

the balmain
association
incorporated
news sheet

The Peninsula OBSERVER

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Back to Balmain Day

There will be many more attractions connected with the 9th annual Back to Balmain Day on Sunday 26 October, culminating in a great day of re-union and reminiscence for those who grew-up or lived in the Balmain and Rozelle areas.

The day will commence with re-unions at Balmain (Pigeon Ground), Birchgrove, Nicholson Street and Rozelle Schools. Former students and teachers are asked to bring along old school photographs and memorabilia.

A very simple ecumenical service will be held at St Andrew's Church at 10am.

The main activity of the day will be an 'old fashioned' BYO picnic at Elkington Park. A food stall will be operating by a local school, providing steak and sausage sandwiches, soft drinks and ice creams may be purchased from a local vendor. Don't forget to bring a sign or placard showing your family name and the streets in which you lived.

The Leichhardt Municipal Band and a student band from the Birchgrove School will play from the Rotunda.

The Balmain Association will have a book stall and a large note pad for family history enquiries.

Contacts: George Stone 9810 1078 and Allan Lonnon 9713 4486.

The Balmain Regatta Sunday 26 October is jointly organised by the Balmain Sailing Club and the Wooden Boat Association and in association with the Sydney Maritime Museum, the Balmain Association and the Back to Balmain Committee. Breakfast at the historic Dawn Fraser Pool. Sailing races called from 1pm, White Horse Point, Elkington Park. The Balmain Regatta is an historic event originating in 1849.

The 1997 regatta events are: Wooden yacht: two divisions - Yachts built prior to 1962 - Yachts built in or after 1962. Yachts: divisions will be determined after entries have been received. Dinghy: two divisions - Vintage wooden dinghies - open dinghies division. "The Waterman": A boatman's rowing race.

Putt-putt: Gentleman's Launch also Club fleet entries.

Enjoy a harbour cruise aboard one of the Sydney Maritime Museum's historic boats.

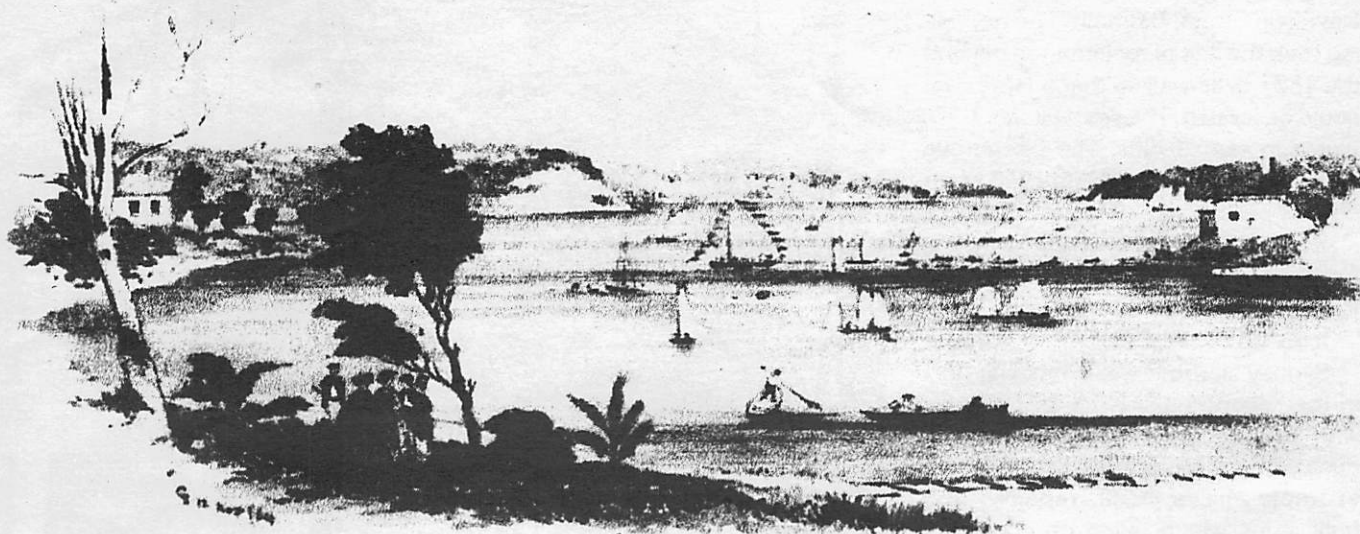
Experience the earthy atmosphere of the Balmain Sailing Club, River Street, Balmain. Crew positions available.

For further information 9810 2086 and P O Box 653, Rozelle, 2039.

