

the balmain
association
incorporated
news sheet

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Leichhardt Town Plan

Before 1900 building regulations were ineffective beyond the Sydney Council boundaries. Moves towards a building code went on in a desultory manner because most aldermen had some interest in property. Balmain Council voted on 15 October 1878 to enforce a five shilling fee for any building erected. Ignoring this brought a £2 fine.

At a Council meeting on 25 November 1879, Ald Gow expressed concern at persons building two and three houses on allotments intended for one house. He was opposed on the grounds of impracticality - such a restriction would drive people away if they intended to build; it would interfere with the liberty of the people; the expense of carrying out necessary regulations "would be enormous". Ald Gow's motion was lost. It was not until 2 June 1896 that Council proposed a short building Act "to regulate the erection of buildings according to the locality and street". Strict building regulations did not come into effect for suburban councils until the 1919 Local Government Act was passed.

In 1992, Leichhardt Council initiated the process of preparing a new Town Plan which will provide a comprehensive package of planning controls and guidelines for the use of land and the development of buildings. Council adopted a Vision for Leichhardt; *To foster Leichhardt's distinguishing characteristics, namely; diversity, tolerance, community involvement and environmental consciousness.*

Fostering diversity is a key element of the Town Plan. Traditionally, this diversity results from mixing local shops, studios, home offices, workshops and cultural/ recreational facilities with residential uses.

Town planning generally aims to reduce

conflicts of use by isolating incompatible uses. Leichhardt needs a land use and assessment system that is flexible enough to achieve diversity of land use, whilst protecting the amenity of existing uses. Performance standards for development are necessary to ensure that this objective is successful. The provisions can be divided into measures and guidelines. Measures are typical requirements expected to be met by a development proposal. Guidelines are provisions outlined as useful.

The Council's planners have produced a draft Interface Issue Paper. These are mostly performance measures or 'deemed-to-comply' provisions. Other measures and guidelines are to be included in further issue papers covering built form, density, street-scapes, heritage, transport, traffic, etc. The assessment of development proposals through a performance standards approach can enable a more adaptable system of control to operate with least expense.

We cannot seriously adopt a zoning system which ignores current trends. In this decade there will be more and more residents working at home. The public service now has an industrial award covering such conditions of work. Employment close to home can help to reduce car dependency in urban areas.

Local government's real function is the regulation of the property industry. It is this regulatory function which provides planning bodies with the greatest scope

for creative management of the urban environment. Planning with enterprise needs an agreed set of long term objectives; a relatively stable set of attitudes and preferences; and it needs to take an open and flexible approach to the manner by which these things are implemented.

The present controls are contained in Local Environmental Plan No 20 and Development Control Plan No 1. The high number of amendments to LEP 20 are evidence of its inflexibility. The precinct descriptions in DCP 1 are considered to make an impressive and valuable document. Currently, Council is considering three zoning proposals which promote flexibility and adaptability by broadening the range of uses permitted with development consent within a particular zone, while prohibiting others. The first has three zones - living, working and leisure. The second has five zones - residential, business, industrial, open space and public lands. The last has five zones with sub-zones and is the more traditional and least flexible. The ideal may be a combination of the features of the first two.

Heritage Week 17-24 April

Clontarf Cottage (1844), 4 Wallace Street, Balmain. *Clontarf Cottage and its Environments*. Saturday 16, Sunday 17, 11am-4pm. Entry Free.

Watch House (1854), 179 Darling Street, Balmain. *History Murals & Open Bite Heritage Collage*. Saturday, 16, 23, Sunday 17, 24, 11am-4pm. Free Entry.

Heritage Walk. Saturday 16 & 23. Depart 2pm, Main gate Balmain Markets, Darling Street corner Curtis Road, Cost \$5pp to Watch House restoration.

Balmain Library. *Panorama Views of Balmain. Now and Then*. Saturday 16-Saturday 23. Library hours.

Balmain on the Move.

The Balmain Darling Street shop windows will display a map, photograph or painting of early Balmain.

Contact 8184954.



