

the balmain
association
incorporated
news sheet

The Peninsula OBSERVER

Vol 36 No2 Issue 270

Founded November 1965

April 2001

They Linger Lightly

Concerning the War Memorial in St John's Church, Balmain.

In his parish letter of April 1950, the Rector of St John's Church, Father Arthur George Rix, gently reminded his parishioners to pause from time to time at the war memorial in the church and remember those who gave their lives in the cause of freedom.

In the early days of the First World War, a temporary memorial to the fallen had been set up at the west-end of the church. This comprised as Honour Roll, a painted glass panel and a kneeling stool with a book of prayers. The panel had been given by John Lyons of *Joylen*, 104 Louisa Road, Birchgrove, formerly of Messrs Lyons & Cottier Ecclesiastic Artists. In addition Mrs Jones, the mother of Roy Jones, one of the first young men to give their lives, placed flowers from her own garden on the shrine every week.

In due course a proposal was put forward that the quarry glass in one of the north wall windows be removed and the painted glass panel be used as a centre-piece of a permanent memorial. When completed the whole window depicted the Crucifixion and twined round it were grapevines, one rising from an urn on each side of the cross. The vine is the emblem of suffering, the message being that it has to be cut back to produce new growth and grapes crushed to make wine.

On the wall near the window is a bronze Honour Roll, donated by Mervyn Finlay and made by Messrs Castle and Sons. Eighteen of the names on the Roll are those of young parishioners. At the bottom of the Roll is another name and this last addition requires some explanation. The name is Major the Hon Patrick Hore-Ruthven who was killed in Libya during the North Africa campaign. Hore-Ruthven was the only son of Alexander Hore-Ruthven VC, Governor of New South Wales 1935-36, Governor General of Australia

1936-44, created Baron Gowrie of Canberra in 1935 and Earl Gowrie in 1945.

There is one aspect of Major Patrick Hore-Ruthven's life that should be mentioned. He was one of a small group who came to be known as soldier-poets, whose first-hand involvement in the horrors of war prompted the need for them to record details of their experiences. A collection of his poems was published under the title *The Happy Warrior* and his correspondence is also published entitled *Joy of Youth*.

A quotation from one of the poems was used by the Governor-General Sir William Deane, in his address on 19th September 1999, on the occasion of the unveiling of a memorial to No 5 Service Flying School R A A F., Uranquinty, NSW.

Lord and Lady Gowrie attended St John's on a number of occasions so when the bronze memorial was being made, Father Rix approached the Gowrie's for permission for their late son's name to be added to the list. Later a copy of *The Happy Warrior* with an illuminated fly-leaf by Lance Sharp of Mort Dock, was presented to them. For many years a framed copy of the book hung near the memorial in the church and it is now preserved in the church archives.

Another memorial extended outside the church and comprised of a rectangular pool backed by a stone wall, inscribed with the well-known quotation from Laurence Binyon's *Poems for the Fallen*: 'At the going down of the sun and in the morning We will remember them.' Mounted on the wall were a keystone supporting a lion's head and other ornamental carving. This, according to the October 1948 Parish Newsletter, was the keystone from the arch over the main door of the first Bank of New South Wales in Martin Place. Research into the origin of the keystone was inconclusive. Photographs of the bank's offices in Sydney show no evidence of a lion motif having been used on any of the keystones, furthermore the bank did not have an office in Martin Place until 1970s. There is a possibility

the keystone came from another building in the city since material from demolished buildings was re-used from time to time.

Charles Hirst, a young architect who lived or lodged in Tilba Avenue had given the lion's keystone to Father Rix. At the time of his death in August 1947, Hirst was a member of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects and resided in Cammeray.

The memorials were unveiled on Saturday 20th November 1948 by Lieutenant General John Northcott, Governor of New South Wales and dedicated by Major-General the Rev C A Osborne.

Flowers are lovingly placed at the foot of the window each week and the essential features of the outside memorial remain intact.

Vernon Kemp

Ballast Point Campaign Committee

The Department of Urban Affairs & Planning is preparing framework plans for 24 strategic sites in Sydney harbour, including Parramatta River and all tributaries. Of local interest Cockatoo Island, Rozelle Rail Sidings and Ballast Point are included in *Sharing Sydney Harbour—Regional Action Plan*.

