

the balmain
association
incorporated
news sheet

The Peninsula OBSERVER

Vol 35 No1 Issue 263

Founded November 1965

February 2000

Conservation Crisis

The Peninsula is under threat from the development of existing single dwelling sites. Until the Minister for Planning, Mr Refshauge, approves the Draft Town Plan, Council is relatively powerless. We are concerned that DCP 20 on Single Cottages is not operating as effectively as we had hoped.

Recent sales of old houses are causes for concern. Residents are at a loss to explain why someone would spend up to \$600 000 on an old house and then pull it down for redevelopment. Precinct 2 recently carried a motion "That Leichhardt Council draft, in plain English, an attachment to Section 149 Certificate warning of Council's policy to protect heritage houses from unsympathetic development."

New candidates for demolition are dwellings at 51 Louisa Road, a 1902 two storey brick terrace, 37 Palmer Street, a single timber cottage c1880, and 14 Clifton Street, a sandstone dwelling c1845.

Heritage Festival

In April each year, the National Trust of Australia hosts the Heritage Festival to stress the importance of the past and the need to conserve Australian heritage. Its 20th year is devoted to Our Sporting Heritage. This year will be the bicentenary of the Balmain land grant. Guided walking tours, an Island visit, Photographic Exhibition and a book launch at the Watch House, are some of the events.

Saturday 1 & 8 April. 11am-4pm Entry Free. Watch House. Photographic Exhibition of Old Balmain and sporting personalities.

Sports Walk. Saturday 1 April. Depart 1.30pm Balmain Post Office. A 2 hour guided walk will visit the venues of rowing, swimming, sailing, tennis, cricket and football, including the archive room at the Dawn Fraser Pool. Cost \$12. Conc. \$10. Bookings 9818 4954.

Spectacle Island Tour. Wednesday 5 April. Depart 9.45am sharp for boat pick-up at Drummoyle Sailing Club

Ferry Wharf Closure

Almost 100 local residents gathered at Yurulbin Point to discuss the abrupt closure of the wharf due to damage and deterioration of the structure. Sandra Nori, MP, Mayor Maire Sheehan and ward councillors, Jamie Parker and Paddy McGuinness attended. Sydney Ferries deny any responsibility for the repair claiming the Leichhardt Council is accountable. Elliott Street Wharf is also out of action after being rammed by a ferry. Residents are concerned by the cancellation of services and Cove Street Wharf has been suggested as a possible stopgap measure.

Quotes for repairs have been obtained ranging from \$30 000 to \$150 000. Sandra Nori is negotiating with the Minister for Transport, Mr Skully, to obtain funds. There is some doubt of an agreement in the past between the Council and Sydney Ferries to finance the repairs to wharves.

The next meeting is at 5pm on Saturday 5 February.

Wharf, cnr St Georges Terrace and Park Avenue. A 3 hour tour of the Naval Historical Collection. Buildings on the island constructed to provide storage facilities for explosives are dated from 1865-1902. Cost \$12. Conc. \$10. Included morning tea. Numbers limited. Bookings 9555 7293.

Old Balmain Walk. Saturday 8 April. Depart 1.30pm Watch House.

Dr William Balmain received a land grant in April 1800. The first land sales were in 1836 and much of Old Balmain 1840s sandstone buildings will be seen on this guided walk. Cost \$12. Concession \$10. Bookings 9818 4954.

Balmain Bi-centenary Book Launch at the Watch House at 6.30pm.

Peter Reynolds' John Balmain 1810-1884. A Presbyterian Schoolteacher and Goldseeker in Balmain, California and Goondiwindi. This book has particular reference to the Protestant Orphan School at Parramatta and schools at Old Junee, Peel and Boggabilla. All Welcome-RSVP 9810 5185.

Loyalty Square

A fantastic community response to the "Save Our Memorial" fund has made possible the restoration of the Loyalty Square monument. The fund was established by the Balmain-Rozelle RSL Sub-branch and The Village Voice.

A temporary construction fence has appeared around the monument to facilitate the remedial work. It is anticipated that the work will be completed in 4-6 weeks.

Further information can be obtained by contacting Vince Caccavo on 9367 9007.

Balmain Cemetery

Imagine the quandary of the family historian who, when obtaining a death certificate of an ancestor, would find under Place of Internment - the Balmain Cemetery. Where was this cemetery that accepted 10 608 burials from 1868 until its closure in 1912?

It is regret that the historian is told the sorry tale of neglect and vandalism of the headstones when, in 1941, the area in Norton Street, Leichhardt became the Pioneer Memorial Park.

