



the balmain
association
incorporated
news sheet

The Peninsula OBSERVER

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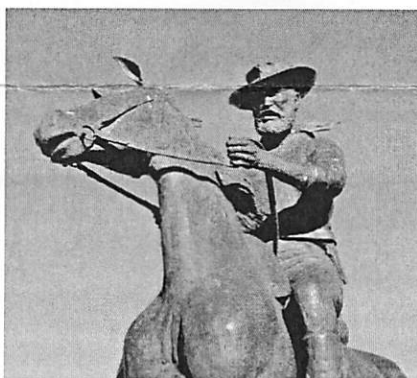
The sign is mightier than the horse!

Morgan Mandorla is a student and resident of White Street next to Elkington Park (originally named White Horse Reserve) and White Horse Point. The idea described below was both a school project and a matter of interest to him. He is trying to get Leichhardt Council to change the name of his street back to its original name. He has sent a petition with 182 signatures to Mayor Jamie Parker for consideration. The signatories include famous Australian authors, numerous heritage architects, historians, the local members of both Federal and State parliament, as well as many, many more. He has received overwhelming support for his idea and would like to say a huge thankyou to all those who helped him on his way. Ed.

On the 11th of September 1863, Fred Ward, aka Captain Thunderbolt the bushranger, escaped from Cockatoo Island Prison with the help of his aboriginal soon-to-be wife, Mary Ann Bugg.

Her daring break-out took a few weeks to plan, and another week to take place. In the middle of the night, she would sneak out of the house she was a domestic in, and swim across the shark-infested waters to scout out Cockatoo Island, and would come home with a plan in the back of her mind. One night, she swam the breach between them and passed some tools through his bars. A few days later, Captain Thunderbolt and a fellow prisoner, Frank Britten, left their filed-through shackles and prison uniforms on the shoreline. This made it look like they had escaped, and swam off, but in reality, they hid out on the island. The authorities

swallowed the lie, and searched the coastline for a few days before broadening their search, and moving further inland. This was their chance, and Thunderbolt and Britten seized it, and swam to shore. Bugg met them at



Statue of Thunderbolt outside the Uralla Historical Society

the shore and gave them clothes to wear that she had stolen. The next day, she smuggled them up the later called White Horse Street under a bale of hay in a cart, which, funnily enough, was led by a horse, and escaped from the later called White Horse Point.

The surrounding land was subdivided in 1866, and the street running towards White Horse Point was inevitably named White Horse Street. Now, this would all be very well, but now I get to the actual point. On the 11th of March 1881, the Balmain Municipal Council changed the much more romantic and historically important *White Horse Street* to boring old *White Street*. This incredibly interesting side of Balmain was locked up just fifteen years after it was uncovered, and the thrown away key has gotten rusty over the one-hundred and twenty nine years it's been there. But it is not forgotten! I am campaigning to bring out the real Balmain, the not just lovely but interesting, historical, and altogether amazing Balmain, a Balmain where White Horse Street would be restored, and a Balmain where by doing so would not be glorifying criminals, but revering an event which, over the

course of one hundred and forty seven years, has made the Balmain it is today.

Morgan Mandorla,
Resident of the soon-to-be-once-
more White Horse Street

45 YEARS!

Can it really be 45 years since that dedicated group of "trendies" or "basket weavers", new arrivals in Balmain, (but with a long term resident, Sybil Masterman, at the helm) started the Balmain Association to combat development? Mid 1965, galvanized by the threatened demolition of Birchgrove House, a public meeting was held for all interested residents to form an action group. Much more genteel in those days we called it the Balmain Association!

On 12 October a party was held at the Royal Oak Hotel to celebrate the past 45 years. Many stories were told of losses and successes – the most notable being saving the Balmain Watch House and being able to use it for our headquarters (after many thousands of hours of restoration!). It was a lovely night with good food, a glass of bubbly, magnificent birthday cake and some happy memories! We look forward in 5 years time for the 50th!!

Diana Garder

NEW MEMBERS

Peter Benson, L Creagh, Michelle Davies, Wayne Driver, Kyle & Jon Evans, Ken & Ann Gray, Wayne Moss, Anny Slater, Pam Springate, Bernice Stewart, Geoff Turner, Margarit Wallace.

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Future Directions for the Balmain Association

The Balmain Association has played an incredibly important role over the last 45 years (see page 1 article by Diana Garder) in the transformation of Balmain from an industrial working class suburb to what it is today. As that transformation is largely over it is worth considering what the Association should be concentrating on now.

In the early days of the Balmain Association the young activists who were moving into Balmain recognized that there was a need to conserve the heritage of the suburb and that an unsympathetic Council and State Government needed to be encouraged to prevent high-rise development in such an historic area. The first issues to be taken on were the preservation of Birchgrove House and the Watch House. Birchgrove House, the third oldest house in NSW at the time, was demolished in the late 1960s and the Watch House was saved and restored. There have been many wins and some losses since then. Recent Councils have been sympathetic to community views on development issues and there are no longer threats of industrial expansion or high-rise residential developments.

