

the balmain
association
incorporated
news sheet

The Peninsula OBSERVER

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Water Restrictions

The on going water restrictions in Sydney and the Leichhardt Council encouraging residents to install water tanks for garden use, appears to be once more of history repeating its self in regard to the Balmain water supply.

Pre 1880 before town water was connected; residents relied on wells sunk in their backyards. During dry spells, people resorted to getting their water from natural springs in places like Beattie Street near Elliott Street. Sometime residents sat beside these springs all night waiting their turn to get a bucket from the hand pump that brought the water from underground. Balmain Council water carts also filled up at these pumps and delivered water to houses for one shilling a load.

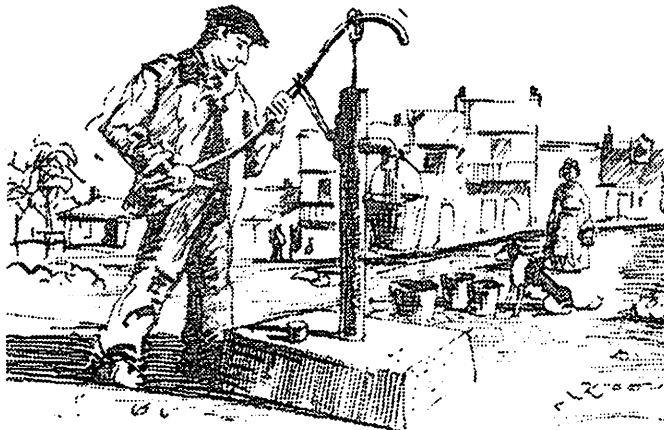
By 1880 town water was connected to a few streets in Balmain. Standpipe with taps were set up on the mains in convenient locations and by 1881 Balmain was connected to Sydney's pipes but a good water supply was a long way off. The reticulation of town water could not keep up with the speed of new building. In 1884 the City Council, which controlled the water supply, issued notices against the waste of water. The Balmain residents replied that when the water ceased to flow, in periods of hot weather, people inadvertently left their taps on and water could be heard running until the early hours of the morning.

In December 1884 water rationing was introduced. Balmain was allowed water on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays of each week. Some households in Balmain East

had no water for at least a week. Council carts laid the dust and tried to prevent infection by sprinkling the streets with a mixture of sea-water and carbolic.

The situation was improved in 1892 with the opening of the Ryde pumping station. In the hot January on 1896 there was little water in the pipes for at least 12 days. As the population increased and many iron works and factories were established, the low rate of supply became critical. In the drought of 1916, parts of Balmain were without water. The situation was so bad that Sydney had only 200 days supply when heavy rain set in.

The Water Board announced plans for a service reservoir under Gladstone Park in 1912. The excavation into the rock was completed in 1915 and the reservoir was completely enclosed and ready for use by June 1917 holding 2.4 million gallons of water. With the top water level at 128 feet above sea level, the balance reservoir, serving the low-lying areas of Balmain. The reservoir remained 'on line' until the 1990s when the water was pumped out. A brick building on Booth Street frontage houses a pumping chamber.



FILLING BUCKETS AT A STREET PUMP

There are wells still in evidence today in Balmain. One at 14 Louisa Road, is visible in the front left of the building. Source: Gladstone Park, Peter Reynolds

Rozelle Festival 2004

Planning and preparations for the second annual Rozelle Festival to be held 20 to 27th November are on schedule. The Committee has been meeting for some months and has an interesting program that should please everyone.

The events begin with the Sydney College of the Arts Undergraduate Degree Show at Callan Park. The Writers' Centre also at Callan Park will hold an Australian Publishers & Authors Bookshow. There is to be a writing competition for seniors 'Reminiscences of My Youth', an art show, a school music competition, film screening of local interest, progressive dinner at local restaurants and an outdoor concert and poetry reading.

Negotiations are at the moment with the Tram Museum at Loftus to have a vintage tram and the Balmain Counterweight to be on display during the Festival in Nelson Street.

The Balmain Association has attended Committee meetings and will conduct a Rozelle Pub Tour on Saturday 27 November and exhibit early photos of Rozelle in the shop windows.

Information: Ian Scandrett on 9555 1400.

Desalinisation

We are not short of water. There are immense quantities of sea water if it could be used. Desalinisation unfortunately requires immense amounts of energy. The use of fossil fuel is unacceptable due to the increased greenhouse effect. The amount of energy from the sun is far in excess of our present fuels. It is time we harnessed that energy. Other renewable sources are the tides and currents/

Flushing toilets uses 20% of our water. Hong Kong uses sea water.

George Ellis Balmain Boat Builder

A small item in the Sydney Morning Herald in July 2004, stating that the oldest yacht in Australia *Kelpie* was built by George Ellis of Balmain in 1884, lead to checking in the archives and more research.

