

the balmain
association
incorporated
news sheet

The Peninsula OBSERVER

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Birchgrove Bicentenary Revels

Birchgrove became 200 years old on 15 September 1996. Imagine Yurulbin when the indigenous people lived here. Cast your thoughts to when the area was busy in ship building and repairs, to the first rugby league match held on the reclaimed land that is now Birchgrove Oval. Didier Joubert subdivided the locality and named Louisa Road after his wife, Numa and Rose Streets after his children and Ferdinand Street after his nephew.

Community spirit was the focus of the Birchgrove Bicentenary Committee when they enthusiastically created the ideas for the celebrations. This was in spite of the limited financial resources and the core committee numbering only four. Nevertheless they brought a celebration worthy of the area.

The Bicentenary Church Service at St Johns was rung in by 200 peals and the generosity of the congregation raised \$90 for the Birchgrove Bicentenary Trust. The Rev Humphries became a Bronze Sponsor. The Trust, approaching \$3500, is a living memorial of the Bicentenary that will be a grant award annually to support studies or sporting endeavours.

People travelled across Sydney to join the House and Garden Tour run by our local historian, Kath Hamey, and ended sipping champagne at *Wyoming* in Wharf Road. The Colonial Dance at the Town Hall was great. Dressed for the occasion no-one could resist the toe-tapping rhythms of that excellent band, Ryebucks.

The community thronged to the oval for the Picnic Day. The Mayor, Clr Sheehan, complimented the committee, which had sprung out of the precinct system, and the major sponsors, the Council and Anita Duffy. The Tug-o-War was intensely battled by teams from *The Village Voice*, Police Boys and Swimming Clubs and the residents of Numa Street, who finished second to the Police Boys.

Dressed boats of the Balmain Sail-

ing Club paraded in Snails Bay. Twenty five boats competed in the Birchgrove Bicentenary Sailing Race and the winner was Capt Doug Friis-Clark on *Sh-wotnee*. The Rose Street School was the venue for a display of early photographs and students welcomed visitors.

The early entertainment came from the Birchgrove School fencers, Rap Dancers and the Balmain High School Band. Then followed the Darc Swan Dance Company. Gondwana produced some exciting sounds until a power failure interrupted their performance. They

were able to complete their spot with temporary repairs but power was lost for nearly an hour when the Don Mori Trio and Albion Fair (Morris Dancers) had to performed acoustically as well as the River City Big Band.

A generator helped to restore some power for Chris Kempster and John Dengate to perform Balmain industrial songs followed by Jimmy Little. Unfortunately most of the crowd had left before Drum Arabic came on stage but they were able to entertain many local residents on their balconies.



Above, At the Colonial Dance revels. Below, The Mayor opens the Picnic Day.



Kirkbride Reborn

Artists have taken over the asylum. The Callan Park Hospital, known collectively as Kirkbride, is now the permanent home for the Sydney College of the Arts. On Open Day Saturday 21 September the complex welcomed the public to inspect the conversion. Almost 500 students will be accommodated in a range of visual arts, craft and design courses and fine arts.

Some 29 magnificent sandstone neo-classical buildings on the shores of Iron Cove are being restored to their former glory at a cost of \$19 million with \$12.6 million from a Federal Govt grant. Designed by the Colonial Architect, James Barnett to achieve the aims of "moral therapy" practised by American, Dr Thomas Storey Kirkbride, the first stone was laid in 1880 and completed in 1883. Barnett's drawing board must have been crowded as he was engaged on the Sydney GPO, major additions to the Sydney Customs House and the construction of the International Exhibition of 1879.

Sunlight and air were seen to important, so the patients benefited from a pavilion-type plan, arranged around interlinked courtyards. The site was divided to separate male and female patients with a central courtyard surrounded by the medical officers residences, hospital administration and dining rooms - male and female assiduously separated by the magnificent chapel that serves as the colleges lec-

ture room. The medical officers residence, with its pair of solid-slate staircases is the college administration building.

Designed for security compatible with views out, high sandstone walls encircled the complex with that facing Iron Cove sunk in to the bank - a ha-ha device pioneered by Capability Brown. Hundreds of mini-Doric cast-iron columns support the veranda roofs providing covered ways between the buildings. While the gracious structures displayed a minimum of decoration there was room for a Venetian watertower complete with tidal ball-spire.