The main activity of the Balmain Association today is still centred on the Watch House; its maintenance and its use as an exhibition space. The Balmain Association leases the Watch House from the National Trust. In return for a peppercorn rental the Balmain Association maintains the Watch House and opens it to the public. However the building is not very accessible except at weekends when art exhibitions are being held and otherwise on Saturdays between 11:30am and 3:00pm.

Over the years Balmain Association members have undertaken important research and produced a number of pamphlets, exhibitions, books and booklets on various aspects of Balmain. Members have also helped locals and others find information about their houses and families in Balmain and organized tours. Researching, recording and exhibiting historical information about Balmain remains an important role of the Association.

The Association has most recently been involved in the "discussions" on the future development of the "Bays" (White, Johnston, Rozelle and Blackwattle Bay) precinct. It has also made submissions on plans for Callan Park and Goat Island amongst other issues. However the Precinct Committees have, to some extent, taken over this "development" function from the Balmain Association.

The Association's newsletter is produced quarterly but there is less need for it these days as there are two free "Inner West Couriers" each week, a free monthly "Village Voice" and Precinct Newsletter, as well as "Ciao", and the "Inner West Independent" and now the emailed Balmain Association's *Bulletin*. It is worth acknowledging though that not all members of the Balmain Association live in Balmain (Some live in far away Rozelle, other Sydney suburbs, NSW towns

and even other Australian States.) and not every member uses email.

Despite these activities the future direction of the Association is far from certain. Even though there are an increasing number of new members, as the average age of the committee members seems to increase inexorably. So what are the options for the Association as it celebrates the 45th year of its existence? Some possibilities are given below:

- It could limit its activities to those of an historical society with the major activities being to make its collection safe, catalogued and accessible, and maintain the Watch House, and organize exhibitions of the work of local artists.
- The Watch House could be used for a café or wine bar or other uses besides the current exhibition space. This would allow greater use of the building and exhibiting of works of art and historical material and provide an income for maintaining the building. It would also provide better access to the Watch House for more people. Oh, and in case you are wondering, no, there can't be too many cafes in Balmain!

Other suggestions that have been made for the Watch House and the Association's activities are:

- Provide a venue for book launches.
- Organize social events (eg pub dinners).
- Set up a History of Balmain blog.
- Be more proactive on Council Committees.
- Run history quizzes.
- Submit historical and other articles to local papers
- Offer honorary membership to some high profile Balmain residents.
- Take action on providing more sporting fields and a skateboard facility.
- Give talks to parents at schools, childcare centres and playgroups, about Balmain's history and heritage.
- Cooperate with other local organizations (eg Chamber of Commerce) on issues and activities.
- Organize "Meet the candidates" nights for elections.
- Fund school projects.
- Encourage Telstra to demolish the Darling Street façade of the Balmain Telephone Exchange or at least improve its appearance.

Balmain Association members and newsletter readers are encouraged to add to the above list of suggestions. Contact your friendly Management Committee member directly, or send your suggestions by post to the Balmain Association, PO Box 57, Balmain 2041, or email them to: fergus.fricke@sydney.edu.au

