

the balmain
association
incorporated
news sheet

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Integrated Transport Strategy

The Leichhardt Council has released an Integrated Transport Strategy for public exhibition. The aim of the strategy is to promote ecologically sustainable land use and transport planning to reduce the need to travel. The existing level of car usage is environmentally and socially damaging. Most of the municipality, especially the Balmain Peninsula, was developed before the advent of the car and is having immense difficulties in adjusting to its use. The challenge is to use them more responsibly. The mobility of the car is threatened by high levels of ownership. I am reminded of a recent episode of Seinfeld in which a character is loath to move his car for fear of losing the parking place.

The Balmain café society is attracting many people from other areas putting off-street parking under greater stress. Local residents are clamouring for residential parking schemes. Council's Local Traffic Committee has generally responded to requests and in

many streets has installed angle parking which is often unsightly and creates difficulty for street cleaning. However, the increase in parking tends to encourage greater car ownership.

A proposal in 1990 for installation of parking meters in business centres was abandoned due to lobbying by residents and retailers. 'Apart from generating revenue, the main aim of parking meters is to deter unwanted parking by commuters and workers and to encourage short-term shopper parking. Meters are able to reduce the work load for parking inspectors and create a greater turnover of vehicles'. Council has resolved to allow local residents to use meters free of charge. Multistorey car parks are clearly not viable because of the cost per car space of such schemes? Open car parks are certainly unacceptable because they require demolition of buildings.

Although better serviced by public transport than most suburban locations and offering opportunities for

medium density living, our area is characterised by rates of car ownership and usage only marginally lower than average. Without measures to combat the trend, over the next ten years the increase in population will add to the number of vehicles. In this regard the report addresses public transport. Proposals for Light rail on the peninsula are discussed but it will be a long time before they are considered seriously.

A feasibility study has yet to be completed on the proposed Personal Public Transport with electronic bus stops that make it possible to dial up a multi-hire vehicle. The concept of PPT is being explored in Europe but would only be attempted in cooperation with Marrickville, South Sydney and Sydney City Councils. In the short term the introduction of privately owned taxibuses with radio control could produce results. Taxi-buses are in use in some South American countries but require legislation in NSW to allow multiple hire and eliminate excessive license fees.

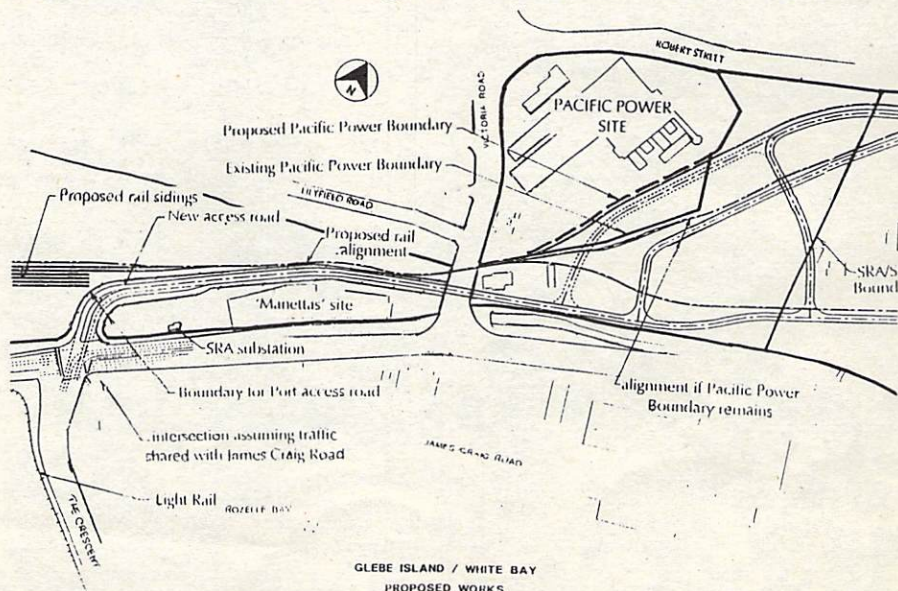
Port Access Road

In 1993 a Truck Survey carried out by the Peninsula Transport Group concluded that the operations of heavy transport from White Bay adds to the traffic problem at the Robert Street intersection with Victoria Road. It also asked for investigation of destination of trucks using Mullens Street. A widening of Roberts Street has been planned for sometime and there is a Section 94 plan to fund this by levying large residential developments nearby.

