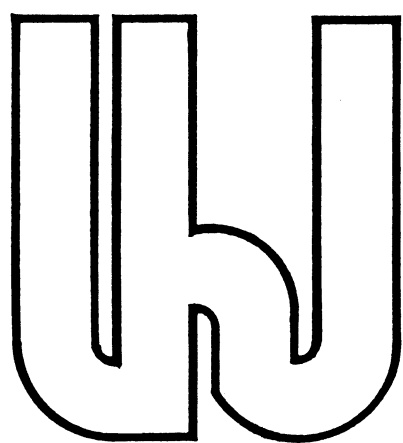




Leichhardt Historical Journal 1

Reprinted 1994

Responses of the Balmain People to the Depression
Glebe: Bishopgate Estate
Balmain: Lot 48, Waterview Estate



Annandale Balmain Glebe Leichhardt Lilyfield Rozelle



Goodman's Buildings, Parramatta Rd and Johnston St, 1905-10
Walter Goodman built the shops, designed by Joseph Sheerin, Designed by Joseph Sheerin, in stages.

Editor's Note

The *Leichhardt Historical Journal* was founded in 1971 to encourage the reading, writing and researching of the history of the Municipality. The demand for out-of-print issues prompted the reprinting of No 1, November 1971, in a new format.

The cover has been redesigned in this reprinting and the page format enlarged to correspond with later issues. The layout has been re-designed and illustrations have been added to pages 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 15, 17, 18 and 27. The purchase price of books, etc, reviewed or listed may differ from the 1971 rates.

Peter Reynolds, March 1994

A Note on Contributors

Robert Irving lectures in architecture at the University of New South Wales. David Kernohan is a fourth-generation Glebe resident. Peter Reynolds is Convenor of the History Sub-Committee of the Balmain Association of which Rita Wise and John Engels are members. Alan Roberts is President of the Annandale Association and Convenor of its History Sub-Committee. Max Solling is Convenor of the History Sub-Committee of the Glebe Society. Ronald James Stuart-Robertson is a family historian. Nadia Wheatley is a higher-degree student at Macquarie University.

Contents List

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Glebe Town Hall in 1887, architect Ambrose Thornley junior. (*Government Printer, No 272*)

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EDITORIAL

THE FOUNDING OF THIS JOURNAL

ALAN ROBERTS

The foundation of this Journal is yet another manifestation of the great growth of interest in local history over the last few years. The prime purpose of the Journal is to encourage the reading, writing and researching of the history of this particular municipal area, comprising the suburbs of Annandale, Balmain, Glebe, Leichhardt, Lilyfield and Rozelle. Considerable historical research has already been undertaken, on parts of this area, largely for the three civic groups sponsoring this Journal. It was decided, however, that the best area to be covered by the Journal would be the whole Municipality for several reasons: there would be a greater supply of copy and a greater market than for a smaller area, and mainly because it would focus attention on a wider area. It is important to be aware of historical developments in the areas beyond each individual suburb making up the Municipality.

There is quite sufficient in the history of one suburb to keep a historian busy for a long time. But an undesirable result of the concentration of the historical vision on to such a small geographical area is that he may overlook what was happening in the suburbs surrounding his own. This should be avoided because there is value in seeing each suburb within its urban context. Developments in one suburb frequently have an influence on neighbouring suburbs, and if they have no effect, that also may be significant. Thus the scope of this Journal will, we hope, provide a larger context in which to see each of these suburbs. Yet it should be remembered that the context has been somewhat arbitrarily chosen,



and the fact of their present municipal incorporation is the main reason for their association for the purpose of the Journal. Other suburbs were of course related to these, and there may be a stronger case for linking the history of Glebe with the City of Sydney, and of Annandale with that of Leichhardt, than Leichhardt with Glebe. As long as this point of arbitrariness is noted, however, the association of these suburbs in this Journal should be useful.

There is need for some systematic organisation of the study of the development of the component parts making up the history of Sydney. This could be immensely valuable as a schema in which to view, analyse and assess the peculiar and typical characteristics of each area, and to provide some common basis by which comparative work between different suburbs may be done. Our Journal may be a small contribution to the realisation of this ideal.

It is to be expected that few articles published in this Journal will have much significance in the study of the history of Sydney as a whole. Some articles will be valuable in showing the mutual influences between sub-

Leichhardt Town Hall, 1888
(Sydney Mail, 13 Oct 1888, p 74)

urbs; many again will have importance only in their particular suburb. We wish to encourage the study of anything and everything within the geographic scope of this Journal. This provides for an immense variety in the articles that will be acceptable for publication: from the reminiscences of residents, to the histories of houses, short biographies, the histories of organisations such as churches, clubs and so on, to studies of municipal politics and the patterns of land utilisation and residential and commercial development. Pejorative adjectives such as "parish pump" and "antiquarian" have little meaning for the purposes of this Journal. We wish to encourage the reading, writing and research of all aspects of the history of this area.

Let me conclude with two appeals for assistance. Please do not hesitate to submit material for this Journal, for it can live only as long as work is being done. Secondly, we need someone who will organise the actual publication and distribution, and we need typists and technical assistance. If you can help in any way, please let us know. _____

REMAINS OF BIRCH GROVE HOUSE

ROBERT IRVING

Birch Grove House, Balmain, was the most ancient building in the municipality, dating from 1810. Its demolition four years ago, to make way for a block of flats, not only provoked a storm of noisy protest, but also generated a wave of sentiment in the hearts of all those who knew the house. The protests were unavailing. Thus when, very early one morning in December, 1967, the inevitable wreckers moved in, a few sympathetic souls were there too, skulking about in the debris, and plucking bits and pieces out of the bulldozer's path, for keepsakes and souvenirs of Balmain's past.

The *Sydney Gazette* records the laying of the foundation stone of the 1827 extension by the second owner, Roland Walpole Loane. He and his party arrived by boat, and laid the stone with some ceremony. Under the stone were placed coins of the realm, and then the stone was anointed with corn, wine and oil, but was not otherwise marked. No trace of the stone or the coins was found after the demolition, but several relics of this historic house were kept.

In the cellar were stored some of the possessions of J H von Sturmer, who lived there from the 1890s to the First World War. He came from New Zealand, where he had been a judge or magistrate in the Maori Land Court. He left behind in Birch Grove House about a hundred books, including some on military history, photographs, a painting of trees and a creek, table-ware and a beautiful damask linen. All had been damaged to some extent, which was probably von Sturmer's reason for leaving them behind. Most were given by the final owner to the Balmain Association. The Association gave the books on military history to a military historical society, in exchange for a lamp for the Charge Room of the Watch House. Alan Harding has the painting.

From the old-world garden, before it was razed, rosemary, irises and jonquils were taken, to be grown again in local gardens then propagated still further afield. They still flourish as remembrances. And there was the hollowed-out stone block that served as a bird-bath but looked more like an aboriginal artefact; it too survives as an ornament in a nearby garden almost as old.

Most of the surviving relics came from the house itself, although numerous beautiful things were



Birch Grove House c1810
The Snails Bay Garden Front

torn apart and burnt and broken before the scroungers could save them. There was a cedar six-panelled door, covered by many thicknesses of paint. Though not pristine, it is a very fine example of 1810 joinery. Low, wide and thick, it bespeaks a quieter, Georgian period. It is now restored and in use again, in my home. Some of the carefully turned wooden door knobs, keyhole plates and finger plates have also been restored to new life. A gorgeous gilt window pelmet of large size, and some of the black and white marble tiles of the old verandah, appeared again in nearby houses.

Perhaps the most interesting pieces were two that no one wanted, but which seemed too unusual just to leave for burning. They were cedar fireplace surrounds and mantelpieces, starkly simple in design and delicately and naively moulded. The National Trust undertook to look after these until someone restoring an early 19th-century house is able to use them. There even survives a small collection of postcards, letters and other papers that slipped down into the narrow gap between the mantelpiece and the wall in one room. Other treasured relics of Birch Grove House than the ones described above must be about somewhere. One way and another this graceful old home is fondly remembered by a great many people.

Notes

For the history and architectural description of Birch Grove House, see the article by Robert Irving in *Architecture in Australia*, December, 1969, and *Balmain in Time* by Peter Reynolds and Robert Irving (Balmain Association, 1971). See also P Jeffery, "Birchgrove, 1796-1985", in *Leichhardt Historical Journal* No 15, pp 7-34 for the history of the house, architectural drawings and photographs.

WILLIAM AND ANNIE MILLER

DAVID KERNOHAN

Amongst the makers of Victorian Glebe must be included not only large landowners and builders but the financiers of their enterprise, the providers of essential services, the caterers for leisure and the suburban communities themselves. A list of suburban dwellers would include shopkeepers, estate agents, blacksmiths, architects, publicans, omnibus proprietors, horse dealers, schoolmasters, ratepayers, lodgers and so on, all of whom influenced the shape and character of the suburb. I intend to trace the life of two Scots migrants who made an home in The Glebe in the early 1860s and played a small part in its development.

William Miller was born in Leith, Scotland, in 1825. During his teens he met a local girl named Annie Balfour Wilson whom he married in 1852. Relatives of his wife, William and Janet Elphinstone, also natives of Leith had migrated to Australia in the early 1840s and William Elphinstone was listed in *Low's Directory 1844/5*, as living in The Glebe.

Life was hard in Scotland and reports of William Elphinstone's success in his adopted country obviously influenced the young couple to try their luck in Australia in 1854. They finally arrived at Melbourne after such a rough voyage that Annie Miller refused to continue the voyage to Sydney. This decision was almost a fatal one as whilst transferring from the ship to a lighter in Port Phillip Bay, Annie Miller lost her footing and fell into the sea but was rescued by a member of the ship's crew.

They were not impressed by Melbourne and eventually set off overland for Sydney by bullock dray, with their two children. Unfortunately no record of their experiences are available other than the fact that at night the women and children slept under the drays and the men around the drays and watches were kept each night.

Sydney was eventually reached and to be near Elphinstones, the Millers settled in the Glebe. William Miller was listed in *Sands Suburban Directory 1861*, as living in Brougham Street.

In 1853, Robert Morehead as manger of the Aberdeen-based Scottish-Australian Investment Company purchased 16 acres of the Lyndhurst Estate in The Glebe. Morehead, an astute businessman and a director of the Pymont Bridge Company bought this land knowing that the Pyr-



Four Generations of Glebeites

Photographed on 7 January 1912 at 104 Bridge Road, Glebe, are Annie Miller, (died 23 January 1921, aged 88), William Miller, joiner, (died c1929, aged 69), Caroline Janet Miller, standing, (died 8 March 1977, 84) and six-month old David Kernohan, the author of this article.

mont Bridge Company's toll route to be constructed from Pymont to Camperdown would pass through the middle of the 16-acre allotment greatly increasing the value of the land.

Although the land remained idle for 15 years, when the first building lease was signed in 1868, it was clear that the company would make a handsome profit from its Glebe property. The company had the area subdivided into 21- to 26-foot frontage allotments with the depths varying from 82 to 98 feet and offered the building blocks on 99-year leases.

In January, 1868, William Miller became the lessee of lot 1 section 8 in the subdivision. Under the terms of the lease he was required to spend at least £100 in erecting "a good and substantial dwelling house of brick, stone or sawn hardwood". Clause 3 required the lessee to build a paling fence at least five feet high and to pay for the cleansing and repairs of sewers, drains and water courses. William Miller exercised his option to purchase the dwelling before 1875, by paying to the company the sum of £145, this amount being the equivalent of 20 years rental.

During the sixties Mrs. Miller operated a dairy, the cows grazing within 200 yards of their Brougham Street cottage, in paddocks approximately on the site now occupied by George Hudson Pty Ltd. It was indeed a tough neighbourhood and robberies were common as the following letter to a newspaper shows:

I believe we have one constable and the mounted patrol on our main road once in the 24 hours. Robberies have become so numerous of late that the whole of the inhabitants are kept in a constant state of alarm. A short time ago a Toll house on the Bridge was broken into and robbed. Last Sunday a Prize Fight was fought in Mrs Miller's Paddock in the middle of the day, lasting an hour and a half. Crowds of boys whose conduct is dreadful visit The Glebe, besides numbers of the lowest class of women, johnny warders, beggars and impostors. Our fruit gardens are robbed in open daylight with impunity. We have quietly endured these troubles for years and how much longer are we expected to wait for proper protection, is the question; perhaps until our throats are cut.

