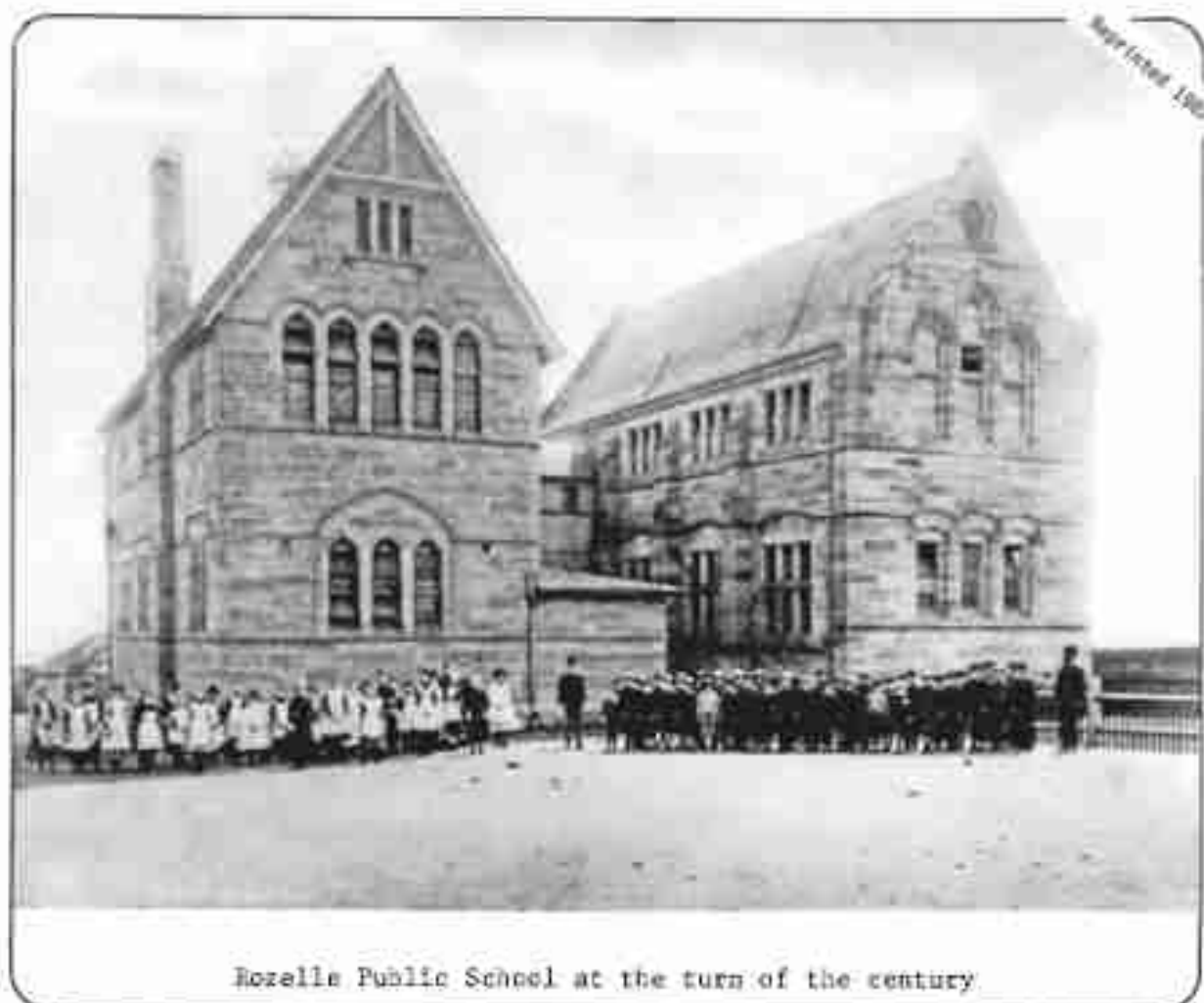




Leichhardt Historical Journal

No. 8
1979

REMINISCENCES OF NORTH ANNANDALE PUBLIC SCHOOL
THE BLUE BIRD HUNTER OF BALMAIN
LEICHHARDT: THE ORIGIN OF THE NAME



Rozelle Public School at the turn of the century

Annandale Balmain Glebe Leichhardt Lilyfield Rozelle

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Contents

Robert Schmitt: Social Officer, Explorer and Landowner by K J Cable	1
James McDonald: Architect of Balmain by John Flower	4
Settlements of North Annandale Public School by Margaret Quinn	10
John Ward: Stone Bird Hunter of Balmain by Peter Reynolds	12
Leichhardt: The Origin of the Name by Jennifer Bates	15
Robert Stoker: Soldier, Sheriff and Sped. Builder by Peter Reynolds	16
Marshall Public School: 1870-1901 by Peter Reynolds	24
Football in Sydney: 1870-1920 by Max Salling	28
Publication for Sale	32
Index 1871-1979	33
Reviews	33-35

Editorial

LOCAL HISTORY RESOURCES FOR SCHOOL USE

Local history studies are increasingly being promoted as a vehicle for the better understanding of the schoolchild's environment. By recognising the intrinsic qualities of their surroundings, children can find a sense of identity with their place of living. Where the rural dweller is encompassed by the natural landscape, the city child is usually involved with man-made things. His own intimate locale may be the few streets containing home, shops and school but it is to these that he looks with familiarity.

Why then is so little teaching being done on this vital aspect of a child's development?

The answer to this question lies not in the want of written texts on how to go about it nor from lack of accessible resources - accessible, that is, to the pupil. University undergraduates are seldom permitted access to manuscript collections. How then does a schoolchild obtain information about his local area?

What is needed is a combination of decentralization and centralization.

Copies of historical documents already housed in restricted library collections must be decentralized by being returned to the area of origin for all to see. Scattered material must be centralized in a local library.

Full marks go to the Stanton Library and the North Shore Historical Society for getting together to form an excellent local collection under the guardianship of the local history librarian. Willoughby Municipal Library is also forging ahead by collecting every available snippet, photograph and map which will be of use in the study of the area. The aim is to provide historical material for any level of research from the academic historian to the primary student.

In Leichhardt Municipality there is already the basis of a similar collection with four very active local associations dedicated to preservation and research in the district. High schools at Balmain, Leichhardt, Glebe and Port Street are all potential users of this resource to say nothing of the many primary and denominational schools in the district.

Editors

Peter Reynolds, Alan Roberts and Max Salling

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Cover: Annandale Public School - see page 24.

Council funds should be allocated for copying any desirable material. Historians, societies and private individuals are not to be pressed into parting with cherished relics but are to be encouraged to lend them for copying.

The Balmain Association collection of slides, photographs and printed material is housed in the North House where access is tightly restricted. This material could be copied by Leichhardt Library and housed at the Balmain branch library. Estimates of archival documents and manuscripts held by the Archivist Office and the Mitchell Library, concerning areas of the Municipality, should be similarly acquired.

Leichhardt Council has already graciously donated precious archival material to the Mitchell Library but still retains some Council Minutes, newspapers and registers not in current use.

The custodians of the collection must be concerned with the dissemination of gathered knowledge. It is at the school level where this dissemination is most difficult. A worthwhile collection would be more than a prepared kit on the popular local projects such as "Child", "Aborigines" and "Convicts". As good as present kits are, these topics are not "local" enough. We should encourage the child to go beyond the kit and search "facts" out himself. He must also be encouraged to look at exposed rock ledges, assess changes to waterfronts from reclamation, see what buildings look like above shopfronts, find out how his street was named and discover what family memories are still available. All this can form a display for temporary or permanent housing in the Branch or School Library.

Historical research will help develop the child's thinking skills through first hand observation of historical material. There is a reality about such study, a sense of past, present and future which can counter the child's rapidly changing environment.

The Leichhardt Historical Journal now calls upon the Council, local civic groups and interested parties to come together to emulate the North Sydney and Willoughby example.

Peter Reynolds

Robert Johnston (1792?-1882):

Naval Officer,

Explorer and Landowner

by E J Cable

Robert Johnston was born at Sydney on 9 March 1792, second of three sons of Captain-Lieutenant George Johnston, formerly of the Royal Marines and then of the 88th Corps, and Esther Abraham (or Julian), a convict of Jewish origin. In 1800, Robert was taken to England by his father, who was under arrest for illegal trading in spirits. Major Johnston returned unhired, leaving his son at school at Newington Green.

Robert joined the Royal Navy in February 1807; he and the three sons of Governor King were the 1381 native-born youths to do so. He saw much active service during the Napoleonic war and narrowly escaped death during the bombardment of Cadix. In 1812 he was sent to the American theatre and was involved in heavy action at Baltimore and New Orleans. Johnston's temporary rank of lieutenant was confirmed on 12 February 1815, but with peace he could not find naval employment. So he came back to Sydney on the *Warrior* in 1816, "to remain in the Colony", as Macquarie noted.

Johnston found the reputation of his father restored and his members prosperous. The Colonial, censured for his part in the rebellion against King, had married Esther Julian in 1814 and was quietly busy with his western estates. His eldest son, George, was a government clerk and a favourite of Macquarie.

Robert, as befitting his profession and reputation, lived energetically. With Sir John Jamison, he travelled more than forty miles up the Barramunda River, in November 1818; in an attempt to iron his uniform, three years later, he accompanied the Governor to Port Macquarie; their departure from the Hastings River was difficult and Macquarie noted that Johnston's "exertions and judgment ... when the Elizabeth *Swallowtail* struck, did him a great deal of credit". Johnston also explored in South Coast waters and discovered the river Clyde. He returned in the *Shepper* in January 1822 with Alexander Berry and Jamison home to explore the river and the adjacent coast.

He interested himself in vigorous commercial enterprises - a voyage in the *Queen Charlotte* in 1819 to the Cape of Good Hope for a consignment of wine and assistance to his brothers George and David in rounding up the wild Coastpasture cattle. The latter, a lung and successful operation, helped to develop the area and to further the road-making activities of Charles Throsby.

George's death in 1820 and the father's ill-health gave Robert new responsibilities. He signalled these, in August 1820, by securing permission to settle permanently and to be granted 800 acres. Soon he bought more land and asked for a further grant.

After 1823, the management of the Johnston estates took up most of his time. Six years later, he prompted the appointment of a commission to enquire into his mother's estate



of mind and capacity to manage her affairs. The "highly respectable" jury declared her insane, with lucid intervals, but denied that Robert was born-at-law, a trust was thereupon appointed. The affair did Robert little good; it indicated his growing involvement as a landed proprietor.

Johnston married Fanny Weller (died 23 June 1866), daughter of Joseph Weller of Cleveland House, at St James' Church on 20 July 1831. There were seven sons and two daughters of the marriage.

Johnston lived mostly at Annandale House, built by his father and famous for its gardens and its Norfolk Island pines, among the first to have been planted on the mainland.

He gave more attention to public affairs, as a JP and a member of the district council. His name appears on many petitions throughout many years. In politics, he was conservative in the manner of his class but he avoided active participation; on two occasions, he declined nomination to the Legislative Council, pleading indifferent health. On 18 February 1871 he was promoted to commander on the retired list.

Robert Johnston died, a patriarchal figure, on 8 September 1882. He is buried at Waverley Cemetery in a vault which replaced the family vault at Annandale erected for his brother George.

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ED NOTE: This article was commissioned for the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* for the second series of volumes for the period 1851-1858. When it was realised that Johnston's death lay in the pre-1850 period, the article was omitted from Volume IV, but may be included in a new edition of the Dictionary. It is published here with the permission of the author and of the Dictionary who retain copyright.

Robert Johnston's portrait courtesy of Callaghan's Estate Agency, Adelaide.

James McDonald (1814-1902):

Architect of Balmain

by John Finner
James McDonald certainly earned the title "Architect of Balmain". Of the fifty-four years of his life there, forty-five of them can be documented as being spent as an architect. The "of Balmain" part of the title is proved by the fact that all but one of his known works were executed within walking distance of his residence in the West Bay area.