A meeting at very short notice was called by DÚAP for representatives from the Committee to discuss a framework plan for Ballast Point. Developers and owners attended a separate meeting. Robert Bennett of UDAP understands the communities push for open space with some interim industrial activities. Sydney Ferries are concerned that the refuelling matter has been relocated to Shell at Gore Cove.

Morrison & Sinclair Ltd, conducted their ship building business on Long Nose Point from 1932 to 1972 when the site was purchased for \$250,000. The area today is Yuralbin Park.

The 5 Sites Revisited-Ferry Excursion has been arranged for Sunday 6th May 2001. The 3 hour tour departing Thames Street Wharf 1pm. Cost \$35. \$25 child. Book now on 9810 6885 (ah) as ferry capacity is limited.



Lionshead keystone

Heritage Festival 2001.

The National Trust established in 1945 celebrates its work in conserving and protecting Australia's heritage with a community festival in its 21st year. Between Saturday 21st April and Sunday 29th April, a festival of 300 events has been organised by government, business, tourism and community groups. The Balmain Association is proud of the continuing restoration of the Balmain Watch House and has participated in Heritage/Festival Week for many years.

Local community program

Photographic Exhibition

The Balmain Watch House, 179 Darling Street. Photographs from the ever-growing archives of former industrial sites, pubs, trams of Balmain, Rozelle and Birchgrove. Saturday 21st & 28th April, 11am to 4pm. Free Admission Enquiries 9818 4954

Old Balmain Walk

Much of old Balmain remains, so join a guided walking tour. Afternoon tea and a short talk by a descendant of Sir Henry Parkes at Clontarf Cottage, Wallace Street, en route. Saturday 21st April. Depart 1.30pm Watch House. \$15. conc \$10. Bookings 9818 4954

Heritage Pub Crawl.

The guided 2hour + walking tour, will visit two of the nine Balmain hotels en route and see five former hotel buildings. Question: When did 6 o'clock closing finish? \$15. Conc \$10. Drinks extra. Bookings 9818 4954

Vale John 'Jack' Grafton

The Association has lost one of their long time members, Jack Grafton who died 27th January 2001, aged 87years, at his Gipps Street home of over 60 years. Although Jack was born in Leichhardt his family had moved to Balmain where he attended the 'Pigeon Ground' Balmain Primary School.

He was working at Dunlops at Birkenhead, Drummoyne, when he joined the Australian forces in WWII, serving in the Northern Territory. Jack had a variety of work experiences such as a toll collector on the Sydney Harbour Bridge and an usher at the now demolished King's Theatre and the former Hoyts, now the Bijou building on corner Darling and Rowntree Streets. After many years at the State Railway, he retired to work for the improvement of pensioner benefits. Jack was the vice-president of both the Combined Pensioners' Association and

Friends of the Baths

Morning and afternoon tea at the Archives Room at Dawn Fraser Pool, Elkington Park. Saturday 28th April, 10am to 3.30pm. Free admission. \$4 morning/afternoon tea. 9818 6885

Friends of Callan Park

Callan Park Heritage Tour of Kirkbride buildings, now Sydney College of the Arts and self guided tour of grounds. Maps provided. Sunday 22nd April 11am to 3pm. Entrance opposite Cecily Street. Donations welcome. 9810 2511

Roslyn Burge. Private Garden/Public Therapy

Outdoor historical photographic exhibition located in the garden of Broughton Hall, now part of Rozelle Hospital. Cnr Church Street and Wharf Road, Lilyfield. Saturday 21st April to Sunday 29th April. 9am to 4.30pm. Donations Welcome. 0413 733 218

National Trust Balmain Day

The Women's Committee Tuesday inspection day will be held in Balmain on 8th May 2001. Three houses and the Watch House will be open for inspection. The Watch House opening hours will be 10.30am to 3pm. Entry free.

