

the balmain
association
incorporated
news sheet

The Peninsula OBSERVER

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Morrison & Sinclair

Ferry passengers using the ferry wharf at the end of Louisa Road, Birchgrove, can obtain a good view of a small park much inhabited by fishermen.

Facing east in this park and bounded by sandstone walls, is a gentle slope, suitable for dinghies and obviously not natural. This slope is just about all that remains of one of the great ship and boat-building names of Port Jackson – Morrison & Sinclair.

Early in the 1890s Thomas Forrester Morrison (1851-1944) and Thomas Callender Sinclair (1856-1940) formed a boat and ship building organisation known as T F Morrison & Sinclair, Shipbuilders at a waterfront side in Jones Street, Pyrmont, close to the present RAN site, previously known as the Royal Edward Victualling Yard. This site was soon needed for a wharf development and the company moved its works to a site in Johnston's Bay, Balmain, close to the then Stephens Street ferry wharf. From this site, adjacent to Poole and Steel, shipbuilders, the company produced many fine wooden vessels.

The following vessels built between 1890 and 1913 comprise just a partial list of the company's output; *Aotea*, *Awaroa*, *Tangaroa*, various coastal colliers for the Bellambi Coal Co, famous racing yacht *Morna* and ferries *Karabee*, still to be seen in Gosford, *Karinal*, *Kamiri*, *Kanimbla*, *Kareela*, *Kiandra*, *King Edward*, *Kirrule*, *Kookooburra*, *Kubu*, *Lady Carrington*, *Lady Northcote* and *Lady Rawson*.

In 1918 T F Morrison sold his share to T C Sinclair who retained the joint name and soon after moved the company to a new site on the end of Long Nose Point. The Wallace Powerboat Building Co had previously used this site. Here Sinclair built smaller craft with an emphasis on important private vessels.

The first vessel built on the new slip was *Laurabada*, a New Guinea patrol ship for the colonial administration. Other well-known craft from the ways included the large luxury motor cruiser *Oombabah*, owned by the Arnott family and launched in 1927 and *Mirimar* in December 1925.

In 1923 the company was incorporated as Morrison & Sinclair Ltd. with the inclusion of T C Sinclair and family members, plus Tom and George Morrison.

The business went well and two of the fine wooden ferries built on the site are still in service. The 1939 built *Curranulla* is still in regular service and the larger and slighter newer 1939 built *Proclaim* can still be seen in regular work on Port Jackson.

During WWII, the company as with other harbour industries, was very busy. Many small craft were built for government agencies while seagoing ships were outfitted or overhauled alongside. The company's work launch *White Heather*, later renamed *Heather Spray*, was kept busy collecting special items from around the harbour and carrying company staff to jobs on ships anchored in the stream. *Heather Spray* was last reported in private use and on a mooring in Sandbrook Inlet on the Hawkesbury River, near Brooklyn.

In 1969 considering the changing needs of shipping and the decrease in business associated with the use of new materials for building recreational boats, the company decided to cease trading in 1970 and wound up its affairs.

The State Planning Authority bought the 1.5 acre site on 17th June 1971, pay-

ing \$185,000, a figure which would 'boggle the brains' of those who have gentrified Louisa Road in the late 1990s. The area is used as a park and has a plaque that tells the tale in brief of the area's former history. In 1994 Long Nose Point was renamed Yurulbin in recognition of the Aboriginal heritage of the area which was previously occupied by the Wangal clan. Yurulbin means 'swiftly running water' and ancient original stencils and middens have been found on private land adjoining the site.

With permission from Graeme Andrews. The Watermen of Port Jackson Part 12. August 2001 AFLOAT magazine.

Bremer House at 29 Ballast Point Road, Birchgrove, was the home of Kenneth and Ruby Sinclair for over 50 years, from 1920 to 1974. The house was painted with many coats 'battle ship grey' and the bathroom appliances had some distinctive ship's plumbing.

The house c1870 was the home of Frederick Lemm, builder. Lemm Street is named in his honour.