Balmain Volunteer Rifles

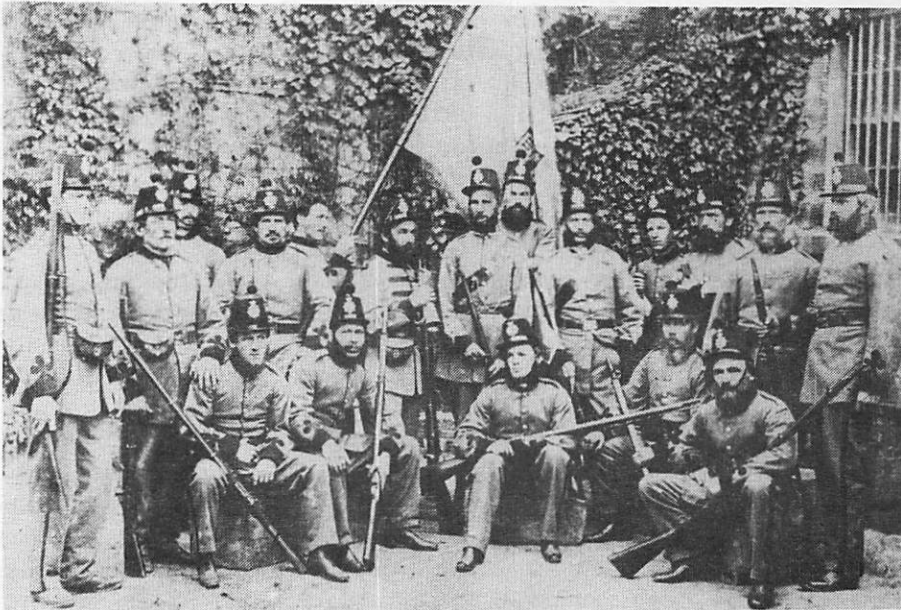
In the colony of New South Wales in the late 1850s, government policy was to encourage the raising of volunteer citizen militia for local defence. British army units, which had been in the colony since its founding, were being withdrawn and at the same time there were fears, real or imagined, about possible military threats to Australia from the empire building activities in the Pacific of such major powers as Russia, France and Germany. Volunteers had already been recruited in Australia to serve in the Maori Wars in New Zealand. In 1860 a public meeting was held at the Victoria Theatre to organise the formation of units of Volunteers. Henry Parkes and other leading figures attended. The Balmain Corp Volunteer Rifles was formed as a unit of the New South Wales military forces, one of a number of rifle companies named after the suburbs or localities where they were located and recruited.

Two of the original members took an important role in the establishment of the unit. The commanding officer, Theodore James Jacques was a lawyer by profession living at *Eastcliffe*, 11 Pearson St, East Balmain, who went on to become Chairman of the NSW Land Titles Commission and also Deputy Registrar General. His appointment was in keeping with the practice of appointing local professional men and senior public servants to command the volunteer companies.

When the Balmain Rifles were formed, Theodore Jacques was made Captain. A few years later on 4th July 1868 he was promoted to Major and in which rank he continued in the volunteer forces until 1885. On the fifth of February in that year he retired and was given the honorary rank of Lieutenant Colonel. In addition to his service with the volunteer military forces, Jacques was also, for many years, President of the New South Wales Rifle Association and Secretary of the Balmain Mechanics School of Arts.

Patrick Killeen was another founding member of the Rifles and a resident of

Balmain with considerable prior military experience. Born in Ireland in 1797 he enlisted at Ballinasloe 1 July 1815 in the 17th Regiment of Foot. In 1822 he was promoted to Colour Sergeant. By 1830 he had married and was sent to join his regiment stationed at Parramatta. After six years in Australia he paid a discharge fee of £10 and retired from the army on 29th January 1836 and came to live in Balmain working as a carpenter. When he enlisted in the newly formed Balmain Rifles he would have been sixty three years of age. He helped the Balmain unit win the Company Challenge Bugle in



1863 and again in 1864, presumably in competition with other Sydney suburban volunteer companies. Patrick Killeen died on the 6th November 1879 aged 82 years. In the photograph of the Balmain Volunteer Rifles, the unit appears to number about twenty (Killeen is standing second from the left). Their original uniform was of a European style, probably coloured light green, with belted military frock coats and high tapered peaked kepis decorated with a pom-pom plume and a large silver badge. The rifles were muzzle loaders and there was a unit flag.