William Miller followed his trade as a shipwright whilst his wife managed the dairy and over the years bore ten more children, four girls and six boys, one of the boys dying in infancy. Despite her very full and busy life, Mrs Miller was never too busy to drop what she was doing and dash off in her capacity as an honorary midwife when the need arose. The Millers took an interest in community affairs and the balcony of 96 Bridge Road, as it became known after Pyrmont Bridge was built, was used during various pre-election campaigns by speakers who ranged from Edmund Barton to James Hogue.

They were staunch but not bigoted Presbyterians, one son, William junior, became eucumenical-minded at an early age. With other Protestant children he climbed atop the iron fence surrounding Lyndhurst College and they chanted religious doggerel. A Priest appeared and the youngsters quickly disappeared, with the exception of William junior, who slipped, his buttock impaled by one of the spikes and there he stayed until the priest arrived, lifted him off, took him straight to a doctor to be stitched up and finally took him home, a very chastened small boy.

Mrs Miller supplied Lyndhurst College with milk. Due to financial difficulties the College's account fell into arrears. Never being one to "cry over spilt milk" she promptly enrolled a son, Wilson, as a pupil at the College and two daughters at a nearby Convent. Despite the lack of bigotry, a clash of personalities occurred between Mrs Miller and the local constable, re-

putedly an Irishman. Rumour has it that he would let cows out of the paddocks and promptly impound them as straying stock.

Realising the opportunities their adopted country presented, William and Annie Miller had each of their sons, with the exception of the youngest, apprenticed to trades allied with building. The youngest son was given a commercial education. Unfortunately, their vision of Miller Bros, Builders, came to naught. The sons were all excellent tradesmen but the Miller temperament prevented them working together harmoniously. The youngest son at a later stage was postmaster at Glebe Post Office.

William Miller retired in 1884, with the idea of extending the dairy. A few months later, having collected a load of fodder, his horse was frightened as he was about to step up into a cart. His foot slipped and the steel step gashed his leg from ankle to knee. Erysipelas set in and he died eight days later at Prince Alfred Hospital on 21 March 1885, and was interred at Balmain Cemetery the following day. Years later when the cemetery was closed for further interments his headstone was removed to Rookwood and was later used for his wife and two daughters after their decease.

Until Mrs Miller left 96 Bridge Road to reside with a daughter at Erskineville, Hogmanay was always celebrated and No 96 was an open house for family, friends and neighbours.

For many years another important yearly event was the family picnic at La Perouse. One of Quigley's horse buses was hired for the day. Married sons and daughter with respective spouses and children and single ones with their suitors would assemble at No 96. Rumour has it that romances either flourished or came to naught after a "day with the family". After much counting of heads to assure that none of the beloved grandchildren were left behind, the bus was mounted and off they would go to La Perouse where lunch was partaken at Henning's Hall.

Shortly after her husband's death Mrs Miller was compelled to give up the dairy because of ill health. She was bedridden for the last years of her life which were spent with her daughter Mrs John Osborne. Her death occurred on 17 January 1921 at the age of 88 and thus passed away a very remarkable and extremely loveable old lady.

Though nothing came of her dream of Miller Bros, Builders, I am sure that she would be pleased to know that her descendants include solicitors, engineers, doctors, architects, teachers, a dairy farmer and a great-great-grandaughter who is second-in-charge of the Sydney University Experimental Dairy Farm at Camden.

About 1863, John and Mary Anne Hutchings of Tavistock, Devon, also came to The Glebe. They too had landed at Melbourne but made their way to Sydney via Ballarat, Bendigo and Lambing Flat. One daughter, Gertrude, was born in Melbourne; Caroline, in a tent at Lambing Flat; and Eliza, at The Glebe. During their travels John Hutchings had struck sufficient gold to establish himself as the licensee of the Australian Youth Hotel on the corner of Bay and Glebe Streets in 1861. Later he had The Friend in Hand in Cowper Street. He bought two terraces, Devon and Eliza, in what was then Lyndhurst Street, now 102-106 and 108-112 Bridge Road. When he retired from hotelkeeping the Hutchings lived in No 104 and thus became neighbours of William and Annie Miller, with the result that William junior met and married their daughter Caroline.

The Hutchings built themselves a home at Croydon and William and Caroline Miller moved in

and their family, a son and daughter, were born at 104. Their daughter, my mother, moved back to 104 in 1939 and I have lived there from then.

ADDENDUM (1994)

David Kernohan (1911-1989)

David Miller Kernohan, born on 18 July 1911 at Newtown, died on 9 December 1989. Educated at Forest Lodge Public School (1916-1925), he served an apprenticeship as a fitter and turner (at twelve shillings and sixpence per week) with the NSW Government Railways from 1926 to 1931. On completing his apprenticeship, in the depth of the depression, with no jobs available, he lost his job. He worked in his father's corner store at 22 Mitchell Street, Glebe, from 1931 to 1935. A fourth generation Glebeite, he was an astute observer of life in Glebe, a suburb he had a great affection for. Max Solling recorded David's reminiscences in 1984.

The Sydney Hospital for Sick Children, Glebe Point (architect not known)

Erected by builder J P Walker on the corner of Glebe Point Road and Wigram Road and "used by Mr Bowyer as a large boarding school", the Glebe Point Collegiate School was completed in 1878. On 30 May 1879 architect J Horbury Hunt called tenders for "general repairs to the house lately purchased for the Hospital for Sick Children at the Glebe". An addition, probably designed by Horbury Hunt, was built as a memorial to businessman Thomas Sutcliffe Mort who died on 9 May 1878. By 31 August of that year a plaque

had been installed which read "Your fathers subscribed and built this wing of the Hospital for Children in honour of a good man who was the real benefactor of New South Wales". The hospital became the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children on 9 May 1904 and moved to its present site in Pyrmont Bridge Road, Camperdown, in 1906. The old Glebe buildings were demolished in c1963. (Sydney Mail, 19 May 1900, p 1163, for photograph. Australian Town & Country Journal, 20 Apr 1878, p 744, for completion of school; 31 Aug 1887, p 393, for plaque. D G Hamilton, Hand in Hand, the Story of the Royal Hospital for Children, Sydney (John Ferguson, Sydney, 1979) for Royal Charter and removal to Camperdown.



ROBERT JAMES STUART-ROBERTSON

RONALD JAMES STUART-ROBERTSON

Robert James Stuart-Robertson was born at Booi-igan on 10 August 1874. His parents, Dr J A Stuart-Robertson and Catherine (née Joyce), were married in Sydney in the 1830s. He was the second youngest of nine children. His father was killed when travelling to Queensland in 1878. The family moved from Sydney to Bourke after this death and an unsuccessful personal fight for property which was granted to the father. The children were educated at Bourke and at 12 years my father took a job with Wright Heaton & Co in the town. He did their books, office work and ordering, and I have always heard him spoken of in the highest terms by his contemporaries and family. The people whom I met over the years from the early life of my father, were delighted and honoured to know him, and he seems to have left in his path, as he went through life, a wide swathe of love and appreciation.

In early youth, he and his brother Charles Edward took up a holding near Bourke for cattle raising. The property was called Glen Truel. The family was highly regarded in Bourke. With the proceeds of the station property, they returned to Bourke township and started a soft-goods store, but went broke because of drought conditions and debts unpaid by their customers. I recollect that they all had a very happy life in this country town. Their mother died and two years later my mother, Frances Alice Purtell, came on a holiday to Bourke with her sisters. She was born at Holbrook, in 1876, from a well-known grazing family in that area. She married my father in 1895 and in the following year my eldest brother, Robert Francis, was born. The loss of my father's businesses in Bourke, Nyngan, Byrock and Cobar came after their marriage.

He was always interested in politics and whilst in Bourke was elected President of the Barrier Council. When the business failed, they moved to Cobar and carried on the business there. Here my father continued his interest in politics, and was an executive member of the Labor League, as it was called in those days. For many years afterwards he claimed that the decisions which the Cobar Branch submitted to the Labor Conference in 1900 were the foundation ideas which went to make the ideals and platform of the Labor Party. Whilst in Cobar, he led an active and efficient life and, like everywhere they went, they were happy and lived to the full in this town.

He was editor of the local newspaper in Cobar, and was successful at it. During these years he wrote, under the name of D Ross, a book called *The Woman**. It was favourably commented on by *The Bulletin*. My brothers were Martin Joyce (after his maternal great-grandfather), Charles Edward (after the Young Pretender) and Donald Aloysius (after Donald McDonald, State Parliamentary representative). Then my father left the business to my two aunts and moved to Cambelligo where he opened a mixed business at Mt Boppy. Here, according to his usual practice, he became interested in and outgoing to his fellow man. A skill he had acquired on the way came into operation when he was appointed to the position of town ambulanceman, and, like all things he did, he did it well. Here also, another brother, Collumbia Andrew (named after St Columkille and the Patron of Scotland) was born.

My father's interest continued in the condition of the Australian people, who were being blown about by the winds of chance. He realised that the only thing for the great majority of people was to found unions and bring order out of the economic chaos of the times. With his experience of the shop trade, my father, and five others, came up with idea of a Shop Assistants Union. Being a man of excellent parts, he was chosen to interview the employers and interest them in this project. This was the cause of the next move, to Sydney, where another son, Ronald James, was born at Marrickville in 1906. (Called the lucky baby, because my father was approached by the Newtown Labor League then to stand for that seat.) Anyway, the five men who were interested in the Union got it off to a successful start and one of its first victories was the completion of a situation which had started many years before. This was early closing of shops, both in the evenings and on Saturdays, and also the granting of the first awards in that industry, for which my father was the industrial advocate, which he carried on for many years thereafter. He was part of every effort to found all unions, especially the Clerks, the Transport Workers, the BWIU, and he was the sole founder of the Newcastle Branch of the Shop Assistants Union.

My father stood for Camperdown and won that seat from a conservative member, and was declared elected on 10 September 1907. In 1908 another son, Malcolm Malachi, was born. In 1910 my father led the fight in the Legislative Assembly for the Arbitration System. Also in that year was born my first sister, Catherine Mary Frances. During the years that followed, my father was associated with all facets of the Party and was appointed to the Executive of the ALP for a number of years. He was active in all things for the promotion of the good of all people. People used to throng to the house to



R J Stuart-Robertson and Family in 1912

seek his help. They joined the Party in great numbers to support him and selected him over and over, no matter how the electorates changed.

He was a good conversationalist, spoke well and was chosen many times to lead debates. He learnt to debate in the usual place, the famous Schools of Arts which were such a fashion in the last century and the early part of this century. In 1912 my parents were delighted when the second daughter, Ida Iona, was born. I remember that somehow my parents managed to avoid serious conditions of hate and jealousy between us. During these years he managed to do industrial advocacy amongst innumerable other things, and did not neglect his wife or children in any way. He was the promoter of the old Fair Rents Act and the court which was instituted as a result. In this court he also took cases and invariably won them for the tenants. During the Labor conferences he was instrumental in having Mr W Holman, Mr Hughes and Mr R D Meagher expelled from the party. In 1916 the youngest child was born, John Alexander, named after his great grandfather.

In 1920 the State Government decided to introduce proportional representation and my father was selected to run with the ALP five for the seat which they won. One of these five, John Storey was elected in Balmain, became Premier, and my father was elected by the Party to the position of Chairman of Committees and Deputy Speaker. During this period my father approached my brother in the usual way at a branch meeting and paid his usual membership fee, but did not notice that he had made the ticket out for the wrong

amount, and our excellent Party took up the case and declared him an unfinancial member and, in their usual insane manner, tried to carry the day to give the seat to a favoured son, but did not succeed because the people would not allow them. At this time the Party was ruled by a corrupt inner group of very real scoundrels.

In 1927 the proportional representation system was abandoned and they reverted to the single-seat system. My father was returned as member for Annandale, and then in 1930 was re-elected with an overwhelming majority and retained the seat until his death in 1933, as a result of Parkinson's disease and osteoarthritis. When he died he was Chairman of the Banking Enquiry Committee, appointed by Mr Lang 18 months before, and was Vice-Chairman of the Royal National Park Trust, a position he had held since 1923.

His obituary describes him as a staunch unionist and a strong supporter of legislation for the amelioration of conditions for shop assistants and indoor workers. His funeral to South Head Cemetery was an inspiration. About 1,000 people formed a guard of honour from St Michael's Catholic Church, Stanmore, to Parramatta Rd. Every brand of politics were present at the funeral. Both Premier Stevens and J T Lang, and representatives of Federal and State Parliaments and of all Sydney's municipalities were present. He was 59 years of age, worn out by hard work.

I remember him as a kind and good man who treated us well – all on a miserable £10 per week.