Contact 9818 4954. House inspection bookings closed.



the local Senior Citizens Club. In the 1980s he lobbied successfully on the pensioner travel concession restrictions and promoted the rights of the elderly as a volunteer presenter at the radio station 2SER. Jack was a great assistance to the History Committee, with his great memory for earlier Balmain days. Sincere condolences to Jack's wife of 62 years Flo and son Ian and family.



2001 year of the Volunteer

Each year a theme subject is chosen to promote the awareness to the general public.

This year's theme is the Volunteer.

The Leichhardt Council invites you to nominate an individual that you believe has demonstrated their selfless dedication to the residents of the Council area. Their achievements must be current and nominee must live in the Leichhardt Municipality. Winners of the Mayor's Volunteer Award will be presented with a medal on 14th May 2001, during Volunteer week. Entries for the nomination to be sent to Council c/- Matt O'Neill, P O Box 45 Leichhardt 2040 by 24th April 2001.

It's not for the money

It's not for the fame

It's not for only personal gain

It's just love of fellow man

It's just to lend a helping hand

It's just to give a little of self

That's something you can't buy with wealth

It's that reward down deep in my heart

It's that feeling that you have been a part

Of helping others far and near

That makes me become a volunteer

Anon

Callan Park Threat

For the last three months the Friends of Callan Park have been collecting signatures on a petition supporting a proposed private members bill designed to preserve the open space, the hospital and other compatible uses of the area. Greens MP, Lee Rhiannon, will introduce the bill in early April. A rally on Saturday 24 March demanded an urgent meeting with Premier Bob Carr to object to the Treasury policy to sell portion for residential development.

It was Sir Henry Parkes, the father of Federation, whose government in the 1870s provided the £75 000 to purchase the land that had been earmarked for private development. At the centenary of Federation the current NSW Premier is negotiating the transfer of the Rozelle Hospital to Concord and to sell the site for housing.

With development rampant on the Balmain Peninsula and surrounding suburbs, green space is more necessary than ever.

Police Heroic Rescue

A letter from Mrs Meg Chamberlin formerly of Ferdinand Street, Balmain now of Macleay Island, Queensland, stated that some information on her family history could be of interest to the Association. While cleaning out a draw on a visit to her mother at the family home, a letter was found with an interesting, PS, relating to a presentation of a gold watch to Constable John Benoni Ross in 1879.

Constable Ross was stationed at the Watch House from 1879 to 1882 and lived in Darling Street, Rozelle, near Red Lion Street. He then moved to Chatswood where he, his wife Sarah Ann and a child died within a few days of each other in a Typhoid epidemic in April 1885. John was 32 years and Sarah was 30 years and daughter Sarah 1 year. They were buried in the churchyard of the Methodist Church, Chatswood. Comrades and friends erected the headstone. Grandmother Sarah Ann Robinson reared the other four children.

In a report in the Sydney Morning Herald, Tuesday 21st April 1879: *On Friday morning a man named Albert Drave was nearly suffocated by descending into a newly dug well 25 feet deep behind the Belleue, now Sackville Hotel, Darling Street. A blast had just taken place at the bottom of the well and the smoke not having thoroughly cleared away before Drave descended, he was almost suffocated when he reached the bottom. His distress having been noticed by the proprietor of the allotment Mr Barthrope, he at once descended to retrieve Drave, but he was likewise became overpow-*

ered by the fumes of the powder. Constable Ross being near the spot, volunteered to descend and succeeded in bringing up to the surface first Drave, then Barthrope. Drs Brennan and Evans were quickly on the spot and industriously applied the usual restoratives. Both men are doing well at the latest accounts.

Another lengthy report was in the SMH Tuesday 3rd June 1879, on the presentation of the gold watch and chain and an address as an acknowledgement of Constable Ross, intrepid conduct rescuing two persons at the risk of his own life. Three cheer were

given by the 50 residents attended the Balmain Council Chambers for the presentation. The inscription: *Presented to Constable John Benoni Ross by the inhabitants of Balmain, in admiration of his heroic conduct in rescuing two lives at a well accident, 18 April 1879. Balmain 2 June 1879.*

A letter from the Inspector General of Police was noted at the 27 June 1879, Balmain Council meeting, having reference to the gallant conduct of Constable Ross at the recent well accident.