It is said that the Balmain Rifles turned out for local events, probably led by the Balmain Brass Band, on such occasions as the opening of the Balmain Post Office and in 1868 the Glebe Island Bridge. Where the unit drilled is not known but there is some old talk of practice rifle shooting on the old Pigeon Ground. Presumably they would have joined other volunteer units at annual military camps, usually at Easter, at the the Royal National Park and at Rookwood. Following the formation of the Balmain Rifles in 1860, it's story becomes one of

mergers and new names. In 1864 it was merged with other local units to become Number Two (Balmain) Company of the Suburban Battalion, NSW Volunteer Rifles. In 1875, it was changed to Number Two (Balmain) Company, Second Regiment New South Wales Volunteer Rifles. Three years later this in turn became Number Two (Balmain) Company, New South Wales Volunteer Infantry. Finally, on the 1st July 1903, following the takeover of all colonial military forces by the Commonwealth after Federation, the Balmain Volunteers lost all local identity when they became part of the Second Australian Infantry Regiment.

Long before the Balmain Volunteer Rifles disappeared into the emerging twentieth century Australian Army, two other Balmain organisations also took the name "Volunteers". One was the Balmain Fire Brigade, which originally was largely staffed by local volunteers, to whom, mostly the term Balmain Volunteers

applies.

In 1889 there was a move to form a Balmain Reserve Rifle Corp with a meeting held at Dicks Hotel. These reserve units were in fact rifle clubs formed primarily for recreational purposes but subsidised and supported by the government as a potential source of trained riflemen to be recruited in time of war. After a period of effective service in such a reserve unit, members became eligible to be given a grant of land in the colony for a nominal fee. Theodore Jacques, the commander of the original Balmain Rifles and then President of the NSW Rifle Association, possibly had some interest in this second formation of a unit of Balmain volunteer riflemen.

As a footnote to this story of the Balmain Rifles, during renovations to the Balmain Watch House some years ago, a small object was found which after cleaning appears to be a military badge made to fit a hand carried flag staff. A reasonable possibility is that it was once part of the equipment of the Balmain Volunteer Rifles.

John Sullivan

Balmain Teachers College

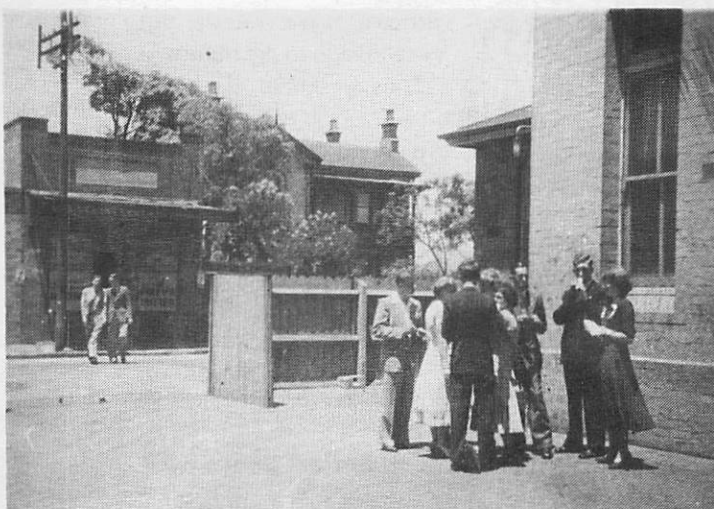
A history is being written of teacher education at Balmain Teachers College which became Kuring-gai College of Advanced Education and now is part of UTS. The book will be written in 1995 by Professor Cliff Turney and Judy Taylor of the University of Sydney.

