

the balmain
association
incorporated
news sheet

The Peninsula OBSERVER

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Colgate Closing Balmain Factory

Colgate-Palmolive began with soap-boiling in Balmain in 1923 and will close this October. To commemorate over seventy years of production in Balmain an exhibition of photographs and products will be held in the History Room at the Watch House on Saturday 29 and Sunday 30 October. A book, *Down the Olive*, will be ready in time for "Back to Balmain Day" celebrations on 30 October in Elkington Park.

Else Lackey, Archivist, Monica Vardabasso, Corporate Affairs Manager, and Riaz Dean, Balmain Plant Manager, have been researching the plant's social history. This required some rewarding trips to the Central Coast to interview ex-Palmolivers who have retired there.

They wanted to hear the voices of the many men and women who have worked there. Many of these people lived and worked in Balmain and some still do. It was a true-blue working class area. The coal mine was still being worked, Mort's Dock & Engineering was operating and Colgate-Palmolive was producing the 'original and best' Palmolive soap in the famous olive green crepe paper wrapper with its black band and gold seal. The Acme Box Co was turning out wooden crates to transport soap and toothpaste for Colgate-Palmolive.

Ray Collyer, Roy Dale and Geoff Hanley will be on hand in the Watch House to answer any questions and talk to anyone who wants to know more about those days 'down the olive'.

Book Launch

Streets, Lanes and Places, 1836-1994, an index of street names of Balmain, Birchgrove and Rozelle will be launched by Dr Peter Reynolds at 6pm on Tuesday 25 October at the Watch House. Most of the origins of the streets on the Peninsula are traced in our new publication.

The book contains 64 pages with 41 photographs and 3 maps and can also be purchased at the Watch House for \$10 or \$12 posted. Contact PO Box 57 Balmain 2041 or tel 810 5185.

Caltex Development

Caltex proposes to build 134 dwellings on its Ballast Point site with the consent authority Planning Minister, Mr Robert Webster, instead of Leichhardt Council. On 27 September The Council backed the Mayor's application to appeal against the decision of the Land & Environment Court upholding the Minister's REP.

The Council supports the Ballast Point National Park Campaign Committee in advocating that the area be returned to the public as a natural reserve reflecting its importance to Sydney Harbour as part of the group of related headlands. These include Yurulbin (Long Nose Point), Ball's Head, Manns Point and Berry Island. Caltex's own heritage study acknowledges the

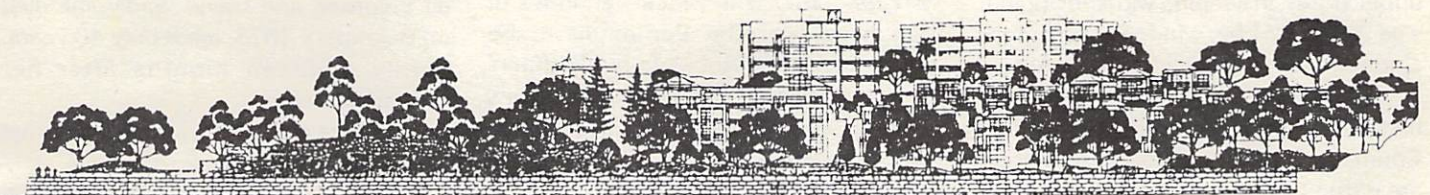
importance of the site's relationship to the harbour.

The Caltex plan has 16 Torrens title lots (10 waterfront dwellings of 3 levels) facing north, 3 apartment blocks of 6 levels on the ridge, 7 town-houses on the southern side of the ridge, 4 apartment blocks of 4 or 5 levels overlooking the point and 2 apartment blocks facing south, one of 7 and the other of 6 levels. One-third of the site, 8000m², on the point, will be formed and grassed and dedicated as public open space.

An extraordinary approach to the maximum height control of the buildings is the use of the height of existing trees at the site entrance to overcome Leichhardt Environmental Plan No 20. This results in a ten storey appearance from the harbour and trees have been drawn on the elevations to attempt to

mask the proposed wall of buildings. This emphasises the exclusion of height controls in the negotiations by the Department of Planning with the Council on the REP. The Department evidently decided to help the developer against the interests of residents. The height control is the basis of the Council's appeal against the Court's decision.

