



the balmain
association
incorporated
news sheet

The Peninsula OBSERVER

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Birchgrove Bicentenary 1796-1996.

Private George Whitfield, New South Wales Corps.

In June 1789 Major Francis Grose was entrusted with the formation of the New South Wales Corps and the recruitments were carried out at London and Chatham in England. The Corps were to replace the Marines of the First Fleet and the first detachment arrived in Sydney with the Second Fleet in 1790 as convict guards. Detachments of the Corps continued to arrive in the Colony as guards on most of the male convict ships with the last arriving with their commander, Grose, on the *Pitt* in February, 1792. At first the Corps were mainly preoccupied with the routine of garrison duty.

George Whitfield joined the NSW Corps as a Private on the 17th November, 1789, receiving an annual pay of £14 in two payments a year. Also a levy of £3.12.6 but the money would soon disappear as the recruits had to part pay for their uniform. The uniform was based on the Marines, having a coat of red cloth with yellow lapel, shirt of white linen with frill neck, white single breasted waist coat, white cloth breeches with black knee length gaiters. One wonders how the clothing was kept clean! Whitfield's height must have been at least 163 cm, age between 16 to 30 years and be literate, also be strong enough to handle 15 kg weight of the complete kit of knapsack, water bottle, bayonet and a 5 kg musket. Although much research has been carried out on Whitfield's life in Sydney, little could be found other than the NSW Corps pay lists which did not convey where the men were stationed.

A daughter Elizabeth was born on the 13th April, 1794 to George and Sarah (Jones?) Whitfield, baptism recorded on the 27th April, 1794, in the register of St Philips Church Sydney. Elizabeth's burial is also recorded for the 25th April, 1796. There is no marriage recorded between George and Sarah.

Private Whitfield, described as a gun maker, received a 25 acre grant at Hunter's Hill on the 19th November, 1794, which was leased by James Williamson, who cul-

tivated 10 acres. On the 15th September, 1796, Whitfield again received a small grant of 30 acres and it was named Whitfield Farm, although no farming was carried out. The area today is Birchgrove. The original boundary line to the 1800 William Balmain grant, is Cove and Grove Streets. These events could be interpreted to mean that George Whitfield and Sarah were stationed in Sydney during those years. There is no record of a land sale under the name of George Whitfield, although on the 1st January, 1800, William Wilson sold Whitfield Farm to Richard Knight for £20. The property was sold in 1806 to Captain Edward Abbott of the New South Wales Corps, for £21 who in turn sold to John Birch, Paymaster of the 73rd Regiment for a consideration of £450. It was Birch who in 1810, built the first house, *Birch Grove House*, from which the area was named.

George and Sarah Whitfield's son George, was born on 5th September, 1899, baptised on the 17th November, 1799. Indications

are that the birth was on Norfolk Island and the visiting clergy from St Philips Church, Sydney, baptised and married as required on visits to the island. Another daughter Sarah was born on the 25th December, 1801, baptised the 6th January, 1802, on Norfolk Island.

George Whitfield was made a Corporal on the 26th June, 1799, and died on Norfolk Island on 18th November, 1801.

In the 1802 Norfolk Island Victualling Book, Sarah Whitfield, daughter Sarah and son George are mentioned. The 1805 Norfolk Island Muster includes Sarah, son George and a James Whitfield.

George Whitfield, Drummer Boy, departed Sydney on the *Providence* on the 11th September, 1811 under the command of Captain John Piper.

The Birchgrove Bicentenary will be celebrated in September, 1996. Events include a Heritage Walk on Saturday, 14th Sept, adults \$12.50, conc \$10, children free. A Commemorative Service at St John's Church, at 9.30am on Sunday, 15th Sept, with 200 bell peals. A Colonial Dance at the Balmain Town Hall, on Saturday 21st and a Grand Picnic Day with entertainment, 10am - 5pm on Sunday, 22nd Sept, at Birchgrove Park. Bring a picnic rug and buy your lunch from the food stalls. Support your community and the Birchgrove Bicentenary.

Contact 9810 7917 or 9810 8208



Marine private and sergeant 1789

Annual General Meeting

**All members are
requested to attend the
30th Annual General
Meeting of the Balmain
Association to be held
at 7.30pm on
Wednesday
4 September 1996
in the Watch House
179 Darling Street**

Pymont Development

The NSW Minister for Planning, Craig Knowles, recently called for the enhancement of Sydney Harbour but we have learned that he has approved a development plan for Pymont Point without notifying the public and interested parties. Pymont Community Group spokesman, Michael Brook said, "Its an outrageous decision, considering that the park is covered by an Interim National Heritage Listing and a union green ban. We found out only last week at a Sydney City Council Open Space Committee that Mr Knowles had approved the amended Pymont Point Master Plan on 4 December 1995."