Balmain Teachers College was opened in Smith Street, Balmain in 1946 in order to meet the increasing post war demand for teachers. Teacher trainee numbers in NSW had fallen because of the low birth rate during the Great Depression of the thirties. Many teachers had been killed during World War II. Others, who had filled teaching positions during the war while the young men were away, had retired. The birth rate was expected to rise. There was an urgent need to train more teachers. Many of the first intake of 210 students were ex-servicemen who were offered rehabilitation training after the war. The building was the previously condemned Smith Street Superior Public School which had been erected in 1880. In some oral history interviews which have already been done, early students and staff at the

time remember the "pong" and the soot which came from the industrial area in which the college was sited. George Cantello, the first Principal, was always pleased when the rain overflowed the inadequate gutters because it combined

with the soap flakes from Lever Bros to wash the building.

George Cantello met his students on the first day the college opened and told them that it was being renovated. In fact the renovations and scaffolding, ladders and noise were to continue for the next year or two. Mr Cantello solved the initial problem of having a student body but no buildings ready, by sending them out for the first two weeks making a study of Balmain. Students were to explore the district, find out about the industries, the history, the geography, the housing, the parks, the churches, the shipping, the commerce and to meet with the people. Each student was to produce a project on Balmain. Mr Cantello thus capitalised on the inadequate facilities by turning



them into a positive educational experience which is still remembered by those students.

The college was only supposed to be a temporary one. It was opened for two years at first and then for another two and

after six years, it was decided that Balmain Teachers College should become a permanent institution. Annexes were opened at Orange Grove in 1957 and at North Sydney in 1970, but the main part of the college remained in the refurbished but inadequate Smith Street buildings on a cramped site with one camphor laurel tree. In 1972 it moved to Eton Road, Lindfield as William Balmain College. The name was changed to Kuring-gai College of Advanced Education in 1974. On 1 January 1990 the college amalgamated with other institutions to form the new University of Technology, Sydney or UTS.

The college had close links with the Balmain community during its 25 years in Smith Street because of the College's inadequate facilities. Local swimming baths and sporting facilities were used and the annual prize-giving was in the Methodist Hall when the largest room in the College was proved too small. There was a shop (photo) across the street where students bought drinks and sandwiches at lunch time.

Information, photographs and memorabilia are sought about life in Balmain between 1946 and 1971 that affected the Balmain Teachers College. Particulars of facilities such as

Birchgrove Oval and Balmain Baths and the Methodist Hall which were used by the students. Send information or enquiries to Mrs Judy Taylor at the Faculty of Education, UTS. Phone 692 4683 ext 390 or 692 2625.

Mainstreet Study

In 1989 the Department of Planning commenced a Mainstreet Program for NSW. Leichhardt Council has been given a grant of \$20,000 towards a Mainstreet Study of Balmain and Rozelle. A steering committee was chosen by the Council Heritage Committee and comprises representatives of Barcham, the Balmain Association and Heritage. It is chaired by Cr Kath Hacking. The study area of Darling Street lies between Colgate Avenue to just past Elliott Street and in Rozelle from Browns Hardware to Denison Street.

The program will bring together diverse groups with the object of promoting positive changes and improvements that will enhance the

elements which convey the suburbs image, strengthening businesses and create new opportunities for growth. It aims to capitalise on the unique character and recognise the importance of heritage as a familiar part of everyday experiences. Promotion of the suburbs identity and retail services for visitors and locals through marketing is another objective.

A consultant has been selected from a short list and has been passed on to Council for approval. They will be required to consult with shop owners, lessees, steering committee members, residents and Council to ensure a clear understanding of community views and to create further public interest. A comprehensive building and streetscape survey will be made of the study area

producing a photographic inventory of these items.

The program will draw from the Leichhardt Heritage Study, the Business Centres Study and the draft of the Development Control Plan component of the new Town Plan. The Barcham civic improvement scheme for the centres will also be considered.

Most buildings are in the form of terraced shops with residential above. They are either Italianate in style from the late 19th century, or early 20th century Federation. The area is of high architectural and heritage significance with fine, coherent streetscapes. The decline has been arrested in recent decades by rejuvenation but the centres have nevertheless suffered from periods of neglect and ad hoc development.

