers can get copies of the Transport Plan itself by phoning the Total Environment Centre on 247 471. LinkUp hopes to present its final proposal to the State Government in six months time.

Debby Nicholls

President's Report

This has been a rewarding year for the Balmain Association in that our aim to improve the amenities in our area has been taken up by our State member and Leichhardt Council as well as the newly established Precinct Committees (one of our policy commitments).

The need to conserve the character of this area (in spite of the NSW Government's plans to whittle away our amenities) is being supported by a large community determined to save the Hospital and Ballast Point and to establish a sane public transport system.

Within the Balmain, Birchgrove and Rozelle area, the Watch House has become the focus of increasing interest. It is a desired centre for the display of art, attracting artists from other parts of Sydney, whose exhibitions have been providing us with more visitors and more income. The Watch House is not only of interest for artists and visitors but it is

also the centre for the work of the History Committee who, despite their on-going research, found time to publish the successful "Gourlie's Corner" and provide for the professional history display, soon to be permanently housed.

Extensive repairs and a face-lift have given the Watch House the charm that captivates visitors; and the reconstruction of the garden will enhance the appearance of the building.

It was a constructing year, not only for the Watch House and the Balmain Association, but also one in which the plans of earlier committees are rapidly being realised. Conservation is also being promoted in the shopping centres. The Council has undertaken the care of the War Memorial in Loyalty Square.

The annual "Back to Balmain Day" and the "Arts Balmania" will find much to commend. With such support we look forward to another successful year.

Frances Heathfield, President

Management Committee

President: Frances Heathfield
Vice President: Ann Bastock
Treasurer: Debby Nicholls
Minutes Sec: Jeremy Arnott
Public Officer & Editor: Val Hamey
History Committee:
Convenor: Kath Hamey
Committee:
Bonnie Davidson, Debby Nicholls

Watch House Gallery Committee:

Convenor: Steve South

Leonard Matkevitch

Conservation Committee:

Debby Nicholls, Jeremy Arnott.

Fund Raising Committee:

Bonnie Davidson

Jean Torrens

Kay Trippe

Traffic Committee:

David Ramsay, Val Hamey.

Treasurer's Report 1992-93

Income	1991-92	1992-93	Expenditure	1991-92	1992-93
Membership	4484.00	3826.00	News Sheet	2959.87	2090.39
Grants	3075.17	2950.00	Watch House	7406.03	16251.56
Donations		468.99	W H Operating	727.69	2808.69
Watch House Hire	8955.35	12347.85			
Leaflets	734.23	694.60	Publications	249.25	1259.60
Around Balmain	2524.00	1426.50	Gourlie's Corner		5340.20
Gourlie's Corner		5001.15	Called to the Bar	9501.53	
Called to the Bar	13440.58	2064.02			
Other Publications	896.50	984.00	Miscellaneous	1049.13	260.15
Miscellaneous	1155.60	90.50	Subscriptions	175.00	210.00
Loan Repayment		2000.00	Music 2041	1000.00	
W'hold Tax Return		102.75	To BDT		1500.00
For BDT		1500.00	Govt Charges	152.25	70.31
Interest	407.39	515.09	Reissue Cheque		750.00
Stop Cheque		750.00	History Cttee	662.74	2128.08
History Cttee	1384.58	740.90	Totals	24956.01	32668.98
Totals	37057.82	35462.35			
Bank Balances					
Cheque A/C	5897.51	18518.71	Income	37057.82	35462.35
unpresented chqs		106.00	Expenditure	24956.01	32668.98
Savings A/C	10142.85	5361.95	Surplus	12101.81	2793.37
History A/C	5328.81	387.88			
Totals	21369.17	24162.54			

In Your Garden

October Notes

Mid-spring sees lovely colours all around the garden with azaleas, rhododendrons, flowering fruits, callistemons, weigelas and many other plants in bloom. Ornamental fruit trees, still at a manageable size, need a trim when their flowering is finished. Most evergreen plants can be planted. Choose one or two that produce perfumed flowers, such as boronia megastigma, daphne odora. Do not lift the spring-flowering bulbs until their foliage dies off.

