



the balmain
association
incorporated
news sheet

The Peninsula OBSERVER

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Callan Park and John Gordon

Mystery of Name Solved

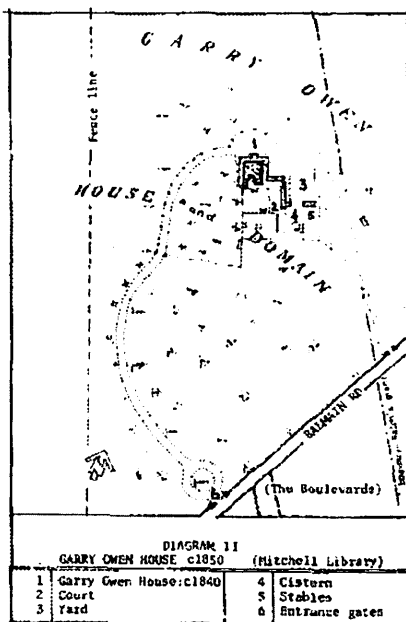
The Balmain Association history team began to investigate the origin of the name Callan Park and its association with John Gordon, who had purchased the Garry Owen Estate in 1865 and renamed the property Callan Park but after two years searching Gordon's ancestors, other matters came forward and the study was put aside.

History research is much like being a detective and also requires luck. By chance one of the team was given a diary written by Robert David Gordon, dated 9th June 1904 to his wedding day 30th November 1904. A reference in the diary to the Gary Owen Estate being sold to his uncle John Gordon gave the family connection for further research. In another diary by R D Gordon written in 1866 when he was age 14 years and living in Balmain, mention is made of visiting Callan Park several times with his family and meeting Uncle John.

Robert was born in Limerick, Ireland, on 29th February 1852, the eldest son of Eliza Bell FitzGerald and Thomas Acheson Gordon. The family arrived in Sydney on the *Hydaspes* on 17th December 1852. T A Gordon became the first minister of the Congregation Church, Balmain and lived in *Tassagh*, Campbell Street.

Thomas Acheson Gordon was the youngest of three sons of Samuel and Jane nee Acheson. His eldest brother was Robert, but John, the second son born in 1815, is the principal reason for our story.

John Gordon arrived in Sydney on 25th August 1841 on the *Percy*. He established himself on a property called *Barambola* near Wagga Wagga and he married Mary Reese in Yass on 13th February 1847. Their son Samuel was born on 25th August 1850 but Mary died soon after the birth. John married again in 1854 to Elizabeth Peter in the Congregational Church, Pitt Street, Sydney. They had two children, John born in 1856 at Bathurst and who died a year later and Jane born in 1858 at Wagga Wagga.



The original grant now known as Callan Park

John Gordon purchased Garry Owen House and Estate in Lilyfield as an investment in 1865 for £700, from John Ryan Brenan. Brenan had named his property Garry Owen after his home in Limerick, Ireland. There is also an Irish folk tune called The Garry Owen which incidentally Lieutenant Colonel George A Custer adopted as the 7th Cavalry regimental song, when he rode into American history in 1876 at Rosebud River.

The property was renamed Callan Park, after the River Callan which flows past John Gordon's home *Tassagh House* in County Armagh, Ireland. Any large grounds or garden were known as a park at that time in Ireland. The Gordon family lived at Callan Park for about eight years, when the property was placed in the hands of Estate Agent Richardson & Wrench for auction on 19th December 1873. Although Gordon appears to have been a very astute businessman, a pastoralist and a wine merchant, in New South Wales, he had decided to move to Victoria.

At the time of the sale, the NSW Government had voted £75,000 for the establishment of a new lunatic asylum. The Premier of NSW, Sir Henry Parkes had previously invited Dr Frederick Norton Manning to become medical su-

perintendent at Tarban Creek Lunatic Asylum, but Dr Manning successfully agitated for a new asylum at Callan Park. 104½ acres was purchased by the Government for £12,500, which was shared by J Gordon and Samuel Deane Gordon MLA, pastoralist. Our search is continuing for the connection between the two men.

John Gordon's elder brother Robert, mother Jane and their sister Margaret Annie arrived in Port Phillip, Victoria on the *Anna*, on 20th September 1849. Jane died in 1857 aged 80 at Lower Tarcutta near Wagga Wagga and Robert died in 1888 aged 79 at Walgett.

John now in Melbourne, called his home *Tassagh* and he used the house name again when he returned to London where he died in 1889.

John's surviving son, Samuel, married Annie Frazer in Balmain in 1880 and moved to Tumut where the family was known as the Gocup Gordon's of the district. Samuel died there in 1917.

Without the diaries by Robert David Gordon, which luckily were kept by his family, the story of John Gordon and the name of Callan Park could not have been told.

Source: R D Gordon, *Dairies*. Leichhardt Historical Journal No 14. World Wide Web.