James McDonald was born at Inverness, Scotland, in 1814. His father, William Kelson, was a schoolteacher at Stornoway (on the Island of Lewis). James finished schooling at Inverness and later studied at King and Aberdeen to become an architect and surveyor. In 1840 he married Mary Gray nee Elgin and their first child, Margaret, was born in the following year.¹

Being "of an active and rushing disposition", James sought architectural employment in his native country.² Career openings were few and unobtainable, however, and in 1850 he decided to emigrate to New South Wales. On arriving in Sydney in 1851, he found the city in the grip of gold fever and he held to his original purpose of following an architectural career rather than "a life of adventure and chance upon the diggings".³

The fast growing village of Balmain, hard by Sydney Town, became his home and it was there that his two other children were born - William in 1853 and Mary in 1856.⁴ At the time, Balmain was a busy headland, teeming with building activity and containing some 1,400 residents, a number that was to more than double within McDonald's first ten years there.⁵

During this period of population increase, Balmain's industrial expansion was under way, a phenomenon which further provided a need for an architect. James McDonald was to fill this need well for he became the designer of many ecclesiastical, domestic and official buildings, as well as being the architect for the West's Dock complex.⁶ In civic terms, he was to be almost continually involved in the operations of the Balmain Council, being its first Council Clerk, Alderman and Mayor.

McDONALD'S FIRST TENDER: McDonald's long career as "Architect of Balmain" is recorded as beginning with a tender notice in the *Adelaide Morning Herald* of 28 March 1857. The notice is characteristic of the period as it tells us nothing about the work and the client. For example, McDonald's tender calls for prices for "House work to a residence in Balmain" but

the location of the residence is not stated.⁷ McDonald's own address is simply referred to as "House Cottage near the Dry Dock".⁸ The exact location of "House Cottage" cannot be determined even if it still exists.

MURDOCH STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH: McDonald's first commission of note was to design the Darling Street Presbyterian Church.⁹ The need for this small but elegant timber church arose from a split in the united Presbyterian and Congregational denominations. The two had united in 1843 to build the fine stone church on St Andrew in Balmain but, after its opening in 1855, doctrinal differences forced a schism to occur.¹⁰

McDonald completed the new church on the triangular allotment adjoining the Balmain Watch House in 1858. Seating 170 worshippers, with provision to be built later for a further 110, the building combined "utility, taste and economy" and was seen as a credit to the architect.¹¹ McDonald had given his service free and the quality of the work undoubtedly attracted more substantial commissions.



APPOINTED COUNCIL CLERK: Two years after building the Darling Street church, McDonald was appointed Clerk to the new Balmain Council which was proclaimed on 12 February 1860. His appointment was confirmed on 12 October 1860 and his duties were mainly concerned with road survey and construction for which he received £250 per annum and a rent-free dwelling.¹²

¹ See also Inglis J., Reynolds P. and Wise E., "Lot 48 Darling Street Balmain", *Richmond Hist. J.*, No 1 1971 and Reynolds P., "Remains of the Second Balmain Presbyterian Church", *Richmond Hist. J.*, No 4 1975.

During his eight-year term of office, McDonald constructed Darling Street, Curtis Road, Rowntree, Mullens, Palmer, Donnelly and Vincent Streets. The Darling Street construction, however, brought his professional expertise into question. Residents along the three-quarter mile stretch, from the harbour to Rowntree Street corner, complained bitterly of property damage caused by his drainage installations and difficulty of access resulting from the construction levels.¹²

McDonald's lax supervision also brought criticism upon his head. The contract time of road builder McCallum expired in January 1861 but Darling Street was anything but completed. The Council blamed McDonald for McCallum's tardiness and insisted that he issue certificates for every fifty yards of completed road. As this amounted to thirty-five certificates, the Council Clerk was forced to supervise McCallum's work thoroughly.¹³

Despite the close inspection, this part of Darling Street was not completed until June 1861.¹⁴

After this unpromising beginning, McDonald carried out his duties diligently which is borne out by the Council's naming a street after him. The top part of Thames Street, from Curtis Road in Darling Street, was renamed McDonald Street by a resolution of Council in December 1866.¹⁵

SCHOOL OF ARTS. Throughout his Council employment, McDonald retained the right to practice privately. When the time came for a new School of Arts for Balmain he was the obvious choice. A "Library and Reading Room" had been conducted at St Mary's Schoolhouse in Adelaide Street in the mid-1850s but it soon outgrew these premises. Temporary accommodation was found for a School of Arts at "Mr Gregory's, Darling Street, near the Durham Hotel" in October 1858.¹⁶

The foundation stone of McDonald's School of Arts was laid on land in Darling Street on 7 October 1861 and he called tenders for building work in January 1861 and February 1862. This distinctive building was destroyed by fire in the early 1920s and the stone-work was taken down in the late 1930s for use in the Weston Street end of the Balmain Rowing Club's retaining wall. All that survives of



School of Arts, Darling Street, Balmain destroyed by fire in the 1920s.
Australian Town and Country Journal, 10 December 1962



10 Thames Street, Balmain
 McDonald's own home

the School of Arts are the massive stone foundations which are still visible from Darling Street next to the premises No 140.¹⁷

McDONALD'S THAMES STREET RESIDENCE: Designed at the same time as the School of Arts and incorporating some of its details, McDonald's house at No 10 Thames Street became the centre of his architectural practice. Built in 1862 on land purchased from John Francis Gray for £131 in November 1862, it replaced the "rent-free dwelling" allowed him as Council Clerk.¹⁸

Although this is not one of McDonald's outstanding buildings, it contains his characteristic design quirk such as the small pointed-arch openings in the main gable - a detail to be seen in the School of Arts. A more significant detail was his use of extensively tall and very narrow windows which when viewed from the inside, engaged in dark cedar architraves, have the effect of light passing through glass in a pulley frame. This element was to appear often in his later works.

Another "trademark" shown here is the architect's knack of employing unrelated stylistic elements in the one project. The ornamental triple window with its worked label could and does finish an otherwise marked contrast with the undecorated entry portico. Abutting the portico, McDonald's study exhibits a series of large paneled windows with square heads below a quatrefoil frieze which supports a flat roof.

Although the portico and study were probably added later they were certainly the work of McDonald as he was the constant occupant for thirty-nine years.

CAMPBELL STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH: In 1860 McDonald received his largest and most important commission, the design of a new stone church to replace the overcrowded Darling Street church.¹⁹ It was to be situated in Campbell Street and McDonald called tenders on 17 November 1860. The successful tenders were William and James Bart of Ann Street, Balmain. James Smith of Clington Street supplied the joinery and fittings.²⁰

The double-aisled church with its impressive central tower was completed a little over a year on 18 April 1868. Four years later, in 1872, the gallery was added with access via a stair within the tower.²¹

¹⁸ See also Reynolds F and Irving S, *BALMAIN IN TIME* (Balmain 1971), p 31.

The church's exposed timber roof construction is quite unusual but consistent with other work designed by McDonald. Two systems of trusses intersect over carefully conceived timber columns. The major trusses, running across the body of the church, are a variation of the scissors truss with some noteworthy variations. Longitudinally, the architect's minor trusses give support to the valleys between the roofs of the nave and aisles. These minor elements are not really trusses in the strict sense but satisfactorily reduce the distance between the columns by half.

Above the side-aisles, the thrust of the main roof trusses is carried to the exterior by timber members similar to the minor trusses. At these critical load points, the stone walls are strengthened by stout buttresses which aid the walls to carry roof loads down to foundation level.

Internally, the roof load is supported by the timber columns mentioned before. Here the architect has lightened the church's interior by putting these columns down to an extreme minimum. By fabricating together an eight inch square core with four inch by two inch strips centrally fixed to each face, columns of elegant slenderness modulate the interior space. These vertical members are further enhanced by colouring the main surfaces, braces and stop-chamfering all external corners which are painted gold.

Externally, the architect's use of very tall narrow windows echo his own house in Thames Street. The window members are finely divided with slim sliding bars and give a very sophisticated appearance in contrast to the massive stone walls. As the street air windows have a forty-five degree reveal with a narrow frame which is a poor man's version of the reveals seen in Gothic churches in Europe. The windows have label moulds and rose finials, range from the front and in contrast with their smooth top and bottom surfaces.

THE CHURCH BUILDING McDonald's Campbell Street church windows were to re-appear in his design for the schoolroom at St Andrew's Congregational Church. Built between February and December 1871, the schoolroom was loaded with trimmings similar to the Presbyterian church.¹⁴

McDonald again used this trussing system in the Bathurst Congregational Church, a brick and stone building which was opened in July 1874. Still standing in good repair, the Bathurst church is the architect's only known work outside the Balmain district.¹⁵

The general appearance of the Bathurst church had an affinity with the Balmain West Presbyterian Schoolroom which was also designed by McDonald. In 1875 land for the schoolroom was bought at the corner of Darling Street and Wentworth Road (now Victoria Road). The weatherboard building opened in September 1876 and was jointly used as a school and mission church. Later, however, to enable work to begin on St Paul's Presbyterian church in 1904, the schoolroom was moved to a site facing Embley Road behind the new church.¹⁶ The weatherboard school was demolished in the 1950s to make way for the widening of Victoria Road.¹⁷



120-122A Campbell Street, Balmain

THE HOUSE BUILDING In 1872 McDonald executed his most personal commission.¹⁸ The background of this strange project began in November 1869 when Owen Wallace Campbell, a partner in Burt and Co and one of Balmain's leading citizens, engaged McDonald to build an upper story on "Blake Vale" which he had purchased from Robert Blake in 1866 and renamed "Evesham". This addition incorporated a handsome bay window which commanded a fine view over Darling Harbour towards the city. The bay window was expertly located between two well-proportioned full-height windows with simple arched pediments above them. An entry portico, carried up to form a balcony for the upper floor, was added to the eastern facade.¹⁹

Although well-illustrated in "Blake Vale" have survived. It was presumably he assumed that it was the standard Colonial Georgian dwelling of its time. McDonald, in making the two-storey addition would naturally have followed Georgian principles in matching his extension.

More striking and unusual ideas for him in 1872 was a second extension in 1872 in a style markedly different to Georgian. This extension is all the more peculiar when it is realised that the same architect was commissioned by the same owner to execute the two distinctly different parts of the building.

McDonald began work on the upper story in May 1872.²⁰ This four-storey structure may be vaguely termed mid-Victorian. It is a style, nevertheless, very personal to its designer. The massive stone exterior is heavily articulated in flat bas-relief decoration around the windows. The stone window sill, which is continuous across the end window, is one of McDonald's "trademarks". The sill design and window proportions are reminiscent of those in his Thames Street house.

The inside order window shutters and wall panelling are expertly integrated. When closed the shutters combine with the panelling to form a continuous wall of polished cedar. When opened the shutters disappear into their surrounding window casing.

The building is detailed externally with a clever combination of polished and well-chiselled Portland stone but the contrast between the two styles makes one appear unsympathetic to the other. However, despite the years of neglect and the many destructive alterations, "Evesham" is a majestic landmark in Balmain.²¹

¹⁴ See article "The Schoolroom" in next issue.

¹⁵ See article "Robert Blake" in this issue.



Stone Ferry Bay (Whaling Bay), Balmain, between 1864 and 1872. Jacobson's House, Hampton Villa and Penrose (centre right) front the bay with the old Stone Island Bridge in the background. View the original by painted in the Tasman Library

ALDERMAN AND MAYOR: During this busy period, James McDonald found time to become involved in community affairs. In February 1870 he stood against James Venn in the election for Balmain Council North Ward but was defeated. Undeterred, McDonald contested the October 1872 election and, at the age of fifty-eight, embarked upon a twenty three year term as alderman.¹¹

McDonald's aldermanic career reached its peak at the beginning of 1878 when he became Mayor of Balmain. He initiated two significant works for Balmain. In June 1878, he proposed that Waterloo Bay be renamed *Mort Bay* in honour of Thomas Mort whose industrial enterprise had transformed the waterfront and had provided employment for the district's workforce. The second important step was to call in the large number of outstanding rates in the district.¹²

McDonald also showed his economic good sense when he suspended the Council Clerk, James Raby. McDonald knew the nature of that office and soon discovered Raby's accounts were deficient by £157.15.4 and turned him to resign. Alderman Tidswell, the Council's Treasurer also resigned. In 1880 McDonald himself became Treasurer and stability returned to the Council's accounts once more.¹³

NEW COUNCIL CHAMBERS: During his second term as Mayor, in 1879, McDonald prepared plans for new Council Chambers. The Council had been meeting in rented premises since their first meeting in the loft of Captain Rowatree's warehouse in 1860. Their next place of meeting was at the corner of Darling and Stephen Streets but from 1862 until June 1876, the Council operated from the School of Arts. In September 1873, McDonald moved that a permanent headquarters be built and the present site was purchased in 1876. The Council off-

ices and meeting room were set up in a stone cottage already located on the land.¹⁴

Balmain's population had reached almost 15,000 by 1880 and the Council could not serve this large number efficiently from the cottage in which it was "painful to sit, especially when the heat was oppressive".¹⁵ Accordingly in March 1880, McDonald's design for "a substantial town hall" was approved and the acceptance of Mr Gibson's tender enabled work to commence.¹⁶ The architect gave his services without charge and his diligence in supervision allowed this worthy addition to Balmain's civic architecture to be completed in 1887.¹⁷

McDonald's Council Chambers building has a character similar to the Thomas Street House, particularly in its quiet gabled elevations with tall slim windows. The building is now the Meeting Room at the rear of the Town Hall which was built in 1888.¹⁸

SIX SMITH STREET HOUSES: McDonald's architectural practice went pace with the economic 'boom' of the 1880s. In March 1880, he called tenders for the erection of five houses in Smith Street. For reasons not now known, McDonald amended this scheme to six houses and called tenders again in November 1880.¹⁹

These six houses (Nos 11-16), which stand today in very good condition, are remarkable in three ways. To overcome the characteristic sagging of terrace house balconies, McDonald used the same system of trusses as those placed longitudinally in the Campbell Street Presbyterian church. This system reduces the long span of the main supporting beams of the verandah and thereby counteracts the dead weight of the cast iron balustrading.