There is soil contamination comprising petroleum carbon levels and elevated lead values. It has been estimated that 6000 cubic metres of soil will require remediation. When the storage tanks are demolished sludge will need to be removed. Pulpit Point contained similar tanks whose demolition constituted the major cost of bringing that site up to residential standards and sludge is reported to be still rising to the surface.



Balmain Personality

Ewen Wallace Cameron

Ewen Wallace Cameron was born in 1816 in France to Lieutenant-colonel Charles Cameron and his second wife Luduvina Rosa da Silva. His father, accompanied by his family, was posted to garrison duty in Van Dieman's Land after 1821 following service in the Napoleonic Wars. Ewen attended W T Cape's school in Sydney and later joined the Commissariat Department as a clerk.

In 1838 Ewen, with his brother-in-law, W H Dutton, and others formed one of the first overlanding parties to South Australia. After unsuccessfully taking up land in New England he went off to the California gold diggings. On his return he entered the office of T S Mort and soon became his financial manager and a partner in 1856 when the firm of T S Mort & Co was created. He took charge of the wool assignments, squatting accounts and pastoral finance.

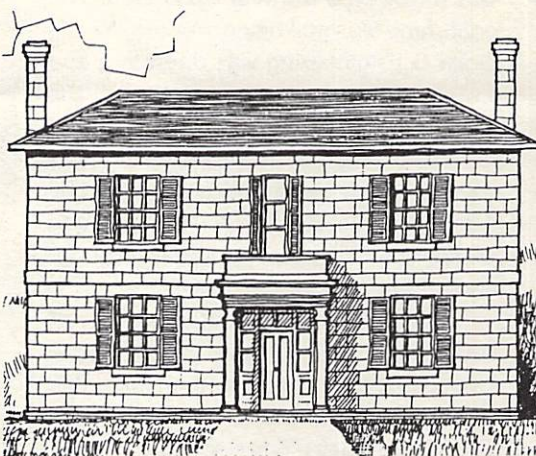
Cameron went on to become a very important Balmain person. On 7 October 1852 at St Mary's Church, Balmain, he married Sophia Usher (b1830) and they had twelve children, ten of whom survived childhood. They were Luduvina (b1853), Sophia (b1855), Julian (b1857), Charles G (b1859), Ewen Mort (b1861), Jessie I (b1864, d1864), Wallace (b1865), Annie c (b1867), Ronald J (b1869), William L (b1871), Donald C (b1874) and Elsie N (b1876, d1876). All but Luduvina, Sophie and Annie were born at Ewenton, Blake Street, Balmain. Ewen Cameron purchased *Blake Vale* in 1856 and renamed it *Ewenton*. Concluding that it was too small for his growing family, in 1860 he commissioned the Balmain

architect, James McDonald, to add an upper storey and entrance portico. The upper storey, in keeping with the original, was given a bay window of singular appearance.

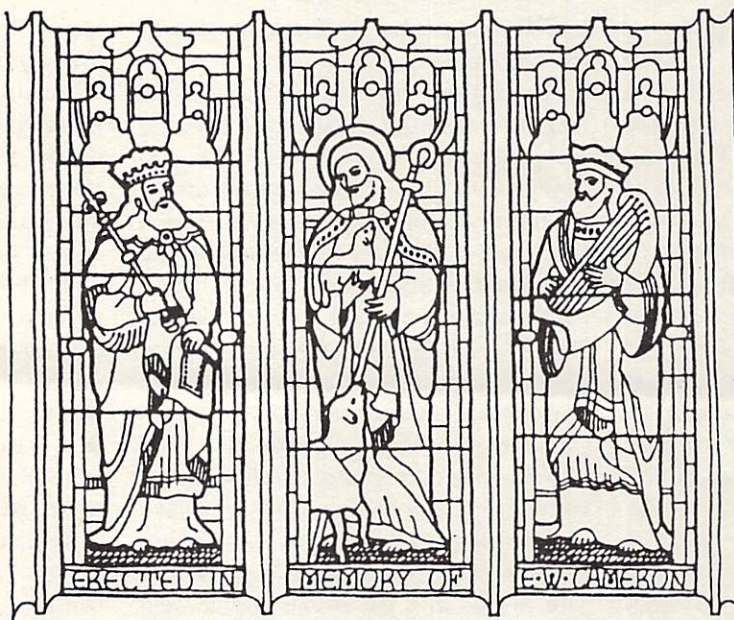
Cameron was elected as one of the first aldermen of the Balmain Municipal Council in 1860. Four streets in Balmain are named after the Camerons, Charles,