The Balmain Cemetery, Grave Concerns is an A4 size, fifty page account of locating sixteen memorials and finding others and photographs of demolished memorials. Price \$10. The book is also available with a set of six microfiche of the Balmain Cemetery Burial Register for \$35. Postage \$2.

Available from the Balmain Association PO Box 57 Balmain 2041. Tel/Fax 9818 4954.

Watch House Visitor

Margaret Collett, one of five children born at the Watch House to Eliza and Sergeant Ira Gray, paid an enjoyable visit to her former home in January with 10 of her extended family. The Grays had 14 children, two died in infancy and one in adulthood. Margaret was 8 years old when her father died. The family was relocated to Herne Bay.

Searching the origin of Balmain's name

The origin of words, including the names of places and people, hold a certain fascination for many people and in such words it is often possible to find something that may tell us, if only in general terms, at least a little of how and when they came into use.

Many surnames that have come down to us from the past, were derived from words in ordinary, everyday use and may reflect, through their meanings, the nature of life, perhaps as far back as the Middle Ages.

One of the difficulties encountered in looking at the origin of names is that alternative derivations may be offered by scholars working in the field and it does, of course, sometimes happen that a name is derived from a number of separate sources.

Surnames became necessary for purpose of identification due to an increase in population and were formed in the 13th and 14th centuries and by the early 16th century virtually the whole population of England, even in rural areas, possessed hereditary surnames.

A late 16th century antiquary William Camden, had quite a lot to say about surnames in his *Remaines Concerning Britaine*.

Relationships—making use of the father's names usually combined with a patronymic prefix or suffix. The Welsh

used ap (son of) which over the years tended to become blended with the surname, thus ap Rhys became Price. The Irish used Mac (son of) and O as in O'Brien, was grandson of Brian. The Scots had Mc and the English method was to add a suffix 's' or -son as in John-son and Roberts.

Office and Occupation—perpetuated through such names as Bailey, Bowman, Spicer and Smith.

Nicknames—Eric the Bald, Ralph the Fat, Edifu Thief, Alwyn the Rat, were bestowed freely at a time when people's relationships and expectations were somewhat different from those of today.

"Names, once they are in common use, quickly become mere sounds, their etymology being buried, like so many of earth's marvels, beneath the dust of habit."

Salmon Rushdie,
The Sataniv Verses, Ayesha

Location—this is the largest group and is interesting both philologically and topographically. Those who lived close to such natural features acquired single element names such as Hill, Wood, Moore and Ford. Many village and town names were adopted as surnames and quite often prepositional descriptions were used such as 'of', the Norman 'de'

and 'atte' which persists in the modern name Attwell. This section accounts for some forty-three percent of all surnames and of these about a quarter are village names.

A student of English surnames would say that Balmain was classed as a nickname and arose from a person's physical characteristic. Throughout the ages there has been a tendency for hands, legs and feet to attract comment: Good hand, Blanchmains and Littlehand are examples. Bellemain, the 'main' corresponding to the Saxon 'hand', refers to attractive hands as opposed to Malesmaynes—evil or deformed hands.

With regard to Balmain, the Sydney suburb named for Dr William Balmain who was not English but a Scot born in Rhynd, a small village close to Perthshire. As a Scottish name, Balmain falls into William Camden's Location section, being of local or territorial origin from the lands of Balmain in the parish of Fettercain, Kincardineshire.