The cast iron itself is of great interest. Each panel bears the inscription "G Fletcher Son Registered, Mar 4 1880". The pattern

of the lace work is a fine example of the florid decoration of the time and not common in Balmain.

The third point of interest is that for the only known time in his career, McDonald added engaged brick piers to the sides of the main door openings. By so thickening the walls of the entrance, he achieved a feeling of stability and gave a further emphasis to the point of arrival.

FIVE DARLING STREET HOUSES: A row of five houses was begun in Darling Street, East Balmain, in 1881 near the corner of Darling Street and The Avenue (now Nos 113-121). The houses, like the Smith Street row, were built as a speculative investment.³⁶

They are standard terrace houses but, by a curious separation of the stairs into two steep "wings", the architect was able to isolate the servant's room from the family bedrooms.

Although the arrangement of the decorated triple windows on the street frontages is not uncommon, details unique to the architect exist. For example, McDonald's hand is seen in the colour and arrangement of the glass panels in the sidelights which resemble those used in "Easton".

NO 42 DARLING STREET: William Miller of No 48 Darling Street engaged McDonald in 1883 to build a house on the adjoining lot which he owned (No 42). Miller's own house was originally designed to receive its neighbour as all necessary "toothings" and fireplace modifications had already been provided. It is quite possible that McDonald designed No 48 but it is No 42 which has proved the more interesting.³⁷

The new house is a neat and presentable example of its time to which McDonald has added a certain Gothic "twist" which is manifested in the bold dormer window jutting out above Darling Street. The front parlour is enlarged by the introduction of a bay window of simple but elegant proportions. The potential sagging of the upper verandah is overcome by a central cast iron column. An enormous truss was shown on McDonald's working drawings but evidently proved too much for Mr Miller as it was eliminated from the design before work began.

No 42 Darling Street was completed in April 1884 at a cost of £735.15.0.³⁸



11-43 Smith Street, Balmain



113-121 Darling Street, Balmain

THREE PAUL STREET HOUSES: Miller's land fronting Darling Street extended through to Paul Street and he subdivided this rear portion into three allotments. Acting on Miller's instructions, McDonald called tenders for three houses on the Paul Street land in April 1885. The successful tenderer was Henry Bonitz who also built No 42 Darling Street.³⁹

The Paul Street houses (Nos 15-18) are of similar internal arrangement to the Darling Street house but are without attics and are generally of a lower standard.

Curiously, an alteration in McDonald's hand to his working drawings for the Paul Street houses provides a possible link to two houses still standing in Lawson Street. McDonald's inability to spell accurately is noticeable to anyone searching his life and it appears that he used his designs more than once. In the drawing's title-block the word "Larson" is scribbled out and "Paul" substituted.

There are two houses in Lawson Street (Nos 14 and 5) which have an uncanny resemblance to the Paul Street houses. Though admittedly suffering from "modernisation", the basic architecture is still discernible and could well be McDonald's.

The details and planning in the above four groups of houses vary somewhat but there is an architectural (dis)symmetry common to all. A small servant's room is located above the kitchen wing in each house. In most cases the internal planning was stretched to the limit to allow this by the arrangement of the staircase. For example in No 42 Darling Street, McDonald gave the builder two alternative methods of constructing the staircase and kitchen wing to ensure that the servant's room would be built.⁴⁰

It seems that an isolated servant's room was a desirable necessity in Balmain real estate dealing as it would bring in good rentals. **ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL, BALMAIN WEST:** The Catholic church in Balmain was a significant source of architectural work for James McDonald. His first project for them came in 1868 when he undertook repairs to the first St Augustine's church. In 1880 McDonald enlarged the Jane Street Convent which had been designed by Edmund Blacket in 1876. He further added to this building in 1885.⁴¹

McDonald designed a new school for St Joseph's church at the corner of Westoo Road and Gordon Street. Built in 1876 it was a

"Beautiful and spacious building" but after 1879, cramped conditions forced an upper storey to be added.⁵²

McDonald also built a church and chapel on the site in 1880-1881. The brick church was described as a "most beautiful of Gothic Architecture" but unfortunately alterations have made it no longer recognisable.⁵³

THAMES STREET SCHOOLROOM. In 1883 McDonald designed a new schoolroom "in the 12th Century style" for St Augustine's school, then located in Thames Street.⁵⁴

The building was given a rather curious window arrangement. In an attempt to control the daylight penetrating the classroom, McDonald planned tall thin windows along the north side only and apart from slim vertical windows at each end, these were the only means of lighting the interior. It was said that this system of daylighting was "less trying to the eyes" than having windows on both sides.⁵⁵

The actual building work was completed in mid-1885, but McDonald carried out fencing and ground improvements in 1886. In 1887 the school was acquired by the Vincentian Brothers who employed him to make further alterations.⁵⁶

This particular building is now the Primary School of the Thames Street Christian Brothers College and is almost unrecognisable under an upper storey, added in 1929, and a first floor extension added in 1936.⁵⁷

INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS OF NSW. For most of his professional life James McDonald was an active member of the Institute of Architects. He joined that body in 1873 by becoming one of the eleven founding members. He was elected honorary Treasurer in 1876, a position that he was to hold unchallenged until 1886. McDonald served throughout the faction-ridden evolution of 1886-1906 during which time he supported his controversial President, J. Hartley Hunt⁵⁸ and by so doing helped considerably to keep the Institute viable.⁵⁹

After his retirement in 1897, his meritorious service of twenty-six years was recognised in the following year when the Institute unanimously elected him to the "Class of Retired Fellow".⁶⁰

THE MANSE, CAMPBELL STREET. During the late 1880s and throughout the 1890s, McDonald received many small commissions. Although these works were important enough to provide a good living, information about them is sketchy and unreliable.

One project that occupied him last years was the design of the Presbyterian Manse in Campbell Street. He called tenders for his first design in March 1901 and again in May 1901 but was apparently unimpressed with the results. Uncharacteristically, his third tender call in October 1901 was in the joint names of McDonald and the Sydney architectural firm of Slattery and Coombs.⁶¹

It seems that McDonald's advancing years had forced him to share this important commission with other architects. The completed building bears witness to this because its architecture is not McDonald's. It is the work of younger men designing in the Edwardian style - an architecture concerned with unadorned face brick, timber verandahs and symmetrical massing.

When the Manse was completed in 1906 after McDonald's death, the final cost was



15-17 East Street, Balmain

£1,590.⁶²

McDONALD'S DEATH. James McDonald died at his Thames Street home on 15 November 1902 at the age of eighty-nine. His wife Mary had died in 1887 and he spent the years after her death in a room rented from his son-in-law, James Skirra, to whom he had sold the property in 1886. As well as his room, his possessions amounted to nothing more than drafting implements, some books, a watch and a few items of furniture.⁶³

His funeral service took place in the Campbell Street Church where he had been an Elder since 1879. His memory is revered with a plaque at the rear of the church below the gallery. The Institute's President, G. A. Mansfield, Treasurer, F. K. Peitchard, Secretary, G. Sidney Jones and Council members, J. Marlow and J. Smith attended to pay their last respects to their former colleague.⁶⁴

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Although James McDonald's practice was modest the architectural front line of his day, it was remarkable in that it began, grew and ended in the age district - Balmain. McDonald's concentration on Balmain buildings is a measure of the suburb's growth over the second fifty years of the nineteenth century. This steady growth was strong enough to provide work for many architects and builders but still gave McDonald the opportunity to complete a successful career.

There is no doubt that he was fortunate to have been the right man, in the right place, at the right time. James McDonald's greatest attribute, however, was his unswerving devotion to every task he undertook - an attribute recorded in his contribution to Balmain's architectural heritage.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The above article was extracted from the author's B Arch (Hons) 1976 thesis of the same title and published with his permission.

JANE STRAIN CONSENT

See *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 18 November 1876, p. 421. The building described as Blacket's was for the Sisters of the Good Shepherd and was to be completed "within a few weeks". The design, incorporating an impressive tower, which was never built, is reminiscent of that time in Blacket's career when J. Hartley Hunt was the majority of his office. See Fredland J. H. *Architect Extraordinary, The Life and Work of John Hartley Hunt* (Melbourne 1963), pp. 25-32.

Mrs Graham was a popular sewing mistress. She taught us plain and fancy sewing including point lace and Venetian work, and read us a story as we sewed. In Lower Sixth we commenced a Graph Work book with a Baby's Feeder paper pattern. The cost for a half-yard of buckram, ingrain cotton, tape and white cotton was one-shilling and threepence; a child's dress for three shillings made from 1 yard double width voile, 2 skeins cotton, pearl buttons and white cotton; then a Fancy collar of half a yard of piece embroidery, 2 yards of lace and cotton for two shillings and threepence; baby's pincers made from three-quarters of a yard of calico, 2 yards of lace, feather stitch cotton and white cotton for two shillings and one halfpenny. We never made up these articles in material.

Corporal punishment was applied to unruly boys. An ex-pupil of my school was recently told me that a caning hurt at the time, increased his respect for the teacher and did him good for a little while, but never curbed his youthful spirit and he lined up for several more canings. Another method of restraint on troublesome pupils was punishment sums of long multiplication which had to be proved by division. These sums were gruesome for the backward and outward fraternity.

SCHOOL HOURS: Our school day began in the morning at 9.30am, playtime 11-11.15am, lunchtime 12.30pm-2pm, afternoon 2pm, playtime 3pm-3.15pm and finished at 4pm. We marched from the playground into school and were greeted with the strains of the "Glow Worm" and other marches rendered by pupils proficient in the art of playing the piano. How we envied those musicians. A girl pupil was stationed at the gate and took the names of latecomers who were marched round the playground in the lunch hour for five minutes to the delight of those pupils who took lunch to school.

STAFFING: 50 pupils of boys and girls to each class.

SPORTS: Tennis, basketball, cricket, soccer and swimming. I remember a soccer song:

Just as the ball was centred,
Just as the whistle blew,
Somebody got the ball
And down the line he flew,
He passed it on to Stuart,
And Stuart passed it back,
He passed it on to Jimmy,
And Jimmy was flung on his back.

For swimming we went to Drummoyne Baths where the water was pumped in from the river. We marched down Johnston Street to The Crescent and a double tram took us to the baths for one penny each way.

DRILL: Manned school drill was effective in coloured tunics and comprised:

Hand drill - hands decorated with flowers.
Flag drill - small flags held in hands for lining up, as legs and arms made elaborate formation in concerted action, especially on the green sward at the Showground on Combined School Sports Day.
Maypole - we had a gaily decorated Maypole in the school ground.
Class drill - classes stood to attention in two lines and showed hands, then heels. Patted fours, turned right and right-wheelies to march round the playground and return to original line assembly. Did small exercises - deep breathing



North Annandale's Maypole Dancers c 1914

and told to keep shoulders back; arms up, forward, back and sideways.

JOHN GOULD TRAGEDY OF KING LOVERS: We paid one penny and received a printed foolscap membership sheet with a bird on one side and Mr. Gould's photograph on the other side.

ANNON DAY ABOUT 1918 OR 1919: We planted trees in the boy's playground on the Piper Street boundary. Miss Sullivan tended the gardens in the playgrounds.

EMPIRE DAY CELEBRATION 24TH MAY: An annual event commemorating Queen Victoria's Birthday. Deputy Mr Reed was our singing teacher (with tuning fork) and we practised in the school yard a few weeks before the event. Items included "God Save the King" (King George V), "Advance Australia", and "Three Cheers for the Red, White and Blue". One pupil Billy Archer rendered the song "Two Little Boys had two Little Tops" (recently revived by Neil Harris but in a different tune).