* D Ross, *A Woman: A Tale of Australian Life in the Early Fifties* (Cobar, J A Bradley, 1901), pp 73.

RESPONSES OF THE BALMAIN PEOPLE TO THE DEPRESSION

NADIA WHEATLEY

The growing interest shown by historians recently in detailed studies of communities reflects the increased awareness of the necessity of writing history "from below", of tracing the pattern of historical events in the lives of ordinary people. It proceeds from a new interest in social history – that is (a French expert notes), "the history of a whole society, not only the happy few who governed it, judged it, ground it down, or taught it."¹

A major difficulty often facing the local historian is the limitation of source material. Another is that this type of local history must often be suggestive rather than definitive – it is paradoxical that it is in many ways easier to be authoritative when dealing with the political and social responses of a large, rather than a small, group. This leads to the danger that the local historian may concentrate on the articulate leaders of the small community – on politicians, aldermen, ministers of religion – thus reproducing on a small scale the old elitist history. If the local historian is to attempt more than an antiquarian study written for the historical dilettante, he must attempt to explain the particular responses of his chosen community within a broad perspective, and he must suggest the complexity of the pattern of responses and events.

It would be impossible in an article of this size to delineate the reactions of Balmain residents to the depression of the Thirties, even if it were possible to determine these responses fully. Thus this article will be concerned with certain political and social responses in Balmain, using these to suggest some of the limitations and possibilities of local history written "from below". It will attempt to probe the divisions and diversity underlying the apparent stability and homogeneity of the community, and thus question some of the general assumptions regarding Balmain.² Even the term "community" could be misleading, for the concept suggests a unity, and a sense of unanimity, among the inhabitants that may in fact be absent; it is easy to view a "community as an entity and to lose sight of the living people who comprise it.

Balmain is traditionally portrayed as a strongly working class suburb, the home of the skilled artisan employed almost exclusively in water-

front trades, and a centre of political radicalism. The people of Balmain are seen to have a strong sense of local identity, a sense of community consciousness and difference.³ By 1930, Balmain was certainly well populated and highly industrialised; nearly half the local bread-winners were engaged in industrial occupations in 1933, compared with less than a third in New South Wales generally.⁴ However, Balmain industries included oilmills, soap factories, timberyards, railway workshops, sawmills, abattoirs, and the wheat silos as well as Mort's Dock and the numerous smaller shipyards. The waterfront trades required unskilled as well as skilled workers. The point is important, for in 1936, when the shipping trade had revived and the unemployed generally tended to be unskilled workers, unemployment was still high in Balmain.⁵

The effects of the depression were particularly severe in Balmain. The *Sydney Morning Herald* in 1930 noted that Balmain "feels the pinch acutely, more so perhaps than other suburbs".⁶ While there is no complete record of the number unemployed in Balmain, or the number receiving relief, the following table suggests the comparative severity of the crisis:

TABLE 1 UNEMPLOYMENT IN BALMAIN ⁷		
	As a % of Balmain Males	As a % of NSW Males
Males Unemployed	24.0	14.3
	As a % of Balmain Females	As a % of NSW Females
Females Unemployed	4.9	2.6
	As a % of Balmain Bread- winners	As a % of NSW Bread- winners
Total Unemployed	27.2	18.4

In November 1932 Mr Quirk, MLA for Balmain, claimed that half Balmain's industrial population needed work. Moreover, economic recovery was an uneven, protracted process in Balmain. Between 1934 and 1936, when the economy generally was reviving, the number of food rations received by families and single adults in Balmain remained between 1,700 and 1,800. Even in

1939 and 1940 the state member for Balmain was protesting about evictions, unemployment, and the lack of relief work in Balmain.⁸

The *Sydney Morning Herald* in 1930 noted the presence of a sizeable business and residential sector in Balmain⁹ which is confirmed by the non-Labor vote in elections of the period. While it is largely correct to characterise Balmain in this period as a working class community, these dissimilarities must also be noted.

A study of the political atmosphere in Balmain in the Thirties suggests both the general unity and the specific diversity of community feeling. The political history of the depression and especially of the years 1929 to 1932, witnessed rapid changes of governments, party splits, and a proliferation of plans and policies. Balmain remained, of course, a Labor – and Lang-Labor – seat, and the political affiliations of the population do suggest stability and unanimity. Balmain politics reflected long-standing allegiances, not only to the Labor Party, but to certain politicians well known in the area.¹⁰ Balmain politics in this period often seem to have centred around personalities rather than party policies, reflecting the loyalties of a small community as well as the confusion of electors bewildered by economic and political crises. However, below the surface support for Langism, there lay certain divisions and dissension.

The Federal electorate of Dalley, which included Balmain, was represented by E G Theodore, the ex-Premier of Queensland, from 1927.¹¹ Theodore had gained the seat from the long standing Mahoney, allegedly by illicit means. The Federal Election of 1929 was fought in the atmosphere of the miners' and timberworkers' strikes, rising unemployment, the attack on wages and conditions by the Arbitration Court and employers, and Bruce's Arbitration policy. Theodore's resounding victory reflected these factors, as well as his personal prestige and the support given him by Lang.¹²

The inability of the Scullin Labor government, in which Theodore was Treasurer, to solve the crisis led to disillusionment among some Labor supporters. A general animosity towards Theodore seems to have arisen in his electorate even before the Lang split: in January 1930 the Balmain branch of the Miners Federation asked Lang to oppose Theodore for the Dalley pre-selection, and Theodore was strongly attacked at a meeting in Balmain.¹³ Perhaps the early disillusionment with the Scullin Government in Balmain reflects the immediacy and severity of the economic crisis in Balmain. It also shows that in this area at least, the Labor split represented more than just the top-level machinations of party politicians.

Lang's victory in the State elections of October 1930 reflected the swing in Labor opinion against the policy of retrenchment and deflation decided upon at the Premiers' Conference in August. Although Quirk, the Lang candidate for Balmain, gained a clear victory, the Nationalist candidate won a fifth of the total vote, reflecting the non-Labor sympathies of part of the community. Despite the popular notion of Lang's radicalism and militancy, fostered by the Establishment press and Lang himself, Quirk was a moderate.¹⁴ Balmain's long Labor allegiance should not be simply equated with political radicalism.

By March 1931 the Federal and New South Wales Labor Parties had split. In the Federal elections of December 1931 "Lang candidates" opposed the Federal-endorsed candidates, and the fight in Dalley was one of the most vicious in the State. Rosevear, the Lang candidate, had the support of the local party branches.¹⁵ Theodore, in spite of his prestige, was a relatively new member with no strong roots in the area, and no specifically local Labor reputation.¹⁶ As a prosperous Queenslander he was an outsider, and he had recently been the subject of two Royal Commissions which cast doubt on his integrity.¹⁷ If Lang was demagogic and dictatorial, Theodore was highly arrogant and elitist. The local epithet of "Kirribilli Ted" suggests the animosity of the community to the outsider; when asked once why he did not live in his electorate Theodore replied, "A man may work in the abattoirs, but that is no reason why he should live in the abattoirs".¹⁸

During the campaign opposition ranging from interjections to flour bombs and tomatoes was directed against Theodore, while at least three thousand applauded Lang's appearance in Balmain.¹⁹ Theodore had declared that he "would rather be driven into the dust" than run away from Dalley.²⁰ This prophecy held true for his political career at least; after a crushing defeat, "Red Ted", retired from Labor politics to further his already successful career as a capitalist. Theodore accomplished little during his brief and controversial term as Treasurer, but had left his continuing mark upon the Australian way of life, by founding the *Women's Weekly*.

The community's general support for Lang and the State Labor Party is obvious – Rosevear won 7,000 votes in Balmain – Rozelle, Theodore only 2,500.²¹ It is a simplification, however, to describe Balmain as a Lang stronghold without noting the number who voted for Theodore either from support for the Federal Labor Party, or from general allegiance to the Labor movement which Lang seemed to be disrupting, or from confusion. The number of informal votes in this election (1,100) was exceptionally high, again suggesting the confusion of electors. The

United Australia Party²² won half as many votes as Rosevear, and significantly greater support than in the two previous elections – traditional Labor supporters defected to the Right, which seemed stronger and more able to meet the crisis. The political divisions and confusion in Balmain in this election reflect the situation in the country as a whole. In the state elections of 1932 and 1935 the Federal Labor candidates polled half as many votes as Quirk, probably due to the absence of a UAP candidate.

The Communist vote in Balmain in the Thirties rose steadily, though in 1938 it still only represented 9% of the total vote. The *Herald* in 1931 noted: "In Balmain, a district where recent months have seen a considerable increase in unemployment and distress, Communists have been making a vigorous drive for 'converts'. Some success appears to have been attending their efforts."²³ Beneath the tide of Langism there swelled an undercurrent of militant radicalism which occasionally rose to the surface.

The Balmain Unemployed Workers Movement, led by Jack Sylvester, held meetings and produced a weekly paper from 1930 until 1935, when the UWM merged with the Unemployed and Relief Workers Union. Sylvester's group broke from the Communist Party in early 1933, and a new Communist unemployed group was founded in Balmain by Stan Moran. The Balmain UWM organised free speech fights, dole struggles, and an anti-war campaign. The militants were harassed by police and relief officials, and many suffered prison sentences.²⁴

The size, strength and general support for the militant groups is difficult to gauge, as is their effectiveness. Numerous political meetings are recorded,²⁵ yet, most of the old residents I spoke to claimed not to remember Unemployed Associations. There were about a dozen regular activists in Sylvester's group, and, although crowds of up to one thousand attended the street meetings,²⁶ the UWM never won a permanent base of mass support. The importance of the radical groups is that they represented an attempt by the unemployed to control their own lives, to rebel against a situation in which the political and social odds were heavily weighed against them.

Another response to the depression in Balmain was the proliferation of social and charitable groups. The community, as well as the unemployed, was forced to adapt itself to the new situation. The Methodist Minister claimed that "most of the people of this district are unable to avail themselves of the charitable assistance given by great central institutions in the city, and are entirely dependent upon local assistance".²⁷ The comparative isolation of Balmain also made the

search for work more difficult.²⁸ It is possible that Balmain had a greater degree of communal consciousness than other areas, and that this may have mitigated the effects of the crisis in some ways. Certainly, the idle workshops would have been a constant reminder to the prosperous of the plight of the area.

One of the main charitable centres in Balmain was the Methodist Church, under the Reverend Mr McKibbin. In 1930 the Soup Kitchen supplied 2,000 meals a week; one resident wrote: "But for [the soup] we would often not have anything to eat."²⁹ McKibbin fought against the eviction of his congregation, and on one occasion challenged the bailiffs to arrest him.³⁰

Welfare groups organised social activities to raise funds and to widen the interests of the unemployed. Typical functions were the swimming carnivals organised by the Balmain-Rozelle Relief Fund or the Balmain League of Swimmers, and the boxing tournaments run by the Balmain-Rozelle Distress Fund and the Returned Soldiers & Sailors Imperial League. The Balmain Unemployed Girls Club conducted Physical Activity displays.³¹ Dances and picnics were organised, at which adults contributed a shilling.³²

More important, perhaps, than any of these charitable provisions were the attempts by the unemployed to improve their own conditions, for charitable assistance was spasmodic and unevenly distributed. The UWM established a hostel for unemployed single men, where 30 men pooled their dole rations. The Balmain Council and the community provided assistance with furniture, crockery and some rent money. The Balmain unemployed collected fruit and vegetables from charitable shopkeepers, and organised free passes to the local picture theatre.³³

In a study of unemployed workers in Greenwich (UK) in this period, Bakke notes the isolation of unemployed individuals and their families, and the lack of social contacts among the unemployed.³⁴ The position seems different in Balmain. Some of the people interviewed stated that despite of the difficulties "it was a happy time." One lady said, "It made people come closer together." Many said, "We were all in the same boat".

