



the balmain
association
incorporated
news sheet

The Peninsula OBSERVER

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Balmain and the Bush

In April 2003, the Sydney Morning Herald carried an article about the unkempt state of some memorials at Waverley Cemetery where many prominent people are buried. The memorial chosen for illustration was for the Australian poet and journalist Henry Lawson. The memorial for his mother, the Pioneer of Suffragette, Louisa Lawson in the Rookwood Cemetery was restored by Public Subscription in 1978.

As it so happens, two intrepid researchers from our History Committee had also visited Waverley Cemetery in April, to find Henry Lawson's memorial and of John Booth, Balmain's first Mayor of Balmain Council and timber merchant and Thomas Wakfer, stone mason who in 1856 built the Dry Dock Inn cnr College and Cameron Street.

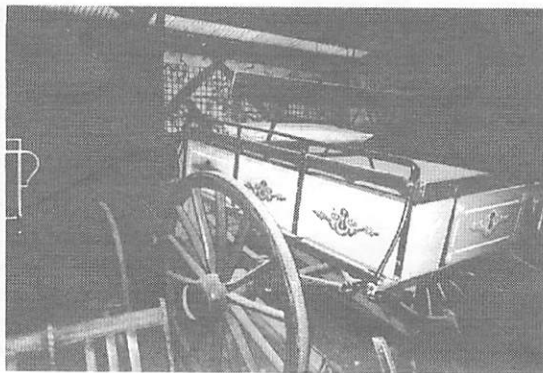
Last October, the two Balmainites visited Gulgong near Mudgee known as Henry Lawson country. Lawson, described as the authentic voice of Australia, was born in 1867 in a tent on the Grenfell Goldfields. His parents were Peter Larsen, a Norwegian seaman and Louisa Albury of Mudgee. In 1871, the family moved to the Gulgong

Goldfields on the north eastern edge of Gulgong.

Even though Henry's association with the town was a relative short one, the impact of what he saw and heard during those informative years and the long walking treks he undertook, was to provide him with material for much of his later poetry and prose. It was the people he met in real-life on the goldfields that were later to reappear in his literary works.

Renewed interest of Henry Lawson was heightened by a rumour in Balmain that a close relative had lived at Balmain East. This has been difficult to prove so at the moment, another urban myth!

On arrival at the motel accommodation at Gulgong we were welcomed by the proprietor who knew Balmain well as being one of the Swadling timber-family. On a visit to the Pioneer Museum we found,



Cart in Gulgong Museum

among the memorabilia, a two wheel cart beautifully restored with H Stewart, 17 Mullers (Mullens) Street, Balmain, painted on the side.

On enquiring about the horse drawn vehicle, a card index stated that the donation was from a Mr Colin Gill a farmer west of the Gulgong district. How and when this cart made its way from Balmain to be in a display in the Gulgong Pioneer Museum is another of life's little mysteries.

The following is an extract from a Henry Lawson poem, *The Bush Fire*, which is a reminder of the 2002-2003 drought and bush fires in NSW:-

*On the runs to the west of Dingo
Scrub there was a drought, and
ruin, and death,
And the sandstorm came from the
dread north-east with the blast of a
furnace-breath;
Till at last one day, at the fierce sun-
rise, a boundary-rider woke,
And saw in the place of the distant
haze a curtain of light-blue smoke.
Old Pat is deploring his burnt-out
home, and his wife the climate
warm;
And Jim the loss of his favourite
horse and Dunn of his uniform:
And Boozing Bill, with a raging thirst,
is cursing the Dingo Scrub,
But all he'll ask is the loan of a flask
and a lift to the nearest pub.*

Local Government

After months of disputation, alterations to inner Sydney council boundaries have finally occurred. On May 8 Glebe and Forest Lodge were shifted into the City of Sydney. With the addition of Camperdown and Darlinghurst, Sydney Council area was doubled.

Leichhardt Community transport Group has to hand over its services

in Glebe and Forest Lodge to South Sydney as it handles individual transport in the City of Sydney.

Many of Leichhardt's staff have been transferred as well as some assets. The transfer arrangements has increased the Council office work load in the last few weeks.

The State Government has announced several changes to its departmental structure that affect local government. The Dept of Planning has been abolished and

most of the staff are transferred to the new Dept of Urban & Transport Planning and are responsible to the Minister for Infrastructure & Planning, Mr Craig Knowles, through his Assisting Minister, Dianne Beamer. The others now work for the Dept of Sustainable Natural Resources. The Infrastructure Coordination Unit is transferred from the Premiers Dept to the Dept of Urban & Transport Planning. The Dept of Land & Water Conservatio has lost control of Water Conservation.

The Kerry Photographs

The Balmain Association was indeed fortunate when the early members received a donation of two Charles Kerry 1909 Panoramic views taken from the Balmain Post Office tower. One looking north shows Mort Bay to Darling Street. The second, looking east includes Lever Bros & Kitchen and part of Rozelle.

A third photograph looking west towards the Iron Cove Bridge was discovered some years ago at another location. The 120cm x 40cm size copy had been folded, placed in a box and forgotten.