Loyalty Square Monument

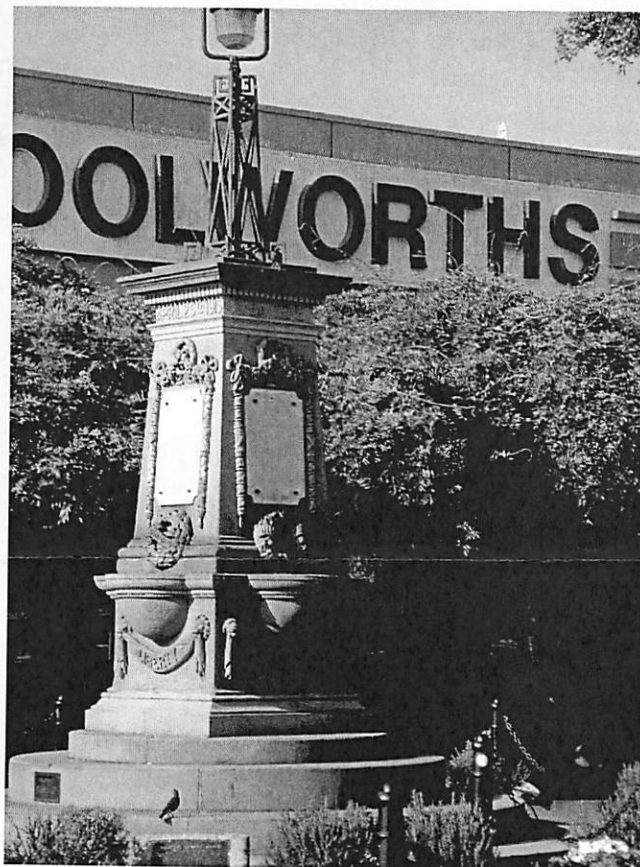
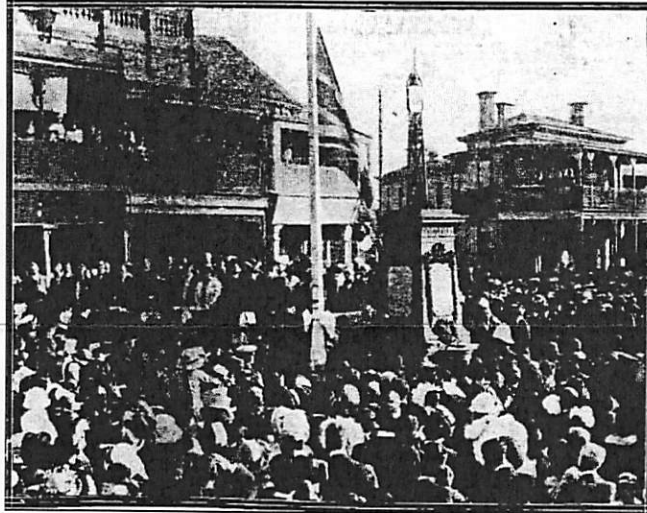
After Gallipoli and particularly after the armistice, Australia embarked on a massive program of monument construction, on a scale unknown anywhere else in the world. There are reputedly more than 4000 depending on one's definition of a war memorial. One of these is in Loyalty Square. In his book, *Sacred Places*, Ken Inglis says that these memorials became holy sites of a new civil and nationalist "Anzac" religion. Balmain's memorial is now appears more like a shrine to Mammon.

The Balmain memorial was unveiled by Alderman H B Swan on 23 April 1916 in the presence of the NSW Premier, William Holman. The memorial is one of only a few which were erected before the end of WWI. It lists the names of 38 Balmain men who died in the Dardenelles campaign. The memorial was designed by a local soldier, Lieutenant R C Nowland, the winner of a competition organized by the mayor of Balmain, apparently without prompting from any military or civil central authority. The winning tender of £244 was from Garnett and Whiteoak, stonemasons. Funds to build the memorial were donated by Balmain Council (£200), and local residents while four local businessmen paid for the marble tablets on which the names of the fallen soldiers were inscribed.

After the memorial was unveiled there was a change of name from Unity Hall Square to Loyalty Square.

The memorial takes the form of a sandstone plinth topped by an iron frame holding a light. While the light was part of the original design, it was not until 2000 that it took its intended place atop the monument.

The original design for the monument, once thought lost, was found by a student undertaking work experience at the local council, and the light was added during the 2000 restoration work.



The 38 local men who perished on Turkish shores have their names on four marble tablets, one on each side of the monument. In recent years there have been some additions to the monument. Perhaps the most notable occurred in 2000, when the

Leichhardt-Lilyfield RSL Branch was closing. They had in their possession plaques commemorating four local Victoria Cross recipients: Corporal Mackey (1945); Private Currey (1918); Lance Corporal JWA Jackson (1915) the youngest ever recipient of the medal and the first Australian so recognized on the Western front; and James Gorman (1854), an English-born sailor awarded the VC for his bravery at the Battle of Inkerman during the Crimean War. These plaques were placed on the steps below the plinth, along with a fifth plaque commemorating all wars, and inscribed with the words 'In memory of all those men and women who served in the services in all wars for the defense of this country'.

Why Balmain became the site for one of Australia's earliest war memorials is unknown. However, at the time of the memorial's unveiling, Balmain was a working-class suburb whose main industry came from its busy docks. At the outbreak of World War I the population of Balmain stood at around 32,000, with approximately 5,000 men eligible to enlist. Nearly all of these men did enlist, and considering the physical nature of the main industry of Balmain at that time, their absence would have been sorely felt.

For further information see http://www.dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/balmain_war_memorial

PHOTOS

Above: From the Sydney Morning Herald, Monday 24 April 1916 page 3 under the banner "BALMAIN'S MEMORIAL TO FALLEN HEROS" and underneath, "THE UNVEILING CEREMONY IN UNITY HALL SQUARE YESTERDAY AFTERNOON"

Below: The memorial as it is now in Loyalty Square by the entrance to the "Woolly Mammoth"

What's on at the Watch House

For further information see <http://balmainassociation.org.au>

FEBRUARY

Saturday 12 and Sunday 13 10am – 4pm

PRIMAVERA

Emerging artists Marisa Leung and Sandy Bliim present this show of recent works. Marisa's transformed landscape paintings speak to her sensuous handling of light, colour and forms. Sandy's quirky sculptural assemblages recall childhood memories, combining found and made objects.