The Clergy who attended were Mr R Hook (later Canon Hook) rector of St Aidan's, Mr Walker from the Methodist Church and Mr Gallaway from the Hunter Bailie. One of the school founders, Mr Mahony M.A. the Mayor and some Aldermen also attended. The P and C provided a piece of fruit and a bag of boiled sweets each on our way home, after Mr Mahony had announced a half-holiday granted by the Education Department. We later proceeded to the Annandale Theatre for a free matinee provided by Mr Tate.

PRIZE DAY CELEBRATIONS 1919: The P and C provided cut lunches, fruit, sweets and soft drinks. Sporting events such as tug-of-war and foot races were held in Kingsby Park. A Fancy Dress competition was judged in the school grounds and all participants marched from the school up Johnston Street towards Booth Street, led by a bugler and drummer, and returned to the school grounds. Prizes and certificates were awarded to the winners of all events in the sports and fancy dress competitions.

The P and C was an active Association and, to raise money, conducted supper dances in Lapan's Colonnade Hall in Johnston Street, for one shilling admission. Excellent music was provided by Cec Goman's band. This was the Ragtime and Jazz era and popular dances included the "Turkey Trot" and "Riviera Rag" (recently revived in the musical show Irene), the "Tickle Toe" and "Shimmy" and, later on, the "Makinn". Other bands were led by Dad Hawkins and Lock Wilmsley. Mrs Hunt was a

popular pianist and band leader when the P and C conducted dances in the Mahoeir Hall in Trafalgar Street during the "foxtrot", "two-step", "Charleston", "Valsecia" and "Blackbottom" dancing years. Admission price was raised to two shillings to cover the twenty-five shillings hall rent and supper costs.

TENNIS: About 1920 teacher Miss Sullivan's proposal for two tennis courts became a reality through the P and C Association's financial support. Tennis racquets and balls were also provided by this worthy Association. Fifth and Sixth class boys and girls played on Friday afternoon. Billy Gumble, our postman and a P and C member, conducted this club and ex-pupils played on Saturday afternoon.

I may be prejudiced, but I believe Miss Sullivan's dedication to forming a school tennis club was the nucleus of the many tennis clubs formed later on in Annandale and neighbouring suburbs.

Annandale Clubs were Iona (Young Street), Wimbledon, Whately's (Annandale Street), The Glen (Preston's courts in Booth Street - now the Commonwealth Banking Corporation's store), Tramway Courts in The Crescent (now Harold Park car park), and Fernvale (corner Booth and Catherine Streets, Leichhardt). Iona Club in Young Street was affiliated with Tenterden Suburban Association until the Balmain District Harcourts Tennis Association was formed about 1930.

The internationally famous Lew Head, who played with Harford (Glebe Point), was a Blackwall Cup representative for the Balmain Harcourts Tennis Association. Leichhardt Council named the cliff-side reserve, opposite Harold Park, Lew Head Reserve after this famous tennis player.

LOCAL SHOPKEEPERS: At Nos 221 and 223 Johnston Street on the opposite side of the school towards Wymouth Steps, Miss Nash conducted a mixed business in No 221 and sold half-penny lollies, one penny vacuum books, graph books, drawing and painting books, erasers, pencils, pen holders and slates. We had a free issue of some of these items and bought replacements from Miss Nash until the next free issue. She also sold ham and beef, pork frizz, brawn, bread, butter and a few grocery lines. The shop always had an appetising smell of fresh bread.

A Greek family had a fish and chip shop next door to Miss Nash and these two lines were popular with those who had money to buy.

These two premises have been converted to private residences.

No 211 Johnston Street was Mr Brady's barber shop. Mr Brady was about 5 feet and stout with dark eyes and bushy eyebrows, olive skin a white vandyke beard and a bald pate fringed with grey wavy hair. He intrigued us, and every day we gathered near him as he stood in the middle of Johnston Street in front of his shop, gold watch opened in his hand and adjusted its time as nine o'clock chimed from the Sydney Town Hall clock - an impressive feat nowadays.

Mr Harry Lauder, who retired about 12 years ago to Brisbane, bought Mr Brady's business in about 1920. Mr Lauder cut the North Annandale School boys' hair, and many ex-pupils returned to him for a trim until he closed shop.

We had a great time at North Annandale School and dreaded the time when we had to leave the Upper Sixth and transfer to other schools but it was unavoidable and we had our happy memories to treasure for all time.

* * * * *

In conversation with the Headmaster, Mr Wetherapoon, we discussed the sudden death of his popular Deputy Mr J M Ridge on 23 December 1973. Mr Ridge, born in Annandale Street on 11 June 1918, was a member of the Ridge family who resided in Annandale before the turn of the century. Mr Ridge joined the staff of North Annandale in February 1956.

John Ward (1865-1955):

Blue Bird Hunter of Balmain

By Peter Keynolds

Historical journals and monographs are usually concerned with the life and achievements of eighteenth and nineteenth century pioneers. Twentieth century pioneers are somewhat neglected in the rush to document earlier "doers of deeds". John Edward Ward, a sprightly, humorous, somewhat glibly bird-lover of Balmain, an ornithologist extraordinaire, who made fourteen expeditions to New Guinea to collect exotic birds, was one of this century's notable men.

Ward was born in 1865, the son of a Birmingham man who successfully combined the avocations of art collector, publisher and racehorse breeder. This multi-disciplinary gentleman had his own study painting at the age of thirteen under Robert Mann, a protégé of the celebrated Turner. Two years later the young Ward exhibited his first painting at the Birmingham Art Gallery. This first effort was an everyday study piece entitled *The Old Mill at Llanelli*, a Welsh scene. The painting was the first in a lifetime of representations of landscape objects and scenes. His early obsession with still-life paintings led him to join a lithographic firm at the age of fourteen.

In 1883 the family emigrated to Queensland and Ward began a long chain of jobs with newspaper publishers. His first post was an lithographic artist and designer on the *Queensland Freeman*. The new life in Queensland allowed Ward to add black-and-white illustrative work to his lithographic art.

A return trip to England came in 1893 when he was commissioned to deliver a consignment of Australian fauna for purposes now unknown. Returning to Brisbane, Ward was appointed to the *Queensland Courier* and the *Queenslander* newspapers. From 1904 to 1908, he was employed on the *Southland* and the *Drum* in New Zealand.

At the end of his New Zealand newspaper employment, Ward moved to Sydney where between 1908 and 1914 he did illustrative work for the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Sydney Mail*. Over this period he gradually set aside lithography for illustrative work and in 1914 began to devote all his energies to birds, a task that was to bring him great hazards but inestimable rewards.

The year 1914 was the turning point of Ward's life for, in that year, he resolved to satisfy a curiosity that had plagued him for



John Ward at 88

The fine detail of his bird paintings

many years. In the course of his previous bird studies, he had become aware of the existence of the New Guinea Blue Bird of Paradise. An ornithologist friend, A. S. Meek, had been on an expedition to New Guinea and its nearby islands and had brought back an unusually fine collection of birds of Paradise and butterflies for the Tring Park Museum in England. Ward was enraptured by the one Blue Bird of Paradise in the collection that Meek had brought from the Central Division of New Guinea.

For many decades ornithologists had regarded the existence of the Blue Bird as a New Guinea myth until the first specimen, an incomplete skin, reached England. When the second specimen, a live Blue Bird reputed to be worth \$100, reached London, the myth became fact. The mystery that surrounded this bird and its extreme rarity started Ward dreaming of visiting New Guinea to find one for himself.

In 1914 Ward prepared to make the first of his fourteen bird-seeking expeditions to the hinterland of New Guinea.

Ward sailed for New Guinea aboard the *Suzanna* and disembarked at Port Moresby. He set off into the mountains of south-eastern New Guinea to search for the Blue Bird, *Paradisaea rudolphi*, which was named in honour of the ill-fated Archduke Rudolph of Austria.

The results of excessive enthusiasm and lamentable inexperience caused him to return exhausted, in poor health and, most distressing of all, empty-handed. Ward, however, had learned one important lesson. Meticulous planning, correct equipment and above all, the knowledge of the native dialects and an understanding of their customs, was essential if he were to bring back the fabulous "bird".

Even on his second journey, and with previous requirements catered for, Ward returned without his Blue Bird of Paradise.

He was completely mystified by his lack of success. He reasoned that he knew enough of the natives themselves and, in his constant questioning them of the whereabouts of the "bird", to be sure that he was making his meaning abundantly clear.

On his return a third time, a New Guinea acquaintance explained to him that the natives of the Blue Bird country had no word for "blue". In that area "blue" and "green" were synonymous. For some reason that Ward has never since explained, the natives were repelled by "blue" and the Blue Bird was not sought for their ceremonial adornment.

Ward, the artist, quickly roughed out a colour sketch of the Blue Bird and on showing it to the natives they uttered cries of *Manika Manika*, their word for the "bird". Having bridged this communication gap, Ward soon got his first Blue Bird.

In a subsequent article, Ward described the experience of beholding his first Blue Bird of Paradise:

*I am not likely to forget the thrill I experienced when the first live Blue Bird of Paradise was brought to me. It was the native children who first attracted my attention as they raced past my dala (native hut) shouting *Manika! Manika!* which is the local name for the Blue Bird of Paradise. As the natives climbed the stile at the entrance of the village, the leader held up the bird for my inspection. Words failed me completely. I was lost in wonder at the dazzling beauty of this specimen compared with the few bedraggled skins that I had seen before. Here, at last I saw before me that which few men have had the privilege to behold, a live Blue Bird of Paradise.*

I could not hope to describe the sensation that came over me at that impressive moment as I gazed upon the bird I had come so far to see. Its jet black head radiated a deep crimson from the depths of the velvet-like texture of the feathers; the exquisite arched line of its wings and tail possessed an opalescent effect; the fine delicate colouring of its display plumes partly hidden under its wings were purple blue near the base, graduating to a delicate mauve tone toward the outer edge, while two long streaming flexible shafts hung gracefully down from its tail. Only a bird lover could appreciate fully the elation with which I gazed, enthralled at this beautiful creature.

On a subsequent trip to New Guinea Ward brought back eleven live Blue Birds, some of

which he sent to museums in America where they had never been seen before.

John Ward's later career was also concerned with bird-hunting. Four or five years after World War I, he was commissioned by the Fiji Government to find insectivorous birds which could be imported to Fiji to combat the *levuana* moths which were destroying the coconut trees. To find suitable birds Ward travelled to Ceylon and as far north as Borneo. He sent a large number of birds to Fiji, but on orders from the British Government they were destroyed before release. Ward reflected somewhat regretfully that British naturalists had decided that, without careful experiments, they could not be certain that the newly-imported birds would not become a greater menace than the moths they were sent to destroy.

On another occasion the Government of Honolulu asked Ward to find them birds to eradicate an insect that was destroying the cane there. This job was easier, since the Minah, a bird he found near Maryborough had been imported to Queensland from India for the same purpose.

In 1927 Ward reached the climax of his bird-collecting life when he was asked by the Curator of Birds of the New York Zoological Society to lead an expedition into the Central Division of New Guinea to search for rare birds - particularly the Blue Bird of Paradise. Ward accepted and set out for New Guinea late that year with Lee B. Crandall. Crandall subsequently wrote a book about the expedition, entitled *Paradise Quest*, in which he pays many tributes to Ward's jungle experience and leadership.

These trips into the mountainous interior of New Guinea were no Boy Scout hikes. At the time of the New York Zoological Society's expedition Ward was in his sixties, but according to Crandall he proved incredibly hardy. One of the risks on the journey was malaria - a disease that Ward had come to accept stoically. Describing one of Ward's malaria attacks, Crandall wrote:

Ward had not gone far before I noticed that he was beginning to stagger. Doubt, he began stumbling wildly and then he fell flat, face down in the track. When I helped him up, he was mumbling, saying that he had gone blind. These sudden attacks of malaria are terrible. Poor Ward knew well enough that he would never hold out to each Matsika and that resting would not help him. Half delirious, he still held fast to the feeling that he must get as far as he could before he went down to stay. He would not let me help him but insisted on floundering ahead as best he could. He wove from side to side and soon he could go no more than 20 ft between falls. At last when he struggled to rise, I held him down; he lacked the strength to resist.

It was a tight fit for me. I could not leave Ward lying in the mud. But I must get on, for the Belau boys must already have reached Matsika and they would let the bird loose wherever they happened to drop. Ward began to mutter again. He admitted he was done but insisted that he would soon be allright. "Why was I such a fool as to let our birds die in the mud", he asked. I must leave at once; he would be sleep soon.