In Your Garden

Gardening With Bulbs

Once autumn arrives the thoughts of the flower gardener turn inevitably to the spring bulbs display. Most of us have plans for a few new bulb varieties that we would like to grow and now is the time to put them into effect.

If you're a novice take heart - anyone can grow bulbs. With a couple of exceptions (notably tulips and hyacinths) they will grow and flower with ease in a wide range of soils and locations. Even those places less than ideal but never in heavy wet clays as these spell trouble because the constantly damp situation could rot the bulbs.

Bulbs mix well with other plants and so are ideal for spots here and there in the garden. Plant them between shrubs, under trees or in pockets of a rockery. They are also suitable for pots, tubs, hanging baskets and window boxes to bring colour to balconies and other



paved areas. Bulbs can be planted at anytime over the autumn months. Before planting it's worthwhile to add some plant food into the soil to provide future nourishment and have better flowering. Use about two handfuls of any plant food per square metre. If you forget just sprinkle on top of the planting site afterwards. Once they are planted it's a good idea to mark the spot to ensure you don't disturb them accidentally.

The first shoots that push through are rather tempting to slugs and snails so keep an eye out and scatter some bait around. When flower buds appear in spring apply some liquid fertiliser to give the display a boost.

After flowering is finished remove flowerheads but leave foliage to die naturally. This is essential since the bulb draws in nutrients from the dying foliage which it uses to produce next year's blooms. The foliage may look untidy as it yellows but don't be tempted. Some bulbs are happy to remain in the same site year after year but check directions on the packet for most bulbs.

Bonnie Davidson

Seniors Award

The Courier's Senior of the Year Award has honoured Kay Tripp of Balmain with second place shared with Vic Vieyra of Ashfield. Kay, a member of the Balmain Association and Clontarf Cottage Committee, was recognised for her contribution to the community through a number of charities, clubs and community groups. These include the Red Cross, Neighbourhood Watch and the Rozelle Neighbourhood Centre, among others.

Kay was nominated by Cr Kath Hacking, Ian Scandrett, Barcham, and Superintendent Peter McLachlan, Balmain Police.

Prizes were presented on 24 March at an afternoon tea in the Drawing Room of the Observatory Hotel, Sydney. The winner was Ruby Williams of Five Dock who made an outstanding fundraising effort for the Intensive Centre Ward of the Royal Alexander Children's Hospital.

Now available

Leichhardt Historical Journal 18

Methodism in Glebe By Max Solling. Leichhardt: The Excelsior Subdivision Part 2. By Peter Reynolds. Balmain: From Adolphus Street to Gladstone Park Part 2. By Peter Reynolds. The block bounded by Stephen Street, Gladstone Street, Jane Street, Vincent Street, plus Donnelly Street.

Leichhardt Historical Journal 1

was published in 1971 and to conform to the later format, has been re-designed with added illustrations.

The complete set is now available at the Watch House and at Clontarf Cottage 16 & 17 April, or contact 8184954. Cost of journals \$10 to \$15 each. Full Set Special Price \$175.

What's On

Exhibitions at the Watch House

- Open Byte - April 16-24
Printmakers
- Sue Cowden - May 14-15
- Nado Milat - June 4-6
Ink on Paper
- Julie Chamberlin - July 30

Letter to Leichhardt Council

Sir,

Until recently, at the entrance of Leichhardt Park, there was a timber structure not unlike a pergola which spanned the roadway. This relic, of the same vintage as the adjacent cottage, lent an air of charm and style to this area.

I believe our pergola dates from the mid 1910s to maybe the early 1920s. The council has seen fit to preserve and maintain it through times of war, material shortages, depressions and even through the slash and burn 50s and 60s. And now in these heritage enlightened times, some philistine has decided to destroy a unique piece of history.

I can't foresee anyone losing by having the pergola reinstated. It was only a simple timber structure - it wouldn't cost a fortune. Perhaps the original timbers are still sitting on a rubbish pile waiting to be rescued.

regards,

Brian Conolly.

Ed. Mr Conolly requests a photograph of the pergola from members.

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.

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