Balmain Library

On Tuesday 21 October, 1997, at 6.30pm, at the Balmain Library, a speaker from the State Library will give details of the Family History research available and on Wednesday 22 October, a member of the Balmain Association will give a view of Balmain in 1897.

School children competition: Short story about Balmain 100 years ago. Section A: 7-12 years; Section B: 13-18 years. Draw or paint your day in Balmain. Section C: 6 years and under. Presentation: 6.30pm Wednesday, 22 October.



Balmain Regatta 1864 - George P Slade

Balmain in 1897

In early 1897, Mayor A Milne and his fellow eleven Aldermen of the Balmain Municipal Council, were pleased with the proposed new industry for White Bay, Iron Cove and major reclamation works on Snail's Bay. The depression of the 1890s had been a difficult time for the 30,000 residents of Balmain, Rozelle and Birchgrove, the area covered by the Balmain Council.

Snail's Bay

For many years the Snail's Bay mud flats had become increasingly unhealthy. It was said at the time that the water and mud 'alternatively ripple and evolve evil smells at high and low tide respectively'. Sydney was suffering from a shortage of parks and playing fields as 'eighteen century notions of open space were being challenged by the rise, in England and English colonies especially, of the phenomenon of organised public recreation'.

A Trust was set up in 1882 to begin reclaiming the bay but apart from their interest, progress was slow. Birchgrove Park was fenced in 1883 and filling began. It was proposed to use the filling from the Sutherland Dock being excavated on Cockatoo Island to allow the cricket ground to be built. The trustees received £300 and were able to employ one labourer only 'to level off rough ground'. A cricket pitch was laid in 1885 and in 1887, Thomas Rose, 'a man with botanical experience, had two men to help him lay out the grounds'. Early photographs show that park seats had been provided and cattle graze at the water's edge.

It was not until 1897 when further filling began, using clay carted from Davidson Street, Balmain. The new filling took the line of reclamation beyond the 1887 dyke-wall so that a large oval could be leveled. The sea wall was completed in early 1900s. The Birchgrove Park Trust ceased to exist in 1948 when control passed to Leichhardt Council.

Source: Birchgrove 1796-1895. Leichhardt Historical Journal 15. Pamela Jeffery.

Iron Cove

Sydney Harbour was a bustling port in the second half of the 19th century with Balmain a centre of maritime industry. Many waterfront activities, for example Mort's Dock, repaired and built ships which relied on coal as a source of power.

Below Sydney Harbour, the Bulli coal seam swept along the coast between

Newcastle and Wollongong at 3,000 feet below sea-level. To tap this seam within the Harbour would eliminate transport costs, provide a local supply of coal and allow ships to be loaded for export. Ships could also be bunkered direct from a mine.

The Balmain waterfront was an obvious choice. There was plenty of deep sheltered water, close to the maritime trade links and provide jobs for the local community.

A syndicate formed the Sydney Harbour Collieries Ltd. and a small site was chosen as most of the mining activities would take place below ground. Land fronting Iron Cove at the corner of Birchgrove Road and Water Street was acquired. Leveling the steep site close to the water began in December, 1896. A massive sea wall was constructed and work began in May, 1897 with the dredging of 20,000 tons of mud to allow the quay-wall to be built.

Two shafts, 18 ft in diameter were sunk down to the coal seam. Amid the patriotic fever of the times they were named Birthday and Jubilee after Queen Victoria's birthday and Diamond Jubilee of her record reign in 1897. The colliery chimney, a prominent feature on the Balmain skyline, was a symbol of the heavy industrialisation of the 20th century Balmain. Today, 1997, 111 dwellings are being erected on the site.

Source: Balmain Places 2. The Coal Mine Under the Harbour. Peter Reynolds. Leaflet cost \$2.

White Bay

William and Elizabeth Lever visited Sydney for the first time in 1892 during their world tour.