The buildings were constructed from sandstone quarried on the site and the resulting excavation provided an underground reservoir for the the hospital. A shaft of the steam engine used for washing still exists under the centre.

For cost reasons as much as heritage the renovation minimises intervention, demolitions have been confined to added toilet blocks, for instance, and are marked by bagged walls painted in Tuscan hues to disguise unsatisfactory brickwork and clearly distinguish original structures. The sculpture studio is located in the hospital laundry, its six metre ceiling supported by tall Roman arcades. Kirkbride is well suited to its new use.

There is a proposal to move the Conservatorium to a new building sunk into the slope below Kirkbride to maintain the extensive views.

Church Registers

Continuing the commitment made some time ago to have local church registers copied on to microfiche the History Committee is pleased to report that St Augustine Catholic Church finally consented for theirs to be included. The records show Baptisms 1876-1919, Weddings 1856-1945, Funerals 1913-1945. St Marys Cathedral archives will hold copies.

The history of the church is published in Leichhardt Historical Journal No 20. Price \$17 plus \$2 postage.

Bicentenary Souvenirs

A recorded tape of live to air Oz Folk Program of songs about Balmain, history narrative, and memories presented by Birchgrove Bicentenary Committee members on Radio 2SR is available for \$15. There is also a possibility of a tape of featured items from the Picnic Day Concert.

Bicentenary T Shirts \$15, Mugs \$7.50, Cards \$2.50, Pens \$1.
Contact 9818 4954

Balmain Art & Craft Show

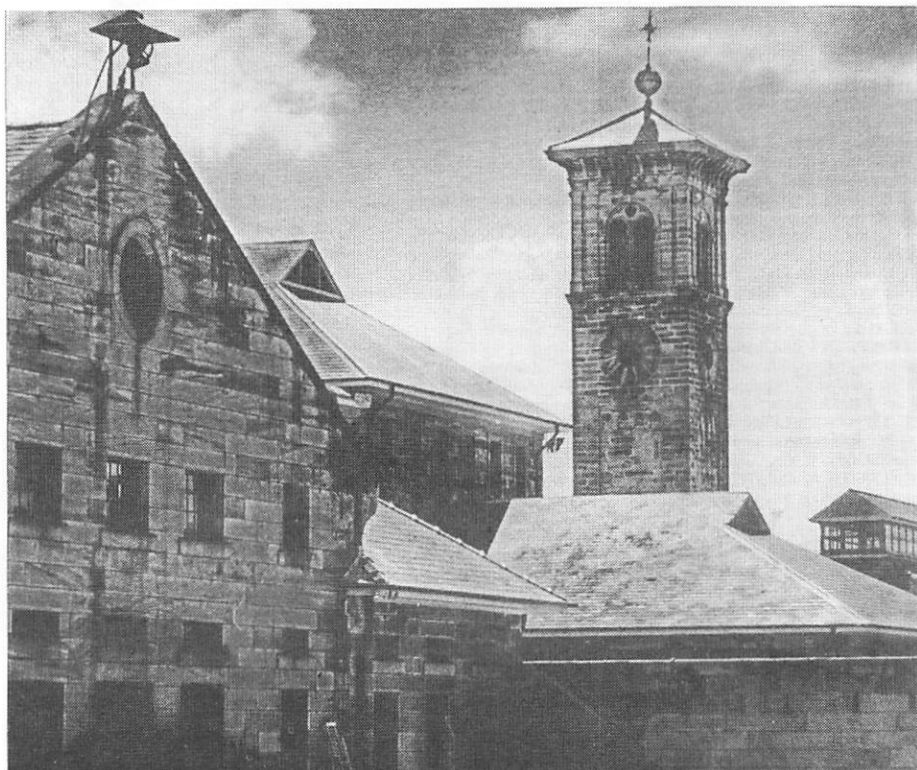
Opening on Friday 18 October at 7pm in Father John Therry School with a champagne supper. Katherine Greiner, guest speaker. Saturday and Sunday 10am to 4pm, entry by \$4 donation. Over 100 artists and craft persons exhibiting. Phone 9810 2640

General Practice Casualty

The General Practice Casualty at Balmain Hospital is a new service committed to provide the community with 24 hour care to anyone needing treatment. The service has been set up by Central Sydney Area Health in co-operation with GPs. Balmain casualty is staffed by local GPs. The casualty treats all minor emergencies and injuries and offers GP type services when a patients family doctor is unavailable. The patient receives information about their condition to pass on to their GP.