The Sands Directory for the Balmain area covering the period 1867 to 1896 has three Ellis's all shipwrights, Hugh, Henry and George W. Hugh father to Henry and George W.

George W, shipwright, first in Snail's Bay then Clifton Street and from 1884, various Duke Street and Place addresses. One residence was *Melrose*, c1860, 10 Duke Place was recently restored after many years of neglect.

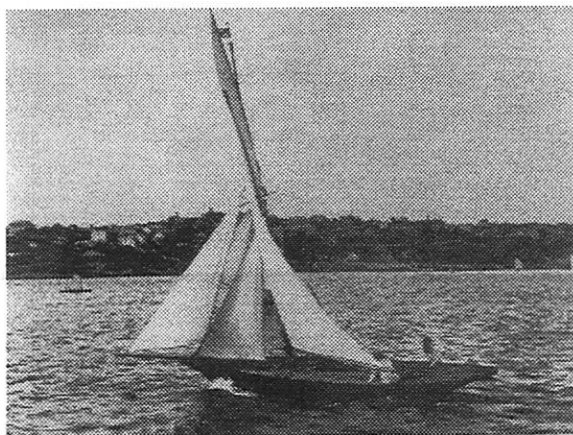
Mort Bay has had a long association with ship building and the foreshore of Duke Street from the 1850s was associated with Andrew W Reynolds who built a boatshed, wharf and stone cottage on the waterfront. Reynolds boatbuilding skills won acclaim at the London International Exhibition of 1862 winning a prize medal for his cedar skiff. It is thought that when Reynolds left the area that George W Ellis carried on the building of gentleman's yachts.

Some of the yachts built at the Ellis boatyard: 1879, 5 ton *Doris*, 1879, 9 ton yawl *Harpy*, 1884, William Fife designed 30ft gaff-rigged cutter *Kelpie* built from Burmese teak, 1887, a load waterline yacht of 58 feet *Era*, and 1889, 42 foot boat that could be rigged as a cutter or yawl, *Thelma*.

In August 1887 the *Balmain Observer* reported that 'George Ellis, boat builder, has built some of the fastest boats in the colony including the *Dreamland*, *Sophia*, *Lucia* and *Predia*. They are at present building a yacht of 40 tons for Mr Milson of North Shore and have plenty of work on hand, 13 hands are at present employed and other orders for large boats are waiting.'

George W had married Mary Books from the Hawkesbury River on 18th January 1873 and a nephew Cameron Books was 14 years old when he was apprenticed to his uncle and lived *Melrose*.

Every Sunday the Ellis family would climb the hill of Duke Street to Darling Street to attend the St Mary's Church. After the service one Sunday, so the family history story goes, the clergyman called Cameron over and told him he wished to cut up some firewood and could he borrow a saw. Cameron was responsible for the care of the yard tools, but not wishing to disappoint the Reverend gentleman, lent him the boat yard's cross cut saw. The following week Ellis found the saw missing and docked Cameron 15/-. As he was paid 2'6d per week this amounted to six weeks pay. Some weeks later the clergyman gave back the saw. Ellis, to make his point, did not return the 15/-.



Kelpie 1890s Photo Maurice Dent

On finishing his apprentice Cameron Books went to sea but settled in Balmain and married Mary Conway. Their two sons, Patrick and Billy operated a boat yard in Balmain, Books Brothers. Cameron Books died on 20th May 1964 at The Avenue, Balmain.

Mary Ellis died aged 46 years in 1888. It is not known what happened to George Ellis as no death date can be found and family history say he went to Canada and never returned to Australia.

Source: Robert and Janice Taylor, Family research. LHJ No 13, Peter Reynolds.

Balmain Library Upgrade

Proposals for alterations to the Town Hall to increase the space for the library have met with opposition from the Friends of The Library. They objected to the use of the two front rooms as foyers for the elevator to the Auditorium.

In our view the Town Hall building is unsuitable for a modern library. The heritage building cannot successfully and economically be modified. A more suitable venue for is the Baby Health Centre when it is closed next year. The site can be used for a purpose built facility.

The two front rooms could be made into an entrance vestibule with access to the elevator that is necessary to provide disabled entry to the auditorium. The ground floor of the Town Hall could then be employed for meetings and community facilities.

Bell's Store Site

On 30 July Leichhardt Council acquired the site at 2-6 Weston Street, East Balmain. Council is not entitled to occupy the land until the Valuer General determines the amount of compensation to be paid to the owner.

Meanwhile the reclassification of the property to Operational Land is under way to allow Council and the community to consider uses for the Bell Store in accordance with Council's resolution to allow some commercial use to offset the purchase and remediation costs.