The Museum of Sydney is preparing an exhibition for 2002, titled 'The Shipbuilders of Port Jackson'. Photographs of Balmain ferry shipbuilding yards are to be included. Contact Nicki Tessa on 9251 5988 if you can assist with photographs or information.



Morrison & Sinclair Shipyard at Long Nose Point 1968

Poem Sculpture

Have you noticed at Robert Street, Rozelle, a poem sculpture attached to the fence at 18 Robert Street. Some 10 years ago local sculptor Michael Snape installed the 2 x 4-meter steel poem. I have tried to catch a word or two during my journey back and forth to the city so I decided to investigate the poem. Each letter has been flame-cut in the metal and appears when backlit with daylight.

*Our lives are led. The streets are full.
The air is filled with the wretched fuel.
At night the cars are tucked up tight as
close as the curb allows. By day they
flee on a shopping spree the Mullens,
Darling run. From town we come past
old white bay at 80, 90, a hundred ks.
The roads are drains we waste along.
Robert Street here we come. We're
charging up. You can hear the roar.
From time and peace you will hear no
more. There's work and space and
things to do. While the engine is run-
ning our blood does too. We lock them
and shine them and make them sing.
Their song is a siren, the Balmain
sting. STOP. There is something we
think we cannot do. There are currents
and waves and tides too. There's a
voice that is rising and floating along
and we can steer it and shape it and
make it as strong as the voice of the
reason of machinery's song. So while
logic and facts and circumstance de-
clare a brave new voice returns the
stare. It can be done. The cars will go.
We must show belief can know.*

Kathleen Hamey

Rozelle Hospital

Previous attempts by the Urban Design Advisory Service (UDAS) to hold consultations with the local community were frustrated by strident opposition. We were offered a presentation of the draft master plan and to represent all of the members of the Association, Ann Bastok with Kathleen and Val Hamey visited their office. Judy Halford from Precinct 1 also attended. These details have now been distributed in a UDAS newsletter.

The plan provides for a dedication of 47 ha of parkland to be administered by the National Parks Service at an annual cost of \$2 million. Some buildings in the central slope will be removed and the road system will be simplified. Heritage buildings will be protected.

The contentious areas are those set aside for low-scale development. We pointed out that a single developer could not be relied on to honour the plan and would almost certainly apply to the Court for concessions.



The Balmain Association stall at last year's Back to Balmain Day

Back to Balmain Day & Balmain Regatta

I cannot believe another year has gone and it is time for Back to Balmain Day once more. Time to renew friendships in Elkington Park, Glassop Street, during the 13th Back to Balmain Day on Sunday 28th October 2001.

Sunday will begin with Balmain and Birchgrove Schools open from 9am to noon. Bring your school photographs.

10am: Ecumenical Church Service at St Andrew's, Darling and Curtis Road.

Noon: BYO picnic at Elkington park.

1pm: Leichhardt Municipal Council Band and followed by dancers from the Honeybrook School of Dance.

2pm: Balmain Regatta off White Horse Point, Elkington park. A dress parade of boats will precede the regatta.

Come and enjoy an old fashioned picnic in the park. Steak sandwiches, ice

creams, soft drinks will be on sale by local school and vendor. Enjoy a swim in the historic Dawn Fraser Pool.

The Association will be on site to chat about 'the good old days'. Donations of photographs are most welcome and local history publications will be on sale.

In case of inclement weather, the picnic will be held at the Balmain Town Hall.

Help on the day would be most welcome. Enquiries: 9810 1078 or 9818 4954.

The Dunford and Hall Family Reunion will be held at the Back to Balmain Day. James M Hall, builder, arrived in Balmain in the mid 1870s. The family settled in the Punch and Gow Street area where homes were built. The Dunford name is still associated with Gow Street

Leichhardt Local History Group Inc

Kris Cruden launched an Oral History Program at the Balmain Library on 12th September 2001. Thanks to the Friends of Balmain Library who provided the supper and a cassette, for the recording of local resident's memories of living and working in the area. More volunteer interviewers are needed for the project. Tuition provided.