Bonnie Davidson and Rosaleen Tidswell

36th Annual General Meeting of the Balmain Association Inc

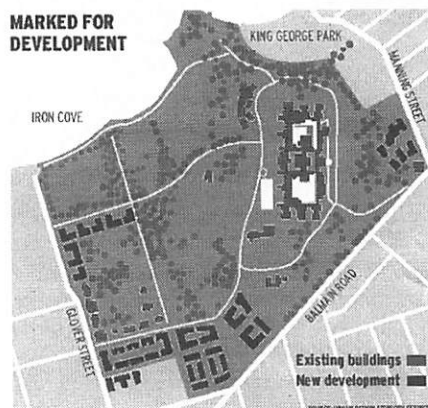
3 pm Saturday 21 September 2002

In the Meeting Room
At the Watch House Darling St

For catering purpose please contact
9818 4954

Rozelle Hospital Master Plan

The Planning Minister, Andrew Refshauge, on 22 July released the draft plan for the Rozelle Hospital land revealing that significant changes had been made since we viewed it earlier this year. The Minister revealed that the Government was now seeking \$80 million instead of \$45 million to fund the Mental Health Services at Concord. The extra expenditure is envisaged for works on Callan Park to remove 50 unsympathetic buildings as well as some roads. He claims that the proposal will deliver 47 ha of open space, "the biggest public park on the harbour" in over a century. The plan proposes 8 hectares of the 61 ha site for development on the ambulance and administrative building sites as well as those on Glover and Manning Streets. No waterfront land will be sold and the heritage buildings will be protected.



Opponents of the scheme say that this would mean up to 1000 dwellings with some of four storeys. A traffic report estimates there would be between 350 and 477 car trips an hour during peak periods. Port Jackson MP, Sandra

Nori, says that she will fight to reduce the proposed development by 20% advocating the removal of units on lower Glover Street. At a meeting with the Planning Dept we expressed alarm that a single developer would attempt to increase the density after the land transfer. It is important to preserve the Kirkbride Complex, Gary Owen House, Broughton Hall, Charles Moore Garden, Japanese Garden and the rain forest. At least one of the Repatriation Wards should be retained to show how the hospital developed historically but the majority should be demolished to increase open space.

Friends of Callan Park president, Jean Lennane, says that locals wanted an expanded mental health centre at Rozelle Hospital instead of "being shunted off to a tiny corner of Concord". Opposition Leader John Brogden's plan to expand the Hospital into a 400 bed mental institution would result in a huge reduction in public open space. However, Mike Wallace, Central Sydney Area Health Service officer, said that the decision to move the hospital is not up for negotiation and it would be wrong to try and revitalise health services at Rozelle.

The changes in patient care stemmed from the Richmond Report that "recommended the reduction in the number of available psychiatric beds and 405 were taken away by 1987. This meant that many buildings, services and much land were being under-utilised. Existing psychiatric hospitals had been declining for some years for a variety of reasons: the availability of alternative services, the use of drugs to maintain people outside and changing social attitudes to mental illness." (Ken Leong, *Leichhardt Historical Journal* No 14).

The master plan and accompanying planning policy, SEPP 56, will be on public exhibition until 20 August at the Balmain Library. A public meeting is planned for 7 August at the Balmain Leagues Club.

White Bay Power Station

The Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority has engaged a team of specialist consultants, headed by Design 5-Architects Pty Ltd to prepare a Conservation Management Plan for the area.

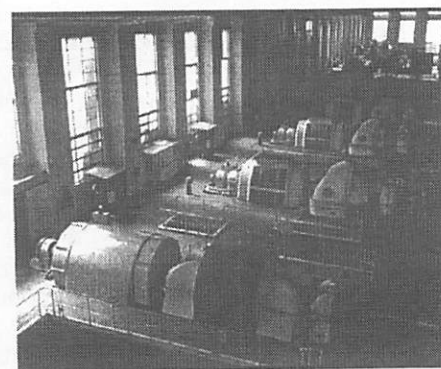
The purpose of this CMP is to identify what is important about the place and then to prepare guidelines which will aim to protect these important values, whatever the future use or uses may be. These values could be associated with the buildings, the machinery, the memories and associations of those people who worked in or lived near the power station, or those who know or value the place for other reasons.

As part of this process an Open Day was held Saturday 22nd June 2002.

Pymont and Balmain Power Stations have been demolished; the Ultimo Power House is now one of Sydney's great Museums and so to White Bay?

The WBPS functioned from 1912 to the 1970's. Many men were employed when it was at peak power production in 1950s as well as a large bureaucracy to administer the workforce and an active social life.

Contact 02 9319 1855 to give your views on the White Bay Power Station.



White Bay Turbine House c.1965

The Mystery of History

How do historians work?
What kind of resources do they use?
What does history tell us?

