



The Peninsula OBSERVER

the news sheet of the Balmain Association • PO Box 57• Balmain • 2041
www.balmainassociation.org.au

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Journeys to and from Balmain.

The outward spread of the suburbs of Sydney in the 1800s was determined by the available means of transport. The first land sale in Balmain in 1836 was at today's Balmain East as the city was a short distance by water but along way by toll road Parramatta Road to Balmain Road along the ridge Darling Street on a rough track.

The first regular means of transport was by ferries began in 1843, Balmain Steam Ferry Service and watermen who could be hired to row their heavy timber whale boats to all points on the Harbour or to Parramatta when catching the tide helped reduced the time taken for the journey.

Land travel was by foot, horse, horse drawn carriage, that restricted movement for workmen to other areas and were the mainstays of

Pymont Bridge and the Pymont Bridge Road, both had tolls to pay to use and the charge of two pence for pedestrians was beyond the means of the average workmen. Closer to Balmain in 1862 the first Glebe Island Bridge was built to access the abattoirs but this also had a toll to pay but although expensive the introduction of the horse drawn omnibus service was begun. Many earned their living with horse drawn drays and delivery carts. The next phase for the growing population of Sydney demanding better transport (this seems to be a recurring



c 1940 tram with counterweight at bottom of Darling St

the slow progress of the lines to reach the area so the Balmain Council sought a private enterprise to build a electric tramway to joint up with the network. This work did not go ahead and it was in 1892 that a single line from the Forest Lodge line was constructed around Rozelle Bay to Balmain West (Rozelle) Public School, then gradually extending to Gladstone Park and again to finish at Nicholson Street, as the steep decent had to be negotiated. This occurred in 1903 with the assistance of the counterweight system.

By the 1950s the motor car was being used extensively by the general public and trams were limiting the road space so double decker buses came into use in Balmain in mid 1950, gradually replacing the trams. Kathleen Hamey.

Source: Leichhardt. On the margins of the city. Max Solling and Peter Reynolds.



Horse Tram 158, Balmain:Photo courtesy Duncan MacAuslan

private transport prior to the wider use of the bicycle. In 1888, John Dunlop introduced the first practical pneumatic tire then other refinements of cable brake, gears and pull brakes and the grading of smooth roads in the late 19th century made way for the motor bike and automobile. In 1857 a private company built the

theme) were the trams. Balmain with the flourishing shipping and timber milling industries by 1880s had swelled to 15,000 residents. Between 1879 to 1884, 30 miles of tram tracks were laid in Sydney including to the wealthy eastern suburbs. First used by the horse drawn trams, then steam to electricity. Balmain residents were agitated at

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NT Heritage Festival 2014

Planning Matters Feb 2014 – Christina Ritchie

Illoura Reserve Heritage listing – The Bruce McKenzie-designed historic space that is Illoura Reserve parkland at East Balmain was listed on the State Heritage Register on 29th November 2013. Information on the State Heritage listing is available on the Heritage Division website www.heritage.nsw.gov.au

New NSW planning laws – In November 2013, the NSW Government Upper House rejected the new Planning Bills that were passed through the Lower House of Parliament. Labor, Greens and other minor parties combined to defeat the bills. Although there were some important changes made to the originally proposed Bills before they passed through the lower house, some major issues are still unresolved. Designated growth zones will allow fast-tracking of development without consultation. The Better Planning Network, (BPN), the large group of community organisations which is supported by the Association, believes there is a good chance that the Bills will either be reintroduced when Parliament resumes in late February or Parliamentary process will be bypassed and the new Planning Laws will come into effect using significantly increased powers made available to the Planning Minister during the term of the previous State Government. BPN believes these bills would take away residents' rights to comment on proposed development in their neighbourhood, including new apartment blocks and commercial buildings. BPN is calling on its supporters to continue to actively oppose the proposed laws and lobby parliamentarians to reject the Bills if introduced a second time. Further information is available on the BPN website.

Glebe Island Bridge – The Glebe Island Bridge, opened in 1903, has been Heritage listed by the NSW Government. Heritage Minister Robyn Parker stated that the bridge is one of the earliest examples of an electric-powered swing bridge in the world. The Ports Minister, Duncan Gay strongly objected to the listing. RMS has expressed its preference for demolition of the bridge to allow easier access for the larger boats moored in Rozelle Bay. Members of the Balmain Association Committee, among other community organisations, and Council's Heritage Committee, support the retention of the bridge for pedestrian and cycle access and its listing as a Heritage item. There is widespread support for retention and adaptable re-

use of the bridge. Supporters of retention of the bridge believe the cost-benefit analysis report to the NSW Government, organised by RMS, fails to acknowledge the long-term benefit of adaptable re-use of the bridge for commuters, tourists and others by connecting the CBD with Glebe Island, White Bay and the inner-west, and ignores its value as a Heritage item. It is now important that the bridge is protected from further dilapidation and is sensitively adapted for appropriate re-use.