To help promote local history activities throughout the Leichhardt Municipality, a group called the Leichhardt Local History Group has been formed. Next meeting will be held at the

Leichhardt Library at 5.30pm on Monday 15th October. The launch of the Group will be held at the Glebe Library, the Benledi meeting room at 186 Glebe Point Road, on Friday 23rd November from 6-8 pm. The aims and objectives of the Group shall be: to facilitate networking and liaison between local history groups in the Leichhardt Municipality; to assist in raising funds for local history activities and resources; to act as advocates for increased awareness of local history in the Leichhardt Municipality; to offer assistance to the community.

Contact Margaret Penson, Leichhardt Library 9367 9266

Presidents Report

By the time you read this edition of our newssheet the Association will have been in existence for 36 years. It is hard to believe that a whole year has passed since that 'slap-up' party at the Watch House where we celebrated our 35th anniversary. Quite a few foundation members came along and told some memorable yarns including the truth about the grille on the front windows of the Watch House. I had always thought they were 'original'. A member of the first working party explained that as they were volunteers and could only work at weekends, the restoration process was often damaged through the week, probably by those who had been vandalising the building for years. Hence the addition of the bars.

In June this year we received a proposal from the National Trust to renew the lease as managers between the Balmain Watch House Reserve Trust and our Association. We replied that so long as a clause was included in the lease for the Watch House to revert to the National Trust should there be insufficient active members of the Association to

work for the restoration of the Watch House, then we would accept management. This is what the Committee has done for many years. To date we have not received a response but feel sure the Trust will agree.

During the past year we have had a steady run of quality exhibitions. One special exhibition made history at the Watch House. A regular exhibitor Denise Barry and friends organised 'Belonging'. A Dhungatti woman, Jaluka (Rosalee Quinlin) performed the opening night ceremony in the traditional Aboriginal way. Jaluka's fine art work was on show. Denise Barry was among the first group of non-indigenous people to complete the Aboriginal course at Tranby College, Glebe, hence the theme of this successful exhibition.

As you know our 'Mission Statement' describes the aims of the Balmain Association and members have been kept very busy dealing with local heritage and environmental issues particularly Rozelle Hospital/Callan Park. On 5th September, three members of the Committee attended a presentation of the proposed Master Plan for the Rozelle Hospital site which is being prepared by

the Urban Design Advisory Service. The plans we saw are designed to take special care of two important issues: heritage and public access to this precious place. The designers do not have any influence on the Government's proposal to sell off part of the site to developers and took note of our objections to this and our suggestions, which included age-care accommodation. They stressed that the Master Plan will benefit from community input.

A well attended meeting at Clontarf Cottage of local residents, representatives from Leichhardt Council, the Catholic Church and the Developers discussed the Council's preparation of a DCP for the Jane Street site. I made the point that many visitors who attend the Association's guided walking tours are impressed with this particular heritage area. This area of Balmain contains so much of our early history and architecture but although being in a conservation area it is continually under threat of demolition and new buildings. The whole suburb is steadily losing its uniqueness. See you at the Back to Balmain Day.

Ann Bastock

Treasurers Report

Receipts		Payments	
Publication sales	4352.15	Catering	736.40
Walks	795.00	Garden	111.83
Membership	2256.00	Gifts	10.00
Bank interest	959.24	Household	350.55
Photos	298.00	Office	81.25
Donations	280.00	Misc	90.70
Refund (Snap Print)	158.15	Insurance	401.00
Other	210.00	Photo prints	1672.67
Watch House rent	6053.00	Postage	533.79
Commission	12567.80	Publication	3037.67
		Fee returns	235.00
Total receipts	27929.34	Suscriptions	190.00
		GST/GDT/FID	591.79
		Telephone directory	105.49
		WH conservation	8018.49
		Water & Electricity	730.63
		Cleaning	1080.00
		Repairs & Maintenance	1486.61
		Total payments	19463.87