Come and hear
Dr Shirley Fitzgerald
Sydney City Historian
discuss these questions
6.30pm Thursday 8 August 2002
Balmain Town Hall
Meeting Room
\$5 members \$8 non-members
Leichhardt Local History Group
Sue 9519 3268

CONGRATULATIONS

Dr Peter Reynolds, was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for his dedication to recording community history and the architectural heritage of the Municipality of Leichhardt. Peter has been a member of the Balmain Association for 36 years and President from 1980 - 1982. The research into the beginnings of particularly Balmain and Leichhardt have been published in the *Leichhardt Historical Journals* with the first of the series in 1971 with number 23 due for publication later in 2002.

Peter has an extensive list of books to his name as well as collaborating with Max Solling for the 1997 *Leichhardt: On*

the Margins of the City. In August, The Museum of Sydney will hold an exhibition on the work of 19th century architect John Horbury Hunt. Dr Peter Reynolds and co-author Dr Lesley Muir will launch their research in John Horbury Hunt: *Radical Architect 1838-1904*, on 31st August to coincide with the exhibition.

Congratulations to Peter's daughter Rebecca for *Index to Leichhardt Historical Journals*, 11, 12 and 13. *Index to LHJ*, 1 to 10 was published in 1998. I believe Rebecca is well on the way of *Index on LHJ* 14 and 15. All Journals and Index are available from the Watch House.

Turnabout Tugboat

Why on earth would Sydney Ferries purchase a fairly new tugboat, fit it out as a ferry and then after 10 years service, sell it to a towage company who would rebuild the vessel back as a tug, a role it played for another 25 years?

Greyhound 11 was built in 1902 at the Balmain shipyard Allan & Hunter for one of Port Jackson's major towage companies. After six years of hard work, the tug was purchased for £6473 by Sydney Ferries Ltd. for use as a ferry! The rebuild enclosed a full length passenger saloon on the main deck, with an open roofed area behind the wheelhouse. In keeping with the company's tradition of using aboriginal words beginning with the letter K, she was renamed *Kailoa*.

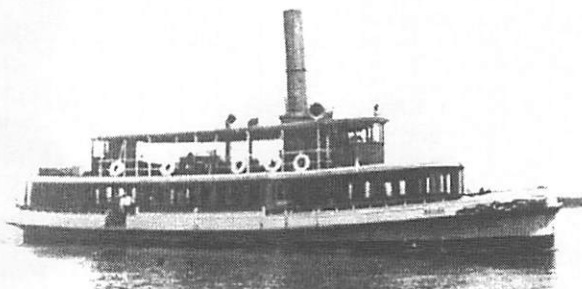
A ferry was needed for the Clifton Gardens service as in the same year 1908, the company purchased the Clifton Gardens Hotel, fronting Chowder Bay. The hotel was to be promoted as a first class harbourside holiday accommodation venue with extensive grounds to be developed as a picnic and recreational resort.

By the time the *Kailoa* was placed in service, the Harbour authorities had banned the use of single ended ferries at Circular Quay because of the congestion safety concerns stemming from single-ended boats leaving the Quay wharves stern first and then doing a 'three pointer' to resume their bow-ahead position.

This problem was overcome by the building of a small auxiliary wheelhouse over the stern and the cutting of a rudder in the bow. The *Kailoa* would

resume bow-first running once the Sydney Cove had been cleared.

After paying over £12,300 for the hotel and seven acres of land, the Sydney Ferries Ltd. went on a spending spree over the next few years on extensions and improvements, summer houses and construction of harbour baths. With



Kailoa rebuilt as a ferry

the boosted ferry traffic and visitors increase, the *Kailoa* became too small. Clifton Gardens was now included in a separate service linking Circular Quay with Athol Gardens, Balmoral and The Spit, using more conventional sized ferries.

So, in May 1917, she was sold to J Fenwick & Co. one of the Port's most important tug owners, for £2440. The passenger accommodation and surplus superstructure were removed and the *Kailoa* settled down for a further 25 years of humdrum towing work until it was withdrawn and broken up in 1941. The Fenwick Company apparently liked the sound of *Kailoa* and retained the name until it was taken out of service. The three maritime company's mentioned in this article were based in Balmain.

Geoff Johnson, President, Australian Ferry Society. Contact: 02 9451 8559. The Society can arrange interesting tours, by ferry, of course.

ceived by Council. As one can imagine some proposals caused considerable debate, particularly the multi-purpose court, placement of public toilets, dogs off-leash areas and a shared traffic zone in McKell Street from Cameron Street.

Although there was no item on a community garden a third of all sheets stated an interest for one at Mort Bay Park. What is meant by a community garden? There are four of various sizes in the municipality. One has a fowl yard. Then there is the native plant nursery at Rozelle Bay. To gain ideas for Mort Bay Park a tour of these is to be arranged.