Telstra Exchange, Post Office Park

– The Balmain Association continues to support the push to demolish the front of the Telstra Balmain Telephone Exchange to establish a public open space with viewlines to the Heritage Precinct that includes the historic Post Office building. Council has obtained a valuation (the figure cannot be revealed) and has made an offer to Telstra. Council is awaiting a response.

Public Access to the White Bay foreshore

– Sydney Ports has deferred a plan for extended public foreshore access at White Bay next to and around the Cruise ship Terminal. Some line markings for the new access have been drawn. Sydney Ports say the plans for extending the pedestrian access in front of the Terminal and next to the Wharf 6 site need further attention before access can be granted. The expected access date is a few weeks away, according to Sydney Ports.

The establishment of a dedicated pedestrian/cycle access point to the White Bay foreshore via Booth St, Balmain is not being pursued by Sydney Ports at this time. The Association supported public pedestrian and cycle access to the foreshore. It is still hoped that the open area at the back of the foreshore adjacent to Booth St and Birrung Park will be made available in the near future for public recreation. Sydney Ports has not agreed to enter into discussion on this at present.

Maybanke, 23 Wharf Road DA – has been resubmitted to Leichhardt Council. Members of the Association and local residents strongly objected to the first DA which was approved by Council in July 2013. However, Council's approval was later challenged in the Land and Environment Court by two members of the Balmain Association on legal grounds about the lack of waterfront assessment. This second DA is virtually the identical to the first DA but with additional documentation which aims to

address the legal issues. This provides an opportunity to review the merit issues. Wharf Rd has its own heritage DCP, being recognised as the most intact Victorian/Federation waterfront street in the Municipality and on Sydney Harbour.

4 Pearson St Balmain – This heritage item also has a DA before Leichhardt council for a major 'container-like' addition and some demolition. Balmain residents are concerned about the Heritage aspects being totally overpowered by the bulk and scale of the additions.

Cruise Ship Terminal Impacts

– Balmain residents are very concerned about the noxious fumes and noise emanating from ships berthed at the White Bay Cruise ship Terminal. The 'Good Neighbour' policy is not being adhered to and the ships' generators are problematical. There is no on-shore power provided so the generators are working the whole time the ships are berthed at White Bay. The Terminal is adjacent to a high-density historic residential area.

Rozelle Village development – The Association committee opposes the oversized, inappropriate development that is still being assessed under the infamous Part 3A provisions. The developer has been allowed to submit yet another revised plan for access arrangements. This report is now being assessed by RMS but if approved, it would mean the loss of a large number of parking spaces in the area. The final decision on the development is still pending.

Heritage Advisory Committee

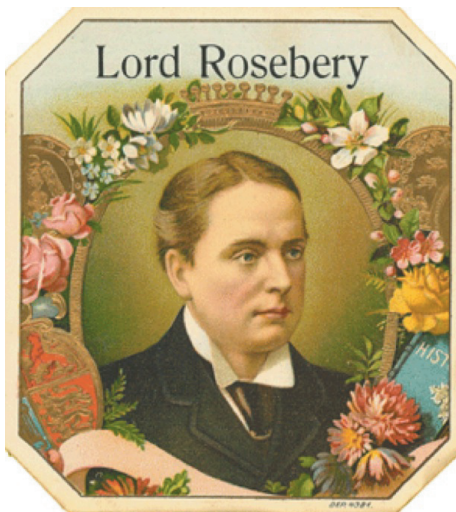
– Balmain Association members attended the February HAC meeting. It was noted that historical carvings at Callan Point have been vandalised. The HAC resolved to protect Heritage Items at Callan Park and called for the Masterplan to be approved as soon as possible and a Trust formed to manage the park. The demolition and replacement of the Balmain East Wharf was discussed and the HAC supported Council's push for community consultation and asked for protection of heritage aspects of the surrounding area, including viewlines.

Callan Park – The Masterplan for Callan Park is still awaiting a decision by the Planning Minister. It was completed and delivered to the Minister more than a year ago.

