

the balmain
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news sheet

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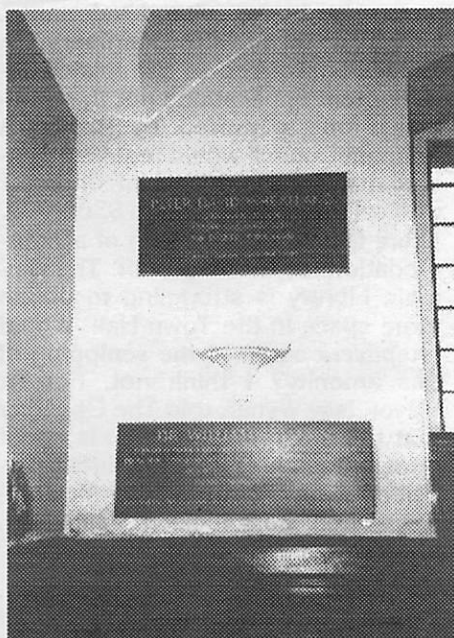
Founded November 1965

August 1999

A Balmain Memorial

About eighteen months ago the Committee approved a suggestion from the History Committee to place a memorial in the St Giles-in-the-Fields Church, London to commemorate the death of Dr William Balmain. He was Assistant Surgeon on the First Fleet to help establish the Colony of New South Wales in 1788 and later was the Principal Surgeon. Balmain returned to London in 1801 and died on 17 November 1803 at Bloomsbury, a London suburb and was buried in the churchyard of St Giles.

A letter dated 24 May 1999 from the Rev Gordon Taylor, Rector, states: *I am most happy to be able to write to you and say that the Balmain Memorial Tablet was erected in the north aisle of St Giles-in-the-Fields Church on 19 May. The lettering incised in the slate has been gilded. I will try to have a photograph taken of the result and will send it to you. It seems to have taken a long time to arrange but that must be attributed in some measure to the strict requirements of ecclesiastical law in care of churches. I am pleased it has all come to a satisfactory conclusion. The address is St Giles High Street, London WC2 and is only a short distance from Tottenham Court Road Underground Station.*



The Memorial Visited

During a recent visit to London, I was glad to have the opportunity of visiting the Anglican Church of St Giles-in-the-Fields in order to see the plaque recently erected there in memory of Dr William Balmain. It has been placed on the north wall at the back of the church in a position that catches the eye as soon as one enters the church.

In his July 1999 Rector's letter the Rev. Gordon Taylor F S A, describes the plaque as a very handsome memorial and adds that the church has been delighted to foster this Australian connection.

Members may be interested to know that St Giles began its existence in 1101 as a hospital for lepers in the fields to the west of London. It seems that St Anselm may have suggested the foundation, but certainly it continued as a monastic foundation until the Dissolution in 1539. In 1547 the surviving chapel became a parish church, being replaced by a new building in 1630. A century later this building was also demolished and replaced by the present church.