In later life when some visitors asked Ward what he did between trips to New Guinea, he looked shy and replied, "In my spare time I had malaria".

Ward was equally casual about other serious matters of the expeditions. When curious people later asked him how he managed to catch birds in the New Guinea mountains, he replied laconically, "With salt". In his writings, however, he has explained that he left the actual bird-catching to the natives, who used several devices. Sometimes to catch smaller birds, they used "bird-lime", a sticky substance that was smeared on a branch near some attractive morsel of bird food. The bird that perched on the sticky branch was unable to pull its feet loose and fly away.

The larger birds lived mostly in the tops of the highest trees and were usually caught with nets woven by the natives and placed across gaps in the foliage where the birds flew. The top of the net sat lightly on a twig and a bird flying into the net dislodged the top of the net which fell around the bird. The smaller, low-flying birds were often caught by children with their own finely woven nets. Ward paid in tobacco, beads, knives, matches, and calico for the birds which the natives brought in and sometimes the children inundated him with small common birds. Often when he had been brought great quantities of common birds of Paradise, he paid for them, and, as soon as the natives were out of sight, liberated them.

There were problems in getting live birds from the jungle into the aviaries of zoos - and even in keeping them alive once they arrived. When Ward was asked about the life expectancy of a jungle bird in captivity he replied, "He'll live till he dies if you look after him".

After he had been to New Guinea a few times Ward tried to supplement his profit from these trips by making movies. He made three altogether, "Quest for the Blue Bird", "Terrible Twins" and "Australia's Own". They were all shown briefly in Australian theatres but Ward observed philosophically that since the theatre managers were already committed to showing their regular stock of films, he couldn't persuade them to show his very often.

Retirement and old-age did not quell John Ward's love of birds. As late as 1951, aged eighty-six, Ward gained popular recognition when *Life* magazine offered to purchase the rights to reprint his bird paintings. The magazine's interest in his work came from an exhibition of them at the New York Zoological Society. The magazine reprinted several and requested more through their Sydney agent. For the sum of \$1,000 (American), Ward gave the magazine publication rights.

It has been said that without knowing the man one would never suspect that his heavy wrinkled hands could produce paintings of extraordinary detail and unquestioned ornithological beauty. Each of the few dozen paintings he has produced is of a colourful bird in its natural setting - usually a luminous maze of deep green ferns, grasses and trees. Each leaf and each feather is carefully shaped, reflecting the craftsmanship that Ward developed in the first half of his life as a lithographer.

When Ward first sent his bird paintings to his friend, Crandall, Curator of Birds at the New York Zoological Society, he was asked how he painted them because the technique was unfathomable. He painted in water colour but produced the effect of oil. People who saw his original bird paintings often asked him to explain his technique. Sometimes Ward spoke darkly of "trade secrets", but then chuckled and explained, "Oh, I just put on a bit of gum".

New York's recognition of Ward's work at eighty-six rejuvenated his interest in bird-painting and he was inspired to produce more. He also began to turn out an occasional oil painting - a medium he had not worked in for fifty years. As far as Ward was concerned, serious painting could develop into a career - even at that advanced age.

During World War II Ward compiled an autobiography which he hoped to see published along with his paintings but this hope has not yet been realized.

John Ward moved his family to Balmain in 1898 on his arrival from New Zealand. His first residence was "Glenarush" in Thomas Street and he later lived in Rowntree Street. In 1914, after deciding to devote himself to the study of birds, Ward moved his family to "Shannon Grove", an 1845 stone cottage "on a small block of jungle" across the water from, and in sight of, the city of Sydney. Six years later, in 1920, Ward purchased the house from the Cameron family.

Ward, who was known to his friends as "Pop" and to his acquaintances as "Jack", looked in later life more like a tough white jungle-fighter than either a serious artist or expert ornithologist. With an undersized diamond-shaped hat on his head and ready smile on his weatherbeaten face, Ward spent his leisure hours tending to his "jungle" until its luxuriant growth and his advancing age combined to get the better of him.

For many years Ward kept large aviaries at his home and experimented with cross-breeding fish in a small concrete hatchery he had installed in his garden. He did a great deal of work on lyrebirds, making the first scientific observations on the hatch-time of the lyrebird egg. He also wrote articles on the lyrebird for the *Bulletin of the New York Zoological Society* and other magazines. He kept numbers of lyrebirds at home and avowed that they were wonderful pets. Because they were easily domesticated they were not caged and ran loose in the house and garden.

John Ward lived at "Shannon Grove" until his death in 1955 at the age of ninety. He left behind a widow and one son, Mr J L Ward of Dulwich Hill, and a collection of paintings and writings on his chosen subject.

NOTES ON SOURCES

1. *People*, fortnightly, 16 March 1952, pp 24-26.
2. *The Australian Encyclopedia*, "Birds of Paradise", Vol II, pp 14-15.
3. *Bulletin of the New York Zoological Society*, September-October 1930, Vol XLIII No 5, Ward J L, "The passing of the type bird" pp 147-152.
4. *Ibid*, November-December 1929, Vol XXXII No 6, Crandall L S, "The New York Zoological Society's Expedition to New Guinea", pp 225-256.
5. *Staff News*, February 1953, Vol III.

Leichhardt: The Origin of the Name

by Jennifer Bates

Sydney's Centennial Year saw the completion of many suburban town halls. A public holiday was proclaimed on 29 September 1888 when the Governor, Lord Carrington, and 5,000 others witnessed the official opening of the Leichhardt Town Hall.

The two-storey brick and cement-plastered building was designed "in the style known as the free classic" and was described as "the best municipal building outside the city of Sydney". Messrs Drake and Walcott were the architects and the building with its ninety-feet high tower was built by Tabrett and Designer of Newtown for £5,000.

Sixteen years previously, on 24 December 1871, the area between Parramatta Road, Iron Cove, Balmain and Johnston's Creek had been proclaimed a municipality in response to a petition of ninety-eight residents in the district.

How does the renowned naturalist and explorer, Ludwig Leichhardt, come to be connected with an inner suburb of Sydney?

After expeditions to explore the inland of Australia, Leichhardt left for his last fatal journey in February 1848. He and his party of six were last seen at McPherson's Station on the Darling Downs on 3 April 1848. Their disappearance gave rise to intense speculation throughout the country.

Before his departure, Leichhardt had befriended Walter Beames, a merchant of Sydney. When nearing the end of his expedition to the Gulf of Carpentaria, he encountered a small stream which, as he noted in his journal:

I called the brook, "Beames brook". In honour of the liberal support I received from Walter Beames Esquire, of Sydney.

Beames returned this honour by naming his land at Sydney, Leichhardt. This was the area to the north of Parramatta Road between Balmain Road and Brennan and Styles Street and across to White's Creek. The land had been granted to Captain John Piper and Ensign Hugh Piper in 1811 and when Beames purchased it, sometime after 1842, it was known as "Piperston".

This "important and valuable property was subdivided and re-named "Leichhardt Township" by Beames in 1849. "Leichhardt Township", the "Anandale", "Edswick", "Ausienham", "Broughton" and "Garry Owen" estates, as well as other smaller holdings, were incorporated into the Leichhardt Municipality.

The area comprising present-day Annandale was proclaimed a separate municipality on 2 January 1894.

The name Leichhardt was retained in preference to any of the other estate names on which the Municipality was founded. The mystery surrounding the explorer's ultimate fate, coupled with his friendship with Beames, ensured that his name be perpetuated in the suburb, Leichhardt. Justifiably, Walter Beames became Town Clerk of Leichhardt and Frank, his nephew, its first Mayor.

(cont. p 30)

* Leichhardt L, *Overland Expedition from Murrumbidgee to Fort Irwin* (London 1847), p 170.



Leichhardt Town Hall in 1888. Sydney Mail, 13 October 1888, p. 724

Robert Blake (1806 - 1875): Soldier, Sheriff and Spec. Builder

By Peter Reynolds

In June 1976, Leichhardt Council's Mayor, Les Rodwell, sounded the death-knell for one of Balmain's oldest buildings. "Clontarf", built in 1844, had been purchased by the Council with the intention of demolishing it and converting the allotment to a public park.¹

When faced with Council's decision to demolish "Clontarf", interested local business and conservation authorities presented arguments sound enough to dissuade the Council from its chosen course. "Clontarf's" immediate destruction had been forestalled. However, the old house, after suffering slight damage by fire in August 1978, still stands derelict, providing mute evidence of bureaucratic neglect.²

Amid the moves set on foot to save the house came the question of its origins. Who was its builder? Why was it built? What has been its past?

"Clontarf's" original owner, Robert Blake, was a member of His Majesty's forces, Under Sheriff of Sydney and one of Balmain's early developers.

ROBERT BLAKE, SOLDIER. At Eyre Court, in Ireland's County Galway, landowner Peter Blake married Jane Eyre who gave him a son Robert in 1806. County life apparently did not suit the young Blake for in 1823 at just seventeen he took the 'King's shilling' and enlisted in the 17th Regiment of Foot. Within two years he had captured his superior's attention to become a sub-commissioned officer before the age twenty.³

Army life continued to be rewarding for Robert Blake for, on embarking for New South Wales with the Regiment in 1831, he had reached the rank of Quartermaster-Sergeant. His

"steady, sober, trustworthy" conduct in the Sydney garrison earned him the recognition of his commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Despard who had it in mind to promote him to Regimental Sergeant-Major."

While Blake naturally welcomed his commander's approbation, he chose a civil rather than a military future for himself. SHERIFF: With Despard's recommendation, letters of introduction from Ireland and supported by the Secretary of State, Lord Goderich, Blake applied for a post in the New South Wales Sheriff's office in August 1835. At the end of that same month, Blake became Sheriff Thomas Macquoid's junior clerical officer, a post that he was to hold until May 1840 when his promotion to Chief Clerk was approved. Robert Blake's diligence in that post encouraged Macquoid to recommend him for the position of Under Sheriff of Sydney. The appointment was made in July 1837.¹

Within two years, then, Blake had become a prominent public official whose efficiency had been demonstrated by his attention to duties that were often onerous and unpleasant.

Although Blake faithfully performed these duties, he complained bitterly of the low salary for this position and in September 1838 made his situation known in the columns of the Sydney press - a practice always frowned upon by governmental authorities.² Therefore, in April 1840, when Blake openly criticised a member of the judiciary, again in the press, his public service career was swiftly terminated.³

This public claim occurred while Sheriff Macquoid was absent from Sydney and had entrusted the care of his department to his deputy, Blake. During proceedings of the Court of Quarter Sessions, the Chairman, Mr Justice Manning, noticed the complete absence of jurors. It was one of the duties of the Sheriff's office to see that an adequate number of jurors were on hand to allow smooth running of the Court. The Chairman held Blake directly responsible for this revocation of duty and invoked a fine of £10 against him.⁴

When Justice Manning's action appeared in the *Australian* of 9 April 1840, Blake, "greatly hurt" at what he saw to be "an unmerited and unasked for mention" of his name as the culprit, immediately responded with a letter to that newspaper which appeared two days later.⁵

In well as earnestly explaining that a clerical error in his department combined with the Sheriff's absence from town had been the real cause of the judge's complaint, Blake went on to castigate the judiciary in so uncertain terms. On Manning's imposition of the £10 fine, Blake plainly repeated Manning's hope that as the Sheriff was out of Sydney "he trusted Mr Blake the Under Sheriff would be compelled to pay the amount". Blake likened this statement to the actions of "a dog snarling and showing his teeth where he can't bite".⁶

As if this condemnation of Chairman Manning had not been strong enough, Blake further replied that the judge had as much chance of collecting the fine as he (Manning) had of ever being Chairman again.⁷

Within a few days, Blake's public vendetta against so august a person as the chairman of the Colony's Court of Quarter Sessions



Clerk, 4 Wallace Street, Balmain now derelict, its remains destroyed

was brought to the notice of Governor Gipps who peremptorily ordered the termination of Blake's service.⁸

Despite a sincere apology from Blake, who "on cool reflection" had seen the folly of his actions, and the support of Sheriff Macquoid, who regretted the loss of "an excellent, so trustworthy and in every respect, an efficient person", the Governor remained adamant.⁹ Macquoid reiterated his plea in June 1840 but the Governor only relented to the degree of allowing Blake six weeks grace to help the Sheriff clear up urgent business.¹⁰

Blake accordingly left the Sheriff's office on 20 July 1840 after serving the British and Colonial governments for the previous seventeen years thus ending his career as soldier and sheriff.¹¹

SPICE BUILDING: By an unhappy coincidence, Blake's discomfiture at having lost office was accentuated by the death of his wife on 10 July 1840. Robert Blake had married the sixteen year old Ann Ashton at St Philip's Church on 11 September 1834, the consent of her parents being necessary for one so young.¹² The newlywed couple lived at "Greenacre Cottage", Clarence Street, but early in 1838 Robert and Ann moved to their new house, Mount Shamrock (now the site of nos 6 and 8 Twentyn Street) at Balmain.¹³

At Mount Shamrock, on 29 May of that year, their son, Henry Giles Blake, was born. The infant lived only five months and died on 23 October 1838. Their first child proved to be the only issue of a marriage that ended with Ann's untimely death at twenty-two years.¹⁴

Erected by Blake in 1837, Mount Shamrock stood on his eight acre Balmain estate that he had purchased for £283.10.3 in October 1837 from John Northwick Gilchrist.¹⁵ The house was the first of his many speculations. Over the ensuing years, Blake was to live in several of these houses as his economic resources dictated.