A street near you

Roseberry Street, Balmain Andrew West

Roseberry Street was named for British Prime Minister, Archibald Primrose 5th Earl of Rosebery, who visited Australia in 1883. The misspelling of his name is repeated in the name of Roseberry Place Balmain, as well as the Sydney suburb of the same name. Originally Roseberry was a short street off Evans, less than half its current length. Work on extending it to join up with Mullens Street began in May 1910. The land was part of the Gilchrist's Estate acquired from Dr. William Balmain, who famously sold the 550 acres granted to him by Governor Hunter in 1800 for 5/-.



After the London Court of Chancery in 1853 upheld Gilchrist's claim to the land, portions of the estate were progressively sold off by public auction. In April 1866 builder James Reynolds purchased a little over 2 acres in the area now occupied by Roseberry Street and its adjoining houses. The block (lot 5 Section 9) was intersected by an unnamed watercourse that formed a series of pools as it made its way down to White Bay. (It drained into a mangrove swamp where Roberts and Mullens Streets now meet on reclaimed land adjacent to White Bay Power Station). The unnamed watercourse was soon polluted and was variously referred to in newspaper accounts of the time as a drain or sewer. Stories in the

Sydney press referred to the dangers and praised the heroic efforts of locals who had gone to the rescue of children trapped here. The unfavourable nature of this land may explain why it was not developed as quickly as adjoining areas and was not built on until 1883.

A storm water channel was constructed in 1891-3 between Beattie and Roberts Streets. It was one of the first purpose built storm water channels constructed in Sydney. Previously watercourses that served to carry storm water were left entirely in their natural state. Choked with silt and rubbish, they became little more than receptacles of sewage from the rapidly expanding settlement of the suburbs. Appalled at the extremely unhealthy conditions prevailing at the time, the Secretary (Minister) for Public Works, Bruce Smith, proposed building a separate system of storm water drains to help alleviate the problem. By 1897 nine had been built, including Beattie Street. Completed in January 1893 Beattie Street storm water channel has been recognised as having heritage significance. It is a good example of one of the earliest storm water channels and additionally it helped improve public health in the 1900's.

The construction of the Beattie Street storm water channel was not without its controversy. The state government and local ratepayers shared the cost of the project and many felt they should not have to pay for infrastructure that was not yet complete. Tensions rose when an upgrading of the specifications, backfilling along the banks and an extension of 76 yards (25 metres) caused cost overruns and led residents to reject proposals to increase payments for the maintenance of the drain. Subscriptions were taken up at public meetings to engage a barrister, while Balmain Council was obliged to take legal action to recover costs from some residents. The dispute was further complicated by the additional expense incurred in maintaining the storm water channel that now flowed through land reclaimed by the Department of Public Works and the cost of removing wooden bridges at Goodsir and Parsons Streets.

In 1891 Balmain Council agreed to provide curb and guttering on the south side of Roseberry Street. This finished at No.27 – then the extent of the street.

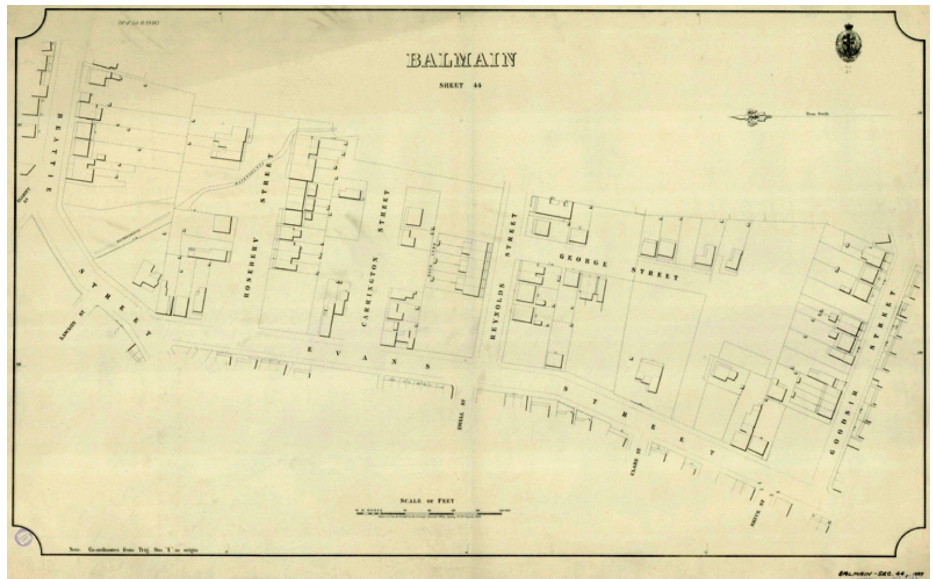


The stormwater canal: image from Sydney Water's website www.sydneywater.com.au.