The plan, prepared by City West Development Corporation, would allow private developers to construct private high-rise housing on harbourside land on and adjacent to Interim Park. "This area is one of the

few remaining pieces of publicly-owned waterfront land in Sydney. To sell it off to private developers for profit means it will be lost to local residents and the people of Australia forever," Mr Brook said.

The decision flies in the face of the Governments own guidelines for providing open space for residents and visitors. The Draft Open Space Study commissioned by Sydney City Council states that Pymont/Ultimo should have additional open space of 14.1 hectares if it is to reach the 15 m² per resident as stated in the Ultimo/Pymont Precinct Planning Study (DoP, 1991) as being an acceptable amount for an urban waterfront location.

The Chairman of Clean Up Australia, Ian Kiernan, a strong supporter of Interim Park and the surrounding headland, said that the planned sell-off directly contradicts

the Federal Governments urban renewal criteria under the Better Cities program. "As well as being an important recreational space for local residents, this area has national significance and should be retained as green harbourside land forming an integral part of an overall plan for Sydney", he said.

Interim Park, a piece of "urban wasteland" that was cleaned up and transformed into parkland by residents, won the 1933 Sydney Morning Herald Australia Day Award for the Most Outstanding Community Service.

Jack Munday, Chairman of the Historic Houses Trust, backed the call to reverse the approval. He says, "Its just like the situation in the Rocks in the 1970s. The Pymont Headland, both upper and lower levels should be retained as public open space. To do otherwise would destroy the finest part of Pymont."

Ampol Site Sold

One of Balmain's controversial development sites has been bought by Meriton Apartments for \$7.5 million. It plans to build 170 dwellings on the 2.1 ha site. Townhouses would be built on top of the escarpment and apartments below. Chief executive, Harry Triguboff said, This is the first time Meriton has planned to build apartments at Balmain, and we believe the area has the potential to be as successful for us as Pymont".

Meriton have agreed to consult with a local community committee to be setup by council. The firm has been remarkably successful in selling apartments beside freeways but the noise from 24 hour operation of the adjacent container terminal may present problems. Former councillor and local resident, Kath Hacking, said that the proposal would overdevelop the site.

Colgate-Palmolive Plans

Leichhardt Council has agreed to a Development Control Plan formulated by a committee of local residents and a Balmain Association representative. It allows for development only within the two buildings of the complex to reduce the number of apartments, car parking to be contained within the buildings where possible and the provision of adequate open space.

The Council has received a DA proposing to convert the original buildings to 100 dwellings and 20 townhouses on other parts of the site. Because the Council did not respond to the application within the statutory forty days the developers have taken their case to the Land and Environment Court.

Darling Street Traffic

The scrapping of plans for a \$4.3 million Iron Cove underpass by Leichhardt Council brought criticism from the RTA representative at the Sydney South Regional Metropolitan Strategy Sub-Committee. He did not mention that Council had dropped the plan because the information presented by the RTA was incomplete and drew no conclusions. In reply I accused the RTA of having a one-track mind as there are other proposals that would improve access to Balmain and Rozelle. They had given little support for Greg Vicas' proposal for a Victoria Road underpass of Darling Street be-

lieving that the Glebe Island Bridge had improved the traffic flow above expectations.

The Darling Street intersection of Victoria Road generates bigger holdups throughout the day than the other peninsula access points. The RTA does not appreciate the other advantages of an underpass such as the integration of Rozelle when Victoria Road no longer separates the suburb and invigoration of the Rozelle shopping centre through easier movement and better parking.

Write to your council and the RTA asking for the proposal to be evaluated correctly.

Val Hamey

Smile

A smile costs nothing, but gives much. It enriches those who receive, without making poorer those who give. It takes but a moment, but the memory of it sometimes lasts forever. None is so rich or mighty that he can get along without it, and none is so poor but that he can be made rich by it. A smile creates happiness in the home, fosters good will in business, and is the countersign of friendship. It brings rest to the weary, cheer to the discouraged, sunshine to the sad, and it is nature's best antidote for trouble. Yet it cannot be bought, begged, borrowed or stolen for it is something that is of no value to anyone until it is given away. Some people are too tired to give you a smile. Give them one of yours, as none needs a smile so much as he who has no more to give.