The Mitchell Library's conservation section 'relaxed' the photograph, gradually unfolding each section until the piece was once more recognizable. This process is extremely slow but successful. In the mean time the original two framed photographs were copied and framed and are the pride of the collection. The third photograph has been similarly treated. The three will be on display at the Watch House from 6 July until 3 August with selections from our archives.

Charles Kerry (1857-1928) was one of Sydney's principal photographers in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Charles Kerry began his career in about 1875, working for a Sydney portrait photographer, Alexander H Lamartiniere. By 1884, Kerry had

took in a number of government commissions, including travelling through New South Wales to record Aboriginal people, their camps and corroborees and taking detailed interior views of Jenolan Caves.

Kerry's work was greatly facilitated by the invention of the dry-plate process in Europe in 1878. Where once photographs had to be developed on the spot; now they could be taken and developed later in the studio. Kerry's work was exhibited at the 1893 Chicago International Exhibition. All the photographs were intended for sale: first as prints and later as postcards when the craze for collecting them began and continues today.

Some of the prize photographs in his collection were of the snow fields of New South Wales. In 1897 he led a party from Jindabyne to the summit of Mt Kosciusko that opened up the area for skiing. He became president of the Kosciusko Alpine Club.

Long interested in mineralogy, in 1913 Kerry retired from his photography business and floated tin-mining companies in the then Federated Malay States and Siam where he was Chairman, a position he held until his death in 1928. Although his nephew took over the business, increased competition and tastes meant that Kerry & CO closed in 1917.

The collection of Kerry's work and another studio of Henry King consisting of 7903 glass plate negatives were bought by the Sydney bookseller, James R Tyrrell, in 1929 for a proposed floating ethnographic museum moored in Sydney Harbour. Although the museum never eventuated, Tyrrell kept the collection intact, eventually selling it in 1980 to Australian Consolidated Press who donated it to the Power House Museum in 1985. The Tyrrell Collection provides an impor-

tant record of city and country life and will shortly be included on the internet at www.pictureaustralia.org.

Source: The Tyrrell Collection. Powerhouse Museum.

White Bay Power Station

An historic video of the White Bay Power Station was recognised by the National Trust during the April Heritage Festival.

The video made by the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, won the Electronic Media Award for using innovative methods to bring an oral history of industrial heritage to an audience.

The White Bay Power Station Oral History Video was commissioned in June 2002 after 900 people attended an open day at the site. Former workers were interviewed on-site as a way to rekindle memories from as far back as the 1940s. Interviewees told of power shortages after WWII, when suburbs would take turns to have their electricity supply shut off for several hours because the power station couldn't meet demand.

The video also explored the hierarchy among different trades at the power station and how to distinguish a worker's position according to the colour of their overalls. The most important people wore white and those considered on the bottom rung of the ladder wore blue.

Last year the SHFA commissioned heritage architects Design 5 to draw up a plan preserving the historical and cultural importance of 'this rare piece of architectural sculpture'.

The authority is to release a conservation management plan for the Victoria Road site in June 2003.

Another National Trust Award was won by local identity Tom Uren, for his dedication in protecting heritage in NSW and across Australia.

Source: Inner Western Suburbs Courier 21 April. Village Voice May 2003.

St Andrew's Church

On 4th May 2003, current and former ministers as well as local dignitaries attended St Andrew's Congregation Church in Darling Street to celebrate 150 years in Balmain. The first female minister of St Andrew's Reverend Hilda Abba, now in her 90s, attended the service. Rev Abba was at the church from 1952-1955.

Other events will be held throughout the year.



Darling Street 1870s (Site of roundabout)

taken over the business and had his studio at 308 George Street, Sydney.

In 1890 he was appointed official photographer to the Governor of New South Wales, Lord Carrington. In addition to his portrait work, Kerry

Community Art

Graffiti is the bane of city life with indiscriminate tagging on buildings, even the sandstone outer wall of the Watch House has been marked with blue paint.

On a recent walk through White Bay Park, Donnelley Street, I discovered on the bunker walls some excellent examples of the graffiti spray paint art. Another example can be found on the foundations at 115 Birchgrove Road.

Two well known murals are at 418 Darling Street. In 1990 the proprietor of the Balmain Auto Port, Bill Evans, celebrated his 20th year in business by commissioning interesting murals, painted on the adjacent terrace walls. The artist Glenda Jones on one wall shows a motor garage c1925 with Bill and another employee in the work. On the other side of the garage on the terrace wall is a scene of the area around The Olgers, Northern Territory. Both works are showing signs of deterioration.

On the front wall at 54 Mullens Street is a blight blue 'primitive art' style painting and on the wall of the corner shop at 135 Mullens has a black cat in the garden scene.



Balmain Auto Port

In 1995 the first Guy Crosley mural in Balmain was painted on the wall of the bar area at the Sir William Wallace Hotel, Cameron Street. A recent update of the work has included some local identities. The bar with the mural has featured in some TV series such as E Street, the Sydney series of The Bill, Water Rats and now Grass Roots.