The extent of this community spirit should, however, not be overstated. One of the difficulties in writing history at this level is that there are no records of those who received no assistance, who did not participate in social activities. Many would have been unable to spend even a shilling, and charitable relief, centred as it was around churches and benevolent societies, would have reached only a selective minority. Another response from residents I spoke to was, "No one

ever helped me". Against this picture of community spirit must be set a picture of individual despair and hopelessness. In 1936 a Balmain man who had only had a fortnight's work in five years committed suicide. The Coroner noted that he had been ill, and had had to feed and clothe himself, his wife and three children on seventeen shillings and ninepence a week. "I think this led to his death", said the Coroner.³⁵ In 1931 a medical authority estimated that there were 2,000 children in Balmain "so seriously undernourished as to be in a state of semi-starvation".³⁶

In tracing the history of a community it must always be remembered that the community is composed of people, of individuals with a multitude of different attitudes and experiences which will condition their reactions to external political, economic and social phenomena. It is easy for the historian to depict general social and political trends, and superimpose a unified pattern upon the diversity of individual experience. Thus, while it is true that Balmain was a working class community severely affected by the depression, the crisis was different for middle class and workers, male and female, married and single, skilled and unskilled. Political allegiance to Lang-Labour was retained but there was a defection to both Right and Left. It may seem that the community "pulled togeth-

er" during the crisis, but many were isolated in hopelessness and despair. The problem is the difficulty in writing the history of the masses, as opposed to the history of the elite. How can we record the experiences of those whose existence can only be seen in the anonymous figures of election returns or census reports? E P Thompson, in rewriting the history of the English working class, seeks to rescue the aspirations and activities of "forgotten" rebels "from the enormous condescension of posterity". Yet, he reminds us, these articulate minorities "arise from a less articulate majority".³⁷ Though hard to trace, this inarticulate majority must continually be borne in mind, and, if we are concerned with the history of society rather than simply social history, the attempt must be made to view the political and economic events through their eyes.

The depression was a confusing and disorienting experience for those involved. It engendered hopelessness and apathy as well as articulate political and social responses. The experience of the people of Balmain in the depression can only be understood if it is approached from a qualitative standpoint; the crisis must be assessed in terms of the living people who experienced it. In Thompson's phrase – "They lived through these times of acute social disturbance and we did not".³⁸

NOTES AND REFERENCES

- 1 Pierre Goubert, "Local History", in *Daedalus*, Winter, 1971, p 117.
- 2 "Balmain" is taken to include the area covered by the Balmain Municipality in this period, which included Rozelle (and Birchgrove).
- 3 Eg, R Stephensen, *The History and Description of Sydney Harbour*, Adelaide 1966, pp 224-226; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 Nov 1930, p 6; J Wong, *The Houses of Balmain*, Sydney 1969.
- 4 Statistics from *Census of the Commonwealth of Australia*, 1933.
- 5 See *NSW Industrial Gazette*, 28 Feb 1937, pp 342-343 and *SMH*, 6 Jan 1934, p 14; 2 Feb 1935, p 15.
- 6 *SMH*, 21 Nov 1930, p 16.
- 7 From the *Census of the Commonwealth of Australia*, 1933.
- 8 *NSW Parl Debates*, vol 140, 31 July 1934 p 2376; vol 141, 25 Sep 1934, p 2747; vol 149, 21 July 1936, p 5, 520; 19 July 1939, p 5423; 23 Aug 1939, p 5782; 1 May 1940, p 8216.
- 9 *SMH*, 4 Oct 1930, p 12.
- 10 In the 1927 State elections, HV Evatt, the standing Labor member, ran as the Independent Labor candidate. He won 1,000 more votes than the selected Labor candidate. In this case, the personality was placed before the Labor Party.
- 11 In the 1934 elections Balmain and Rozelle were included in West Sydney, the electorate of Beasley, and a Lang stronghold.
- 12 Lang did conduct a strong campaign for Theodore (eg *Labor Daily*, 17 Nov 1928, p 3; 11 Oct 1929, p 6; 12 Oct 1929, p 1, 9), he presents a different picture in *I Remember* (1956), pp 333-337.
- 13 *SMH*, 22 Jan 1930, p 15; 31 Jan 1930, p 11.
- 14 See *SMH* 4 Oct 1930 p 2. His speeches in the LA were restrained, and tended to deal with peripheral issues. He firmly supported Lang.
- 15 *Labor Daily*, 19 Sep 1931, p 7; *SMH*, 15 Apr 1931 p 14.
- 16 Theodore had the support of the AWU, which was not nearly so powerful in NSW as Qld.
- 17 One concerned the Mungana Mining Leases and the other his alleged purchase of his electoral seat.
- 18 *SMH*, 12 Dec 1931, p 14.
- 19 *Ibid*, 12 Dec 1931, p 14; 15 Dec 1931, p 9; 19 Dec 1931, p 16.
- 20 *Ibid*, 4 Dec 1931, p 10.
- 21 Election results (approximate) from NSW and Commonwealth *Parliamentary Papers*.
- 22 The UAP was formed when the Lyons group defected from Federal Labor to join the Nationalists.
- 23 *SMH*, 23 Jan 1931, p 10.
- 24 There is no room here to deal fully with unemployed groups and I am preparing an article on this topic for another journal. More information can be obtained from my thesis, *The Responses of a Community to the Great Depression: Social & Political Activity in Balmain 1929-1935*, a copy of which is held by the Balmain Association (the Balmain Association has had no knowledge of this since the early 1970s – Editor).
- 25 Eg, *SMH*, 6 Sep 1930, p 16; *Labor Daily*, 11 Dec 1931, p 5; 13 Sep 1931, p 14; *Red Leader*, 13 Nov 1931, p 8.
- 26 *Ibid*.
- 27 *SMH*, 29 May 1931, p 5.
- 28 See *NSW Parl Debates*, vol 129, 25 Aug 1931, p 5579. Quirk claims it is difficult for Balmain unemployed to go to the relief depot at Circular Quay.
- 29 *SMH*, 21 Nov 1930, p 16.
- 30 *Ibid*, 27 June 1930, p 11.
- 31 Eg, Balmain Council Minutes, 20 Jan 1931; 11 Nov 1930; 28 Apr 1931; 7 July 1931; 27 Feb 1933.
- 32 Information from interviews conducted with about 30 residents.
- 33 See *The Tocsin* (paper of the Balmain UWM kindly lent by Mr Wyner) undated copy (before Sep 1932); 21 Jan 1933, p 1; Balmain Council Minutes, 16 Sep 1930; 20 Jan 1931; 13 Oct 1931.
- 34 EW Bakke, *The Unemployed Man*, New York, 1932, p 154.
- 35 *NSW Parl Debates*, 26 May 1936.
- 36 *SMH*, 21 Nov 1930, p 16.
- 37 EP Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, Middlesex, 1968, p 13, p 59.
- 38 *Ibid*, p 13.

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BISHOPGATE ESTATE GLEBE: 1841-1861

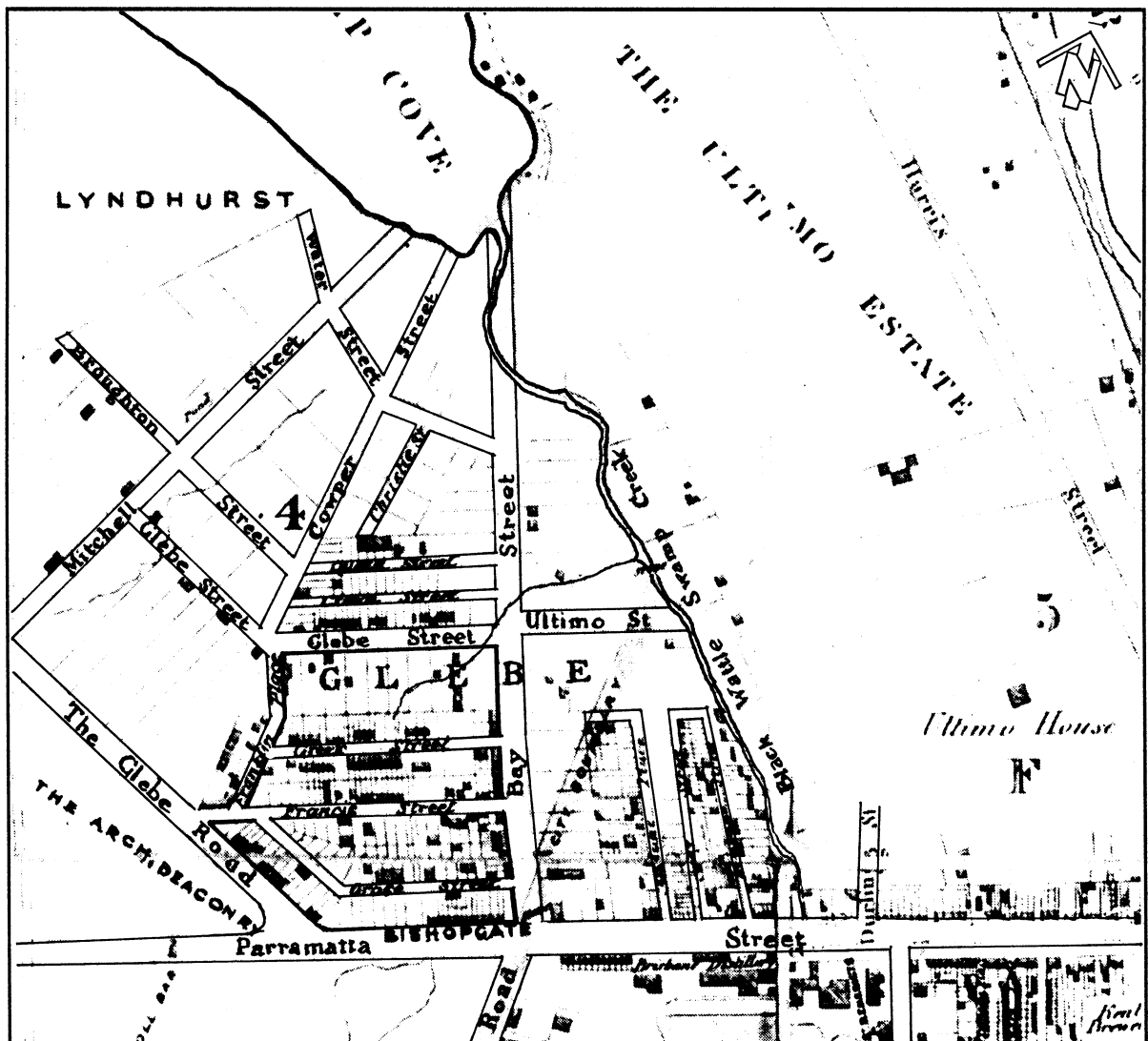
MAX SOLLING

At the second auction sale of the Glebe allotments reported on the 7 May 1828,¹ merchant John Hickey Grose purchased portions 15, 16 and 17, an area of 12 acres 3 roods bounded by Bay Street, Parramatta Road, Glebe Road, Franklyn Place and Glebe Street. Grose paid an average price of £58 per acre for his Glebe estate which he called Bishopgate.

Detail from Woolcott & Clarke's Map of the City of Sydney and Environs of Balmain and Glebe, Chippendale, Redfern, Paddington, etc., 1854, showing the Bishopgate Estate
(M Kelly & R Crocker, Sydney Takes Shape (Doak Press, Sydney, 1978))

Residential growth beyond the city proper in the 1830's was physically restricted by lack of transport and the poor condition of the roads. As assisted and bounty immigrants poured into the colony from the British Isles, Sydney's population swelled and with an almost complete absence of local services, living conditions soon deteriorated. The greatly increased demand for space for non-residential purposes tended to create a radial pattern of movement outwards from the city centre. The well-to-do were the first to escape and form small residential neighbourhoods on the urban perimeter; "to the west Balmain, Pyrmont and The Glebe and to the south Petersham and New Town already exhibit clusters of elegant dwellings and pleasure grounds and promise in a few years to become populous villages".²

Prior to 1841 Glebe was a collection of large estates – Toxteth, Lyndhurst, Eglintoun, St Philips, Pentonville, Boissier and the Archdeaconry and those who moved to Glebe during the 1830s were men of substantial means like solicitor George Allen, doctor James Bowman, banker George Miller and chemist Ambrose Foss who, like the



other small professional and mercantile groups appearing on the outskirts of Sydney, spared no expense in erecting their semi-rural residences.