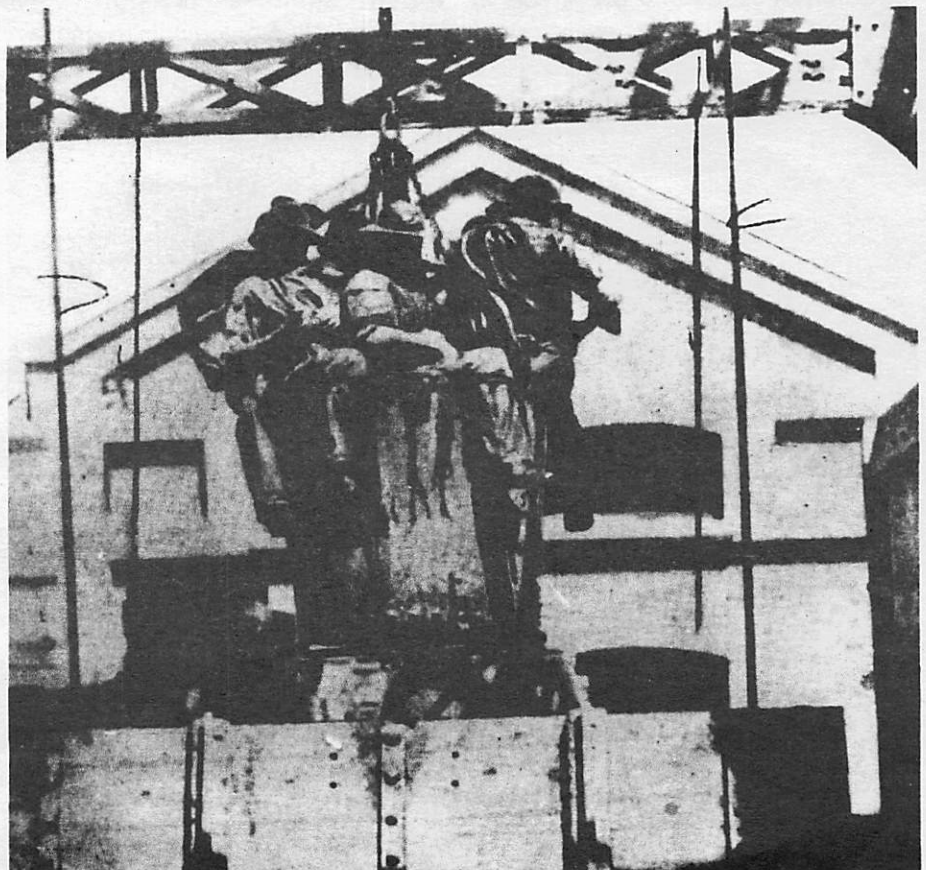
Soap made in Lever's soap works in England was distributed from a warehouse at 74 Clarence Street, Sydney. During their visit to Sydney, land was bought at White Bay.

On a return visit in December, 1895, Elizabeth Lever, turned the first sod for the Sunlight Oil Works. The site bounded by Reynolds and Hyam Streets and the bay. This was the first modern oil mill in the southern hemisphere and the first building erected outside England by Lever Brothers. Balmain was an ideal site for the Lever Bros. mill, with its water frontage and a good supply of coal from Newcastle and Port Kembla and the proposed Balmain colliery.

The Balmain oil mill began production in 1897 and over the next 90 years, proceeded to expand to the adjoining area, providing employment for generations of men and women. To day, 1997, the 5.5ha site is a housing development for over 500 dwellings.

Source: A Lever & Kitchen Album. Kristine Bak.

Kath Hamey



Going down Birthday Shaft. Balmain Mine

Peninsula Population to Increase

Redevelopment of industrial sites in Balmain and Rozelle will push population growth and alter the demographic profile of the area. According to Anita Phillips, director of community services at Leichhardt Council, an additional 470 child care places will be required by 2006. New housing developments are catering for wealthy retirees and well-to-do families. Some wealthy suburbanites are downsizing their expensive homes for apartments closer to the city. More children mean a focus on areas such as baby health, child care and schooling, as well as increased library facilities.

East Asia Property Group will spend \$62 million redeveloping the Colgate-Palmolive factory into 109 prestige apartments and 10 townhouses at prices ranging from \$165,000 to \$1.2 million. Meriton is spending \$130 million on 359 apartments in Somerset Mews (ughh) on the Lever Bros site and has a proposal to build 176 luxury apartments on the adjacent Ampol site. The Walker Corp is constructing 290 luxury apartments on the Monsanto site and the Balmain Power Station is being prepared for redevelopment.

The 100 year old Balmain Town Hall is under utilised and needs to be upgraded to incorporate child care, senior citizens and community services.. It is in the commercial centre of Balmain. The proposal is includes tri-

pling the size of the library. The caretaker's apartment has a number of unused rooms on two floors.

Discussions between the Director of Planning and Council representatives are expected to agree to the Town Plan for public exhibition. There has been agreement on limiting the floor space ratio to 0.6:1 as a means of reducing the density generally but discussions are proceeding on the major sites. The adoption of the plan will give Council better control over development.

Since 1996, 76 of 177 councils in NSW have lost their general managers before their contracts have expired. In most cases clashes with elected councilors has caused the managers to resign or be removed. It appears that the process of councilors working as a type of board and the general manager as a chief executive is not effective. There is always some tension between elected representatives and appointed bureaucrats. There are also concerns on possible restrictions to residents participation rights. However it is the councilors' responsibility to determine policy and the manager is accountable for the administration. The paying out of contracts is a considerable cost to ratepayers. One council has employed three general managers in three years. The Minister for Local Government, Mr Page, has said that he will legislate to standardise severance clauses. Managers should not be able to walk away with over-generous payouts.