Lawns grow quickly now, so mow regularly, being sure to water well after fertiliser has been applied. Using an all-purpose gardening fertiliser, give a



feeding to roses, fuchsias, hydrangeas, daphne and tub plants.

In the next few weeks annual seedlings will be available. Look for Zinnia, petunia, aster, marigold and helichrysum. Dahlia tubers can be planted during late spring. In November, when the evenings are longer, quite a few garden tasks can be done at that time of day. Watering and the preservation of

moisture in the soil are important for a few months, so use any available compost as a mulch. If rose blooms aren't cut for a vase, remove the spent flower heads. If chrysanthemum bushes are becoming leggy, cut them back to about half their growth. Now is the time to repot those house and porch plants as well as basket plants which can be placed in new soil after they flower.

Bonnie Davidson

140th Anniversary Service

On the 22nd August 1993, the 140th Anniversary Service was held at the St Andrew's Congregational Church, Balmain, which was filled to capacity to hear the Guest Speaker, the Rev Hilda M Abba, a Minister of St Andrew's 1952-1955, who had officiated at the Centenary Anniversary. In attendance were Senior Minister, the Rev Dr F Lambert-Carter, Associated Ministers: the Rev Peter Carter, Pastor Warren Rogan, the Rev Luteru Vaifale. Church Secretary, Mrs Sheila Carter gave the Annual Report. The Director of Music was Glenn Amer with soloist Colin Gill and the Samoan Choir. At the request of the Congregation Home Mission Society of NSW in 1857, the Rev Jacob Jones of Wiltshire, England, was sent to Australia by the Colonial Mission Society in order to assume the pastorate of the Balmain Church. Jones, however, did not to take up his appointment for he drowned when the sailing ship *Catherine Adamson* (see Birchgrove Park Sunk) was wrecked on North Head on 24/10/1857. The Address at each Anniversary Service is known as "Jacob Jones Memorial Address" and there is a memorial plaque in the vestibule of St Andrew's Church.

On Sunday 17th October at 4.00pm A Musical Celebration will be held at St Andrew's Church to celebrate the total restoration of the historic Walker Organ. Organist & Musical Director Glenn Amer with soloist Helena Kong. The organ was

built in 1867 for St John's Anglican Church, Darlinghurst at a cost of 300 pounds. It was moved to Balmain in 1887 when a large Hill & Son organ was purchased for St John's. The Organ Society of Sydney have arranged another organ recital for Sunday 31 October at 3.00pm. Organist Michael Dyer. **Kath Hamey**

A View of Watercolour II

A Group Show opening Friday 29 October 1993 at 6.30pm then Saturday and Sunday 30 & 31 October from 10am to 4pm at the Watch House.

This group of watercolour artists has been meeting in Lilyfield for over four years under the guidance of Tina Slon. Their subjects vary from portraits to landscapes, still life and abstracts. All the paintings will be for sale at reasonable prices - ideal for Christmas gifts.

What's On

Exhibitions at the Watch House

- Hilary Cassidy - Oct 2-4
- Robin Elphick - Oct 8-10
- Anne Carney - Oct 16-24
- Watercolour II - Oct 30-31
- Leonard Matkevich - Nov 6-14
- Nado Milat - Nov 27-28
- Imma Thiel - Dec 4-12
- Janet Scott - Dec 15-21

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The Country comes to Balmain.

WASAJAH (Working Australians for Sustainable Agriculture, Jobs and Homes) has been established to provide housing, skills and permanent jobs for disadvantaged people who will work in nurseries and organic gardens and to assist in the repair of Australia's degraded land by applying the techniques of sustainable agriculture and tree regeneration. As part of a drive to set up a self-help program for rural people, a unique exhibition is to be held in Balmain at Clontarf Cottage, 4 Wallace Street, on October 8, 9 & 10. Visitors will be able to purchase rural art; organic wines, jams, chutneys, cakes, sweets, sauces, made by people who grow the crops; organic fabrics to help allergy sufferers, crafted leather works, beautiful wood-turned craft, woven fabrics; see displays of organic and biodynamic fruit and vegetables, bread, juices and traditional long jars of preserved fruits.

This program has been organised in great detail by volunteers who receive no income or expenses. Contact Chairman: Rev Peter Carter 818 2674 or Hon Secretary: Graham Clark 817 5805.

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.