The extension of Roseberry Street was achieved at a cost of demolishing the childhood home of distinguished jurist, Sir Frederick Jordan, whose family owned a produce store on Mullens Street. A home wares store (Prue Trollope) now stands on the site while a Bicentennial Plaque on the storefront commemorates Sir Frederick's life.

An advertisement in the "Evening Standard" dated 4th September 1888 called for tenders from stonemasons to construct a row of 3 stone cottages - each of five rooms, in Roseberry Street. The contractor, Michael McGrath, lived at No. 2 in the same street. McGrath borrowed 400 pounds from a friend, John Harold, to finance the building of these cottages. (No.s 21-25) They were completed in 1889.

McGrath was not only a contractor who worked on roads in the district (including Roseberry Street), but



a hotel licensee. In February 1895, however, he was the subject of a police raid in the middle of the night. He and an accomplice were apprehended in one of the apparently unoccupied houses in Roseberry Street, where they were operating an illicit still. Arrested and taken to Balmain Watch House, the two were brought before the magistrate and fined the considerable sum of £100. Nevertheless, Michael McGrath later held the licenses for the Star Hotel in Mort Street and the Youth Hotel in Sydney. When he died in November 1926, the widow of John Harold made a sequestration order against McGrath's estate. McGrath was

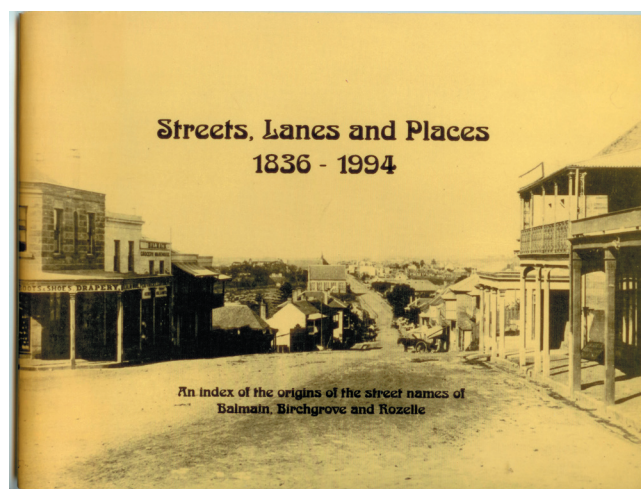
declared bankrupt and his property sold to pay some of his debts.

Every street has its story – sometimes this lies in the narrative of those who lived here, the social context of the times or even the fabric of the buildings themselves. They tell a tale of past deeds and misdeeds, of attitudes and aspirations and of the lives of ordinary people doing the best that they can in the circumstances.

If you suspect your house harbours some secrets or you are just curious about its past or if you have a story to tell email: contact@balmainassociation.org.au



The maps can be found in digital form on-line. Go to Google Images and search for "Balmain maps". This was part of a series of municipal maps by Higgenbotham, Robinson and Harris drawn c1890, which is useful to show the development of Balmain streets.



To whet your appetite for such research buy a copy of the Balmain Association's *Streets, Lanes and Places* available at the Watch House Saturdays 11.30 to 3pm or order from the website \$13.00 plus \$2.50 postage.

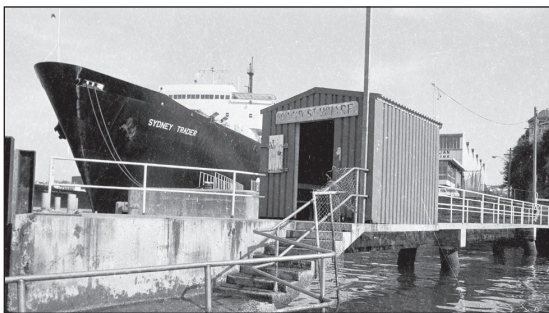
Comings and goings in Mort Bay during the 1960s and 70s

Having moved to Balmain in 1967, frequented the Forth and Clyde Hotel and then taking up residence in Ballast Point Rd, I overlooked the shipping activities in Mort Bay for a number of years.