The private residences of the richer class of gentry are also a little removed from the town and are very surprising from their number and costliness. They are substantial, handsome buildings many of them indeed of considerable pretension ... Several of the designs of these mansions were made by eminent architects of this country and have been carried into execution without regard to cost. The sites ... selected are generally of the most happy description, commanding exquisite views of the harbour. Every house has its garden, of greater or less extent in which the fruits and flowers of Europe vie with those of Asia.³

The 1830s was a period of vast expansion of the colonial wool industry and great prosperity, but by the end of 1840 an acute depression developed, spreading throughout the colonies; "alarm and panic prevailed; over-speculation as it was alleged had been going on to an extraordinary extent; and all credit and confidence are gone. The demand for money is unexampled; but there is none to be had and the bill system will go no further."⁴

The "distress" or "monetary confusion" led to the insolvency of hundreds of professional men, merchants, tradesmen, artisans and unskilled labourers. John Grose, too, felt the contraction of credit and in 1841 he decided to subdivide Bishopgate into narrow-frontage building blocks. An auction advertisement in *The Australian* stated that:

"this estate has been layed out in a great measure likewise to meet the wants of the Shopkeeper, Mechanics and small Capitalists affording them the opportunity of escaping from the heavy rents of the more crowded parts of the town and therefore should not be neglected by so thriving a pro-portion of our citizens ... The air is salubrious and bracing, the water pure and plentiful and the situation most convenient for building operations on account of brick, stone and wood being procurable in the immediate vicinity".⁵

Although few of the Bishopgate allotments sold at the first auction sale, it was nevertheless significant in that it was the first of the extensive Glebe estates to be carved up and led to a steady movement of lower- and middle-class families into this neighbourhood throughout the 1840's. In 1844, due mainly to the failure of the Victoria Mills, Grose was made bankrupt. The appointed trustees of his estate, James Iredale and Felix Wilson, applied to the Supreme Court for Grose's estate to be released from sequestration, and by 1847 most of the Bishopgate allotments had been sold.



Reverend Thomas Smith (1829-1882)
Born at Leominster, England on 21 December 1829, Rev Smith was Rector of St Barnabas's in 1858-72. He died on 12 August 1882 and was buried at Balmain Cemetery.

Adjoining Bishopgate, building leases of parts of the 32-acre holding known as "St Philips Glebe" were granted by the trustees of the Church of England in 1842 and, wedged in between the two estates, John Hughes' four-acre grant was being subdivided into small building blocks.

In 1844 of the 151 dwellings⁶ in Glebe, 40 were on Bishopgate, 60 on St Philips and 20 on Hughes Estate and it was within this broad belt of land stretching from St Johns Road to the north, Glebe and Parramatta Roads to the south, and Bay Street to the east that most intensive residential development occurred in Glebe in 1841-61.

A rich source of documentary material on Glebe for the year 1844 are the Assessment Sheets of the Sydney District Council. The size of allotments, the assessed annual value of house and allotment, building material of habitations and the owners and occupiers of the land are obtained from the Assessment Sheets, and when used in conjunction with roll plans, miscellaneous plans, lithographs and Old System conveyances, a detailed examination of territorial distribution of population and the different levels of housing and social content within Glebe can be made.

The elegant Glebe Point villas, consciously oriented for sunlight and a view and surrounded by shrubberies, orchards and vineyards were in sharp contrast to the miscellaneous collection of

two- and three-roomed slab and brick cottages that appeared on the 25- to 33-foot frontage building blocks in Francis and Grose Streets.

Elevation was not only a sanitary factor in suburban development but was also an important social consideration. A home or lodgings in the more elevated northern segment of Glebe "a neighbourhood of the first respectability"⁷ symbolised the occupant's position in the social pyramid and was quite distinctly separated from the "noxious inhalations and blighting winds"⁸ that blew clustered around Blackwattle Swamp.

Low's Directory for the years 1844-45 and 1847, by providing the occupations of Glebe residents, confirms the residential pattern of a professional and merchant elite in sparsely populated Glebe Point and a concentration of Glebe's working population at the suburb's other extremity.

Right up to 1871 the residential structure of Glebe revealed a strengthening of distinctive social divisions in evidence in 1844. The high-status residential areas were located in Inner Ward, the low-rent areas in Outer Ward while Forest Lodge Ward and Bishopthorpe Ward were basically middle class residential districts. However, in the final quarter of the nineteenth century the general tendency was, it seems, for practically every area to deteriorate in status as the relatively prosperous moved further out and poor families moved in and for gradations of social status which had previously characterised different neighbourhoods within Glebe to become increasingly imprecise.

After the District Council system, based on a compulsory scheme of incorporation proved a complete failure, there was no authority controlling residential development in Glebe from 1848 until the area was proclaimed a Municipality in August 1859.

In 1851 the bulk of Glebe's 1,575 inhabitants lived near the junction of Glebe and Parramatta Roads. Sanitary facilities on the Bishopgate Estate were completely inadequate and legislative attempts at regulating the width of streets were ignored. The *Herald* referring to unregulated residential expansion in Bishopgate and in other areas beyond the city limits wrote "along these undrained, unlevelled, unshaped ways and passages, misnamed Streets, habitations are springing up by hundreds and thousands, many of them quite inaccessible to wheeled vehicles and the whole of them exposed to the nuisances and dangers generated by the want of drainage."⁹

In the ten-year period from 1851 to 1861 Glebe experienced the highest population growth rate of

all the residential districts in Sydney. During this intensive building phase, the narrow streets of Bishopgate in Glebe's Outer Ward were filled with a miscellaneous collection of small cottages, tanneries and slaughterhouses which combined to give the whole neighbourhood both the odours and society of the authentic slum.

A Select Committee on the "Conditions of the Working Classes of the Metropolis"¹⁰ after investigating living conditions in Balmain, Glebe, Paddington, Newtown and Redfern, the largest residential areas of Sydney, reported "the house accommodation of the working classes of Sydney is admitted on all hands to be deplorably bad; even in the more recently erected dwellings the means of drainage and ventilation are almost entirely neglected."¹¹ Evidence given to the Select Committee by the Inspector General of Police, John McLerie is illuminating:

Q What is the size of most of those houses (i.e. just within boundaries of the City of Sydney.)

A Small - two rooms.

Q In those dwellings is there frequently more than one family residing.

A It is within my knowledge that such is the case. In a case I was investigating recently I discovered that there resided in two small rooms seven men and seven women.

Q Perhaps that was a disorderly house?

A It was, no doubt.

Q Where men are engaged in honest occupations, do you know whether it is a general rule for more than one family to be crammed into these houses, owing to the high rents?

A Yes, the consequence is that children of mature years are compelled to sleep in the same room with their parents; children of 14 or 15 years in some instances sleeping in the same bed with their parents.

Q These places to which you are now alluding are mostly devoid of all precautions for sanitary purposes.

A Devoid of all. There are places not in the city worse than any part of the city, namely at the Glebe.

Q What of Chippendale?

A It is not as bad as Glebe.

Q Do you think that if abundance of water were supplied at the Glebe it would alter the state of things there?

A I think the Glebe requires re-arrangement the drainage is the defect; some of the Glebe is below low water mark and the smell is dreadful.

Q That is occasioned by the slaughterhouses?

A Yes, that is one of the causes."

The Reverend William Cowper expressed concern about "a population greatly demoralised" living near Blackwattle Swamp. "Drunkenness

and all the attendant evils were rife and dominant. The holy day of Rest was often desecrated by scenes of riot and disorder. As I stood one day at the end of a street in conversation with a builder who had been a long resident in the Glebe - a man of highly respectable character - looking down the street he said with sorrow, I think there is hardly a sober woman in those houses."¹²

Cowper convened a meeting in December 1856 where an unordained man was chosen to work among the predominantly Protestant families living near Blackwattle Swamp. Thomas Smith, given the task of saving the souls of the "greatly demoralised", soon attracted large congregations to "Parson Smith's barn" and firmly established St Barnabas' as a centre of evangelism.

Ruth Teale in a detailed biography describes Smith's attributes as preacher:

Smith had the gift of inspiring people with the fervour of his own religious faith. He could put across to a massed congregation an intensely personal and individual religion. Largely self educated, he knew nothing, and cared less, for the nicer points of theology. His sermons consisted of a Biblical or topical story, dramatically told, followed by some moral principle extracted from it. For an hour or longer, he would transport his congregation from the depths of destruction to the heights of heaven, and they would finally come to earth intoxicated and trembling with emotion. After such a discourse, each worshipper went away feeling spiritually uplifted and renewed. His preaching generated an hysterical excitement which in that consciously religious age, appealed most successfully, especially among the working classes.¹³

Examination of the 1861 census report reveals a heavy concentration of population in Outer Ward, with a density of 46 people per acre compared to sparsely populated Inner Ward (Glebe Point) with a density of 2 people per acre.¹⁴

The establishment of Sydney University attracted a relatively large number of residents engaged in the learned and educated professions to Bishopsthorpe Ward while a significant proportion of the Inner Ward residents were classified as being engaged in the Legal or Medical Professions, the Public Service and in Trade and Commerce.

By contrast and to show the social diversity within Glebe, the occupations of persons living in Grose and Francis Streets in Outer Ward were chosen at random from *Sands' Directory 1858/9*; - blacksmith, 2 stonemasons, dealer marble mason, butcher, 2 shoe makers, miller, brick-layer, carpenter, cooper, and grocer.



Margaret Onan, née McCready (1810-1862)
The pub was a natural meeting place on Bishopgate. The first woman to obtain a publican's licence in Glebe was Margaret Onan. With her husband Alexander, the Onans arrived in Sydney in 1839, bounty immigrants from Letterkenny, County Donegal. On the death of her husband in 1850, Mrs Onan supported her five children by running the Victoria Inn in Bay Street, Glebe, until her death there of dropsy on 12 June 1862. She was buried beside Alexander at Camperdown Cemetery.

In 1861 Glebe was still a walking suburb and this probably accounts for the fact that 2,043 of its 3,712 inhabitants lived in Outer Ward, portion of which fronted the main route, Parramatta Road. Most people walked to work along the main pedestrian routeways into the city. There was no manufacturing industry in Glebe (apart from a corn mill) but its inhabitants supported seven bootmakers, six bakers, seven grocers, nine butchers, two chemists, and a few dressmaking and tailoring workshops in 1861.

On the streets of Bishopgate, the accents of London and Chatham, Tipperary and Clare and from the Lowlands of Scotland and gave a diversity and vitality of a frontier village. Its social life centred around four chapels and 13 pubs - there was nowhere else to go. However during the next 30 years, a rapid population increase, improved and cheaper means of transportation and other technological advances were to radically change social and physical environment. —

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25

LOT 48 OF THE WATERVIEW ESTATE

CORNER OF DARLING STREET
AND COLGATE AVENUE
BALMAIN

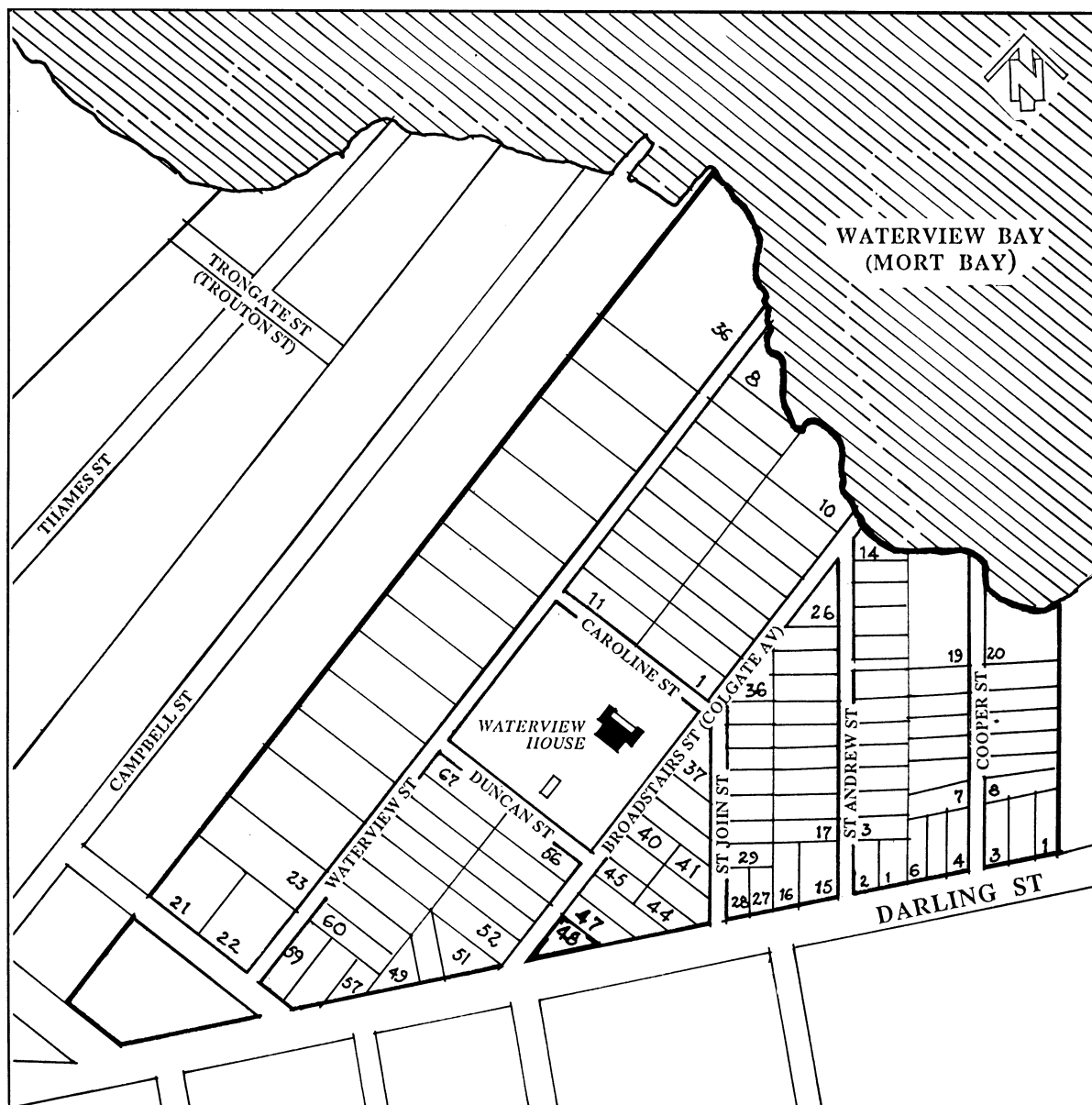
JOHN ENGLE
PETER REYNOLDS
RITA WISE

THE WATERVIEW ESTATE IN c1850

Lot 48 at this time was owned by William Roberts who sold it to Edward Hunt of Hampton Villa in 1853. In about 1857 Hunt seems to have given lot 48 to the Presbyterians to build the timber church.