Ian Scandrett

Homes for People

Alfred Hancock

Alfred Hancock, estate agent, was known as the 'Father of Rozelle' who encouraged and assisted the working class to acquire their own homes. The wage for labourers was 12/-, for an 8 to 10 hour day. Hancock's home and office Mertonville, was on the site of Cashman Reserve, Beattie Street, between Lawson and Elliott Streets. Hancock's, The Merton Estate Agency produced a brochure in the 1890s for the sale of land in the Rozelle area.

Alfred Hancock heads the pamphlet with

To my friends and the Public and continues with florid wording: Nearly a quarter of a century ago, I inaugurated a system whereby struggling people could secure their own freeholds by small gradual payments extending over a long period. There are many hundred of worthy people in Balmain today freeholders and many INDEPENDENT who owe their rise in life SOLELY to the fact that they seized the opportunity then offered. Every one of whom can testify to the considerate and liberal spirit in which I treated them during the currency of their credit.

Having purchased at a cheap rate the whole of the residue of Mr Paling's Estate, Mr Hancock offers a SACRIFICE PRICE of £2 Deposit and £1 Monthly, each lot at only SIX PER CENT INTEREST.

There is a Special Memo that says:

the Vendors offer a Bonus of One Pound to all Purchases on this Estate who shall introduce a Customer purchasing one or more Lots, provided Notice of such Introduction be given at the time. By means of a little energy in this direction holders of Lots may greatly reduce their payments and confer the benefit of an immensely profitable investment upon their friends.

Now is your time to buy: the prices will never again be so low as those quoted herein.

How the children of those thoughtful, frugal parents who purchase now will bless them hereafter.

ONE Price Only and No Deviation.

No advantage taken but fair, straightforward, honourable dealings, as practised by Alfred Hancock towards his Customers since the commencement of his business.

Purchasers Can Be Supplied With Timber, Etc, For Building. Payable By Ten Shillings Weekly.

Comments of interest associated with many of the Lots that were for sale:

Starling, Hartley, Brent Streets will have the Great Attraction of a Double Frontage and will largely participate in the important advantages of the New Reclamation at White Bay and the coming Trams.

Denison, Albion Streets are really good Residential Sites for Working Men.

Longview Street. The Water Frontage Lots will some day be a fortune to the Owners.

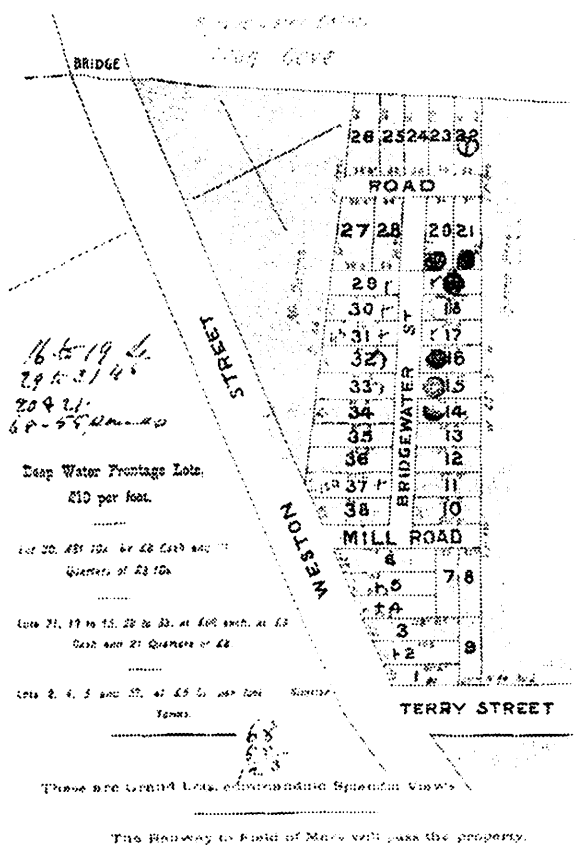
Foucart, Albert and Alice Streets are highly desirable, close to and overlooking Easton Park and almost adjoining the Tramway proposed. Finally Mr Hancock writes. REMEMBER, Nothing can prevent long and shamefully neglected Balmain coming to the front in the immediate future.

Alfred Hancock was looking well into the future as his predictions were to take 100 years. His land sale included the area of Street of Albion, Manning, Denison, Evans, Callan, Springside, Park, Oxford, Moodie, Western Road, Cook, Foucart, Emily, Catherine and Bridgewater.

One area for sale was Section 44, Lot 2, bought in 1874 by Mr Paling. The area of Lot 2 was to become the Balmain Power Station site that is now the housing development, Balmain Shores.