Ewen Wallace Cameron



Ewenton 1860 (Drawn by G Giddy)



Commemorative chancel windows in St Mary's Church

Ewenton, Wallace and Cameron. He is featured in the History Committee's *Streets, Lanes and Places*, an index of the streets of the Peninsula to be released in late October. In public affairs he was active in charitable institutions such as Sydney Hospital, the Sailors Home, Female Refuge Society and Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. In local affairs he

was president of the Balmain Workingmen's Association.

In 1861 he joined the Volunteer Balmain Rifles and became lieutenant in 1862 and captain in 1868, holding that position until 1876. As well he was captain and adjutant of the Sydney Battalion 1869-70. In St Mary's Church he was churchwarden, a member of synod and also lay cannon of St Andrew's Cathedral. He was elected fellow of St Paul's College, University of Sydney and was an original member of the Union Club in 1857 as well as the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron in 1862 and was elected a member of the Royal Society of New South Wales in August 1875.

Cameron retired from active involvement in Mort & Co in early 1866 and took his family on the "Grand Tour" of Europe. The Workingmen's Institute gave him a farewell dinner at the Oddfellows Hall on 7 March 1866. The 100 seated guests were entertained by the Volunteer Rifle Band with the hall dressed with flags, flowers and evergreens. In response he offered half the cost of a new classroom and half of the deficit of a recent picnic. Almost two years to the day, the Camerons were back in Balmain. The Institute

chose to celebrate the occasion with a gala picnic for 250 well-wishers at Clontarf, Middle Harbour.

In 1872 Cameron again called on McDonald to build a three-storey wing on the south side of *Ewenton*, which transformed it to the mansion it is today. The new wing was totally dissimilar to the north wing despite the commissioning of the same architect. The high quality stonework was unusually detailed with heavily outlined windows.

Cameron died on 25 May 1876 aged 59 years. In his honour his widow, Sophia, in 1877 gave St Marys the

wonderful memorial chancel of stained glass windows depicting Christ flanked by Solomon and David. Sadly she died on 8 January 1878, aged only 48 years, barely eighteen months after her husband's death.

Source: Leichhardt Historical Journal No15. Thanks also to Ro Tidswell.

Bonnie Davidson

Treasurer's Annual Report for 1993-94

Income		Expenditure	
Membership	4119.00	Observer	1896.59
Grants	250.00	Subscriptions	175.00
Donations	676.00	Refunds	630.00
Leaflets	947.95	Publications	1627.00
<i>Around Balmain</i>	1182.80	Watch House carpet	550.00
<i>Called to the Bar</i>	1425.76	Watch House garden	6192.00
<i>Half Thousand Acres</i>	223.00	Watch House plinth	1700.00
<i>Gourlie's Corner</i>	729.00	Watch House other	794.60
<i>L Hist Journal</i>	1647.00		
<i>Christian Brothers</i>	165.00	Montague Design	8941.00
History	1155.00	Other History display	2064.13
Watch House hire	10409.00	W/H operating	3320.30
Miscellaneous	29.00	Miscellaneous	414.70
Interest	431.88	Govt charges	95.44
Computer sale	<u>500.00</u>	Computer	<u>1974.00</u>
Total	23890.39	Total	30374.76
Brought forward June 1993			
Cheque Account	18412.71	Carried forward	
Savings Account	5361.95	Cheque account	3221.52
History Cttee	<u>387.88</u>	less outstanding cheques	<u>507.72</u>
	24162.54		2713.80
Plus income	23890.39	Savings account	14570.70
Less expenditure	<u>30374.76</u>	History account	<u>393.67</u>
	17678.17	On hand	17678.17

Silverton Gaol

The Observer's occasional roving correspondent has recently returned from a visit to the outback and wishes to share with readers the pleasures to be found in a side trip to Silverton, especially the former gaol which provides an interesting comparison with the Balmain Watch House.