Operating surplus at 30 June 01 8465.47

Assets & Liabilities

Assets	This year	Last year
CBA cheque A/C	22545.38	7207.36
CBA Term A/C	10000.00	17000.00
Petty cash	143.90	16.44
Sundry debtors	90.00	144.30
Total assets	32779.28	24368.10
Liabilities	658.30	554.50
Surplus	32120.98	23813.60

The Annual General Meeting on 5th September 2001 elected the following:

President: Ann Bastock
Vice-President: Rita Ellis
Secretary: Jeremy Arnott
Treasurer: Val Harney
Public Officer: Bob Ellis
Watch House Hire: John Sullivan

Other committee members: Joyce Landau, Yvonne Davidson, June Lunsman, Kathleen Harney, Patricia Mack and John Sullivan. All positions are honorary.

It is with regret that Stephen and Michelle South have resigned. They have been members of the Association for 15 years. Stephen has been booking officer for the Exhibitions at the Watch House since 1989 when the first approach by the students from the Sydney College of Arts to show their end of year works. Gradually the exhibition bookings increased with Stephen's computer and the Web site. Michelle's patience with the phone calls and the Watch House key collection by artists have been much appreciated. The exhibitions are the main source of income for the Watch House restoration. The South's are departing to the Blue Mountains. Best wishes to them.

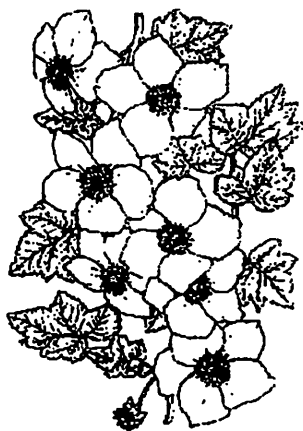
Welcome to John Sullivan, for Watch House Booking on 9555 1026 or Fax 9810 6774.

In Your Garden

The Easy Way

There are some chores in the garden that are time consuming. Weekends spent lawn-mowing, edge trimming, watering and weeding are not for everyone. Formal hedges demand regular clipping. Manicured lawns require feeding and aerating. If you spend much of your time on these jobs then it is time for a re-think. Replace a portion of lawn with paving or if you have a small yard like mine, pave most of it as I did.

Hanging baskets and numerous small pots are fine for a tiny garden but they dry out rapidly. I have a drip watering system with timer. Small potted plants in a few large containers will retain moisture better than small ones. Cultivated beds of annuals need regular weeding, watering, fertilising and dead-heading to stay respectable. Remove all plants that are not thriving or need regular spraying. Mulch garden beds. Use vigorous ground-covers extensively in large mats to suppress weeds.



If you want roses grow only those varieties that are resistant to diseases such as black spot. Feed and much your plants. Healthy plants have great resistance to pests and diseases. Make sure that you take regular strolls around your plants. Close observation of each one's performance ensures your response to its needs. Position a seat in the most appealing area of your garden and use it regularly. Take it easy!

Bonnie Davidson

What's On

Watch House Exhibitions

- Five Artists 29 Sept-7 Oct
- Exciting, Bright, Light
Annette Dorahy 13-14 Oct
- Anne Carney 20-28 Oct
- Nado Milat 3-4 Nov
- Lilyfield Watercolour Group
10-11 Nov
- Local artists 17-18 Nov
Oils & watercolours
- Spirit of Watercolour 24-25 Nov
Trish Quinn & students
- Focal Point 1-9 Dec
Rozelle Photo Workshop
- Annette Dorahy 2-3 Feb
- Arty Ms Annual Exhibition
16-24 Feb

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The Balmain Association Inc
PO Box 57
Balmain 2041

Dr Peter Reynolds
9 The Avenue
Balmain East NSW 2041
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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: hamay@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 John Sullivan on 9555 1026 or fax 9810 6774

Annual subscriptions:
Household \$20, Concession \$10,
Organisations \$30.