To discourage graffiti on the outside wall of the Merton Estate Hotel, 38 Victoria Road, Crosley was again commissioned a mural. Completed

in 1998, the setting of this art work is of the Last Supper, featuring wharfies, a football player, Ned Kelly and recognizable portraits of Neville Wran and Dawn Fraser.

Further along Victoria Road at No. 118 on the facade of the former Rozelle Hotel is another Crosley work depicting modern communication in reference to the business within the building.

Unfortunately another work of Crosley's in National Street has been demolished for the redevelopment of the building. This also depicted the business of the owner of art supplies.

A mural along the railway line in Crescent Street near Johnson Street, Annandale, was a combined effort of the local community and Leichhardt Council painted in the 1970s. The continuous work relates to features of local industry buildings, dog racing, and transport trucks of all sizes one carrying Yellow Cake, planes flying very low over that area, fishing boats, terrace houses, families at play and at the centre a very large tiger. This most interesting work has now been targeted by some graffiti.

In Darling Street only two shops in the main shopping strip have attempted some mural decoration, both relating to the business. Above the awning at 263 a winery is featured and at 353 the facade as well as the interior of the building has rural scenes of farming of fruit and vegetables. On the pavement at

263 is the well known colourful Joe's Flower barrow. At the John McMahon Kindergarten behind the Balmain Town Hall, the children have an Australian bush scene with giant animals on the adjoining wall in their outside playground.

One area in Balmain that could have a mural depicting some of Balmain's history that would be of interest to the general public is in Loyalty Square, on the wall of the Super Market.

Kathleen Hamey.

Cockatoo Island

The recent Federal Budget included \$115.5 million for the preservation of the former Commonwealth sites around Sydney Harbour, regarded as the 'jewels in the crown' along the city's spectacular foreshore.

The Sydney Harbour Federation Trust draft plans, now before the Environment Minister, David Kemp, includes funds to be used to decontaminate Cockatoo Island and restore electricity. Historic buildings will be preserved and business such as ship building will be encouraged to return to the island.

The SHFT is seeking memorabilia on the extensive history of the Island to be included in a pictorial publication. Thousands of people worked and lived there, so the book is to tell the human side of Cockatoo Island. Anyone with material, please phone 8969 2100.

The picture below shows the southern apron under repair.



Ballast point

The Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority is responsible for transforming Ballast Point in Birchgrove into a harbourside park for the enjoyment of everybody. SHFA is committed to involving the community in the project and has a program of community consultation.

Site tours are to be held on Sunday 1 June and Sunday 15 June every hour between 9am and 12pm. Bookings for the tours are essential as access to the site is restricted and group sizes are limited due to safety considerations. Contact Felicity Kitson on the Thursday before each tour on 9240 8813 or email kitson@shfa.nsw.gov.au.

If you have any comments about the park or would like to receive information from SHFA visit www.shfa.nsw.gov.au/ballastpoint.

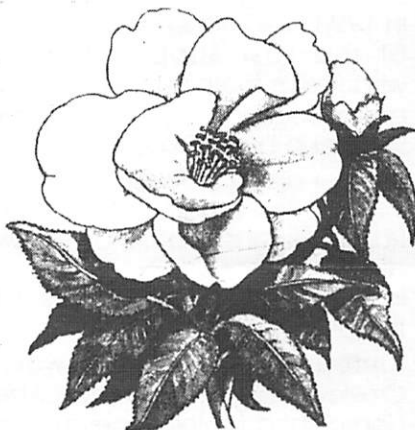
In Your Garden

Plant For Peace

A lovely way to gain benefit from your garden is to design a small intimate area, perhaps a special spot within a larger garden, where you can relax among plants selected for their perfume and colour. You could call it a Peace Garden. Plant with mainly white flowers because the symbolism of peace and purity gives tranquility because of the contrast between green textured leaves and white blooms.

It is interesting to note that some of the best perfumed plants have white blooms, notably gardenia, mock orange and stephanotis murrays.

Dappled sunlight seems to be essential for a peace garden. An overhead canopy is best provided by a deciduous tree. The chinese yulan magnolia, *m. denudata*; one of the



new wisteria trees, *Robina pseudocacia unifolia*; white crepe myrtle and white orchid tree all provide ideal filtered shade.

Privacy is essential and hedging may be needed to enclose the area. Plant tall, flowering shrubs around the perimeter but don't prune them into formal shapes. Any of the hardy white viburnums or snowball bushes, may and startling white camellia *sasanques*.

Bonnie Davidson

What's On

Watch House Exhibitions Art Exhibition

- **Rozelle Photo Workshop**
Photographs June 7-8
- **Elsie McEwen**
Artworks June 14-15
- **Candice Williams**
Artworks June 21-22
- **Jan Melville June 28-29**
Artworks
- **Sat July 6 to Aug 3**
Balmain Photographs
featuring three Kerry
panoramas taken from
the Balmain Post Office
Tower in 1909
- **Debra Harris Artworks**
Aug 9-10 & Aug 16-17
- **Bernadette Glover**
Aug 23-24

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Birchgrove NSW 2041
2003/12

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

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