Mort Bay was the scene for many shipping comings and goings ever since it first opened for business in 1855. It closed just more than a century later in 1959. It was revived as shipping facility in 1963 when Australian National Line (ANL) bought the northern waterfront from Sims to provide a ferry service to Tasmania. Sims retained the remainder of the site intending to build a motel to be used in conjunction with the passenger service. This never happened.

On the northern waterfront

The Empress of Australia, was custom built at Cockatoo Island Dockyards in 1962. The ramp giving motor vehicle entry to the ship's rear door is still in place in Mort Bay, as is a concrete wharf used to board the ship and load supplies. In 1972, because of its size, the Empress was deployed to the Melbourne-Devonport run and the smaller Australian Trader was transferred from the Melbourne-Devonport run to the Sydney-Hobart run. The Australian Trader provided accommodation for 190 passengers and 110 motor vehicles.



Bow of the Sydney Trader, roll-on roll-off cargo ship tied at the northern wharf.

It soon became clear the Australian Trader had inadequate passenger facilities for the 2-day journey. Coupled with this were a number of strikes by the waterside workers leading to passenger numbers falling dramatically along with the ship's reputation, and it was withdrawn from service in 1976. At the same time the Sydney Trader was taking cargo to and from Tasmania.

It had always been fun to watch these boats leave Mort Bay with all the usual

hoo-ha of friends farewelling the passengers and the traffic jam up Ballast Point Rd when these friends departed Patti Martin, publican of the Forth and Clyde and her friend Lena made the trip on several occasions.

We'd like to hear from anybody else who had done this to be included in our exhibition at the Watch House in April, 2014.

On the southern waterfront

In 1966 ANL successfully applied for a second berth on the southern side.



Stern of container ship tied up on southern wharf

With scant regard for its heritage, Sims demolished the main buildings and had the debris bulldozed into the dry dock. Between 1968 and 1969, the dock site was completely paved with bitumen.

The southern side of the bay needed dredging to accommodate the overseas container ships. This involved depositing dynamite and blowing up the seabed. As newcomers to Balmain at that time we often sat on the footpath outside the Forth and Clyde watching the action. There was a diver, obviously Diver Dan, who on many occasions after a dive would come into the pub and shout a round of drinks.

The Mort Bay container wharf opened in 1969 but, as with the larger facility at neighbouring White Bay, the wharfage lacked back-up space for truck movements. Those restrictions contributed to the government's



Container truck crash in Mort Bay

decision to build a major terminal at Botany Bay.

I always enjoyed watching the comings and goings of the coastal and overseas ships and our local ferries. Although I fully acknowledged the problems that arose with the container trucks moving through the streets of Balmain. In those days the narrow end of Rowntree St between Bay St and Ballast Point Rd was two-way and it was always incredible to watch the trucks trying to fit down there. Also it must be noted that there were hardly any cars on the streets then.



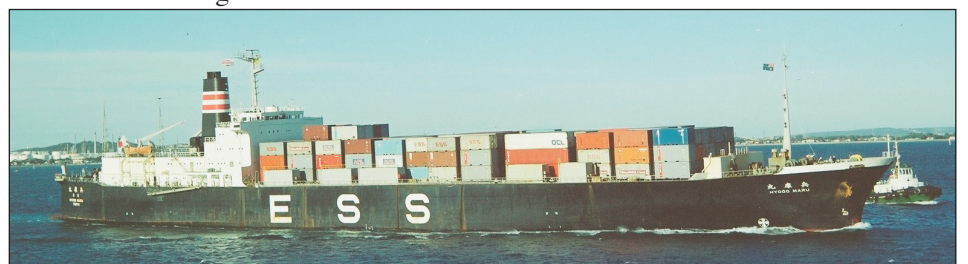
Container truck going down Cameron St past the William Wallace

The last overseas container ship, the Hyogo Maru, left Mort Bay in late 1978. In the previous year, I had been delighted to see it in the harbour in Osaka, Japan, one of its destinations. It was with sadness that I watched its departure with new baby boy and all this to be replaced with a housing development that totally blocked out any view of the bay.

June Lunsmann.

B&W photos courtesy David Liddle.

Ref. Empress of Australia sydneyforeveryone.



The Hyogo Maru sailing out of Port Botany



What's on at the Watch House

www.balmainassociation.org.au

MARCH

Saturday 15, Sunday 16, 10am - 5pm

Ebru – Colours of the Earth

Serpil Gurkhan brings to you her new collection of Turkish Marbling Art which she has created across countries combining the techniques of the ancient Turkish: the Art of Ebru with the colours of Australia.