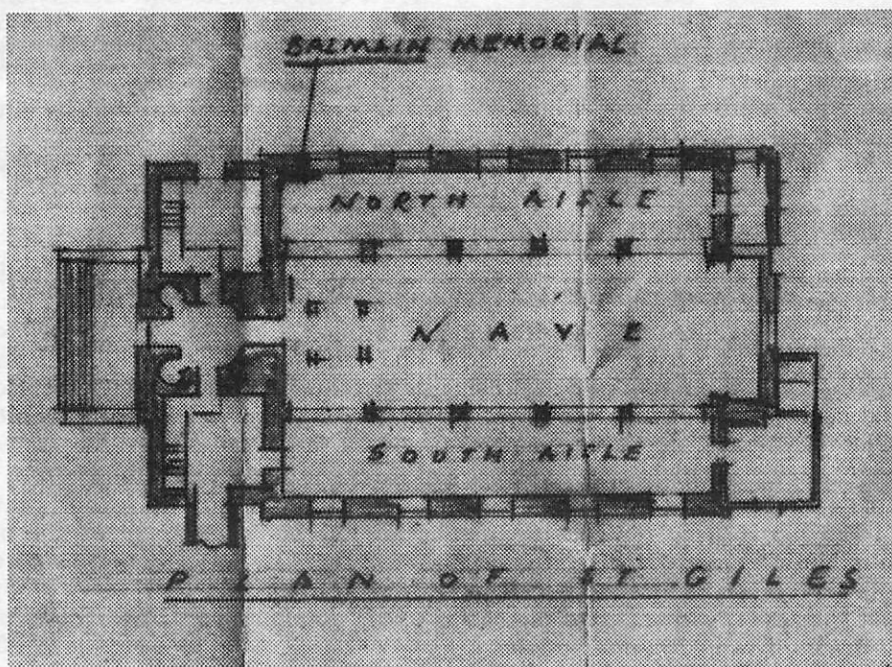
Over the years many well-known names have been associated with St Giles including Sir John Oldcastle, the Lollard leader, John Milton, Samuel Pepys, John and Charles Wesley, Garrick, Balmain and the children of Byron and Shelley.

In the 17th century the parish was one of London's most exclusive addresses but by the middle of the 18th century it had deteriorated to a slum area, 'the resort of beggars and rogues'.

Since the second world war there has been a great deal of redevelopment and the extended parish now comprises parts of the very heart of London, a place full of history extending back nearly a thousand years.

The large, elegant church of St Giles-in-the-Fields today serves a very wide community and is well worth a visit. It stands in St Giles High Street WC2, just off Shaftesbury Avenue and close to Tottenham Court Tube station (Northern and central lines).

Vernon Kemp



Left, the Balmain tablet is the lower. Right Plan showing location

House Names

The practice of numbering houses began in France in 1463 and in Britain it was as late as 1765 that a bill was passed by the Court of Common Council to affix street name tablets and to number houses; however, prior to this, houses were identified by a house name.

Those who came to Australia to establish their homes carried on the tradition. In Balmain house numbers were introduced in 1889 so house names are another source of dating a building.

There were many sources that provided and influenced the choice of a house name such as ties with the home country and family members. For instance *Louisaville* in Wells Street and *Alisa-Craig* in Gipps Street. There are many references and sentiments to England, Ireland and Scotland, such as *Bloomsberry* in Church Street. As the colonisation of Australia took place civil servants and militia brought memories in the form of new words as house names such as the Ireland battlefield of ancient fame, *Clontarf Cottage* in Wallace Street. Location gives *River View* in Reuss Street, *The Anchorage* in Louisa Road, *Corner Cottage* in Curtis Road and *Rowntree House* yes in Rowntree Street and two houses in Thomas Street *The House Opposite* and *The House Next Door*. Australia's unique flora and fauna provided names such as *Banksia House*, *Blue Gums*, *Wattle Tree* and *Waratah*, the latter in Colgate Avenue. The owner at 1 Rowntree Street must be an admirer of Mick Jagger of The Rolling Stones as the house is called *Jumping Jack Flash*.

National sentiment started to grow strongly towards the end of the 1800s and early 1900s with nationalistic spirit evidenced by Federation hous-

ing which displayed national symbols and ornaments. This was reflected in house names such as *Cooee*, *South-ern Cross*, *Kookaburra* and *Boomerang*. Our most original sources have been the Aboriginal languages and include names such as *Coolangatta* (splendid view) in Adolphus Street, *Carinya* (happy, peaceful home), *Noorong* (house), *Bungarie* (hut).

House name signs have varied in their form and have in the past been made on beaten copper, brass lettering on brass plates, stained glass mounted in door panels and windows. A terrace in Macquarie Place has a distinctive sign *Sunnyside* in a panel above the front door. In the Federation era and afterwards the most popular form was gold or silver leaf lettering set on a black or mirrored background with a coloured border, glass covered and set into a frame of stained timber. The plaques were usually attached under the porch beside the front door.



