

The Peninsula OBSERVER

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www.balmainassociation.org.au

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Life Membership Awards - Carolyn Allen

Our inaugural Life Membership Awards ceremony was held at the Watch House on Sunday 4th May.

In 2013, we amended the constitution to include life memberships and it was gratifying to be able to honour John Morris, Bob Irving, Debby Nicholls and Val Hamey for the years they served the Balmain Association and our community.

It was a beautiful sunny autumn afternoon and about 30 members assembled with family and friends of the recipients. Families had joined with us to keep things secret and we were pleased that all were present to be surprised.

Recipients have since expressed their surprise, shock, and in the words of Bob Irving "I am humbled but joyful" and "BA forever!"

A profile of the wonderful contribution these four have made follows. It is a tribute to them and to others over the years that we will be able to celebrate our 50th Anniversary next year.

JOHN MORRIS

John came to Sydney in 1965 to be the Assistant Director of the National Trust (NT) of NSW. The newly formed Balmain Association (BA) contacted the NT regarding the Watch House which was vacant and no longer required by the Police Department.

Following an inspection of the Watch House by John and some members of the NT's Historic Buildings Committee, it was suggested that the BA take over the use of the building as their headquarters. The Minister for Lands, Tom Lewis, was sympathetic for the preservation of the building but was not prepared to give control to a local group. John proposed to the Minister, without the authority of the NT, that the building be transferred to the NT and then leased to the BA, who would be responsible for its preservation.

We are grateful to John for his effort and how the BA has upheld its obligations.

ROBERT IRVING

Bob is an architect, architectural building conservation consultant and author. Bob and his wife, Pat, came to Balmain from Melbourne with their family in the 1960's and Bob was the second President of the BA – possibly 1967. Bob and his family remained in Balmain for over 40 years, only recently moving to Dulwich Hill.

Bob wrote the text for the first book published about Balmain in the BA's time, *The Houses of Balmain* (1969) with photographs by John Wong and the first book published by the BA, *Balmain in Time* with Peter Reynolds in 1971.

Bob has spent a large part of his life recording Australian architecture and has written and contributed to many

publications and heritage studies.

Some of these are:

Fine Houses of Sydney; The History and Design of the Australian House; Identifying Australian Architecture; Paradise, Purgatory and Hellhole about the sandstone quarries of Pyrmont, which was launched at the Watch House.

And most recently *Sydney's Hard Rock Story – the cultural heritage of Trachyte*.

DEBBY NICHOLLS

Debby, originally from the United States, came to Balmain in 1979 and joined the BA Management Committee in 1984. She served in a number of positions over a number of years – Secretary (1986-89), Treasurer and Watch House Conservator (1990-93) and President in 1995.

Debby compiled the information for the publication *Around Balmain*, by the BA in 1986, and co-authored *Called to the Bar: 150 years of Pubs in Balmain and Rozelle* with Bonnie Davidson and Kathleen Hamey (1991).

Debby continues to be very active in the community having been a founding member of the local Probus group (1995); co-ordinated the Community Aid Abroad's Walk Against Want (2002) and from 2001 visiting the Villawood Detention Centre. She is also involved with Bridge for Asylum Seekers.

VAL HAMEY

Val and his wife, Kathleen, moved to Balmain in 1985 to their retirement home. They both became involved with the BA and have worked tirelessly from that time. Val edited the Newsletter, the Peninsula Observer, from 1988 to 2005. He became the Treasurer in 1994 and remained so until 2008.



Diana Garder, Secretary, Carolyn Allen, President, with John Morris, Val Hamey, Bob Irving and Debby Nicholls, inaugural Life Members

Val was involved with the design and camera copy of a number of BA publications:

Called to the Bar; Streets, Lanes and Places; Gourlie's Corner which he also co-edited with Kathleen; *Grave Concerns; History Trail; Rozelle Walk*

In 1990 he instigated the incorporation of the BA.

These four names are put forward as worthy recipients of these inaugural Life Memberships of the BA, which is coming up to 50 years of service in the community. Diana Garder.

Postscript:

On May 14, Bob Irving was recognised by the National Trust as a recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award, for his contribution to heritage.

As well the book "Sydney's Hard Rock Story", which he co-authored with Ron Powell and Noel Irving, was a winner in the Research and Investigation/Analysis community and Individual. See review page 5
Congratulations, Bob

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WE WILL REMEMBER THEM.