The Sydney Port Authority has announced its intention to construct a special purpose road for port traffic on the existing Rozelle goods yards that will soon be vacant when the shunting facility is relocated at Enfield. The proposed access road will be from the White Bay Container Terminal to the intersection of The Crescent and the City West Link. It would use a disused rail portal under Victoria Road. The Authority has to acquire land from SRA

for expansion of port capacity that is constrained by Robert Street and James Craig Drive. They estimate that truck movements will increase from the present 580 per day on average to

3,400 in the year 2010. The road would be a real benefit to Peninsula residents in improving access to Victoria Road by eliminating the heavy vehicles from Robert Street and Mullens Street.



GLEBE ISLAND / WHITE BAY
PROPOSED WORKS

History Committee Report

The history committee is kept busy with many requests for assistance on a great variety of subjects. Last month, a research of a sandstone house at 27 Manning Street, Rozelle, c1883, showed the first resident as Robert Broomhead, stonemason. Because his residence for the two previous years was in Park Street he is possibly the owner/builder. He may have worked on the Callan Park Hospital, which was begun in 1883.

A family historian could not find a death date for an ancestor, whose name did not appear in the New South Wales Death Index. The omission is unusual for on checking the internments index for the Old Balmain Cemetery, a death date was found.

Assistance was given for a publicans list for the Royal Hotel, Leichhardt. Three other questions we have yet to solve are, the water table level around Queens Place in Balmain, information on the Balmain Orchid Society c1890 and the sculptor of Neptune on the wall at lower level of Fitzroy Park.

Most interesting was where did the artist Tom Roberts live in Balmain?

Tom Roberts, Artist

Thomas William Roberts was born on the 9th March, 1856 in Dorset, England, to Richard and Matilda. When Richard died in 1868, leaving the family in poor circumstances, Matilda brought Tom and his younger brother and sister to Melbourne, to join her brother to work in his leather factory making satchels. After attending school at Collingwood, Tom worked as a photographer's assistant and attended evening classes at the local

School of Design. In 1874 he won a prize for landscape painting and earned extra money illustrating books and magazines.

Roberts was one the first painters to recognize the special character of the Australian landscape and he was selected to study at the Royal Academy of Arts, London, which he attended from 1881 to 1884. After travelling extensively throughout the Continent, he returned to Melbourne in 1885. His contemporaries were Fred McCubbin, Louis Abrahams, Arthur Streeton and Charles Conder. They developed a distinctive style of Australian Impressionism that came to be called the Heidelberg School. In August 1889, the painters held the first public exhibition of 182 of their paintings in Melbourne. The exhibition was known as the '9 by 5', because much of the work was painted on cigar box lids that measured nine inches by five inches. Sixty-two of these were works by Roberts.

Soon after Roberts spent some time in outback New South Wales where he painted some of his well-known works, *Shearing the Rams*, 1890 and *Breakaway*, 1891. *Bailed Up* (below) is probably the best known of Roberts' works. It is set on the road between Glen Innes and Inverell. The painting was begun in 1895 but left in his studio until 1927 when he finished the work for a major exhibition in 1928. The Art Gallery of NSW later bought the picture. Following Streeton to Sydney in October 1891, Roberts established a camp at Sirius Cove, Mosman with his fellow artists. Roberts' passion for *plein-air* painting was captured in *The Artists Camp*, 1896.

Roberts had known a former art-student Elizabeth (Lillie) Williamson for some years and married her on the 30th April, 1896 in Melbourne and then made their home at 7 Paul Street, Balmain. His studio was at Vickery Chambers, 76 Pitt Street, Sydney. Lillie was a wood carver and expert frame-maker. Their only child, a son, Calib Grafton, was born on the 31st January, 1898 at 7 Paul Street. The birth certificate carries Tom Roberts signature. Sketches of mother and son are dotted through his notebooks. While in Sydney Roberts was the founding chairman of the Society of Arts.