Rozelle Town Centre

Despite rebuffs of his Victoria Road underpass, Greg Vicas is pressing for implementation of other aspects of the Rozelle Town Centre proposal. The principal of Rozelle Public School, Mr John Charlton, is keen to have the school grounds revitalised with new landscaping and sporting areas. A nature walk would be created as an educational tool for students and the adventure playground will be moved and revamped with rocks and sand pits. The wire fence would be removed. A stage would be used by buskers as well as providing storage space for market stallholders. There would be a new access to the school from Darling Street and two new community car parks.

Help

Can you spare a couple of hours on one Saturday each month to welcome visitors to the Watch House?
Please ring 9818 4854.

Rozelle District Brass Band

During the Back-to-Balmain Day, held on the 28th October last year, Mr George Holmes approached the Association with a request to assist his research into the whereabouts of the trophies won by the Rozelle District Brass Band, 1906-1916. Mr Holmes father and uncles were members of the Championship band and he had often wondered where the silver trophies were, as they had been presented to the NSW Brass Band Association in 1959. The research eventually led to contacts in Nowra, Adelaide and Tasmania. Surprisingly, we found none in Sydney until this July.

The band was formed in 1906 under the baton of Mr W Brown and had its first success in 1908 at a Tamworth contest, under the conductorship of Mr Alf Lovell. In 1911 the band was reorganised by Messrs R Kelly, A Shellsell and S Cruickshanks, with Mr William Partington as the conductor. Mr Partington was Tasmanian by birth and played the euphonium but confined himself wholly to the duties of conductor.

Under his leadership, the band had a wonderful sequence of contest successes. They attended six interstate and four Sydney contests and had an unbeaten record in three different states. The band would assemble at the corner of Weston (Victoria) Road and Darling Street, Rozelle, to march and play on their way to Sydney or to Central Railway for the interstate competitions. Many noted soloists were connected with the band, W Statton, R Cadden, S Gatiss, C Franz, J Worsley, W

Cocks, S Wallings, L Spinks, U Easton, J Whitmore and G Cook. The band was called upon to attend local functions, such as the Foundation Stone ceremony of the Balmain Mission Hall, Montague Street, Balmain on the 14th November, 1914. On the band's disbandment, the trophies worth at that time 200 guineas, (see photo) were kept at the residence of Mr R Kelly, 13 Birchgrove Road, Balmain for many years, before being donated to the NSW Brass Band Association. Mr Kelly's daughter Mrs Betty Bailey of Adelaide remembers the prizes well as it was her responsibility to keep them dusted and polished.

Unfortunately the research has come to a stop as the NSW Brass Band Association could not provide any information about the where-

abouts of the Memorial Shield and Cups but the Balmain Association has received from Mr K Short of Tasmania, a medallion with a lute on one side and on the reverse an inscription reading: "Tamworth Band Contest, won by, Rozelle District Band, G Cook, Cornet, 27 January 1908". G Cook was Mr Short's great-uncle. Miss Ethel Partington of Tasmania has generously donated her uncle William Partington's working and ceremonial batons as well as a tuning fork. Mr Phil Worsley of Maroubra had donated three photographs of the Band. His grandfather, Jim Worsley was also a bandsman. A display of the Rozelle District Brass Band memorabilia will be shown at the Watch House once a secure cabinet is found.

Kath Hamey



Mr Partington with baton and Rozelle Brass Band 1914

Balmain Days

What say this life for a Balmain boy, where one may dwell and enjoy a bottle of wine and a woman's tranquil banter by the somnolent river.

Where fellow fools dare each other to dive from the jetty then to be towed upon old boards behind a boat 'til the sun sinks back into the cool of dusk.

To swim in kindred waters where the harbour and river combine to create one of God's greatest splendours that once bore the water child called Dawn.

A place that allows witness to impressionist sunsets in languid thought, where the distaste of normality ends at the Exchange and is replaced by Balmain ways.

To sit beside the river's hypnotic flow and watch the pleasure boats steam by as juvenile play creates the illusion of holidays of bygone days.

Yet, this is my home, the village within a city by the flow. A place where the adversity of life is kept at bay.

The real world has no say here, there is little time for grief or past regrets for this is the village of younger ways, this is the river of my happier days.

Keith Dixon



Colonial Dance

Celebrate the Birchgrove Bicentenary at the Colonial Dance in the Balmain Town Hall on Saturday 21 September to the music of Ryebucks Band. There will be prizes for best period dress. Supper. 7.30pm - 11.30pm. Tickets available \$25 single \$50 family and \$15 concession. Contact Lynette Hicks 9818 5780.