The General Practice Casualty has been asked by the Commonwealth to find out the community reaction and why patients choose the service. The Balmain Association has kindly agreed to take part in the project and over the next few months we will be holding small discussion groups.

We would like to hear your views, both good and bad points. Please contact Hazel Harden on 9953 8465.



The Kirkbride Venetian Watertower with tidal ball spire. Photo James Alcock

The Birchgrove Subdivision: A Search Plan

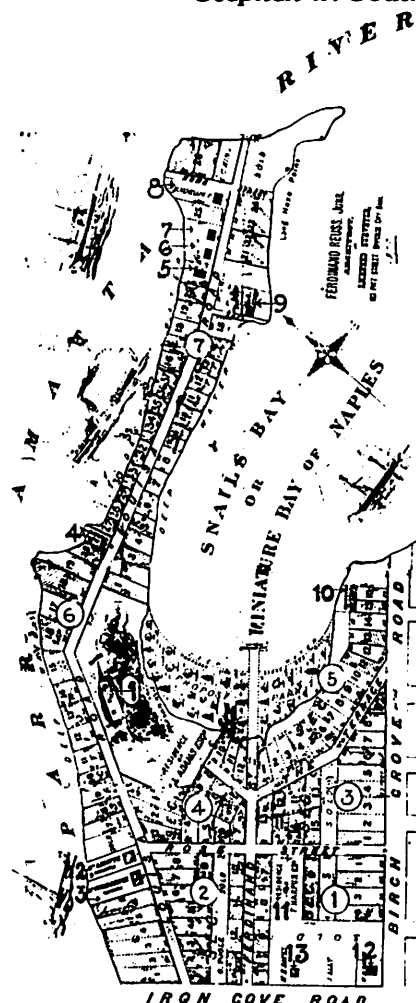
This new publication to celebrate the 200th Anniversary of the Birchgrove Grant was compiled to assist those of you who want to research the history of the area. It is a complete list of the first sales from the two subdivisions that make up Birchgrove as we know it today. The book begins with a brief history of Birchgrove written from the view of the developers of the land and looks at how they fared in their attempts to create Birchgrove in its modern form. A reproduction of both of the original plans of subdivision and diagrams of each is included with guides to the use of the book and location of the records used. Locate your land on the diagram and then use the lists to identify the details of the first sale. Armed with this information you can now begin the search for the history of your land using the guides to assist you. The lists are compiled from the records of the Land Titles Office of NSW (LTO). That is because from its inception this office was the repository for all the registrations affecting land in New South Wales. It is therefore the starting point for any search into the history of Land.

The LTO deals with Land not Houses, but in order to search your house you should know the history of the land. There are two avenues of research one can pursue in the LTO, the title history and the subdivisional history (the plans). The Birchgrove estate subdivisions are shown in the deposited plan (DP) 192096. This is then further subdivided as large areas like the Birchgrove House are divided into small house lots or Strata Plans. These plans may show the existence of buildings on the land especially if the plan uses a wall of the house as a boundary.

The ownership details of your land are established through the title system. The Birchgrove subdivision starts as an Old System title. Here every transaction is evidenced by a deed but registration was not compulsory. Individual blocks have been converted to Torrens Title which is state guaranteed and were every transaction must be registered. Your search may take you through both systems. Residents of the house other than the owner can be established through Leases shown on the title or from sources outside the LTO such as the Sands Directory. That is just some of the things you can do to find the history of your land, its house and the

people who lived in it. I hope you find *The Birchgrove Subdivision: A Search Plan* a useful tool in your research. Price \$5.00 plus \$2.00 postage.