Silverton itself was originally only a small copper claim pegged out in 1881 but grew to a town of 3000 by 1885-6 when silver-bearing ore was found. Not surprisingly a certain amount of crime occurred and it became necessary to find a lock up. According to the Broken Hill Historical Association leaflet on the subject, the original gaol consisted of a makeshift wood and iron structure. Prisoners were secured at night with leg-irons (in two sizes, one for men, one for women). When the limited cell accommodation overflowed, they were chained to a nearby peppercorn tree.

The present structure, built in 1889, was than the Watch House, with four cells, two solitary cells, a padded cell and a sick room, as well as a two exercise yards, a warders room and a bath in addition to the police living quarters.

Following the opening of the Broken Hill Gaol in 1992 and the decrease in population of Silverton which resulted from the exhaustion of the seam of silver

ore, the Silverton Gaol was used only for short-term prisoners and as an overnight lock up. In the 1930s it became a boys' reformatory but both the Police Station and Gaol were closed in 1943.

As was the case in Balmain, many items of historical interest were destroyed in the intervening period, but the Broken Hill Historical Society has been very active in preserving what remains and the Gaol is now the home of a very well organised and well presented exhibition of items from the entire area. These include photographs, documents, household, pastoral and mining equipment and a beautiful collection of clothing. Some of the cell furniture is also on display. Among the records is the hospital register, a page of which gives some hint of why a padded cell was necessary: a number of the admissions were for DT's.

Another Balmain connection is Dame Mary Gilmore who, then Mary Jane Cameron, served as an assistant teacher at Silverton Public School from October 1887-December 1889. Balmain visitors will also find a certain familiarity in the abundance of art studios and the fact that the town - now a "ghost town" - has provided the setting for many Australian film and television productions. A visit to the area, allowing at least an hour for the museum, is highly recommended.

Debby Nicholls

Back to Balmain Day

The 6th Annual Back to Balmain Day will take place on Sunday 30 October in Elkington Park. As in previous years old Tigers are expected to come from all over the state to rekindle their memories.

Free rides in a horse-drawn carriage will be available from St Andrews Church from 9am to 12pm. There will be reunions of ex-students at Birchgrove and Balmain Public schools from 9am to 12pm with displays of photographs and memorabilia.

A Ecumenical Service begins at 10am in St Andrews Congregational Church followed by community singing of *Pack up your troubles and Roll out the barrel*.

The picnic at Elkington park starts at 11am. Steak sandwiches, soft drinks and ice cream available. The Leichhardt Council Band will entertain from 2pm.

Bring the whole family to celebrate the Year of the Family.

Fourth Runway

Do you live under the fourth runway? It starts at Pyrmont and extends along the Parramatta River and Sydney Harbour. If you live close to this waterway then you will be affected by the helicopters that use the runway.

The State Government has approved the construction of a commercial heliport at Wharf 8, Pyrmont. Helicopter flights over the Harbour, Lane Cove and Parramatta Rivers will at least triple with at least 7-8 flights per hour. Helicopters will be licensed to operate between 7am and 7pm with up to 96 flights per day. Public holidays and Sundays will not be helicopter free. The Environment Protection Authority's guidelines allow 27 flights per day. There is no monitoring authority and there is no legal requirement for operators to have public liability insurance.