In Your Garden

Spring Heralds Azalea Season

Soon spring will be here and it is important to understand the basics of positioning azaleas for the best results. In general, azaleas prefer a climate that is warm and moist in summer and with a certain winter chill. However, this is not to say that they cannot be grown successfully in a wider range of climates. Always remember that azaleas are shallow rooted and hot, dry weather causes the surface soil to dry out quickly, and damage the plants. Therefore they must be protected from strong, drying winds, especially in summer, and given sufficient water to keep the soil damp. Most species partial shade to protect their delicate blooms from harsh sunlight. There are species with smaller flowers in the deeper hues that seem to be able to withstand full sun, however, all of the larger flowering whites and pale



Azalea 'Rose Queen'

pinks are better if given a little shade, especially during the middle of the day or late afternoon in summer. Positioning azaleas in beds beneath established trees is a good way to create a suitable growing environment.

Choose plants when in flower so that you are sure of the colours you like for your garden. Most nurseries have a very large selection to choose from. Transplanting is best done in the early morning or late in the afternoon. Watering in the late afternoon, when the heat has left the day, is far better as water in the

sunlight may cause burning of the leaves and flowers. Late afternoon watering really soaks in overnight giving plants a good start to the next day.

Most complete fertilisers designed for azaleas are in granulated form and applied according to the directions twice a year during late autumn and early spring should see you a happy healthy plant.

Bonnie Davidson

Birchgrove Bicentenary

Souvenirs for sale:

Port	\$12
Mugs	\$7
T shirts	\$15
Pens	\$1
Cards	\$2.50

Contact 9818 5780 or 9818 4954, cheque to Birchgrove Bicentenary Committee PO Box 509 Rozelle 2039.

Nick Origlass Honoured

A reception to mark 25 years of AOpen Council and the contributions of its initiators Nick Origlass and Issy Wyner was held at Leichhardt Council in May. Unfortunately, Nick Origlass' death on 17 May preceded his commendation by a few days.

Long-time colleague, Issy, said he felt empty with the loss of Nick who was first elected to Council in 1958 and was Mayor in 1971, 1972 and 1980. The two friends established the People Come First party after being expelled from the Labour Party.

It was a Mayoral Minute from Nick that removed the barrier that separated the public from the councillors which presented a physical and symbolic demarcation of the power within the local community.

Sesqui-centenary Service

St Mary's Anglican Church will celebrate its 150th anniversary with a service on 18 August at 3.00pm. The speaker will be the Area Bishop, the Rt Rev Peter Watson, and the musical group, 'Mixed Blessings' will perform with organist, Greg Dixon. Afternoon tea will be served.

There will be a Civic Commemoration Service on the following Sunday, 25 August during which the Balmain School Choir will sing. The service will show support and appreciation for all those who enhance our common life together. The Mayor and representatives of the Police, Fire Brigade, Schools, Hospital, politicians and local businessmen will attend. Morning tea will follow.

What's On

Watch House Exhibitions

- Paul Connor Architectural photos with Paul Snow Aug 17-25
- Rozelle Photographers Workshop Oct 5-7
- The Print Circle Oct 12-20
- Elaine Norling Oct 26-Nov 3

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Miklouho-Maclay Park

Russian Minister for Culture, Evgeny Sidorov, unveiled the nameplate of the small park in Grove Street, Birchgrove on Friday, 19 July. It is named after the Russian naturalist and anthropologist, Nikolai Miklouho-Maclay, who lived in Wyoming, Wharf Road in 1884. Ambassador Alexander Losynkov said that his countryman had been very clever in choosing his place of living. He paid tribute to Colin and Janette Sullivan's restoration of his former home.

The Russian delegation on Wednesday had presented a bust of the scientist to the Macleay Museum in Sydney University which has a collection of artifacts from his explorations in New Guinea and Melanesia.

Heritage Forum

Throughout the inner suburbs of Sydney there is considerable pressure for redevelopment and those concerned with preserving the heritage face substantial difficulties. The Inner City Heritage Forum on Saturday 10 August 10.30am - 3.30pm in History House 133 Macquarie St will include discussion on understanding the processes of the heritage legislation system; the role of the community in heritage assessment and planning; and consideration of the most effective means of working with local councils. Bookings 9247 8001. Contact James Moloney 9557 3702.

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 PO Box 57, BALMAIN. 2041. Our editorial phone/fax is 9818 4954

Interested artists, potters, sculptors, etc. who would like to organise an exhibition in the Watch House are urged to contact Steve South on 9810 1411.

Annual Subscriptions:

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