Stephen W. South



Treasurer's Report

Balance Sheet

Debtors	103.85
Cheque Account	7888.60
History Account	3435.76
Savings Account	12346.69
Petty cash	104.80
Total cash & bank	<u>23775.05</u>
Total	23879.70

Income

Membership	3476.00
30th Anniversary	880.00
Donations	412.95
500 Acres	145.00
Around Balmain	1484.00
Called to Bar	2091.45
Gourlie's Corner	510.00
Leichhardt Hist Journal	687.00
Streets, Lanes & Places	1587.00
Leaflets	1147.45
Other publications	669.35
Wine sales	2145.00
Photos	210.00
Interest	580.17
Research fees	120.85
Watch House hire	7309.27
Walks & Tours	926.00
Miscellaneous	455.00
Expense return*	<u>1090.00</u>
Total	25966.49

*From Leichhardt Council for path

For year ending 30 June 1996

Expenditure

Advertising	200.00
Catering	1678.85
Conservation	1085.00
Garden	125.80
Gifts	270.00
Groceries	30.25
Historical	306.95
Household	221.00
Insurance	205.00
Office	149.99
Paper	93.30
Photocopying	149.90
Postage	653.56
Printing	6378.00
Booksellers discount	1631.77
Publications	1605.28
Tax (FID, GDT, etc)	63.24
Subscriptions	133.00
Miscellaneous	386.05
Wine	1921.40
Electricity	462.00
Water rates	215.65
Watch House repairs	<u>6639.25</u>
Total	25096.12
Surplus	870.37
Publications in stock	18634.00
Wine in stock	30.00
Total assets	42543.70

Back To Balmain Day

A great day of reunion and reminiscence for those who grew up or lived in Balmain - Rozelle - Lilyfield. Bring the whole family for a great old-style picnic at Elkington Park on Sunday 27 October 1996. Steak sandwiches, ice cream, confectionery and soft drinks will be on sale.

There will be reunions at all the schools from 9am. A Ecumenical service takes place at 10am in St Andrews Church. The Leichhardt Municipal Band plays in the rotunda at 2pm.

Committee Members 1996/7

President	Ann Bastok
Vice President	Frances Heathfield
Secretary	Jeremy Arnott
Treasurer	Val Hamey
Watch House Hire	Steve South
History Sub-Committee	
Kath Hamey, Yvonne Davidson	
Public Officer	Frances Heathfield
Committee Members	
Joyce Landau, Rita Ellis, Kay Trippe,	
Barbara Howard, Dave Ramsay.	

In Your Garden

Bulbs and Daisies

Flowering bulbs call attention to themselves early in spring with a profusion of golden daffodils to herald the end of winter. The lovely show continues with jonquils, hyacinths, freesias, bluebells and many more.

October is mid-spring and the weather is warming so hardier bulbs appear such as Tritonias orange blooms or Watsonia with tall 60 cm spikes of white, pink or mauve flowers. Tiny grape hyacinths decorate shaded areas and bearded irises emerge in their wonderful range of colours. The new Biotech varieties of native kangaroo paw called Bush Gems come in a stunning range of warm colours from pale yellow to hot rusty red and grow to a height of about 30 cm to 1 m.

November. Daisies, which are coming into bloom in sunny spots, lend fresh charm to any garden. However many gardeners do not realise just how diverse they are, with their many



varieties and colours. Old fashioned marguerite daisies are easy to grow and easy to strike from cuttings. The pretty mauve Loura has a fluffy self-coloured centre while Starlight is pure white with a yellow centre. Pinch them back if they become untidy.

There are lovely new varieties of Shasta daisies, some tall vigorous plants with large single yellow centred

flowers. The Dimorphothea or African daisy has deep pink or purple flowers with dark centres. It loves poor well drained soil and plenty of sunshine but are not good cut flowers for the house. Yellow daisies spread a cheery charm. Mine are in the front garden looking great among the purple and mauve of shrubs.

Bonnie Davidson

What's On

Watch House Exhibitions

- The Print Circle Oct 12-20
- Rozelle Photographers Workshop Nov 2-3
- Nardo Milat Nov 9-10
- Patricia Quinn Nov 16-17
- Anne Carney Nov 23-Dec 1
- Elaine Norling Feb 1-16 1997

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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. 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.