Lost somewhere in time are two Streets, Mill and Bridgewater. Bridgewater Street appeared in the Sands Directory in 1884 and Mill Road in 1888. Early occupants of Bridgewater Street were T Addison and G Forster who subsequently joined forces to become Addison & Forster, builders. In later years the NSW Joinery Works. Bridgewater Street in 1930s showed 14 occupants, one Alfred Widmar, musician and R Cruickshank, compositor.

Vacant land to homes to industry to now housing.



The Bega Balmain

William Balmain's supposed great-nephew, John Balmain, a Presbyterian schoolteacher, arrived in Sydney in 1837. The God seeker became a Gold seeker when he left his family destitute in Goulburn to go to California.

His descendents now live in Bega. In the 1900s two Balmain brothers, Arthur Stewart and William Percival, established Motoring Services in Bega, Bombala and Cooma.

Arthur's grand-daughter, Virginia, is researching and gathering information on the pioneers of motoring in the Monaro and Bega districts. She hopes to contact sources that may have information, photos or memorabilia. Her aim is to show a real sense of the country and distances travelled at the time of the Balmain Bros motoring crossing of Brown Mountain, the mail run and the climb to Kosciusko.

Virginia can be contacted on email vbalmmain@optusnet.com.au.

Association Website

After initial delays from our hosts, the Balmain Association website can be visited on:-

<http://balmmainassociation.aussiehosts.com>

It has details of our publications and exhibitions as well as current news.

Book Launch

The Watermen of Sydney, Memories of a Working Harbour by Graeme Andrew, was launched aboard the wooden ferry *Proclaim* by Chris Stannard on 15th September, 2004.

The 99 page publication with 106 illustrations has information on many former Waterman Companies in Balmain, including Stannards and Nicholson's, Tay Lighterage at Snail's Bay, Bailey & Jorgensen, Johnstons Bay, Balmain East, Lever Bros White Bay and Morrison & Sinclair yards at White Bay and Snails Bay end Louisa Road, Birchgrove. The *Proclaim* was built at the Louisa Road site in 1939.

A must for maritime historians. Congratulations Graeme Andrews. The publication can be purchased from Stannards Marine Group for \$35 plus postage. 9418 3711.

Treasurer's Report

Financial Position at June 30 2004

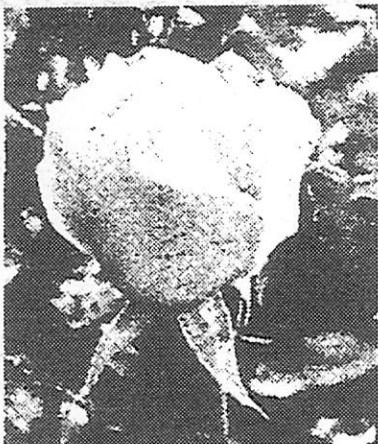
Current Assets	2003	2004
Bank Balance	23822.36	29574.86
Term Deposit	20000.00	25000.00
Cash in hand	6.60	24.50
Sundry Debtors	215.40	52.00
Total Assets	44044.36	54751.36
Current Liabilities		
Creditors	658.30	0.00
Total Funds	\$43386.06	\$54751.36

In Your Garden

The Easy Way

Weekends spent lawn mowing and edge trimming and weeding are not for everyone. If you spend much of your time doing these jobs it is time for a rethink.

Formal hedges demand regular clipping. Manicured lawns need feeding, aerating, edging and watering. 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 dry out rapidly. I have a drip watering system with a timer over my hanging baskets. Put small potted plants in large containers that will retain moisture much



better. Cultivated beds of annuals need regular weeding, watering, fertilising and dead-heading to stay respectable. Remove all plants that are not thriving or that need regular spraying. Mulch all garden beds. Use vigorous ground-covers extensively in large mats to suppress weeds. It really can cut down your weeding. If

you want roses grow only those varieties that are resistant to diseases such as black spot. Feed and mulch your plants.

Healthy plants have greater resistance to pests and diseases. Make 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

- **Rozelle Photographic Workshop Oct 2,3,4**
- **Briohny Elliott Oct 8,9,10**
- **Deborah Harris Oct 16,17 & Oct 22,24**
- **Recent Ceramic & Mixed Media by Six Southern Sydney Artists Oct 29,30,31.**
- **Heather Hepski & Bundeena Artists Nov 6,7**
- **Rosemary Williams Nov 13,14**
- **Peter Mottershead Nov 20,21**
- **Robyn Ross Nov 27,28**
- **Balmain Association History Room is open Saturdays 11am-3pm**

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The Peninsula
OBSERVER

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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 5.00pm 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 :vhomey@tpg.com.au.

Our Web site::

<http://balmainassociation.aussiehosts.com>

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