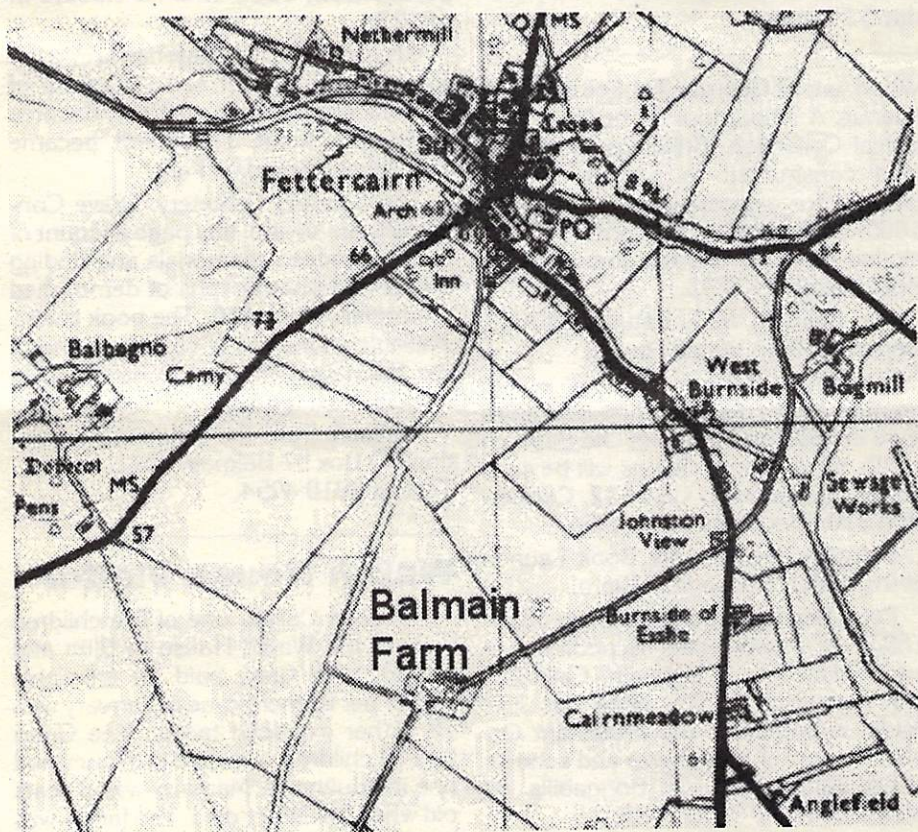
Fettercain is an historic and picturesque village, 18km north west of Montrose and with a number of associations including local families as the Ramsays, Middletons and Gladstones. There were 114 farms, crofts and homesteads in the parish at one time. Close by is Scotland's second oldest distillery producing a delectable 10 years single malt whisky, some of which is retailed as Old Fettercain.

The place name Balmain is from the Gaelic 'baile', pronounced bala, sometimes anglicised as bal or bally and meaning settlement of some kind and 'meadon' pronounced me-un indicating middle, median, centre and heart. It is not easy to determine when these 'bal' placenames were created because three languages, Pictish, English and gaelic all exercise an influence on local names.

Balmain is thus the mid-town lying, as it did, between Balbegno and Esslie. In English the name would be Middleton and by coincidence, it happens to be the name of an early prominent Fettercain family, first recorded as early as the 12th century, indicating a Saxon influence. Today, the place known as Balmain in Kincardineshire comprises a mixed farm of 100ha, reminiscent of an old English lost village where in so many cases the only surviving evidence of the past community is a manor house or farm.

Vernon Kemp.

Ed. This extract from "Like the Chime of a Bell", by Vernon Kemp does not do justice to the research and for those interested the booklet may be borrowed for further reading.



Eternity

The highlight of the Sydney New Year 2000 Fire Works Celebrations was the word Eternity emblazoned on Sydney Harbour Bridge. The main Sydney newspapers carried comment about Arthur Stace and his copperplate singular message he inscribed on the pavements from Martin Place, Sydney to Parramatta from the 1930s to his death in 1967.

In the September 1995, The Peninsula Observer carried an article about Stace, part of which we are pleased to re-print this inspirational story.

Arthur Malcom Stace was born on 9th February 1885 at 16 Morehead Street, Redfern, the fifth child of William Wood Stace, labourer from Mauritius and Laura nee Lewis, born in Richmond, NSW.

At a young age his parents moved to 5 Moore Lane, Rozelle. 'I mostly lived under the house rather than in one, sleeping in bags and for breakfast my brothers and sisters collected the bread and milk from somebody else's door'. Stace learned to live by his wits, stealing cakes and lollies from shop counters and bread from baker's carts.

His parents were drinkers of methylated spirits and died at an early age and his two sisters, who were prostitutes and two brothers, all died derelict drunkards.

Stace was made a ward of the State for a few years when at 14 years of age he started work in a south coast coal mine, thirsty work and drank his first pay. He moved to Surry Hills by his twenties where he was a tout for a local pub, carrying drink from the pub to

houses of ill fame, one of which was run by his sister.

In 1916, Stace enlisted as a stretcher-bearer in the Australian Imperial Force serving with the 19th Battalion in France and at the AIF headquarters in England. On his discharge he soon fell into old ways, drunk, broke and out of work, so by the 1930 he was a broken down derelict. The drink of derelicts at that time was metho - methylated spirits, plonk - bad wine with metho, plink - plonk with the addition of Nugget boot polish.

In August of that year, he attended a service at St Barnabas' Anglican Church, Broadway, as he had heard that a cup of tea and a rock cake was served at the conclusion of the service. The speaker, Archdeacon R B S Hammond, inspired Stace to give up the grog. A few months later he attended a fire and brimstone address by the Rev John Riddle at the Burton Street Baptist Church in Darlinghurst, 'I wish I could shout the word eternity through the streets of Sydney. Eternity? Where will you spend eternity'?