If your home already has its own name then display it. If it hasn't got one then make one up. Because your home does have its own identity and personality as do its owners and by doing this we will be helping to carry on the tradition of house names. Source: *Antiques of Australia* by Russell Scott.

Kathleen Hamey

Council Performance

Is there a council that has not experienced dissatisfaction from its ratepayers? So what should residents do? The Balmain Association was formed in 1965 from concerns about development and the threats to heritage values. In 1990 its members were instrumental in defeating the NSW Government's attempt to take away Leichhardt Council's planning powers when Mayor Brady refused to challenge the appointed Administrator. Unfortunately most of the development has occurred since from judgements of the Land & Environment Court. One decision illustrates our dilemma. Against Council and resident's objection the Court sanctioned the redevelopment of the Colgate-Palmolive building into apartments and 10 townhouses on adjoining sites. The greedy developer made a further application to add penthouses on the top floor of the old factory and this was approved!

We were active on the Council Planning Committee to help draft an acceptable Town Plan. We campaigned for a small cottages preservation policy and the Council has gazetted DCP20 towards the aim of preventing demolitions.

The rationalisation of garbage collection was necessary to encourage recycling and has impressed on residents the need to reduce waste. After the immediate negative reaction residents are cooperating.

There is a campaign for Balmain to secede from Leichhardt Council. How can ratepayers get a better deal from a smaller organisation? By contracting services to private firms says P P McGuinness. This is happening already on some services. Would ratepayers be happy with development approved by private examiners? A council is required to administer development applications not the minimalist one advanced by Paddy. A Balmain Council would require a general manager and a chief engineer with salaries amounting to \$300,000. There is also the question of accommodation for the new staff. The Balmain Library is struggling to obtain more space in the Town Hall. Would ratepayers agree to the scrapping of this amenity? I think not. Former Mayor, Issy Wyner, told The Observer that the push for secession is about rates but is short about resident participation on Council. Paddy McGuinness often slurs local activists with phrases like "the chattering classes" or "Chardonnay socialists".

Val Hamey

Mainstreet Masterplan

Resident consultation has begun for the Darling Street improvement plan. Community workshops are held on Tuesday evenings between 6-8pm until 7 September in the Balmain Town Hall. The masterplan will include traffic and pedestrian management, streetscapes, maintenance, heritage and landscaping.

The Environmental Partnership has been appointed to develop the plan. Work on stage one will begin early next year with an expenditure of over \$500 000. Details can be obtained from David Moir, 9555 1033 or Vince Caccavo, 9367 9007.

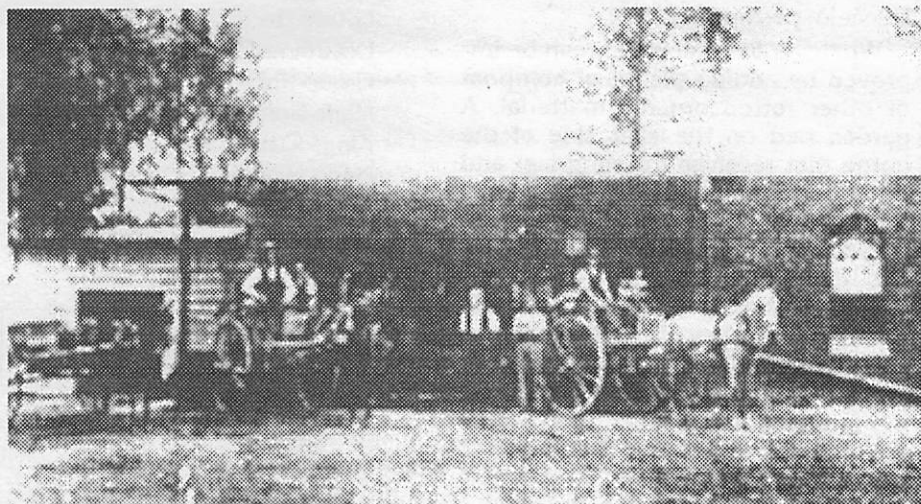
Pools Grant

On 18 July Tanya Plibersek, MHR, presented the Balmain Amateur Swimming Club with a Centenary of Federation grant of \$20 000 for the restoration of their archives. Trophies, medals, shields and photographs are housed in the Dawn Fraser Swimming Pool museum.