The Centenary of the Commencement of World War 1 - Kathleen Hamey

Driving through many of the rural areas, the one thing that the towns/cities have in common is a significant war memorial sometimes with a soldier statue on the top. When stopping at such a town, the memorial has a list of the names for who served in WW1 and WW2.



Here in Balmain we have a constant reminder of WW1 with the significant War Memorial in Loyalty Square, Darling Street, with 38 names on four tablets. It is one of very few memorials actually erected during the war and was in place for the first Anzac Day in 1916.

The idea of a memorial drinking fountain was raised in 1915 by Mayor of Balmain, Alderman Henry B Swan and a competition for a scheme was arranged. Lieutenant R C Nowland combined the idea of a drinking fountain and a memorial and it was his design that was erected in Unity Square in the centre of the roadway. The stonemasons were Garnett & Whiteoak, whose tender of £244 was accepted. The intersection was re-named Loyalty Square when the memorial was unveiled by Mayor, Alderman H B Swan on 23rd April 1916.

In the 1990s the memorial was moved and a plaza area was created.

Two of the names on the memorial are Sydney Leonard Petterson and James Alexander Fettes.

James A Fettes was one of six children born to father William, mariner and mother Margaret nee Mc Ginley and Fettes was 10 years of age when the family settled in Balmain in 1895. Fettes was at 6 Wisbeach Street when he enlisted aged 29 years, in the Royal Australian Navy and served in submarine AE1. The submarine was in St George Channel, New Britain, New Guinea when all aboard were drowned in an accidental loss of vessel on 14th September 1914. A headstone in the Old Catholic Mortuary, Rookwood Cemetery where his parents were buried includes details of Fettes.

The first two RAN submarines AE1 and AE2, arrived in 1913 and were docked and refitted at Cockatoo Island. In fact, Cockatoo Dockyard was to be the sole submarine refitting yard in Australia until the closure in 1992. The AE2 was lost in 1915 in the sea of Marmora, after a passage of the Dardanelles during the Gallipoli campaign.

Sydney Leonard Petterson born in 1897 in Balmain, was the youngest of four children of father John Leonard and mother Caroline nee Furlonger. The family for some time lived at 26 Dock Rd, Birchgrove. Petterson enlisted on 21st September 1914 as Private and was attached to the 13th Battalion E Company and fought at Gallipoli where he died on 29th May 1915. His parents were then living at Glen Ayree, 33 King St, Balmain. A memorial headstone is at Shrapnel Valley Cemetery also his name is on Wall of Remembrance, AWM, Canberra.

While visiting the excellent the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital Museum, I asked if I could research their archives for a nurse from Balmain who enlisted in WW1 and after viewing an admittance book of trainee nurses found a Balmain resident.

Hilda Moxham was born on 25th April 1880, father William James, importer and mother Fanny Jane, resided at Weston St, Balmain East. Moving in 1885 to Boston, 18 Nicholson Street where the Moxham family remained until 1925 when No 16 and No 18 Nicholson St were combined into flats. William J Moxham died in 1904.

Moxham began her studies at the RPA Hospital on 28th December 1910 remaining at the hospital until as Nurse Moxham, she resigned in 6th May 1915 and embarked from Sydney on HNAT Karoola 16th June 1915. Moxham served as Staff Nurse at No1 Australian General Hospital, Helipolis, Egypt. In August 1915 Hilda Moxham married Lieutenant Harry Fitzgerald Harlock at the Abbassieh Garrison Chapel, Egypt. A ship board romance must have happened as Henry (Harry) Harlock also embarked on the HNAT Karoola. Research is continuing but both Hilda and Harry Harlock survived the war and had returned to Balmain by 1919 and the indications are that the Harlocks may have then resided in England as Harry was born in Singleton, England.

The Observer 19th July 1918, reported a ceremony in Elkington Park. In the presence of a few friends and pupils of





Birchgrove Public School, John James Booth planted four trees in memory of his son John who was killed at Passchendaele on 9th October, 1917. John was a grandson of the first mayor of Balmain, John Booth. Four seats were also donated. John was born 6th March 1887, father John James and mother Asa nee Smith. John enlisted in the 20th Battalion and the 5th Machine Gun Company, AIF, and saw action at Gallipoli and France. The June 2013 issue of the Peninsula Observer included an article on Douglas Grant who enlisted in 1916

and embarked for France to join the 13th Battalion. He was wounded and spent time in various places as a prisoner of war. By the 1930s he was a clerk at Callan Park Mental Asylum where in his spare time designed and built a large War Memorial in the shape of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. The memorial is to have some restoration work.