Opening Friday, 11, 6:30 - 9 pm

All welcome.

Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 10am – 4pm

Our changing harbour

Balmain Peninsula Park Painters.

Balmain's changing harbour is the theme for this upcoming annual - ferries, tugs, tankers, sail boats, dinghies, boatsheds, jetties, parks and wharves are all inspiration for their latest works. It is the harbour and waterfront at work, rest and play. The group of artists includes Barbara Hamilton, Susan Grant, Mary Cullen, Pamela Neville and Jenny Saunders Thompson. Their styles are incredibly diverse - from realism to expressionism and abstraction with each artist using different media to portray their images including pen and ink, watercolour, acrylics, pastels and oils. The exhibition also features other recent works of the group, such as still life, abstract floral works, paintings inspired by travel and life on the Balmain Peninsula. To see recent work by each artist, go to www.picasaweb.google.com/balmainpainters

Opening Friday 18, 6-8pm

Come and meet the artists.

Saturday 26 and Sunday 27, 10am – 5pm

BEYOND RAIN: an exhibition of paintings by Janet Reinhardt and Michael van Langenberg

The exhibition showcases abstractions of landscape and the human figure. The two artists capture the fleetingness of time

and its effect upon both imagined physical landscape and abstracted human form. The 30-odd works in the exhibition emphasize chromatic surfaces and sublimated arrangements in which figures and landscapes assert and disappear. They present less tangible yet recognizable and familiar realms. Ultimately the works talk to the stillness of movement - the breathing bodies, the rib of light touching rain or dust - evoked by finding within the integrity of abstract painting the enhanced possibilities of post-photography.

Opening: Friday 25 February, 6-8pm. All welcome.

The Balmain Association
December Exhibition 2010

A Tea Exposition

celebrating tea and friendship

Opening Friday 10 December, 6 - 8.30pm

Saturday 11 and Sunday 12, 10am to 4 pm then Saturdays during December (not 25th) and January 11.30am to 3pm. A display and sale of tea cosies and tea paraphernalia milk jug covers, crafted cup cakes, paintings, photos and teas. Made items to be sold and proceeds donated to:

The Bridge for Asylum Seekers

Items for donation and for exhibition to be delivered by 3 December together with an entry form.

Please contact June speal@zip.com.au ph: 9810 6885 or Di 0407 704 826, diane.osmond@gmail.com for entry form and delivery instructions

For more information about Bridge for Asylum Seekers

www.asylumseekersfoundation.com

NB We need help on Saturday and Sunday - telling people about the Watch House, making tea etc. If you can spare 2 hours of your time between 10am and 4pm on Saturday or Sunday please contact June 9810 6885 or speal@zip.com.au

History Week September 2010 Faces in the Street

There were over 200 events across NSW, celebrating community and professional history, highlighting our cultural life and involving local people. The Balmain Association presented an exhibition:

The face of your street - the person behind the name.

What's in a name? When it comes to streets, there are a wide variety of reasons. In the early days the streets, or rather tracks had names attached to identify them often the name of the property or the owner where the street went. Purchasers of subdivisions often gave the family name and names of family members to the streets. Other streets were named after local aldermen, Governors and towns in the homeland.

In more recent times there has been recognition of the original inhabitants with many of the new streets

in developments on the old industrial sites having Aboriginal names. Long Nose Point, at the end of Louisa Rd, was given the Wangal name of Yurulbin meaning swift running water.

An average of well over 50 people visited the Watch House each Saturday afternoon in September to view the exhibition. Major attractions were the 1909 panorama photos taken by Kerry from the Balmain Post Office Tower and the more recent, 2009, taken by local photographer David Liddle. People spent many hours gazing at these, finding their house or street and comparing the changes over 100 years. Our thanks again to David Liddle for his photos and to Ferg Fricke who spent six months negotiating with owners of the post office building and Australia Post to gain access to the tower.

The Association is also grateful to many families who have donated photographs over the years in particular the Elliott family photos and those from the Booths.

On Saturday 11th September 2010, Kathleen Hamey led one of her ever popular coach tours visiting the former industrial sites where the Balmain workers would walk the streets to their employment at Colgate Palmolive, Unilever, White Bay Power Station, Balmain Power Station, Elliott Bros. Chemical Works, National Box Co., Mort's Dock and Caltex, the latter now Ballast Point Park. As usual the tour was booked out and had a waiting list. The event finished back at the Watch house where participants enjoyed afternoon tea and viewed the exhibition.

June Lunsmann

The Balmain Association Inc Representing Balmain, Birchgrove and 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 realization 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 11:30am – 3:00pm.

Our editorial contacts:

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