June Lunsman, Treasurer, said \$12 500 would be spent on the archive room for waterproofing and repair. The records date back to the pool's founding in 1884. There are swimming costumes from the 1880s including a cap worn by club champion, Peter Murphy.

Milk Companies and Vendors

In the 1950s, two milk companies supplied milk to the Balmain and Rozelle areas. The New South Wales Fresh Food & Ice Co Pty Ltd at 13 Ellen Street and Dairy Farmers' Milk Co Ltd. In 1900 Dairy Farmers Co-operative was established with 70 NSW dairy farmers and set up at the business at 700 Harris Street, Sydney. The business remained at this address until the late 1980s. There are 5500 members today and the company is Australian owned. The Australian Broadcasting Co. now occupies the original site.



Milk carts at Dairy Farmers in Balmain

Dairy Farmers first branch in Balmain was at 3 Elliott Street 1914-1915, then directly opposite at 146 Beattie Street from 1916-1925. The depot then moved to 600 Darling Street. An antique and a popular coffee business were conducted from the Beattie Street address until recently. The site now awaits new development. A food provider business is at the Darling Street building.

These two companies supplied all the vendors and some shops although in later years, the vendors or milkmen supplied the shops as they were commonly called. The vendors delivered the milk twice a day to homes in the 1930s but with the com-

mencement of World War 11, only shops received both deliveries. At this time there was no choice of vendors as the milk runs were zoned. Some of the vendors names were: Hardy, Clarke & Son, Norm Goranson and Mitchell & Daly. Most of the deliveries was still by horse and cart and many 'milks' had a 'billy boy' to help, a young boy who had left school age 14. The price of milk in 1930s was 3 1/2d a pint.

Customers had tin billy cans or jugs covered with a fancy worked cloth with bead edging to keep the flies out. At the same time, there were two dairies in the area. Kinkarde's in Crescent Street and Conaghan's at

33 Crystal Street. In both cases the animals were hand fed. Conaghan's cow yard was opposite King George Park at Callan, Manning and Tolley. The herd was directed up Tolley Street at night to be milked at Crystal Street and the route was reversed at about 2am. This was when the trams along Victoria Road had ceased for the night. A sandstone trough was relocated in King George Park when the dairy yard was developed for housing. Thank You Leichhardt Council for replacing a stolen plaque on this interesting history of the Conaghan's dairy.

With thanks to M/s Kim Laurie, Dairy Farmers, Lidcombe.

Mort Bay Park

A meeting to discuss developing Site C open space will be held on Sunday 22 August at 4pm in the Community Meeting Room, Housing Commission. Entry is from Cameron Street near Mort Street. Council has allocated \$18 000 to begin the remediation.

Bring your wish list to include in the plan. For information ring 9555 9221.

Cameron Cove

Leichhardt Council has rejected the application to move the Water Police headquarters from Pyrmont to Cameron Cove claiming the area was over developed. Residents claim that the Container wharf nearby is more suitable.

The Water Police will probably appeal to the Land & Environment Court as they claim they have nowhere else to go.