The watch remains in the Ross family treasures.



NSW Police in 1876

Development Court?

The reaction of developers to the Lord Mayor's campaign for reform of the Land and Environment Court is predictable. The City of Sydney's publication *Unwanted Legacies* depicts in compelling detail some of the recent decisions of the Court in response to appeals. Four of the examples are on Balmain sites.

The classic decision is the approval of the outlandish residential and commercial block at Birkenhead Point. "Arguably one of the worst urban design outcomes flowing from the Court in the past decade". The Drummoyne Council was able to negotiate with the developer to slightly reduce the density and bulk after the judgement.

Other councils want the NSW Government to reduce the Court's power. Unlike most courts it does not review

decisions of lower authorities, but acts as a parallel approval system. It frequently contravenes planning policies established by councils. "It undermines the authority of councils by allowing developers a second bite of the cherry."



Portion of Hopetoun Keys, Birchgrove

Learning Circles

Another initiative the Leichhardt Council is promoting Learning Circles. Learning Circles Australia is a Program of Adult Learning Australia, with the support of the Federal Government, Office on Ageing. Materials and training are provided free of charge

In a learning circle, groups of around 5-15 people meet regularly to discuss and learn about important issues. Material has been written about Federation issues, eg Exploring Australia's First Fleet, Homes and Housing; The Harbour Bridge, The Weathermen, the Weather and El Nino.

Groups learn at their own pace, drawing on their own experiences without a lecturer. A learning circle is a self-managed learning group. Interested? Contact 9367 9043

In Your Garden

Gardening With Bulbs

Once autumn arrives the thoughts of the flower gardener turn inevitably to the spring bulb display. Most of us have plans for the new bulb varieties that we would like to grow and now is the time to put them into effect.

If you're a novice take heart - anyone can grow bulbs. With a couple of exceptions (notably tulips and hyacinths) they will grow and flower with ease in a wide range of soils and locations. Even those places less than ideal but never in heavy wet clays as these spell trouble because the constantly damp situation could rot the bulbs.

Bulbs mix well with other plants and so are ideal for spots here and there in the garden. Plant them between shrubs, under trees or in pockets of a rockery. They are suitable for pots, tubs, hanging baskets and window boxes to bring colour to balconies and other ar-

reas. Bulbs can be planted at anytime over the autumn months. Before planting it's worthwhile to add some plant food into the soil to provide nourishment and give better flowering. Use about two handfuls of any plant food per square metre. If you forget just sprinkle on top of the spot of the planting site afterwards. Once they are planted it's a good idea to mark the spot to ensure you don't disturb them accidentally.

The first shoots that push through are rather tempting to slugs and snails so keep an eye out and scatter some bait around. When flower buds appear in spring apply some liquid fertiliser to give the display a boost.

After flowering is finished remove the flowerheads but leave foliage to die naturally. It may look untidy as it yellows but don't be tempted as it is essential that the bulb draws in nutrients from the dying foliage that it uses to produce next year's blooms.

Some bulbs are happy to remain in the same site year after year but check directions on the packet

Bonnie Davidson



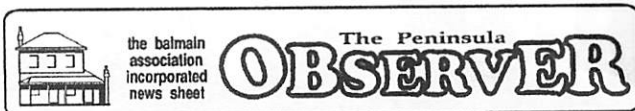
What's On

Watch House Exhibitions

- Oils & watercolors 7-8 April
Helen Ross
- Photos from our archives
Each Saturday 14 April-5 May
- Intertwining - knitting & machine embroidery 12-13 May
Anne Miller
- Annette Dorahy 19-20 May
- HartStart Studios Annual Students Exhibition 26-27 May
- Denise Barry 1-10 June
- Jean MacManus 16-17 June
- Nicholas Beckett 23-24 June
- Paintings 23-24 June
Nicholas Beckett
- 7 Artists - oils 30 June-1 July
Elsie McEwen

Note our new Website below

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Registered Publication PP225832/00001

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Birchgrove NSW 2041
2001/12

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: hamey@netpro.net.au.
Our Web site:
www.balmainassociation.homestead.com

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 \$20, Concession \$10,
Organisations \$30.