The family remained in Balmain until 1901 when Roberts was commissioned to paint the official picture of the opening of the Commonwealth Parliament in Melbourne. He was to paint 250 figures for which he was offered more than one thousand guineas and expenses. The work took two and a half years, completing the Big Picture, 518cm x 305cm, in England. Roberts continued to paint many more outstanding works until his death in July, 1931. Lillie preceded him in December, 1927.

7 Paul Street, Balmain

George William Paul, auctioneer, was one of the first purchasers of land in 1836 in the Paul Street area. On subdivision in 1840, lot 7 was bought by Henry Davy, bookkeeper, for £85. *Fern Villa*, a single-story stone cottage with a verandah, was built in the 1840s probably by Davy, remains today.

Sources: Australian Dictionary of Biography. Leichhardt Historical Journal 11. Photo of Tom & Lillie from *Tom Roberts* by D Chase & V Kransky.



The Good Samaritan Sisters of Rozelle

On Sunday, 3rd November, 1996, a farewell lunch was held at St Joseph's, Rozelle, to commemorate 121 years of community service by the Good Samaritan Sisters. Four remaining sisters live at the Quirk Street convent, all of whom are still actively involved in the community. Sister Xavier is historian and works at the archives at St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney. Sister Marie Lane is a social worker for the aged. Parish Sister, Patricia McGrath, visits local parishioners and teaches at the Father John Therry School, Balmain. Sister Veronica Purcell is retired but is active within the church. The history of Catholic education in the Balmain/Rozelle area can be traced back to 1864, when the only Catholic school was that, provided by five Good Samaritan Sisters. Their first convent was Father Therry's old presbytery (now demolished), then the upper story of the St Augustine's School and finally, in 1877, to the Edmund Blacket designed Convent at 14 Jane Street.

In 1873, the Catholic population of the district was approx 1000, and 230 pupils attended St Augustine's School. The children from Balmain West (Rozelle), had to travel to Balmain for their education. In 1875 Sister Mary Catherine Egan and Sister Winefride Graves journeyed each day "through perilous country and over bush and briar" from their Balmain convent to teach the Infant and Senior classes in Balmain West. It is believed that the lessons were conducted in "rooms" under the old original Church building. The Freeman's Journal on the 19th February, 1876 reports, "St Joseph's School, Balmain West, was opened last

Sunday evening by His Grace, the Most Reverend Dr Vaughan. The spacious building measuring 65 feet by 30 feet".

For some time the Sisters continued to travel by foot from their Convent to the school until a horse and buggy was provided for them. It was not until February, 1880 that a small cottage was rented for 4 teaching Sisters, at a cost of 10 shillings per week. It is interesting to record the inventory of furniture in the house in June, 1880.

Community and General Room. One of each of the following: Chiffonier, couch, lamp, clock, bell, table, crucifix, small tray, cruet stand, pair lustres, Antimacassar, 2 mats, 3 small statues, 4 pictures, 6 chairs, tumblers and wine glasses.

Refectory and Kitchen. 1 pastry roller, baking dish, table, slop basin, kettle, small copper, bucket, frying pan, gridiron, colander, carving knife and fork, 2 bread plates, roller towels vegetable dishes, pie dishes, tea pots, butter basins, small boilers, safes, washing tubs, candle sticks, tin dishes, sugar basins, 3 kitchen towels, kitchen knives and forks, dishes, irons and stand, 4 stools, dinner dishes, saucepans, jugs, 5 mugs, 6 table spoons, dessert spoons, teaspoons, knives and forks, 7 cups and saucers and 24 plates.

Cells. (Bed room). 1 pail, 2 bed-tops, chest of drawers, candlesticks, 4 bedsteads, pillowcases, mattresses, counterpanes, sets of curtains, table cloths, washing stands, sets bedroom delfware, chairs, small pieces of carpet, 8 blankets, pillows, 12 pillowcases, towels and 16 sheets.

Oratory. 1 Stations of the Cross, small table, oil can and feeder, feather duster, dust pan, 2 candlesticks, alter cloths, pair vases, 4 stalls and pictures.

In 1881, the Parish of Balmain West was created and placed under the patronage of St Joseph. Father Thomas O'Reilly was appointed as the first resident Priest and his first duty was to arrange construction of a convent building on the corner of Gordon and Quirk Street. The building on the same site to-day was built in 1955.