Spring Writers' Festival

The NSW Writers' Centre is situated in the original 1842 Garry Owen House, within the grounds of Callan Park, Balmain Road, Lilyfield. The NSW Spring Writing Festival will be held on Saturday 4 September 1999 opening at 10am with a Bush Poets Breakfast. Bush Poetry, the literary language of late, great Australians, such as Henry Lawson and Banjo Paterson, is experiencing a welcome revival. Now you won't have to travel to the bush to hear some of Australia's best contemporary bush authors as they will be in Sydney to compete in, "The Third Big City Muster". At 1pm a Bonza Bush Tucker lunch will be held at the Balmain Tigers League Club, cost \$7. All Welcome. 9797 7575.

Back to Balmain

Yes, its on again. Note in your diary Sunday 31 October for the reunion of Balmainites at Elkington Park. The Balmain Sailing Club will be celebrating the 150 Anniversary of the Balmain Regatta on the same day.

The Vale Family Reunion is to be held over the weekend of the 30-31 October. Frederick Vale was a publican of the Dry Dock Hotel 1872-1876 and purchased land at Cove Street. Frederick and his wife Sarah had eleven children so there are many descendants

Birchgrove Bicentenary + 3

To celebrate the Bicentenary +3 a picnic will be held on Sunday 19 September 1999 from midday at Yurulbin Park, Long Nose Point, Louisa Road. Come and celebrate our unique history. All Welcome. Contact 9818 4954.

Members are urged to attend the 34th Annual General Meeting of the Balmain Association at 7.30pm on 1st September 1999 in the Watch House

In Your Garden

In the Shade

Bringing your garden out of the shade. There is no reason why shady areas around the home and garden can't be brightened with some attractive plants. Houses, sheds, fences and established trees and shrubs all create shade for part of the day but there are lots of plants that will look nice under shady, semi-shaded or filtered sun conditions.

During late autumn or spring, shady areas can be planted with natives or other evergreen plants. Shady areas under eaves tend to be dry most of the time because rain does not fall there and are overlooked when watering. A few hardy plants to grow under eaves with regular watering are palms, tree ferns, tree begonias, euonymus, jacarandas, buxus, murrays, hydrangea, azalea, camelia (filtered sun) and the invaluable impatiens (pictured) that give marvellous colour. Some perennials are foxglove, hellebore, snowdrop, lily of the valley, clivia



and November lily. For ground cover use helexine, ivy, lamium, native violet or vinca. Climbers are cissus and trachelospermum.

Whatever the soil type it can be improved by adding plenty of compost or other rotted organic material. A garden bed on the east side of the home that receives morning sun and afternoon shade or enjoys filtered sun throughout the day provides an area to grow quite a lot of plants. Fuchsias are delightful with a tremendous range to choose from. If given too much shade they do not bloom as well. Try impatiens (Busy Lizzie) here.

Bonnie Davidson

What's On

Watch House Exhibitions

- Historic Photographs from our collection until 21 Aug.
- Open Bite Printmakers
Original prints 28 Aug 11 Sept
Opened by Bruce Petty
- The Burlong Group
Women artists 18-26 Sept
- Photographic Workshop
Anne Garbutt 2-10 October
- Oils, portraits, nudes
Louise Beck & Yolante
Dejardine 16-17 Oct
- Group Photo Exhibit 23-31 Oct
Marie Summersgill
- Kings Cross 1949-1999
Nado Milat 6-7 November
- Lilyfield Watercolour Group
Gail Hewison 13-14 Nov

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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 of the area and keep a permanent collection of historical interest; seek the cooperation of everyone concerned in the realisation of the above.

The Balmain Association meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 7.30pm in the Watch House 179 Darling Street Balmain. The Watch House is open every Saturday from 12 to 3pm. Our editorial phone/fax is 02 98184954. Email: valham@value.com.au. Our Web site: <http://member.rivernet.com.au/swsouth/watchhouse.html>

Interested artists, potters, sculptors, etc who would like to organise an exhibition in the Watch House are urged to contact Steve South on 02 9810 1411 or on email swsouth@rivernet.com.au.

Annual subscriptions:
Household \$16, Concession \$7,
Organisations \$21.