Introduction

At the opening ceremony of the newly restored Balmain Watch House on 12 April 1970, the Minister for Lands, the Hon T L Lewis, was approached regarding the possibility of resuming the adjoining vacant land. The Minister gave a favourable reception to this suggestion and assured the Balmain Association that he would acquire the property for community use. Some time later that year, the Minister was reminded of his assurance and in reply informed the Association that the matter was still under consideration. Notwithstanding this, all hope of the land being given to the community appeared to be lost when it was announced in the local press early this year that a building development had been approved on that site by Leichhardt Municipal Council. Despite the fact that the development was for a single residence, the relatively small site would have forced the owner to situate the greatest bulk



of the building very close to the western elevation of the Watch House. As this view of the Association headquarters is the dominant one when seen from the sharply rising Darling Street, the prominence of the Watch House would have been seriously obscured. However, the Minister interceded and the land was subsequently acquired and is in process of being vested in the National Trust of Australia (NSW). As was the case with the Watch House, the Trust has offered to lease the land to the Association for community use. In accepting this important charge, the Balmain Association has made known its proposals to fully landscape the area for a community refuge.

The Land Grant

The land under discussion is the triangular allotment on the western boundary of the Watch House and is bounded on its other two alignments by Darling Street and Colgate Avenue which was formerly called Broadstairs Street. As a research project it was determined to search out the history of this allotment from the beginnings of Balmain to the present time.

The story of this particular piece of land begins, as all Balmain subdivisions do, with the grant of 550 acres by Governor Hunter to Surgeon William Balmain on 26 April 1800. Subsequently, after the short period of some fifteen months, Balmain transferred all interest in the grant to John Borthwick Gilchrist of Calcutta. Following the execution of this transfer on 7 July 1801, the Balmain lands lay dormant for the ensuing 35 years. In 1836 at the end of that period of quiescence, Gilchrist's Sydney agent was directed to dispose of the property by sale or lease.¹ It was then that the Balmain lands came to form a part of Sydney's suburban expansion.

As a result of important fiscal reforms, Governor Bourke had improved the state of the Colony's finances and in so doing gained a measure of independence from the British Treasury. This new freedom allowed him to commence much needed public works which allied with the general stability of the Colony caused a severe drain upon the skilled workforce. To counteract this, Bourke secured the cooperation of Whitehall in improving the migrant system which brought a sharp increase in the population of the Colony.

As in former times, the new settlers clung to Sydney and the main towns in preference to the inland districts and areas such as the Balmain Estate became valuable real estate not only for its proximity to the growing metropolis but also because it had not been broken up during its dormant period and therefore the most select parts had not been acquired by large land holders to the exclusion of small businessmen, tradesmen and mariners.

Cooper's Purchase

One of the first persons to acquire an interest in the Balmain estate was the Comptroller of Colonial Customs, George Cooper. By 1840, Cooper had purchased some 30 acres of the choicest land fronting the deep water of Waterview Bay, now known as Mort Bay. However, Cooper's first acquisition was the leasehold of ten acres of this land on 2 January 1837 for an annual rental of £40 for a five-year period.² Following his establishment on this land, Cooper felt secure enough to purchase the freehold of the property with an additional five acres from Gilchrist's agent for £700 on 7 January 1839.³ To finance this undertaking, Cooper immediately mortgaged the property to the Savings Bank of New South Wales for the purchase price with interest. By a piece of financial juggling, Cooper managed to discharge this mortgage on 11 July of the same year with payment in full with interest amounting to £35 and immediately re-mortgage the property for two-and-a-half times the purchase price.⁴ He did this two days after the settlement with the Savings Bank, when he bound himself to repay £1800 at 12.5% in two years with quarterly repayments to William Henry Marsh.⁵

Cooper's History

It is necessary to examine the history of Cooper to understand the events that caused his subsequent sudden sale of all his Balmain property. George Cooper came from Dublin and had held the post of Customs Agent in Ireland and England for the previous 20 years.⁶ For unknown reasons, Cooper secured the position of Comptroller of Customs at Sydney before he left England in the early part of 1836. He carried with him an introduction to Samuel Marsden that testified to his desire to be "thrown among the religious persons of the Colony".⁷ The new Comptroller of Customs and his family arrived in Sydney in the *Hooghly* on 12 October 1836 at about the time that the first Balmain sales were taking place.⁸ On that date, Cooper's salary of £600 per annum for his official duties began.⁹

Following the commencement of his Government service, Cooper made an unsuccessful attempt in September 1837 to secure for himself the post of Comptroller of Customs at Port Phillip, which was then administered by the Government of New South Wales.¹⁰ In the following year, he was allowed an additional £75 as Superintendent of Distilleries which position he held simultaneously with, but separate from, his customs duties.¹¹ By 1839, Cooper was settled upon his Balmain leasehold where on 12 January of that year his wife gave birth to a son which brought the number of his children to eight.¹² The next important event in Cooper's life was his purchase of the freehold of the property with the additional five acres previously stated.¹³



Second Balmain Presbyterian Church, 1857
James McDonald, Architect

Undated view down Darling Street toward the east showing the timber church with spire.

See Leichhardt Historical Journal No 4 (reprinted 1992), pp 3-5, and Leichhardt Historical Journal No 5 (reprinted 1987), pp 12-14 for the discovery of the remains of the church.

(Balmain Association)

Departure of Cooper for New Zealand

However, a curious situation developed which brought about the loss of the bulk of his Balmain investment. In addition to soliciting the Port Phillip appointment, Cooper sought a similar post in the colony of New Zealand and upon 14 January 1840, he learned that his application had been successful.¹⁴ This new appointment was announced in the colonial press on the same day that he arranged the first of two mortgages on his 15 acres. The prospect of this New Zealand position appealed to Cooper because five days later on 19

January he embarked in the *Herald* for that colony where as Comptroller of Customs and Colonial Treasurer he was "charged with the whole pecuniary transactions of the Government".¹⁵ In the absence of recorded evidence of his reasons for leaving New South Wales where he had secured reasonable land investments, Cooper's New Zealand adventure is made all the more curious by the fact that the salary for the position was the same as the Sydney post. The only variation in the two positions was that at Auckland Cooper had complete access to the funds of the Colony, which opportunity was the probable attraction. On the other hand, however, the New Zealand Government insisted that Cooper put up a bond for £2000 as security against his good conduct while in the position.¹⁶ Evidently, Cooper found persons willing to offer themselves as sureties for he took up his New Zealand post on his arrival there having left his wife and children residing on his Waterview Estate.

Temporary Return of Cooper to NSW

For reasons unknown, Cooper reappeared at Sydney on 26 March 1840 some 70 days after leaving it for New Zealand.¹⁷ It is most likely that Cooper took this sudden action for financial reasons because he was at that time attempting to sell off his other Balmain property.¹⁸ Whatever the reason, the Governor of New Zealand advised the Governor of New South Wales that Cooper had departed without his permission and requested that he be dismissed from his post.¹⁹ Governor Gipps replied that he had no jurisdiction over Cooper and other than directing him to return to Auckland could take no official action.²⁰ Accordingly, Cooper sailed for New Zealand on 4 June 1840 in the *Chalhydra* accompanied this time by his wife and children.²¹ This second voyage took place a little more than a month before Cooper's transaction with Marsh which eventually brought about the loss of the 15 acres.

Insolvency of Cooper

On his return to New Zealand, Cooper was evidently successful in convincing the Governor of his indispensability for he was allowed to resume his official duties. However, his affairs did not prosper for two years after his return, on 7 June 1842, his estate was sequestered for insolvency.²² As he sold off his Balmain land at a time of severe economic depression it is likely that this contributed to the poor state of his finances. This disastrous event in the fortunes of George Cooper occurred one month before his mortgage on the 15 acres of Waterview fell due and consequently he was unable to meet it. As a result of this, Marsh became the new owner of that part of Cooper's Waterview Estate and on that 15 acres was already built and probably by Cooper what is known today as the first house on the Balmain Peninsula, Waterview House.²³

This estate can be recognised today as the land bounded by Mort Bay, Cooper and Darling Streets, Queens Place and the back fences of properties on the north-west side of Waterview Street. Following the acquisition of the estate by Marsh, the 15 acres were subdivided into many small allotments and sold as a speculative enterprise. Two of these allotments, which were numbered 47 and 48, now carry on the story of the triangular piece of land under discussion.

Conveyance of Lots 47-48 to Hunt

These two allotments were purchased from Marsh by William Roberts on 15 July 1843 for £45.6.0 and in the absence of records nothing is known of his use of the land for the succeeding ten years of his ownership.²⁴ It is most likely, however, that he did not build upon the land for it was vacant when he offered it for sale. On 11 February 1853, this sale was finalised when the two allotments were purchased by Edward Hunt

of Hampton Villa which still exists as 12b Grafton Street.²⁵ Almost exactly one year later, Hunt sold the land to the Crown for the princely sum of £240 but retained lot 48, the triangular block for his own purposes.²⁶ At the time of purchasing the land from Roberts, the boundaries were altered to increase the width of lot 47 by 12 feet to 45 feet which probably accounts for a part of the inflated selling price.²⁷ The other cause of the high price was probably that the site was required for the erection of a Watch House for the district and this fact added to the inflated goldrush economy of the day gave Hunt a handsome profit on his twelve-month ownership of the allotment. Following the acquisition of lot 47 by the Government, the erection of the Watch House began in May 1854 and completed the following year. At this point the story of the corner piece of land continues without its neighbouring Watch House allotment.

Hunt and the Presbyterian Church

In continuing the story of lot 48, the known history of its owner is of sufficient interest to be recorded. Edward Hunt was an important figure in Balmain for, with John Hosking (Mayor of Sydney) and John Jenkins Peacock, he was among the first elected Councillors to the Municipal Council of Sydney.²⁸ Hunt followed his career in local government with his election to the Legislative Council in March 1858.²⁹ Three years later, in May 1861, he lost his seat and returned to private life at Hampton Villa where he died on 20 December 1866.³⁰

Despite his important achievements, Hunt's significance to the story of the corner allotment occurred during the rift that occurred in the united Presbyterian and Congregational Church in 1857.³¹ These two congregations united in 1853 in the original Presbyterian Church at the corner of Darling Street and Cooper Street and two years later together erected the fine stone church which stands at the corner of Darling Street and Curtis Road.³² After a period of dissension between the Minister and some of his congregation, matters came to a head in 1857 when "swords were crossed and the bulk of the congregation marched out ... with full military honours".³³ This strategic withdrawal left the Presbyterians without a place of worship and a suitable site for a new church was sought. As a result of the expense of the new stone church, the funds of the Presbyterians were low and the most that they were able to afford was a tent which they pitched on the corner of Darling Street and the then Broadstairs Street.³⁴

Erection of Second Presbyterian Church

The new site for Presbyterian worship was Hunt's lot 48 and later in that year of 1857, a new timber church with a spire was built.³⁵ Evidently,

Hunt gave his permission for this second Balmain Presbyterian Church to be built on his land for there is no record of any conveyance of the property from him to the Presbyterian Church. Pending the examination of Hunt's probate papers, it is thought likely that Hunt either retained ownership of the land until his death or bequeathed the property to the Church for its benefit by sale or use. Whatever further research may bring to light, it is known that the timber church continued to serve until the opening of the Campbell Street Presbyterian Church on 19 April 1868 some fifteen months after Hunt's death.³⁶ Following its abandonment as a place of worship, the small church was converted to a greengrocery.