"MOUNT SHAMROCK": "Mount Shamrock", built of weatherboard upon a knoll above Steam Ferry Bay (now Jubilee Bay) and looking towards Sydney's Church Hill, commanded a fine view of the City and Darling Harbour. In this pleasant situation, it was surrounded by an excellent garden "replete with almost every description of the finest vegetables and well-stocked with fruit trees".¹⁶

Internally, Blake's first Balmora house contained rooms of generous proportions including a sixteen by eighteen feet drawing room, a dining room twenty-five by fifteen feet, three bedrooms, pantry, a servants room, and "two commodious storerooms", a detached kitchen, stabling and a "cow-house and pig-yard". Blake managed to construct this commodious and well-sited dwelling house for £250.²²

"MOORFIELD": The reasons behind the choice of the name of the house were naturally those of a Galway man as was his decision to call his second house on the estate "Moorfield" (now no 6 Charles Street). Apparently a name reminiscent of home, "Moorfield" was initially intended to be the premier Blake home on the estate*. To provide himself with a first class residence, Blake called upon the services of the Sydney architect, John Bibb (1810-1862). Bibb was commissioned to design and supervise the erection of a "substantial brick villa" for £1000.²³

On "Moorfield's" completion in 1838 Blake moved his household there from "Mount Shamrock" but the unfortunate illness of his wife, Ann, culminated in her death in July of the following year. After moving to the new house, Blake successfully leased "Mount Shamrock", thereby gaining a welcome income as he was still without employment at this time.²⁴

"WALLACOURT LODGE": Blake attempted to increase his income by embarking upon a further investment in his property. To the north of "Mount Shamrock" and in the neck of the bay, he built "Wallacourt Lodge" in 1840. This is now the site of Dickson Prymer and Co Pty Ltd's warehouse and yard at the corner of Darling and Twentyn Street. This "fine cut Stone Mansion" cost Blake £1,200 to construct but he almost immediately let the dwelling in March 1841 to an Alexander Grant at £200 per annum for seven years thereby recouping much of his initial outlay.²⁵

At the time of signing the lease with Grant, Blake applied to the government for copies of the correspondence covering his dismissal.²⁶ His request was complied with but instead of searching for another post in the Colony, Blake abruptly left the country. Arr-



Clontarf in 1844

ed with his papers he apparently intended to seek employment overseas.

MARY ASHTON BLAKE: It seems that the journey was also undertaken as a wedding trip for while en route, Blake took a new wife. Embarking in the *Richards* was for London on 7 April 1841. Robert Blake either took with him or met on board Mary Ashton who was most likely his first wife's sister.²⁷ Although the precise circumstances are unknown, it is a matter of record that the two were married in Brazil on 17 June 1841.²⁸ After their marriage Robert and Mary apparently continued their voyage to England and then to Robert's home county of Galway.

In 1843, almost two years to the day, Blake resumed residential life in Balmora with his new wife. Mary Ashton Blake was the fortunate beneficiary of a one-third share of her father's estate which consisted in the main of the Clarence Street hostelry known variously as "The Wine Shaden" or the "Old Black Horse Inn". Located hard by the military Barracks, this popular watering-place represented valuable property and Mary's share of this probably helped her husband to develop the land at Balmora still further.²⁹

"CLONTARF": As his funds were low, the first two houses that Blake built on his return were less ambitious than his previous ventures. In 1844, he built a small stone cottage with shopfront (formerly in Darling Street at the Adolphus Street corner of the Bowling Club) and also another dwelling, the "substantial Cut-stone Building, Clontarf" (No 4 Wallace Street) which cost £450.³⁰

"Clontarf" was named after a part of Dublin, the site of a famous battle in 1014. It was the basic vernacular dwelling of the time. Containing "nine apartments" and located "in an airy and delightful situation", the single storey verandahed house was flanked by "two neat gardens and pleasure grounds" with a well of "excellent water" and its occupants rejoined in the use of a "family bathing house". The steam ferry gave direct access to "Clontarf" and the other dwellings on the estate. Blake had a private wharf in the Bay, fronting his property.³¹

"EURE VALE" AND "MARY VILLE": In 1845, Blake built three dwellings for rental purposes. As well as a stone cottage (in Darling Street next to the 1844 cottage mentioned above), the much more substantial "Eure Vale" (now the site



Moorfield, 6 Charles Street, Balmora, in 1839

²² Brownrigg's "Pins of the Town of Balmora", c1850, shows a dual circular driveway entering "Moorfield" from both Darling and Twentyn Streets. The driveway and the enclosed garden occupied almost all of the present Balmora Bowling Club.

of No 6 Adelaide Street) and "Mary Villa" (formerly on the corner of "Blake" and Ewenton Streets) appeared, both built in stone and named for places in his home county, or for members of his family.³³

Writing from "Mount Shamrock", in December 1845, Blake applied for re-employment in the government service. He attempted to have his part in the affair of Justice Manning expunged from the record by claiming that it was Manning's animosity towards him that had brought a seemingly innocent situation to a head. Blake hoped to be exonerated and pleaded that the incident should not exclude him from employment in that "Government in whose service the greater part of my life has been spent without one instance of neglect or any other fault found with me".³⁴ He pleaded further that it was not the expected salary so much as the revival of his standing in the community that was at stake.³⁵

Despite the good offices of Mr Justice Therry and Attorney General Plunkett, the Governor declined to accept Blake's services.³⁶ Blake again tried for government work at the beginning of 1846 and his application once more fell on deaf ears. In May of that year, he came to realise the futility of this action and resignedly asked for the return of his documents.³⁷

"SHANNON GROVE": Blake fell back on being his own employer by building yet another house on the estate. "Shannon Grove" (now No 10 Ewenton Street), completed in 1848 at a cost of £500, was named for a village near the River Shannon, in Galway, and was a stone dwelling similar to "Clontarf".³⁸

Since their return to Sydney, Robert and Mary had been in residence at "Mount Shamrock" and it was there that their first child, Robert McDonald Blake, was born in February 1848. Their only daughter, Eleanor Maria Blake, followed in November 1850.³⁹

In August of that year, Robert Blake again sought government service. His old position had become vacant because Under Sheriff Froot was about to retire. Once more the authorities declined to avail themselves of Blake's services. Newspaper criticism of a judge by a civil servant still rankled and could not be forgiven.⁴⁰



Shannon Grove, 10 Ewenton Street, Balmain, in 1848



Kinvarra, 3 Ewenton Street, c 1851

This final rebuff to Blake's plea for re-installment in the civil service, combined with the needs for his growing family, forced him to seek funds outside his income from rentals of dwellings on his estate. Blake had been a consistent borrower of developmental finance with mortgages from the Bank of New South Wales between 1844 and 1847.⁴¹

In July 1850, however, his needs were much greater and he offered the Chief Commissioner for Crown Lands, Lieutenant-Colonel George Barney, his estate which he valued at £7,000 as security for a loan of £1,500. These funds allowed Blake to build two more dwellings.⁴²

"KINVARRA" AND "WREN VALE": In keeping with the Irish flavour of his house names, the first of the two dwellings was the substantial stone-built residence "Kinvarra" (now No 5 Ewenton Street). It was named after the Galway Bay inlet called Kinvarra Bay which, with the nearby village of Kinvarra, formed a part of the coastal parish of Kinvarradocrus.⁴³ The second house, "Wren Vale", was probably much less pretentious than Kinvarra and outside of a record of its existence, nothing more is known of it. The two stone, verandahed houses were built in the years 1851 and 1852.⁴⁴

Despite the fact that Blake by that time had erected eleven valuable dwellings worth some £25,000 on his estate and received steady rentals from ten of them amounting to £1,020 per annum, his financial position was far from secure. In April 1853 his creditors were so forceful in pressing their claims that he decided to ease the burden by selling the whole estate lock stock and barrel to leave for Europe.⁴⁵

Unfortunately, Blake could not find a satisfactory buyer and was therefore unable to free himself from debt. In June 1854, however, by mortgaging the property to a Sydney merchant, John Gilchrist, for £2,000, Blake was able to pay his debt to Barney and satisfy his other creditors.⁴⁶

"BLAKE VALE": Blake seems to have been unable to leave the Colony as planned but contented himself by building yet another house. His last Balmain house, "Blake Vale" (now the site of "Ewenton" on Dickson Primer's Grafton Street yard), was built from 1854 to 1855. After the birth of his second son, D'Arcy Ste-

then, Blake moved from "Mount Shamrock" to the new house.²³

The Blake's newfound happiness was sadly disrupted in June 1855 by the death of their infant son aged only seven months.²⁴ This tragedy caused Blake to offer "Blake Vale" for sale and to move his family back to "Mount Shamrock" where his third son, Peter D'Arcy, was born on Christmas Day, 1856.²⁵

"Blake Vale's" purchaser, Lewis Wallace Cameron, was a partner in the Mori's Dock enterprise. In October 1856 he paid Blake £2,500 for the choice property fronting the Bay with uninterrupted water views and shade-like water access.²⁶

As he was richer by £2,500, Blake was able to repay Gilchrist's loan in June 1857, but in the following November again committed himself to debt by borrowing £5,000 from John Nodds Dickinson, a Supreme Court Judge.²⁷

THE BLAKE ESTATE SOLD TO CAMERON: Despite the loan from Dickinson, Blake again offered the whole of the estate (less "Blake Vale") already sold to Cameron) for public auction on 6 August 1857. The sale was unsuccessful and apart from a 99 year lease of the allotment at the corner of Darling and Adelaide Streets at £30 per annum Blake's only income was the rent from the other houses.²⁸

Robert Blake's new neighbour, Cameron, had viewed the failure of Blake's auction with interest and hid his time until the end of 1860 when he bought the properties, "Mount Shamrock" and "Shannon Grove", adjoining his land, for £2,000.²⁹

By this sale, Blake was deprived of his family residence, "Mount Shamrock", and was forced to live in one of the cottages which remained in his possession. In the same year 1861, repayment of Dickinson's loan fell due and Blake managed to convince Cameron to acquire the remainder of the estate. Finally, in October 1861, Cameron, who seems to have been a very astute investor, paid Blake the sum of £10,250 for the remaining nine small lots with their surrounding fenced gardens and access roadways.³⁰

The effect of these sudden vicissitudes upon Blake's depressed financial state allowed him to take his family on the long-promised voyage to Europe.