The Leichhardt Council Heritage Advisory Committee is recording the placement of war memorials throughout the Municipality.

There is a Soldiers Memorial Hall in Darling Street, beside St Andrew's Church with 9

inscriptions; St John's Church, Balmain has a superbly carved Tasmanian Oak memorial with listing of 255 men who enlisted; St Mary's Church, 85 Darling St, has 112 names on the Honour Board and some 50 parishioners' names appear in the Presbyterian Church, Campbell Street.

The new Glebe Island Bridge was opened on 3rd December 1995 and renamed the Anzac Bridge on Remembrance Day 11th November 1998. Australian artist Alan Somerville, funded by the State Government designed a bronze four metre high statue in the form of a soldier, a fitting tribute to the memory of WW1. The statue was installed on the western approach to the Anzac Bridge on 25th April 2000. On the 27th April 2008, another statue, designed by Alan Somerville, was installed on the western approach dedicated the New Zealand soldier.

Also on both sides of the central outside span of the bridge, is a three metre wide rising sun badge created by Carl Merten.

Source:

- Australian War Museum.
- The Peninsula Observer issues 264, 265, 276, 327.
- Marie Duncan (Pettersen).
- RPA Hospital Museum.



History Week September 2014 *The Great War*

It was to be "the war that will end war" as H.G. Wells commented in August 1914. If you have anything to contribute ie photos or letters from those who participated, please join the people who meet at Balmain Library and are also researching local War Memorials.

Contact Kathleen Hamey, 9818 4954 or Aimee Zar, AimeeZ@lmc.nsw.gov.au.

Next meeting is
1pm Friday 6 June.

LHS statue is the Australian Soldier and RHS the New Zealand soldier
Photos: John Symonds, ANZAC Bridge
www.groveoz.info/

Sydney's hard rock story

the cultural heritage of trachyte

Robert Irving, Ron Powell and Noel Irving

\$30 (available at the Watch House)

Sydney is a city of sandstone won from the quarries of Pyrmont and Bondi. Readily available and easily worked sandstone has the shortcoming of being porous making it unsuitable for footings and foundations due to rising damp. Early city buildings employed hard bluestone brought from Victoria by ship as a solution.

A new source of hard stone became available when a deposit of trachyte was discovered at Mount Gibraltar (known as the Gib) near Bowral.

Quarrying began in 1886 with entrepreneur John Leggat obtaining a lease to take three hundred tons per month. The landowner was paid sixpence a ton.

Sydney's hard rock story provides a detailed account of trachytes geology, its uses, the quarrymen and the entrepreneurs.

Years ago when a column of molten magma pushed to just below the surface. Millions of years of cooling and weathering left a cliff face of trachyte Quarrying the stone was no easy task. Blocks were cut from the rock face by hand and transported to a yard where the masons cut the blocks for their purpose. Early uses were stones for kerb and guttering and road and rail ballast – broken up by hand using hammers. It was not uncommon to transport 10 and 12 tonne blocks to Sydney. The rule of thumb was one draught horse per tonne of stone.

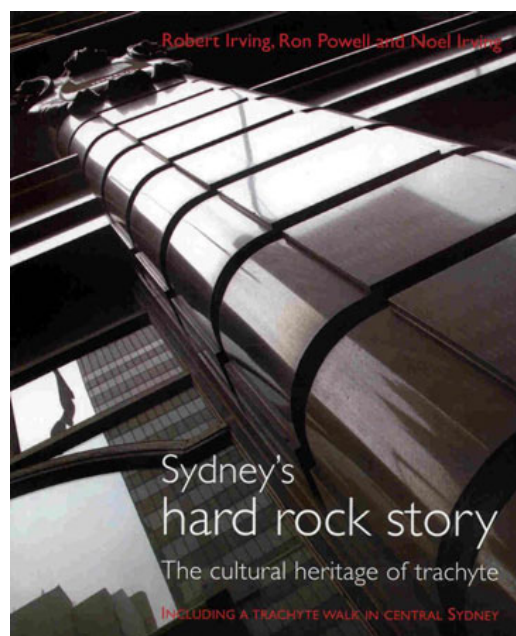
Reviewed by John Symonds

Trachyte has many other uses. It forms excellent foundation stone and is a beautiful stone when polished. The ground floor piers at the east and west entrances and the curved stairs at the western entrance of the Queen Victoria building along with the classical columns Perpetual Mutual building in Hunter St. are fine examples.