Conversion to Shop

The first known occupant of the church/shop was Albert Taylor who opened a greengrocery there in 1870.³⁷ There were doubtless other greengrocers in the premises between 1868 and 1870 but in the absence of direct evidence the probable names are omitted. Taylor did not remain in business for more than the ensuing year and he was followed in 1872 by William Sampson who continued the greengrocery until the following year when he also vacated the premises.

In 1874, the church/shop became a grocery when Thomas Lyons of that trade became its occupant and probable owner for on 1 June 1878 he sold its freehold to John Mills who was a wholesale grocer of George Street Sydney for £450.³⁸ Despite the loss of its freehold, Lyons continued to operate his grocery in the church/shop until 1881 when Samuel Gooud took over. In the tradition of its former occupants, the church/shop and Gooud parted company within a year and the business was carried on either by Michael McQuirk or William Jackson until 1886 when a fruiterer William Bennett opened up there.

In 1888, the premises were recognised by the local Council and allocated street number 193 with its neighbour the Watch House as number 191. In 1890, the occupancy changed once more when J Brumfield continued the fruitery until the beginning of the severe depression of 1893 when C Holding became the occupant. In the following year and probably as a result of the depression the business changed hands once more when W Clarke established a grocery business in the premises. Clarke remained until 1895 when the next occupant Robert Alexander Young became the new owner.

Church Continues as a Shop

The previous owner, Mills, had died at Ashfield in August and his wife followed in June 1887.³⁹ Evidently, the property passed to his trustee, Stephen Mills, a licensed surveyor of Waratah, New South Wales, who sold the freehold to

Young, a shipwright of Beattie Street, Balmain, on 26 September 1895 for £210, which, as a result of the depression was less than half the price paid by Mills 17 years before.⁴⁰ The new owner exchanged his trade for business as a grocer and continued to operate on the until 1903 when he sold both the freehold and the business.

On 16 February of that year, for a purchase price of £425, Rachel Dunning became the owner of the property but the grocery business was carried on until 1917 in the name of her husband, Alexander, who had been a Sydney licensed victualler.⁴¹ For most of that period, the Dunnings mortgaged the property to George Willis Godwin, a moneylender of Sydney, for an unstated amount.⁴² The mortgage was given in 1905 in Rachel Dunning's name and was to be discharged in 1923 but about that time her husband apparently died and she was unable to meet the terms. Accordingly, three years later she sold her interest in the property to William Percy West for £200 on 11 January 1926 but did not settle with Godwin until 13 January 1932. On that same day, Godwin purchased West's interest for £200 and secured a clear title to the property.

Demolition of Shop

Following Mrs Dunning's disposal of her interest in the property, the shop was used in 1926 by hairdresser J McLeod. In 1927 another hairdresser operated in the shop until 1929. In that year, the shop had another change of business when A Morrison began as a bootmaker which he continued until 1930 when he was followed by Theo Rose of the same trade. Following the effect of the depression of the 1930s which ruined so many small businessmen and tradesmen, the church/shop stood vacant until its eventual demolition. There is as yet no direct evidence of the time of its removal but, as the illustration indicates, it very likely did not see out the decade of the 1930s. Thus ended the life of the only building ever to be erected on the corner allotment.

Land Vacant Again

The moneylender, Godwin, did nothing towards the improvement of the property from his acquisition of it in 1932 and on his death his trustees sold the land on behalf of his estate in 1959. On 8 December of that year, it was purchased for £450 by William Charles and Bessie May Heming of St John Street, Balmain, who did not develop their investment in any way.⁴³ The land remained idle until it was offered for sale in the present land boom and on 5 March 1971 the staggering figure of \$7,500.00 was given for it.⁴⁴ This purchase price was paid by Ronald Arthur and Aileen Mary Stowe of Burrowa, New South Wales who were the last private owners of the land for soon after this date the land was acquired by the Minister of Lands.



*The Dilapidated Condition of the Church/shop
Before its Demolition*

(Balmain Association)

Conclusion

In this year of 1971, 170 years have elapsed since the first conveyance of the Balmain lands from Surgeon Balmain to Professor Gilchrist. In researching the history of this single allotment, which is only one of hundreds that resulted from that transaction, many interesting facts have been brought to light. For example, the story of lot 48, Darling Street, Balmain introduced the little known George Cooper but more work remains to be done to establish his effect on the subsequent history of the suburb. In turn, the history of the Presbyterian Church in Balmain has been made a little clearer than formerly, especially regarding the life of the timber church and its subsequent conversion to business premises, yet there is much more to be gleaned from available sources. It also raises the question of the relationship between Hunt and the Presbyterians and the abandonment of the building by that Church. Despite these questions, it is evident that from the time of the first person to set up business in the abandoned church, it became a symbol of the small businessman's struggle to keep operating

for the succeeding 70 years and its eventual demolition occurred during the economic depression which foreshadowed the demise of the small local businesses. Moreover, for most of its life the building served the community as a place of worship and later as a place of supply and service. It is appropriate, therefore, that the uses to which lot 48 will be put will again serve the community as a safe refuge for children and a resting place for all who pass along that way. _____

Abbreviations

SNH	SN Hogg, "Balmain, Past and Present", MS ML.
Aust	<i>The Australian.</i>
RGD	Registrar General's Department.
DESP	Despatches, NSW Governor to Secretary of State.
ML	Mitchell Library.
MP	Marsden Papers.
BB	Returns of the Colony of NSW (Blue Book).
NZDESP	Despatches, NSW Governor to New Zealand Governor.

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BOOK REVIEWS

BALMAIN IN TIME A Record of an Historic Suburb and Some of its Buildings

Text by Peter Reynolds & Robert Irving, photographs by Douglass Baglin, designed and produced by Bettina Chambers
Balmain Association, 1971, \$1.75

SETTING FOR A CAMPUS A Pen Sketch Commentary of the Environs of the University of Sydney By Allan Gamble Wentworth Books Pty Ltd, nd, \$4.00

Reviewed by Alan Roberts

The title of the first book under review aptly sums up its contents. It contains a brief analysis and description of the history of the suburb, and photographs and histories of some 39 buildings in Balmain.

The historical sketch of the suburb hardly attempts to be more than a brief outline of the different stages of the historical development of the suburb. It is admirably summarised into five phases: recreational, residential, industrial, heavy industrial and finally the current clash between residential rehabilitation and containerisation. This account begins to be amplified with a short description of the first grants and the first buildings on Balmain. From this point on, the historical treatment changes to a brief account of notable buildings in Balmain, their histories and the people associated with them. The earlier buildings are arranged chronologically, following on from the preliminary historical sketch, up to the stone terraces in Grove Street, which date from the 1850s. Thereafter the buildings are arranged by function: residences, public buildings, churches and industry. Thus the chrono-

logical treatment breaks down, a quarter of the way through the book, and the historical phases cease to be amplified in the way they were introduced. The reader no longer sees an overall view of the history of the suburb. But it is no criticism of this book to say that the definitive account of the history of this fascinating suburb remains an exciting, and daunting, challenge to historians.

The chief value of this book undoubtedly lies in the photographs and historical accounts of particular buildings. At a time when the market is flooded with superficial and pretentious photograph- and sketch-books of suburbs, it is very refreshing to read *Balmain in Time*. The photographs are good, though some such as St. Mary's Church, The Anchorage and Glendenning lack clarity. Robert Irving's architectural drawings are very good, and Bill Haesler's sketch of the tug *Himma* makes an excellent cover. The historical descriptions of the buildings are brief yet informative, and not at all glib. It is not easy to write complete accounts of buildings, especially when they are residences, and though a lot of information has been gathered here, much of course remains to be discovered and written up. The account of the Watch House, for example, will have to be revised in the light of information discovered in the last few weeks, and this will be recorded in the next issue of the Journal. In all, the accounts of these 39 buildings make up a fascinating and impressionistic – if somewhat ill-organised – view of the history of Balmain.

The Balmain Association deserve congratulations for this book, which they published themselves, and at \$1.75 it is very good value for money.

It is a regrettable paradox that, as the interest in Australian architecture is becoming more popular, and an increasing volume on the subject is being

published, the quality of some published material is getting worse. This is particularly the case with books of drawings of architecture and townscape. Surely the extreme has been reached with Allan Gamble's *Setting For A Campus*.

It would be very interesting to investigate the growth of consciousness of, and reverential interest in, the tangible culture of Australia, of which architecture forms an important part. It seems more likely that an important early point in the development of this attitude was the decision behind James Barnet's design for the present Macquarie Lighthouse, on South Head, which is an approximate facsimile of Greenway's design. What cause that particular example of harking back to a style associated with the convict era, when other elements of that era, such as the power of the Governor and the convict system itself, were so vigorously fought against by the colonists?

Nowadays, the phrase "convict built" will almost certainly be used at some time in relation to any old building and, apart from ignorance, it denotes admiration and distinction. This reverence was not always the case. The Government still shows little conviction in the worth of preserving beautiful and historic buildings. One looks with envy and admiration to the legislation, in the UK, which backs up the work of the Civic Trust.

There are several strands in the development of interest in the history of Australian architecture, including the publication of books and pamphlets, the Georgian revivals in building style, and the expenditure of private and public money on the restoration of original Georgian buildings. These strands are sometimes contradictory, as for example in the spread of bungalows with superficial Georgian trimmings, built for business executives around St Ives. If

these people had any real interest in old architecture, they might buy buildings like Tusculum in Pott's Point, Lyndhurst in Glebe or Addington in Ryde, and restore them as their homes.

It is surprising that the early stage of interest in drawing Georgian architecture produced the most outstanding example: Hardy Wilson's *Old Colonial Architecture in New South Wales and Tasmania*. Based on considerable knowledge, skill, discernment and devotion, his drawings must remain the classic kind in Australia. He was followed by Sidney Ure Smith. In the 1950s and 60s, Morton Herman's researches significantly advanced the study of Australian architecture. He was a practising architect, and though his watercolours lack the assurance and ease of Hardy Wilson's coloured drawings, Herman's pen drawings, particularly in *Early Australian Architects And Their Work*, form another peak comparable with Wilson's. Herman's pen drawings have beauty and clarity, but in addition to their quality as works of art, they convey much information about the design of buildings.

Since these excellent publications, however, there have been numerous books of drawings of buildings and townscapes in particular suburbs. An infamous example is the *Sketchbook* series by Unk White and others which, with their slapdash and hurried drawings, combined with chatty and superficial texts, make a virtue out of mediocrity. Numerous other "artists" recently have exploited the market - a market which is amazingly tolerant. Allan Gamble is one of these.

Let us take a closer look at *Setting for a Campus*. It is a "pen sketch commentary on the environs of the University of Sydney", taking in Railway Square, Broadway, Glebe, Camperdown, Newtown, Darlington and Cleveland Street. To give Mr Gamble

his due, a few of his drawings show a pleasing feeling for texture and balance, such as those of St. John's Bishopthorpe and Claremont. But usually he has not taken the care and effort to fulfil his capacity. Most are very different as drawings and useless as architectural information. The design and detail of the buildings are obscured in a shimmer of uncertain lines. Some are dreadful, especially his vistas, such as the drawings of Arundel Street, Railway Square and Cleveland Street. Curiously enough, by making sloping roof lines curved instead of straight, some of the buildings look distinctly Chinese. Most of the text simply gives the names and locations of the buildings, but where Mr. Gamble attempts to expand, his comments are glib. For example, "Building in the Victorian period gave scope for ingenuity and skill of craftsmen and tradesmen in all departments. This commercial street front on Broadway, somewhat jaded though it is now, testifies to this fact." At another point, he describes the St Barnabas' Rectory in Arundel Street as a "dignified Georgian residence".