Opening: Friday 14, 6-8pm

Saturday 22, Sunday 23, 10am - 5pm

JOURNEYS

Janet Carter's latest solo exhibition of paintings in watercolour and mixed media and etchings are of landscapes she has experienced and hopes that the work is evocative of a mood and a sense of place.

Opening Friday 21, 6-8pm All welcome

Saturday 29, Sunday 30, 10am - 5pm

OKAPI +

The Okapi Group and a few friends will showcase their recent artworks in this exhibition. A variety of subject-matter and techniques are explored by this group of enthusiastic printmakers and painters.

Opening Friday 28, 6-8pm All welcome

APRIL

Saturday 5, Sunday 6, 10am to 4.30pm

"Beginnings"

Selected recent works by Sonia Gallart and Barbara May. Both artists enjoy painting (oil and acrylics) and printmaking (etching, dry point, collagraph and linocuts)

Opening Friday 4, 6 - 8pm all welcome.

Saturday 12, Sunday 13, 10am - 4pm

Not your average exhibition!

This is a politically correct free zone! Lyndsey Hatchwell and Rona Sissons met at The Sydney Gallery School and discovered they shared a penchant for pithy political satirical works and are launching their own "politically correct free zone".

Opening Friday 11, 5-8pm all welcome.

Saturdays 19 April to 4 May

Balmain Association Exhibition.

MAY

Saturday 10, Sunday 11, 10am-4pm

"Flights of Whimsy"

Alisa Burlington is a mixed media artist from the quaint town of Rylstone, NSW. She is a graduate from The Sydney College Of the Arts and is the Director of jewellery label Mon Alisa Design. "Flights of Whimsy" explores themes of transcendence through both physical and imaginative themes.

Opening Fri 9 6-8:30pm All welcome.

Saturday 17, Sunday 18 May

Carol D'amici Photographer

Fri. 23, Sat 24, Sun 25 and Fri day 30,

Sat 31, Sun 1 June 10am-6pm

(Midweek by appointment)

Traces of Wilderness

Jennie Holtsbaum, a postgraduate research student at UNSW, College of Fine Arts, Paddington, lives and works in

Balmain and presents this exhibition of Australian flora and fauna as inspiration for decoration and ornamentation of the domestic space and for gallery-based installation.

www.jennieholttsbaum.com.au

Opening Fri 23, 6-8.30pm All welcome.

The National Trust Heritage Festival

12 April – 26 May 2014 *Journeys*

The Balmain Association will celebrate with

• **Ferry cruise Sunday 18th May**

Departing Thames St Wharf 10am and returning 2pm.

Cost \$45, Balmain Association members \$40.

Picnic lunch with a glass of wine, beer or soft drink included, tea and coffee, bar on board. Journey up the Parramatta River, around the islands Cockatoo, Spectacle, Rodd, Snapper and to the Abbotsford Animal Quarantine Station. Hear about the transportation by water of psychiatric patients to Callan Park and Gladesville Hospitals in late 19th Century.

Bookings essential: June Lunsman speal@zip.com.au, 9810 6885

Payment by cheque to Balmain Association, mail to Ferry Cruise

c/- 29 Ballast Point Rd, Birchgrove

or direct deposit Account name: The Balmain Association

BSB 062 110 Account #: 0090 3672 Reference: ferry cruise

• **Exhibition**

We will have an exhibition Saturdays 19 April and 26 April and Saturday 3 and Sunday 4 May 11am to 4pm.

We NEED your participation - your best travel stories and photos, your arrival in Balmain and your journeys from Balmain by land (horse, tram, bus etc), sea or air. Please contact Kathleen 9818 4954 or June 9810 6885.

TUNNELS AND TRAVELS AT CALLAN PARK

Sunday 25 May 2014, 11.00 am – 12.30 pm

Meet at NSW Writers' Centre, Callan Park, front verandah

That most perfect block of buildings described Callan Park in 1883. Tour the tunnels and hear stories of personal and international journeys which intersected at this heritage landscape.

Parking Sydney College of the Arts car park in Callan Park

Cost \$20 per person (family with children discount \$35)

Bookings Essential

Email focp.admin@gmail.com to book

Friends of Callan Park – www.callanpark.com

For more information Tel: 0413 733 218

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 6:00pm in the Watch House, 179 Darling Street Balmain. MEMBERS ARE INVITED TO ATTEND. The History Room at the Watch House is open every Saturday from 11:30-3 Postal: PO Box 57 Balmain 2041 Material from this newsletter is not to be reproduced without acknowledgement