The exact details of Blake's sojourn away from New South Wales have not come down to us but it is most likely that he visited Eyre Court in Galway. It is recorded, however, that the family spent some time on the outskirts of London for Robert MacDonald Blake and Eleanor Maria Blake were confirmed in Leatham Church by the Lord Bishop of London (later Archbishop of Canterbury) in 1864 and 1866 respectively.³¹

BLAKE'S HUNTERS HILL ESTATE: In February 1868 on his return to Sydney, Blake purchased some eleven acres at Hunters Hill from Kyro Goulburn Ellis. In choosing this parcel of 1860 for his new home, Blake utilised the same criteria as for the Balmain land. The new allotment had 350 feet frontage to Tarban Creek with fine views of the River and its headlands and was located at the corner of Drumoyne Street (now Mount Street) and Church Street.³²

There is no evidence to prove that Blake built a new house there or to say that he mov-

ed into an already existing one. Whatever the circumstances, he named the "new" house "Blakewood" (now "Kareela" No 6 Mount Street) and lived there with his family from 1868 onwards.³³

Blake provided for his maturing children by dividing his eleven acres into three parts with each portion having access to the water-front. Once again he used names from his homeland while retaining "Blakewood" as the centre piece. The names chosen were those of two of his Balmain houses, "Woodfield" (now No 10 Moorfield Avenue) and "Mary Ville" (now "Donohue", No 15 Kareela Road).³⁴

Robert Blake's ill health prevented him from enjoying his new life-style for in 1871 the first traces of the heart disease that later claimed his life became evident. In August of that year, Blake legally clarified the three separate portions of his property by making them over to his children. His eldest son Robert received "Blakewood" and its five acres of garden; Eleanor Maria Blake (who had married Edward Meher Sparks Gerard) was given "Mary Ville" on its half acre and Peter D'Arcy Blake the four acre "Woodfield" property.³⁵

BLAKE'S DEATH: Blake's health continued to deteriorate and on 11 July 1875 he died at "Blakewood" aged 69 years. Although he had requested that his body be placed "in the Roman Catholic Cemetery in Sydney in the family vault" with his first wife Ann, her son Henry and Mary Blake's son D'Arcy, the family thought fit to place his last remains in the churchyard of St Anne's at Ryde.³⁶

A further tragedy struck the family on 28 April 1877 when the elder son, Robert MacDonald Blake, died at "Blakewood", aged only twenty-nine.³⁷ On his death, "Blakewood" passed to his mother, Mary, and his brother, Peter. Mother and son lived in the house until the end of 1880 when they jointly sold the house for £4,000 to a Sydney solicitor, Robert Smith.³⁸

In the following year, Peter D'Arcy Blake sold "Woodfield" and moved with his mother* to a smaller house in Seaview Street, Dulwich Hill.³⁹ During this period in 1876, "Mary Ville" was sold by his sister, Eleanor.⁴⁰

Robert Blake had not wasted his forty-four years in New South Wales. As a newly-arrived quartermaster he was aware that the civil survival of a fast growing Colony offered swifter promotion. As the outspoken sheriff's officer, who criticised the judiciary of the government that employed him, Blake was forced to find a new career. The career that he chose was the speculative one of land developer and builder.

By these factors Balmain benefited by a dozen substantial dwellings, which, with their orchards and gardens, proved to be very desirable places in which to live. Of the five that now stand, two are derelict, "Shannon Grove" and "Kinvarra" have been restored while "Woodfield's" reconstruction is now underway, "Dewton" and "Clostar", the only two not owned by Balmain residents, remain derelict.

* Peter D'Arcy Blake died in April 1893 at Dulwich Hill.

His mother, Mary Ashton Blake, also died there in July 1886 in her seventy-sixth year.

THE HOUSES IN RECENT YEARS

"EWENTON": After acquiring the whole of Blake's Balmain property, Cameron built no new houses, preferring to concentrate on transforming "Blake Vale" into a gentleman's mansion while collecting rents from the other houses on his estate.

In 1868 Cameron commissioned the Balmain architect, James McDonald, to add an upper storey and an entrance portico to the original Georgian house which he re-named "Ewenton".⁵⁵ By 1872, however, Cameron's standing in the business community, his personal fortune and his large family, numbering twelve children at his death, called for a grand and opulent extension to his residence. He had become a Fellow of St Paul's College, a member of the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron and of the Royal Society of New South Wales, and had been an original member of the Union Club.⁵⁶ Again McDonald was employed to design the new wing.



Blake Vale as seen from "Blake" Street in 1833



Ewenton in 1860 - built over Blake Vale



Ewenton in 1872 with new north wing added.



Ewenton now site on an industrial estate
Courtesy Douglas Seplin

Cameron lived at "Ewenton" until his death there in 1876. The house remained in the family until the death of his wife, Sophia, in 1886.⁵⁷ After the death of Mrs Cameron, the house passed through various owners to Henry Brisbane Swan, a timber merchant of Newcastle, in 1911.⁵⁸

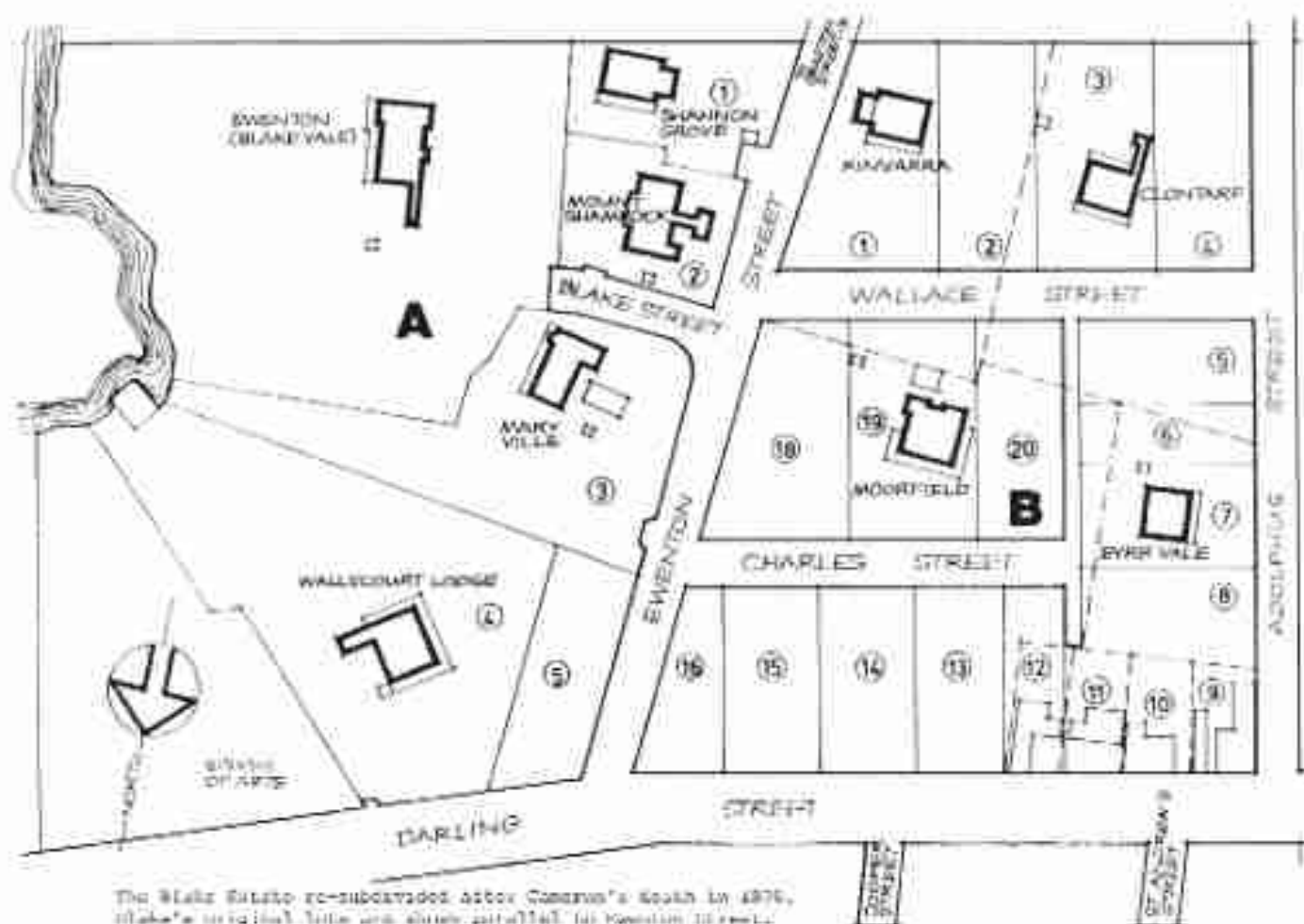
"Ewenton" became the property of its present owners, Dickson Primer and Co Pty Ltd, in 1951. Since that time the house and grounds have been used for industrial purposes and as the Company has no use for the grand mansion, it has become so derelict that it has been condemned by Leichhardt Municipal Council.⁵⁹

After Cameron's death the rest of his large estate was divided into twenty-four lots which were sold in 1878 and 1879. The new subdivision, called the Ewenton Estate, incorporated two new access roads, Wallace and Charles Streets, probably named for members of the family.⁷⁰

"MOUNT SHAMROCK": Like "Ewenton", "Mount Shamrock" passed through various owners after its sale in 1879. Henry Brisbane Swan bought the property in 1914. It seems that Swan demolished the house sometime after World War I and erected two smaller weatherboard cottages (now Nos 6 and 8 Ewenton Street).⁷¹

"WALLACOURT LODGE", "MARY VILLE" AND LOT 5, SECTION A: Both "Mary Ville" and "Wallacourt Lodge" were acquired and demolished by Dickson Primer in 1950. "Wallacourt Lodge" was set well back from the corner of Darling and Ewenton Streets (formerly Wallacourt Avenue), "Mary Ville" faced across the bay to the city at the north eastern corner of Ewenton and "Blake" Streets. "Blake" Street is a short unnamed road leading up to the now unused gates of Ewenton.⁷²

"MOORFIELD" AND LOTS 18 AND 20: Blake's own time family residence has had a much happier fate than its fellows. With the adjoining lot 18, Moorfield was bought by Frederick Augustus Petersen, a furniture broker, in 1879. Lot 20 was sold to Arthur Theodore Jaegers, solicitor, in the same year.



The Blake Estate re-subdivided after Cameron's death in 1876. Blake's original lots are shown dotted (in Ewington Street).

After various sales and mortgages and the addition of other houses around it, "Moorfield" passed to Charles Goodell, a Balmain politician, in 1927. Goodell in turn sold the old house to Alfred Haddock of East Maitland in 1929 who held ownership until 1975. In the late 1980s the fine old verandah was removed and a modern extension of large and ugly proportions defaced "Moorfield's" street front.⁷¹

Fortunately the present owner acquired the house in September 1976 and have embarked upon an extensive restoration programme which will restore "Moorfield" to its former 1870s dignity.

"Eyre Vale" AND LOTS 5, 6, and 8: John Raskin and Thomas Ratty, contractors, of Balmain purchased "Eyre Vale" and the adjoining lots 5, 6 and 8 in March 1879 from Cameron's estate. Balmain Herbert Ryan, produce merchant, and Daniel Sheehy, contractor, bought the land in 1884 and re-subdivided Cameron's lots 5, 6, 7 and 8 into five smaller blocks. These blocks were sold separately in 1895. "Eyre Vale" which occupied the "new" lot 4 (now No 6 Adolphus Street) and part of the adjoining "new" lot 3 (now No 8 Adolphus Street), was demolished at this time to make way for Ryan's and Sheehy's subdivision.⁷²

The purchaser of lot 4 in 1899, Austin Bernard Datty, probably bought the demolished stone of "Eyre Vale's" walls and used it to build the present stone house (No 6 Adolphus

Street) incorporating a bay-window brick front. "SHANNON GROVE": Cameron's daughter-in-law, Johanna, bought "Shannon Grove" in 1878 and held the property until 1903 when it passed to John Edwards Ward.⁷³ Known locally as the "White Bird Hunter of Balmain", Ward is credited by the New York Zoological Society with discovering the New Guinea Blue Bird of Paradise in 1914.⁷⁴ Ward lived at "Shannon Grove" where he kept his private aviary of unusual specimens, until his death in 1955 when the property passed through various owners to Mr and Mrs T F Flower in October 1960.⁷⁵

By this time the house was in a bad state of repair and it is to the Flower's credit that they painstakingly restored it to its former state. "Shannon Grove" has had other sympathetic owners since that time and the building continues to be improved, with the danger of demolition long gone.

LOTS 13 TO 16: These lots were bought by Cole in 1878. In order to found the Balmain Bowling Ground lots 13 to 16 were purchased from Cole in 1880. This land (from the Club House to Ewington Street) was held in trust until 1891 when the title was transferred to the Bowling Ground.⁷⁶

LOTS 9 TO 12: William Parker, Balmain's Chemist and Druggist acquired lot 9 in 1870 while, in the same month, Edward Ritchie Cole, of Sydney purchased lots 10 to 12. The exact location of Blake's "Wren Vale" has always

been in doubt but it was almost certainly built on lot 12. Lots 10 to 12 were bought in 1945 by the then Balmain Bowling Ground Co Ltd but was added ten years later. The lots were located in Darling Street at the corner of Adolphus Street.⁷⁸

"KINVARRA" AND LOT 3: George Davidson of Balmain purchased "Kinvarra" in 1878 and in March of the following year sold it to William Cruikshank. Cruikshank, an engineer of Balmain, owned the property until 1913 when it passed through various owners until purchased in 1949 by Miss Myrtle Victoria Kilmour of Balmain. Miss Kilmour added the tennis court in the front garden and many other improvements.⁷⁹

The present owners who acquired the property in the early 1970s have restored "Kinvarra" to its former charm and grace.