A group of concerned Sydney residents from The Rocks, Pyrmont, Balmain, North Sydney, Lane Cove and Drummoyne have formed ICAFCAG (Inc) to fight this proposal. They have the support of all the local councils and state (except Lane Cove) and federal parliamentarians (Liberal, Labor and Independent) in these areas. If you wish to join or give financial help they can be contacted at 33 Darling St Balmain. Tel/Fax 810 3279

In Your Garden

Late Spring Gardening

Flowers for cutting. Dahlias are quite easy to grow and are among the most popular plants for summer and autumn flowers. They are available in many colours and may be small, medium or tall growers. The plants are heavy feeders and must be grown in very good soil, rich in organic matter. Some of the dwarf dahlias will grow in pots if you are short of space. Your nursery will have packets of tubers which will give you size and colour. My favourite is the cactus Dahlia.

Don't plant the tubers too deeply. The neck where the new shoot arises should be about 5 cm below the surface while the opposite end can be a little deeper. Plant out after September or October and choose an open sunny site. Don't forget to provide a stout stake to support medium and tall growers. Water thoroughly on planting then deeply



every week until the plants are growing strongly. Water more often when buds begin to form during summer and never let the plants dry out. Covering the soil with a thick layer of compost will help.

November gardening will have some fertilising for you to do. Feed all roses, trees and shrubs (camellias and azaleas excepted) with rose food and a complete fertiliser. Use a slow release fertiliser such as Nutricote. As an organic alternative use blood and bone or a well-rotted manure. For natives use a native plant food or blood and bone.

Follow feeding with ample mulching. Use compost, spoiled hay, lucerne hay, mushroom compost or any of the mulches that you like. Mulch applied now will help plants, especially roses, to grow through summer without stress and therefore disease problems will be lessened. Water use will diminish if you mulch well (6 cm or more) as it appears that water restrictions will be imposed this summer. Mulching will be absolutely necessary for your garden.

Bonnie Davidson

Leichhardt Council Wards

The referendum held last March resulted in a decisive vote for the return of wards. A number of options have been prepared by Council for the establishment a ward system.

It is important to note that under the provisions of the Local Government Act (1933), the population of electors in any ward created by division of a council area cannot vary by more than 10% from other wards. The boundaries must correspond as near as practicable to the boundaries of the census collection districts. The options were 2 wards each electing 6 councillors, 3 wards of 4 councillors, 4 wards of 3 councillors and 6 wards of 2 councillors.

The preferred option is for 3 wards; (a) the suburbs of Balmain East, Balmain, Birchgrove and Rozelle with the boundary of Foucart Street, (b) the suburbs of Lilyfield and Leichhardt with the boundary of White's Creek, (c) the suburbs of Glebe, Glebe Point, Annandale and Forest Lodge. The advantages of this option are that there is no division of community interest and that clearly defined boundaries should

result in less potential for resident confusion and the residents could more readily identify with ward issues. There is no division of precinct boundaries or census collection districts which allows precise census data for future reviews of ward boundaries.

What's On

Watch House Exhibitions

- **Helen Engle - Oct 22-23**
Pottery
- **Colgate-Palmolive - 29-30 Oct**
- **Nado Milat - Nov 5-6**
Ink on paper
- **Jean Buettel - Nov 12-20**
A pair of Jeans - multi media
- **Elviora Bakker - Nov 26-27**
Art, pottery & woodturning
- **Elaine Norling - Feb 3-19**

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Art Exhibition

The Senior Citizens Art Group will show their work on Sunday 30 October between 1 and 4 pm at the Harrie S Hanaford Centre, 608 Darling Street, Rozelle.

Colgate-Palmolive

will show a collection of photographs and products in the History Room of the Watch House on Saturday 29 and Sunday 30 October, 11 am to 3 pm. Ray Collyer, Roy Dale and Geoff Hanley will be there to talk to anyone interested in Colgate in Balmain.

A Pair of Jeans

The collaboration of country artist Jean Spokes and north shore artist Jean Buettel proves to be an exciting combination of artworks focusing on Australian flora and fauna at the Watch House on November 12-13 & 17-20.

Jean Spokes, an art teacher from Gloucester, works in oil, water colour, pastel and porcelain. Jean Buettel also works in all mediums. This is an opportunity to view a range of their works.

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.