President's Report

The period from September 1996 was my first year as President of the Balmain Association after several years as a member of the History Committee. I am happy to report that the Watch House continues to be a lively centre for the Association's activities. Many visitors call in each Saturday afternoon — locals as well as tourists from around Australia and the world. A good number of our callers come to admire the building, others are seeking information about historical buildings in our area and quite a few are able to provide information, including photographs, for which the History Committee is grateful. If you could spare the odd Saturday afternoon until 3pm to greet visitors we would like to hear from you.

After a recent visit of National Trust representatives to inspect the Watch House and hold discussions with members of the Executive Committee, we are happy to report that the Trust is most impressed with the condition of the building. The practice of hiring the Watch House for artists' exhibitions has meant a real boost to the funds needed for the upkeep of the building.

The past year has seen the Association involved in the successful Birchgrove Bicentenary celebrations and the Back to Balmain Day in October. Nearly time for this great day again! The Observer, continues, thanks to the hard work of its editors, providing information regarding current events, development issues that effect all of those who live on the peninsula, and well researched historical articles.

Membership fees are vital if we are to continue the good work so please tell others about the Association — perhaps you could pass on the Observer when you have read it. With all the development taking place on the peninsula the Association needs your support if it is to continue the job begun thirty two years ago to look after our special area.

Ann Bastok

Management Committee

Ann Bastok, president; Frances Heathfield, vice-president & public officer; Jeremy Arnott, secretary; Val Hamey, treasurer & editor; Kath Hamey, History convenor; Steve South, Watch House bookings; Bonnie Davidson, archives; Committee members: Rita Ellis, Joyce Landau, Dave Ramsay.

Treasurer's Report

Balance Sheet

Assets

Cheque Account	3735.05
Term Deposit	14000.00
Petty cash	180.30
Debtors	672.87
less Trust fund*	<u>600.00</u>
Total	17988.22

Income

Membership	3045.00
Publication sales	5006.20
Watch House Rent	5777.55
Walks & tours	956.00
Interest	687.85
Donations	370.00
Photo sales	368.00
Research fees	255.50
Wine sales	804.00
Trust Fund*	600.00
Other income	<u>102.00</u>
Total	17972.10

For year ending 30 June 1997

* Snails Bay Group funds

Expenditure

Building conservation	6814.34
Publication	7919.66
Furniture	3450.00
Historical	1396.27
Insurance	265.00
Garden	891.05
Office supplies	103.85
Photo copying	444.65
Suscriptions	140.00
Miscellaneous	201.60
Transport	135.30
Electricity	238.00
Water	172.65
Wine	393.60
Bank charge	9.00
Tax	51.13
Watch House repairs	<u>1206.00</u>
Total	23832.10
Loss	5860.00

In Your Garden

Shasta Daisy

The shasta daisy, *chrysanthemum maximum*, is an old-fashioned plant but the old cottage flowers seem to be staging a comeback. They are large white single or double daisy-like flowers carried on stems above the bushes that grow about 45cm high.

The shasta daisy is a perennial flowering from December until January. They propagate from seeds but may also be grown by division of the roots in early spring. This is the only way that the double variety can be reproduced. Shasta daisies require a moderately rich soil and ample water. A position in full sunlight is desirable. The plants may be left in the ground for two or three years, after which it is advisable to dig them up, divide the roots and replant, preferably in new positions during winter or early spring. They are reasonably free of diseases and pests. They are

good cut flowers and make a lovely display for the house.



Bonnie Davidson

September and October is a good time for gardeners to think about putting in a sprinkler system and a timer if you haven't already done so as one good soaking once a week is better than just lightly the top soil watering by hand.

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Leichhardt: On the Margins of the City.

In 1994, the Leichhardt Council commissioned Max Solling and Peter Reynolds, well-respected local historians, to research and write a social and political history of the municipality.

The history traces the changes that have taken place from Aboriginal beginnings, through to the present.

Balmain, Glebe, Leichhardt and Annandale each had its own distinct municipal identity for decades. This excellent hard cover publication with 111 photos can be obtained from: Records Dept, Leichhardt Council, P O Box 45, Leichhardt, 2039. Cost: \$35, incl Sydney postage.

Watch House Exhibitions

- Judy Brownlie Oct 11-19
- Tracey Marashlian Oct 25-Nov 2
- Nado Milat Nov 8-9
Sydney 1997. Oils, drawings
- Lilyfield Watercolour Grp Nov 15
- Anne Miller Nov 29-30
Jewelry, Weaving, Paintings



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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.