In 1888, just two years after the quarry opened, Sir Henry Parkes opened Centennial Park to celebrate the first one hundred years since settlement. Trachyte from John Leggat's quarry formed the footing for the eastern (Paddington) sandstone entrance gates with trachyte cubes used for paving the entrance.

John Leggat also supplied trachyte for the Hampden Bridge in Kangaroo Valley and the 12 tonne pivot stone used as the central pier on Pyrmont Bridge. The missing link in the railway from Adelaide to Brisbane was across the Hawkesbury river. Bowral trachyte was used on top of the concrete piers from below the low tide line to above the high tide mark as the material best able to resist the waves.

A chapter of the book is devoted to memorials and monuments including many local war memorials. The memorial located in Loyalty Square, Balmain, possibly Australia's first war memorial, has steps at the base



of Bowral trachyte with Pyrmont sandstone superstructure. A further chapter is dedicated to the boom years, 1880 to 1920, for trachyte as a building material. Trachytes use declined from then on.

The quarry at Bowral is no longer worked. The site now incorporates The Mount Gibraltar Quarry Heritage Walking Circuit proving historical information and illustrations for visitors. Perhaps a good reason to visit Bowral.

The book is extensively researched, beautifully illustrated and stylishly written. A feature is the guided walk through Sydney visiting thirty five sites detailing how trachyte was employed.

Robert Irving is a Past President and Life Member of the Balmain Association

Visit by Peter Reynolds

In February, Peter Reynolds, past president of the Balmain Association and the author of the Leichhardt Historical Journals and Jeremy Arnott, past Secretary visited the Watch House to view the amazing work that a small number of members has been doing in archiving material which has been long neglected. As well as this the entire upstairs has been restored - plaster work repaired, painted, floors sanded and oiled and the never seen upgrading of the electrics. Helen Carter and Ross Mackenzie have been directing the archiving of the records with assistance from Andrew West, a recent member, and others, for over a year. It has been a major job sorting, cataloguing and conserving the records of the Association from 1965 to

- Helen Carter

the present. The restoration of the upstairs rooms, including excellent storage spaces for photos and archives has been overseen by Leo White with assistance from John Symonds and Ross MacKenzie.

Helen says, "It was an honour to meet Peter Reynolds whose academic work gives us a wonderful insight into the history of Balmain and its surrounding suburbs; and also to be able to thank Jeremy for his meticulous record keeping which made our job easier." The rest of us simply say Thanks again for the amazing job so well done. Ed.



Peter Reynolds, Helen Carter and Jeremy Arnott

The archiving group meet on Tuesdays between 11am and 1pm. If you have material to offer or would like to assist email Helen Carter <carterhelenj@gmail.com> to register your interest.



What's on at the Watch House

www.balmainassociation.org.au

JUNE

Saturday 7, Sunday 8, Monday 9am - 6pm

Over to you 2014

Richard Sercombe is a Sydney based artist whose work is represented in a growing number of private collections across Australia. He works predominately in acrylic and mixed media, painting landscapes and still life, largely representational, with some abstract and semi-abstract pieces.

Opening Friday 6 June 7.30pm, preview from 6pm All welcome

Saturday 14, Sunday 15

Exhibition space available

Balmain Association History Room open 11.30 - 3pm

Saturday 21, Sunday 22, 10am-4.30pm
Touching Nature

Mother and daughter artists Bianca and A-L Washington work in different artistic media but express many of the same themes in their art. Through acrylics and digital photographic art, this exhibition explores the mystery and beauty inherent in the way that we as humans experience, interact with and interpret nature.

Opening Fri 20 6-8.30pm All welcome
Website: www.macrographia.com.au & www.macrographia.wordpress.com

Saturday 28, Sunday 29, 10am - 4pm
Second Life

John Johansen has been painting little scenes around Balmain for some time now but also loves painting city and country scenes, landscapes and some paintings of Patonga beach where he owns a holiday house with his ex-partner.