The parish continued to grow and in 1883 some 1670 Catholics lived in Balmain West and 300 pupils attended the school. Over the ensuing 100 years there were many periods of expansion of school buildings and facilities even to include in 1967, the former Christian Brothers Secondary School building which is on the corner of Gordon Street and Victoria Road. However, in the early 1970s decreasing enrolments became evident.

The last Good Samaritan Sisters to teach, departed in 1981 when a dedicated team of lay teachers continued to provide a high standard of education but a difficult and painful decision was made to close Rozelle School and combine the students with St Augustine's, Balmain. In 1995 the Father John Therry, began another chapter in Catholic education in Balmain and Rozelle.

Source: Mass of Thanksgiving and Farewell. Ray Swinfield.

Kath Hamey

Christmas Cheer

A Christmas treat was given to four hundred poor people, including children and their parents, in the St Thomas' Hall, Rozelle. The function, which was organized by Captain Smart of the Salvation Army, was made possible by the generosity of Mr and Mrs Minifie, prominent business people of the district. (Minifie Furniture Store, 668 Darling Street, Rozelle). The happy occasion was graced by the presence of Mr Quirk, MLA., who gave an inspiring address, especially directed to the children. He spoke of the impression The Army made upon him when he was a youth, and also paid warm recognition to the work done by the officers and soldiers in Rozelle. Mrs Minifie also voiced a Christmas greeting. The Christmas cheer was very timely as distress is very acute in the district and many people are feeling the after effects of the timber strike. There was a liberal supply of eatables. An open programme was presided over by Captain Smart, the children willingly volunteering to give items.

War Cry. 25th January, 1930.



Good Samaritan Sister with students early 1960s

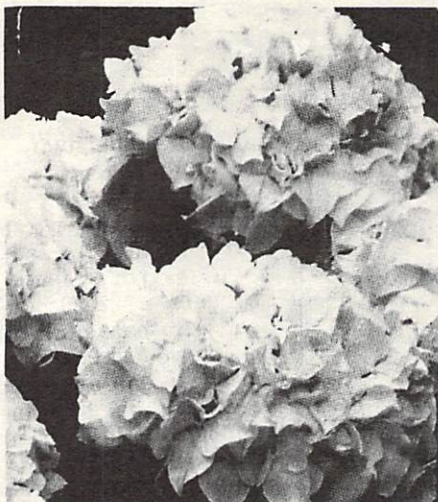
In Your Garden

The Long Hot Summer

Summer would not be summer without the magnificent heads of the hydrangea dominating the shady parts of our gardens with varying shades of pink and blue and occasional white blooms.

The flowers reach there peak at Christmas but remain on the bushes into March and even April. Hydrangeas colour in response to the soils they grow in. Pink blooms indicate limey soil, blue shows acid. If you want to be sure of blue blooms it is necessary to apply sulphate of ammonia (blueing tonic) in October and November. For pink or red blooms add lime now and again mid-winter. The amount you add will depend on how limey the soil is. Start with a good handful.

Those indicators are helpful when you want to plant acid-loving plants such as camellias and azaleas. The soil will suit these if the hydrangeas are blue but you will need to acidify it if the blooms are pink.



Unless you prepare for it gardening is difficult in the summer heat. Mulch everything as that insulates roots from the heat and conserves moisture as well as helping flora to multiply. In turn that helps plants to feed themselves. Next gradually get your plans used to less water, both to save water and to make your plants healthier. Soil dries out quickly and cracks under direct sunlight, so in unmulched soils, frequent watering is needed to maintain

plants. On the other hand mulching prevents drying out and promotes better root systems capable of going deeper for moisture and the nutrients they need. The best care is to mulch and then give long, slow soakings a couple of times each week.

Bonnie Davidson

If you are interested in local, family or applied history then there is an opportunity to gain a university qualification. The University of New England offers courses by distant education in study areas that introduce you to the skills and sorces for researching and writing local history. Applications close soon. Further information can be obtained from Helen McKinnon, Faculty of Arts, UNE., phone 067 73 3020.

Barbara Howard

Watch House Exhibitions

- Sue Callanan Dec 7-8
painting, drawing, sculpture

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A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

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.

AnnualSubscriptions:

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