Contact 9555 9221

or Vince Caccavo. LMC, 9367 9281.

Deed of Gift

Since March 2002, the Association has received three interesting donations for our archives.

Bruce Hannah of Alstonville is a descendant of Harry Cox, a Balmain Council Alderman, 1896-1910, 1917-1919, Mayor 1902. Mr Hannah donated a framed photograph of the Balmain Juvenile Lodge M.U.C.C. Junior Lodge Debating Team 1908. Unfortunately only Harry Cox is identified.

Mrs B Roeavert of Leichhardt donated a small trophy from the Balmain Tennis Club. The inscription: D L DeLoitte Cup and W H Nesbitt 28th March 1902. Mr Nick Zankiewicz of Prospect found the trophy while cleaning a friend's yard in Rooty Hill. His friend had purchased the trophy as a child for 20 cents at an Antique shop. The son of W H Nesbitt lived in Louisa Road for some years.

Mr Richard Hansford of McCoy, Grove and Atkinson, Solicitors of Sydney, donated copies of deeds and documents relating to Capt. Thomas S Rowntree and a map of the Mort Bay area.

A New Industry in Balmain

Every new industry, however small its beginnings, if of a legitimate kind is welcome to the Borough, and the beginning of what may grow to be a big establishment has recently been started at the southern end of Beattie Street.

We refer to the Tasmanian Cascade Dandelion Brewery, owned by Messrs Benn and Edwards. The beverage produced therein is specially designed to provide a drink which shall allay thirst, without having the cloying effects of the usual cordials or the slightest intoxicating quality. It is made from the best dandelion root, imported from Tasmania, which is treated by boiling so as to secure all the taraxacum () (the active ingredient of dandelion) and treated by a system of slight fermentation, producing a beverage which will keep good for years, having a taste like a very mild ale, of a clean and refreshing nature with a slight tonic quality acting beneficially on the liver. It is recommended by one of our leading physicians as the perfection of a summer drink and is guaranteed free of any intoxication principle whatsoever. The beverage is to be procured at all hotels and shops by the dozen or a single bottle. As an enterprise (sic) to provide a healthful and agreeable temperance drink, suited to this climate, it should meet with every success.*

Balmain Observer 20 August 1887

Mort Bay Park

On 26 March 2002, Leichhardt council resolved to exhibit the draft plan of management for Mort Bay Park from 8 April until 31 May. The assorted documents were on display at the Balmain library and on three onsite notice boards. There have been four workshop meetings of local residents with Council staff. Interested people were requested to complete a comments sheet containing 26 proposals.

During the public exhibition period of the draft plan 141 comment sheets were returned with additional suggestions and a further 10 submissions were re-

In Your Garden

August Gardening

Get set for spring. Take advantage of clear sunny days to prepare your garden for a feast of colour for spring and summer.

While soils are still cold you can divide and replant perennials into renovated soils. Though plants such as roses, maples and hydrangeas are dormant you can move them if necessary. You may have a plant in a wrong position that gets too little or too much sun. There is still time to plant new roses so give them plenty of sunshine and a good rich soil.

Cameilias are coming to the end of their flowering and will benefit from a thick mulch of leaf mould. September is the time to plant window boxes and baskets



with as much boisterous colour as you can manage to brighten dull verandahs, patios and courtyards. I have planted a lovely mixture of orange and deep magenta impatiens in a large basket. Dwarf impatiens prefer filtered rather than full sun. Yellow and purple pansies look most attractive together.

Azaleas can now be selected for almost any position in your garden from full sun to near full shade. Most azaleas grow well in tubs. The secret is to plant them in good azalea/camellia potting mix and never let them dry out. They will need to be moist at all times but not wet and soggy. Overwatering will kill azaleas. Fertilise them after flowering has just finished and repeat in January unless an eight-to-nine month slow release fertiliser has been used.

Bonny Davidson

What's On

Watch House Exhibitions

- Balmain Photographs from our archives 3 & 10 August
- Paintings - Nicholas Beckett 17-18 August
- Student Art Group 24-25 Aug Paintings
- Klin Sullivan & Friends Works on paper 30 Aug-1 Sep Opening by Phillip Bray 6.30pm Fri 30 Aug
- Paintings - 7-8 Sep Ross Manwaring
- Paintings - 14-15 Sep Helen Ross
- Paintings, Sculpture, Photos Denise Barry - 21-29 Sep
- Five Artists - 5-13 Oct

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2000/12

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AUSTRALIA

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 :vhamey@tpg.com.au.
Our Web site: www.balmainassociation.homestead.com

Interested artists, potters, sculptors, etc who would like to organise an exhibition are urged to contact John Sullivan on 9555 1026 or fax 9810 6774.

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