Perhaps I am being too harsh on Mr Gamble. This would, after all, make an attractive coffee table book, and it might be cherished as a souvenir by departing university people. But I believe that a protest should be made against these slight publications. The devalue excellence in drawing, they make it more difficult for better work to be published and their texts are trivial. Surely anything would be preferable to this expensive trifle. —

Alan Roberts is President of the Annandale Association and Convenor of its History Sub-committee

RESPONSES OF THE BALMAIN PEOPLE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

ADDENDUM (1994)

Later Related Publications

N Wheatley, "Meeting them at the Door: Radicalism, Militancy, and the Sydney Anti-Eviction Campaign of 1931", in J Roe (ed), *Twentieth Century Sydney, Studies in Urban & Social History* (Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1980) pp 208-230./

N Wheatley, "The Disinherited of the Earth", in J Mackinolty (ed), *The Wasted Years* (George Allen & Unwin Aust, N Sydney, 1981).

N Wheatley, "All in the Same Boat?: Sydney's Rich and Poor in the Great Depression", in V Burgmann & J Lee (eds), *Making a Life, A People's History of Australia Since 1788* (McPhee Gribble, Fitzroy, 1988), pp 205-5.

See also for general references to Balmain, W Lowenstein, *Weevils in the Flour, An Oral record of the 1930s Depression in Australia* (Hyland House Publishing, S Yarra, 1978). —

BISHOPGATE ESTATE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

NOTES AND REFERENCES

ADDENDUM (1994)

Max Solling has provided additional writing in the last two paragraphs.

REFERENCES

- 1 *The Australian*, 7 May 1828, p 2.
- 2 R. Mansfield, *Analytical View of the Census of NSW, 1841* (Kent & Fairfax, Sydney, 1847), p 49.
- 3 CJ. Baker, *Sydney & Melbourne with remarks upon the present State and future Prospects of NSW* (London, 1845), p 135.
- 4 J. Hood, *Australia and the East 1841 & 1842* (London, 1844), p 85.
- 5 *The Australian*, 9 Mar 1841, p 3.
- 6 *Sydney District Council Assessment Books*, ML.
- 7 *SMH*, 14 Apr 1843, p 3.
- 8 *Ibid*.
- 9 *Ibid*, 6 Nov 1850, p 1.
- 10 *Votes & Proceedings of the NSW. Legislative Assembly, 1859/60*, vol 4, p 8.
- 11 *Ibid*, vol 4, p 4.
- 12 WM Cowper, *The Autobiography & Reminiscences of William Macquarie Cowper* (Sydney, 1902), p 136.
- 13 R. Teale, Paper Read to the Church of England Hist Soc, 1970.
- 14 *Census 1861; Votes & Proceedings of the NSW. Legislative Assembly, 1862*. vol 3. —

PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED ARTICLES

LOCAL CIVIC GROUPS

This is a list of historical articles published in the newsletters of the Annandale Association, Balmain Association and Glebe Society before the foundation of this Journal.

ANNANDALE ASSOCIATION

Betty Mason

"The History of Claremont, 258 Johnston St", on which the Association's emblem was based, *Annandale Association Newsletter*, vol.I, no.2, March 1970. "Hunter Baillie Church Hall", *A.A. Newsletter*, No. 17, July 1971.

Alan Roberts

"Historical Happenings", re the Gate House, work at the Registrar General's Dept, and excerpt from a memorandum of transfer, vol.I, no.8, Sept. 1970. "Recent Gifts", No. 10, Nov. 1970.

"Annandale Association Inspection Day", 7 Nov. 1970. - descriptive itinerary - "Annandale in 1799-1916". "National Trust of Australia (NSW) Junior Group in conjunction with the Annandale Association, Activity No. 78, Annandale, 6 Feb. 1971." "The Hunter Baillie Church", No. 14, April 1971. (Includes Cedric Flower's comments on its architectural features). "Historical Journal", *A.A. Newsletter*, no. 18, July 1971, (outlining scope and purposes).

Rev L Williams

"The Hunter Baillie Memorial Presbyterian Church, Annandale", No.15, May 1971. (Describes restoration).

B. Goodger

"George's Hall", excerpt reprinted from *Newsletter* of the Bankstown Hist Soc, vol. 4, no.4, Dec 1970, in *A.A. Newsletter*, no.16 June 1971.

Annandale Association

A Plan for Annandale, Oct 1971. (Contains many photos of important buildings and a section proposing historic precincts.)

BALMAIN ASSOCIATION

Historical Leaflets

"Cockatoo Island", Feb 1968. "Bridging Balmain", Nov. 1969. "Petition the Governor - Unfair Toll on Road to Balmain", Apr 1970. "Premier supports Railway to Balmain (1880)" June, 1970. "The Beginnings of Balmain Hospital, Oct 1970. "The Balmain Watch House", Feb, 1970

Technical Documents

"Container Shipping Schemes for Sydney", 1967. "Objections to The Leichhardt Mun Planning Scheme", 1968. "Residential Development of the Balmain Peninsula", 1969. "Balmain - Further Planning Considerations", 1971.

Inspection Leaflets

9 Oct 1966; 13 Oct 1968; 8 Mar 1970; 20 June 1971.

Books

The Houses of Balmain, (Horwitz, 1969), by John Wong & Robert Irving. "Balmain in Time", (The Balmain Association, 1971), by P Reynolds & R Irving.

News Sheets (bi-monthly)

1 Apr 1966, "Steam to Balmain".
2 June 1966, "Mort's Dock Office Building".
3 Aug 1966, "Rowntree House, Stack St", "Water Supply".
4 Oct 1966, "St. Andrew's Congregational Church", "Fenwick Family", "The Grange, 7 Vincent St".

6 Feb 1967, "Exchange Hotel, 1886", "West Side Centre."
7 Apr 1967, "Ewerton, Johnston's Bay".
8 June 1967, "Clifton Villa, Ballast Pt. Rd".
9 Aug 1967, "Terrace Pair in Glassop St".
10 Oct 1967, "Birch Grove House", "Pilcher's Paddock".
11 Dec 1967, "Birch Grove House".
12 Feb 1968, "Some Balmain Firsts".
13 Apr 1968, "Terrace Houses, Darling St. East".
14 Oct 1968, "House in Curtis Rd".
17 Dec 1968, "Terrace In Palmer St".
18 Feb 1969, "The National Trust Recognises Balmain".
19 Apr 1969, "Containers at White Bay".
20 June 1969, "Plym Terrace, Darling St".
22 Oct 1969, "St. Mary's Church".
24 Feb 1970, "The Watch House Opening".
25 Apr 1970, "Watch House Charge Desk and Chair".
26 June 1970, "Ewerton Gateway".
27 Aug 1970, "The Forth and Clyde Hotel".
29 Dec 1970, "Glendenning", "The Coal Mine".
30 Feb 1971, "The Rowntree Monument".
33 Aug 1971, "The Volunteer Fire Brigade".
34 Oct 1971, "The Old Presbyterian Church". s

GLEBE SOCIETY

Max Solling

"George Allen", no. 1, 1971. "George Allen", (cont.), 2, 1971. "Sir George Wigram Allen", 3, 1971. "Sir George Wigram Allen", 4, 1971. "Presbyterian Manse and The Anchorage", no. 5, 1971. "Blackwattle Swamp Subdivision Advertisement, 1843", no.8, 1971. *The Glebe - A Fascination of a Victorian Suburb. A brief outline of Glebe's development during the 19th Century.*

NOTES AND QUERIES

GLEBE

Mrs Freda Stamper is currently writing a book on the history of Glebe. She would be grateful to receive any information that might help her. Write to 7 The Chase Road, Turramurra, 2074.

BIRCHGROVE

If you know of other relics of Birch Grove House or similarly important buildings, please let us know.

ANNANDALE BALMAIN, GLEBE

Do you have any old photos of buildings and people of these suburbs, or any old school photos. Please inform the relevant editor.

BALMAIN

Peter Reynolds wants to know:

- **Presbyterian Church**

The date of the demolition of the church on the corner of Darling Street and Colgate Avenue, the second to be built in Balmain. See article on page 18 of this Journal.

- **Balmain Watch House**

The date of opening, the name of the first police officer, the date of occupation of the additional storey and rear cells, the date that it ceased to be a lock-up, and the date when it became a police residence only.

- **Balmain Land Grant**

Any documents or copies of title deeds bearing key names such as Balmain, Borthwick, Gilchrist and Parbury.

ANNANDALE

A Plan for Annandale, with a section on historic precincts and old and modern photos is available from the Secretary of the Annandale Association, Mrs Betty Mason, 289 Annandale Street, phone 660 3468. Members \$0.50; pensioners \$0.30; others \$1.00.

Alan Roberts wants to hear any information or reminiscences about the history of Annandale. In particular:

- The history of Greyholme, 23 Johnston Street.
- John Young's Kentville, which stood on the approximate site of Kentville Av.



Bay Street Primitive Methodist Chapel, 1860-64, Bay and Glebe Streets, Glebe

In 1865 the building became the Glebe Ragged School which continued until 1895.

(See Max Solling's Bishopgate Estate" on page 14 of this Journal)

THIS JOURNAL

Do you think the name of the Journal could be improved? If you have any suggestions, please let us know. The title can easily be changed. We want a title that is more colourful, and which symbolises the whole area not just part of it.

Please let us have any small snippets of historical information, even if it only consists of a sentence or two. They can easily go in this section. _____

LOT 48 OF THE WATERVIEW ESTATE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23

NOTES AND REFERENCES

ADDENDUM (1994)

For the land grant see P Reynolds & P Flottmann, *Half a Thousand Acres: Balmain, a History of the Land Grant* (Balmain Association, 1976).

For George Cooper see my "John Fraser Gray and Waterview House", in *Leichhardt Hist J* No 10, pp 3-19 and "From Nicholson Street to Chapman's Slipway", in *Leichhardt Hist J* No 13, pp 9-38.

For Balmain Watch House see W Pearson & P Reynolds, "The First Balmain Watch House", in *Leichhardt Hist J* No 3, pp 8-12. See also P Reynolds & R Irving, *Balmain in Time* (Balmain Assoc, 1971), pp 22-23. See also Balmain Watch House, a leaflet published by the Balmain Association, c1982.

For history of the Second Presbyterian Church, see my "The Remains of the Second Presbyterian Church", in *Leichhardt Hist J* No 4, pp 3-5.

For the archaeological findings see J Wade, "Excavating the Second Presbyterian Church", in *Leichhardt Hist J* No 5, pp 12-14.

For Edward Hunt and Hampton Villa see K Fahy, "Edward Hunt, Cabinet-maker", in *Leichhardt Hist J* No 3, pp 13-14 and my "From Cameron's Cove to Adolphus Street", in *Leichhardt Hist J* No 15, pp 43-73.

REFERENCES

- 1 *Aust*, p 1c, 12 July 1836; p 1b, 13 Sep 1836.
- 2 RGD, Land Titles Office, Vendors Index.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 DESP, A1267-14, p 1890, Cooper & Gibbs to Col Sec, 14 Sep 1837.
- 7 MP, vol 1, pp 598-600, Grey to Marsden, 13 Apr 1836.
- 8 *Aust*, p 2, 14 Oct 1836.
- 9 BB, 1837, pp 122-123.
- 10 Op cit, (6).
- 11 BB, 1838, pp 130-131.
- 12 *Aust*, p 3, 12 Jan 1839.
- 13 Op cit, (3).
- 14 *Aust*, p 2, 14 Jan 1840.
- 15 DESP, A1222, pp 153-156, Gipps to Russell, 9 Feb 1840.
- 16 NZDESP, A-4/1651, p 14, Gipps to Hobson, 29 Feb 1840.
- 17 *Aust*, p 2, 28 Mar 1840.
- 18 Ibid, p 4f, 16 Jan 1840.

- 19 Op cit 916), pp 13-14. Gipps to Hobson, 8 May 1840.
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 *Aust*, p 2, 6 June 1840.
- 22 Ibid, p 4, 7 June 1842.
- 23 Ibid, p 4e, 25 July 1837. Waterview House see Half a Thousand Acres.
- 24 Op cit (2).
- 25 Op cit (2).
- 26 Op cit (2).
- 27 Op cit (25).
- 28 City of Sydney, 1834, pp 42-43.
- 29 Guide to NSW Parlt vol 1.
- 30 Ibid; Probate Office.
- 31 SNH, vol 3, pp 157-161.
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 Ibid.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 Ibid.
- 36 *Centenary History, Campbell Street Presbyterian Church, Balmain*, 1968.
- 37 *Sands' Directory*, 1870. All ensuing references to occupants except purchasers, see Sands for the year mentioned.
- 38 Op cit (2).
- 39 Op cit (2).
- 40 Op cit (2).
- 41 Op cit (2).
- 42 Op cit (2).
- 43 Op cit (2).
- 44 Op cit (2).

The Sydney Hospital for Sick Children, Glebe Point, 1878