Opening Fri 27, 6.30-8.30 pm All welcome

JULY

Saturday 5, Sunday 6, 9am - 4pm

Mosaic Art Exhibition

"mosaico d'modema" is a group of mosaicists who have worked together for several years. They each create individual pieces in a variety of styles using various media, including glass tile ceramic and smalti. Works range from sculptural works to landscapes and decorative pieces.

Opening Fri 4 6pm-8pm. All welcome

Saturday 12, Sunday 13

Exhibition space available

Balmain Association's History Room open Saturdays 11.30am to 3pm

Saturday 19, Sunday 20, 10am to 4pm
DRESS A TEAPOT

A tea cosy gala fundraising for The Anganwadi Project (TAP). Handmade tea cosies will be on display and for sale. Prizes for best in show! Help raise funds for pre-schools (anganwadi) in the Tekra slum area of Ahmedabad, India.

Opening Friday 18 July 6pm - 8pm

\$5 donation, All welcome

Saturday and Sunday, gold coin donation with morning and afternoon tea, cakes, and raffles.

Information about The Anganwadi Project www.anganwadiproject.com

Information or to contribute a cosy to DRESS A TEAPOT contact Jenny at dressateapot@gmail.com

Saturday 26, Sunday 27, 10am-4pm
"A Matter of Difference"

Since Mairi Burns retired from teaching Art in High School both in Scotland and Australia, she has concentrated on her passion for Decoupage although she still works in paint and textiles. Mairi paints, dresses and decoupages old mannequins, hat boxes and other vintage items. Her clients are usually people with a love for something different, away from mass produced, who commission her to work on a piece of their choice.

This is demonstrated in design, period, artist or colours. The finished product is a reflection of the person's style and personality. Each piece is bespoke - there will never be another one the same!

Mairi's eclectic designs encompass something for everyone, finished with old fashioned professionalism.

Opening Friday 25 6-8pm All welcome

AUGUST

Saturday 2, Sunday 3, Saturday 9,

Sunday 10, 10am to 4.30pm

Join us

Students are currently fighting to retain funding for ongoing courses at Meadowbank TAFE. Come along and support their campaign. This year's exhibition will feature the usual wonderful prints of the students and artists from Meadowbank TAFE Sydney Gallery School. Many of the exhibitors are award winning artists and a full range of printmaking will be for sale. Help keep TAFE going.

Opening Fri 1, 6 - 8.30pm all welcome

Saturday 16, Sunday 17, 10am to 6pm

EVOKING THE ANDES

Four Australian women, originally from four different South American countries:

Argentina, Chile, Peru and Colombia, have joined together to bring to the public their art.

Clara Elena Uribe is a sculptor; she creates forms from stone infusing them with life and feelings.

Maggie Escartin, is a painter and her paintings are colourful, an art that inspires and celebrates the lives of children.

Carmen Henry's paintings are inspired by the colours of Peru from the ocean to the bright skirts of the indigenous women, to the colours of desserts and jungles.

Beatriz Copello's abstract paintings emerge from the profound corners of her subconscious awakening in the observer ideas and feelings.

Opening Friday 15 6-8pm all welcome.

Saturday 23, Sunday 24, 10am to 6pm
close 2 my hart

hART stART Studio, now in its 17th year in Balmain/Rozelle, has enjoyed another busy and productive year.

Tutors Gary and Rowena emphasise that hART stART studio is a course designed for beginners. Through modernist methods, all members develop an expressive personal style in an atmosphere that is friendly and non-threatening.

hART stART studio meets Tuesday evenings at The Writers Centre, Rozelle. Ph0410639810. www.hartstartstudio.com

Drinks with the artists Sat 1-3pm
Saturday 30, 10am to 5pm and Sunday 31, 10am to 4pm

terravita

(n. ter-a-veet-a) *connection to the earth and love of its vitality*

An exhibition of prints and small sculptural pieces from 12 artists from Warringah Printmakers Studio, celebrating contemporary methods. Works in a range of printmaking styles including intaglio and relief printing, etching, lino, photopolymer and more.

Opening Friday 29th 6pm-8pm. all welcome.

<http://www.printstudio.org.au>

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

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