Stace came out of the meeting and finding a piece of chalk in his pocket, he bent down and wrote Eternity. In his own words, 'The funny thing is that before I wrote it (Eternity), I could hardly write my own name. I couldn't have spelt the word for a hundred quid and it came out smoothly and in a beautiful copperplate script. I couldn't understand it and I still can't'. So began his nightly mission of the cryptic precept in yellow, waterproof chalk on the pavements, that could cost him 'six bob a day in chalk when he was running hot'.

Stace received an appointment to the R B S Hammond, Buckland Street Hostel, where he issued canteen supplies for 300 down-and-out men and paid regular visits to inmates of Callan Park.



Arthur Stace at work

In January 1942 he married Ellen Ester (Pearl) Dawson at St Barnabas' Church and after her death in 1961 he moved from Pyrmont into one of the Hammondville homes. By the time of Stace's death on 30th July 1967, he had written his one word sermon 500,000 times. He is buried in the same plot as his wife at the Botany Bay cemetery and yes, that word Eternity is inscribed at the bottom of the grave.

The stainless steel signature will be reinstated near the waterfall in Sydney Square after the renovations are completed and a stunning tribute to Stace has yet to find a home in Sydney. Five artists from the Victorian Tapestry Workshop have almost completed a huge tapestry of Eternity, with the word etched in gold weave. Eternity is still visible in chalk on the Sydney GPO Big Bell.

Sources: The Crooked Mad Straight, St Barnabas' Church. SMH 26/10/94. Australian Dictionary of Biographers.

Kathleen Hamey

Rear Lane Development

Rear lanes vary enormously in width and character, some were never designed to service as the primary street frontages for development whereas other lanes have that capacity. Many were laid down as service lanes before the introduction of motor vehicles. Vehicular access issues and the need for off-street parking has greatly transformed their use and character.

Traditionally, rear lanes were developed with small industrial buildings as well as stables and garaging. As a result, rear lanes contrast in terms of their built character compared with primary roads. The different character of rear lanes ne-

cessitates a different approach to the task of designing a development in this location.

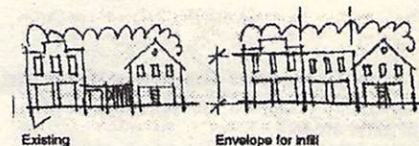
Subdivision has resulted in much development in these lanes. Contemporary development in rear lanes provides for a variety of uses including garages, artist studios and small dwellings that provide a source of much needed affordable housing.

As development opportunities are restricted due to diminishing stocks the pressure to develop land fronting onto rear lanes will increase. Council planners have prepared Development Control Plan 40 in response to this and a need to guide the design approach of rear land development in order to achieve an appropriate and sympathetic development that is best suited for rear

lanes given their narrow and secondary service character.



When existing character is largely backyards.



Where 2 storey buildings abut a site

In Your Garden

February Humidity

As this is a very humid month, make sure to watch out for fungus diseases. In warm areas some tender plants, especially those newly planted, may need extra protection from the strong sun.

Avoid major plantings (trees and shrubs) until the weather cools. Prolong flowers on annuals with light trimming and feeding with a soluble fertiliser. Roses need a light feed of Rose Food to encourage new growth. Water well before and after feeding.

Organise your bulbs during February or buy them now but do not plant in Sydney areas until March when the weather is a little cooler. Prepare your soil with a good dig over and some fertiliser. Plants pots should be given a good dig and some fertiliser. Mulch the surface with compost or peat moss. Plants in large tubs need to be repotted every five years while those in smaller pots up to 30cm in diameter require repotting every two years.

Baskets dry out readily and need constant monitoring for moisture content. For permanent baskets you will not lose as many plants in the summer heat if set up a drip irrigation system and you will save time and money.



Insects breed prolifically this month. Keep a watch for caterpillars, citreous bugs, aphids and lawn grubs.

Bonnie Davidson

What's On

Watch House Exhibitions

- Justine Rich - Still life acrylics 5-6 Feb
- Arty Ms - 12th Annual Show 11-27 Feb
- Jane Stafford 4-12 March
- Louise Pilkington, Philip Bousield, Suzanne Halmhof 18-19 Mar
- Heritage Week - 1 & 8 April
Photographic Exhibition of Old Balmain & sport personalities see page 1 for other events in Heritage Week
- Helen Ross - oils & watercolours 15-16 April
- Ann Miller 6-9 May
Jewelry, Weaving, Paintings
- Patricia Quinn 13-14 May
Watercolor 2000
- Hart Street Studio 27-28 May

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Registered Publication PP225832/00001
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Balmain East NSW 2041
2000/12

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.htm>

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.