"CLONTARI" AND LOT 4: Perhaps the saddest fate of all is that of "Clontari". Without being demolished or renovated, "Clontari" stands amid the weeds of what was once a pleasant garden awaiting officialdom's coup-d'etat.

After the break-up of Cameron's estate in 1878 Charles Vreng, one of Balmain's publishers, bought "Clontari" and the adjoining lot 4 (now located at the corner of Wallace and Adolphus Streets). Several ownerships followed until the house and land passed to an engineer, James Robert Morgan, in 1923. It appears that Morgan operated a "plant terrace and laundry building and out-houses" there. The Power Engineering Pty Ltd took over the foundry in 1938 and expanded it still further. By further changes of ownership, "Clontari" became the property of Sarda Stevedoring Pty Ltd in November 1941.⁸⁰

"Clontari" had become unrecognisable by that time. Its graceful front verandah and lawn torn down, the full-length window shutters had been nailed up and its exterior stone-work painted stark white.⁸¹

Although "Clontari" had become the foundry's office and store room, it was the foundry itself that was the real eyesore. Growing outward from the house towards Adolphus Street, the foundry had become a pile of rusty, rickety corrugated iron sheds and was a symbol of Balmain's surrender to industry.

In the post-war planning revival, the black south of Wallace Street between Adolphus and Erskine Streets (including "Kinvarra" as well as "Clontari") was zoned as open green space. The buildings were earmarked for acquisition and demolition by Leichhardt Council. As soon as "Clontari" was put up for sale therefore in November 1974, the Council purchased the property and began converting it to a public park.⁸²

After demolishing the corrugated iron accretions, the Council's officers compiled a report which recommended that "Clontari" be demolished as renovation costs would be prohibitive. "Clontari's" fate was sealed.⁸³

The old house received a stay of execution, however, when a combined move by local residents, the Balmain Association, the National Trust and the Architecture Faculty of the University of New South Wales put a case to Council for its restoration. These groups, with the support of local industries and students, offered to restore the building to a weatherproof state for eventual use as a kindergarten at an annual contribution to the Council.⁸⁴

The proposal was put before the Council in June 1978. In their wisdom, Council decided to defer any decision on "Clontari" indefinitely. At the time of this publication, apart from the diligent attention of vandals and a partial fire in July 1978, no further action, either demolition or restoration, has been taken by its owners, Leichhardt Municipal Council.⁸⁵

Meanwhile, "Clontari" slowly rots.

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Rozelle Public School: 1878-1901

by Peter Reynolds

Public school architecture began officially on 12 February 1850 with the appointment of Henry Robertson (1802-1881) as Architect to the Board of National Education. Robertson designed a vast quantity of classrooms and teachers' residences throughout New South Wales during his seventeen-year term of office.

With the introduction of the Education Act of 1844, the new Council of Education engaged George Allan Mansfield to succeed Robertson on 1 February 1867. Mansfield continued to design the larger State schools but the spread of population centres made it impossible to supervise buildings "up country". Accordingly, he provided local architects or builders with standard plans which they were permitted to modify within reason.

Mansfield's use of private architects reached a peak between 1870 and 1880. During this period prominent architects such as Benjamin Bachmann (1820-1904) and J Herbury Hunt (1826-1904) were commissioned to design Metropolitan schools.

In 1878, at Rozelle (then called Balmain West), the American-trained Hunt designed a school on the standard Mansfield plan. This layout incorporated bench-seating running the long way of the room in which pupils of different classes were taught by the one teacher. Hunt softened this stark utility by providing coloured glass windows, featuring beautiful pictures of birds and animals, through which the sunlight gleamed. The Gothic school, with its bell turret on the roof, received its first pupils on 6 June 1878. This is the building on the left of the cover illustration.

The inevitable overcrowding at the school demanded further accommodation and William Edmund Kemp (1831-1898) extended Hunt's building in 1888. Kemp recognised the individuality of Hunt's architecture and kept his addition separate while relating to it in form and material.

Kemp's appointment as the Architect for Schools was made in July 1880 after the passage of the Public Instruction Act of that year. This act made attendance compulsory so Kemp was required to construct a great many schools in the shortest possible time. He and his successor, James Lyon Wigram, managed to keep pace with the need for new buildings but made few planning innovations. Brickwork with terra cotta decoration, or stone detailing enclosed the classrooms where the long benches were still in use.

Despite the increasing use of brickwork in schools, Wigram continued Hunt's and Kemp's stone facades at Rozelle when he designed the third major addition to the school in 1901. Wigram's third building completes a trilogy of architectural styles. Although his elevation can be dismissed as debased Tudor, it does not detract from the Kemp Romanesque nor the Hunt Gothic.

(cont p 33)

Football in Sydney: 1870-1920

by Max Delling

Most games have their origin in the spare-time activities of the well-to-do and, in early Sydney, marines played an important part in the development of sports and games. Commissions in the British Army were purchased when the Colony was settled and, in consequence, British officers sailing for Sydney generally came from a wealthy background, were well educated and infused with the English public schools sporting tradition.¹ During the administration of Governor Macquarie (1810-1821) many traditional English sports were already in vogue in Australia and doubtless new colonists with aspirations of becoming "sporting men" would not have left behind the authoritative work of the day of leisure activities, Joseph Strutt's *Sports and Pastimes of the people of England* (1801).

Accounts of early observers indicate the significant place of sport in early Australia. The Rev J B Lang wrote:

Let the reader turn over a file of colonial newspapers for 1877 and he will find them stuffed almost to bursting with advertisements and accounts of races, cricket matches and regattas, with challenges to fight or to run or to swim. The energy of the native mind at the golden age of late to have been directed almost exclusively into this frivolous channel.²

The colonial preoccupation with sports and games attracted the attention of such writers in the late nineteenth century including E Tappan, A Trollope, W F Morrison and A Kenna.

The discovery of gold in 1851 stimulated migration and provided the economic drive to a period of great civic progress and growing national aspiration. The people of New South Wales having "given signal evidence of their fitness to regulate their own affairs" were conceded full powers of self government in 1856 and in the second half of the nineteenth century Australia began to emerge as a highly urbanised society. Sydney and its suburbs grew in size and complexity from the sixties, stimulating the growth of industry and a change in the scale of production. The rise of urban industrialism in the twenty years after 1860 created new leisure needs.

In 1855, when trade unionists engaged in building Sydney and its suburbs achieved an eight-hour day, the recreational pursuits of the mass of society, compelled to work long hours six days a week, were irregular and casual.³ The high value early trade unionists placed on leisure was reflected in their acceptance of lower wages in return for shorter hours and by 1870 Sydney had a Saturday Half Holiday Association which published the names of shops whose proprietors had agreed to close at one o'clock on Saturday and exhorted the public to buy nothing at that time. The drapery stores of Farmers and David Jones were among establishments that gave their employees Saturday afternoon.

Reduced hours of work on Saturdays for some gave a great stimulus to the spectator sports but the transition from games played at occasional festivals, to regular Saturday afternoon competition was a gradual process, a change directly related to more institutional living. Although a twelve-hour day and a six-day week were still common in the early seventies, it was then that the primary pattern of leisure activities, particularly cricket and football, could be discerned in suburban Sydney.⁴

The main features of modern sport were discernible in Britain by mid-nineteenth century and after 1850 organisations, journalistic exploitation, commercialisation, inter-community competition and sundry other developments increased rapidly. In the half century from 1850 to 1900 traditions of mailmen and strength, the athletic movement and the contributions of energetic sportsmen were to have a significant effect on the sporting scene. Industrialisation and the urban movement were the basic causes for the rise of organised sport, for the urban masses seeking a release from the confinements of city life, were won to the support of commercialised entertainment and spectator sports.⁵

Sydney in the eighties revealed the vigour and exuberance of a rapidly expanding society and a quickening in the tempo of migration to its suburbs coincided with the spawning of clubs and associations that waited the needs and interests of ordinary people. In the so-called long boom of the eighties, sport possibly loomed larger in Australian life than ever before and perhaps since.⁶

In England, at the same time, Sydney Law observed a similar phenomenon:

In the suburbs and during the greater part of the year the idle young workmen can at least have the chance of occupying himself with amusements which are more healthy, if not more elevating. He may play cricket, or football or row or ride a bicycle, or if he does none of these things it is a relief to him to get out of the close air of the industrial quarter in which his work is done.

The athlete who desires to enroll in the ranks of his business devotes his days and nights to the study of cricket, football, boxing, tennis or golf and these are sports and games which flourish better in the suburbs than in the country.⁷

English novelist Anthony Trollope (1815-1882) on his visit to Australia noted that "the English passion for the amusements which are technically called 'sports' is as strong in these colonies as it is at home". Some years later, in 1899, the French socialist Andre Motin was simply fascinated by the size of crowds attracted to sports meetings here.

THE FIRST RUGBY: The early history of Rugby football belongs exclusively to England. A plaque at Rugby School, Warwickshire reads:

This stone commemorates the exploit of William Webb Ellis who, with a fine disregard to the rules of football as played in his time, first took the ball in his arms and ran with it, thus originating the distinctive feature of the Rugby game. AD 1823.

There is considerable doubt as to the authenticity of the Ellis legend but the game was developed at Rugby School in the 1830s, taken up by undergraduates of Cambridge and Oxford, and refined into a suitable game for adults. In the period 1840-1860 football of some kind was adopted as the winter sport of most English boarding and grammar schools and, as the boys left school, it spread with them to the universities and cities and by 1863 the division between Association (Soccer) and Rugby football had become clear.⁸ Rugby in mid-Victorian Britain contained its two basic characteristics: freedom to run with the ball and to tackle the man who does so.

The game was improved in the later years of the century by raising the element of footballing skill over that of brute force, by creating the opportunity for reasonably frequent scoring and adjusting the balance between the roles of forwards and backs. For instance, Rule 10 of the Blackheath Club, London 1862 stated:

Though it is lawful to hold any player in a scrum, this does not include attempts to choke or strangle, which are totally opposed to the principles of the game.⁹

In Sydney before 1850 referees had limited powers to control games, disputes being settled by mutual agreement between captains, so it was of prime importance that a club captain be a good "speakup".

Schoolmasters from England were the first to introduce the Rugby game into New South Wales and varieties of football, like cricket, were played by soldiers of the Imperial regiments. In 1858 Tom Willis (1825-1880) Secretary of the Melbourne Cricket Club, advocated the formation of a football club but the independently minded Victorians showed no desire to adopt an English football game. Willis advised that the Rugby tackle was too dangerous for green men on the hard ground of Melbourne and the game they devised eventually became known in Victoria as Australian Rules.

However, Sydney showed less imagination than the southern colonists and decided to "fully import" the Rugby Union code as their winter game. As Rugby was not commonly played in Melbourne and Australian Rules were rarely followed in Sydney, there could be no football matches between representative teams from the two colonies.¹⁰

The first Rugby club was established at Sydney University about 1864 and until 1870 its engagements were confined to occasional meetings between teams from the club, varied by rare meetings with teams from visiting men-of-war. After 1870 three matches were regularly played between University and Wallaroo in each of the succeeding eleven years. In the early adventures new clubs appeared - at Burwood, St Leonards, Balmain, Goulburn, The Kings School, Newington College, Camden College and the Waratah club. By 1874, the rapid growth of the game and confusion over the rules made a controlling body essential.¹¹

THE SOUTHERN RUGBY UNION: Richard Arnold (1848-1922) and Montague Arnold (1850-1918), organisers of the Wallaroo club, J J Calvert, W H Fletcher and delegates from eight other



The pride and joy of the Glens football fraternity in 1844. (International 11 to 17 Charles Hickey (1841-1842), Fred Wood (1844-1844), Charles Hickey (1841-1842) and Tom Davidson (1844-1850)

clubs, formed the Southern Rugby Union in 1874 (only two years after the English Rugby Union) and shortly after, and the first code of rules were adopted and the practice of playing 15 men a side was introduced. For 11 years, from 1874 to 1885, rugby remained one club of the Legislative Council. John Jackson Calvert (1836-1915) was president of the Union.

Large crowds watched contests between the "Kauri" and "Whitara" clubs, with spectators frequently sitting into the field of play and "many a try was scored in the old days by dodging through spectators who were in their eagerness and enthusiasm for their particular fancy did not hesitate to 'open ranks' or 'close' them according to their sympathies".

In the years from 1874 to 1882 clubs engaged in a loosely organized round of matches at the end of which a premier side could be identified. Warratah became the premier club in 1874 and Balmain in 1875. Warratah, which attracted membership by press advertisement benefited greatly by the arrival of Irish international Maurice Barlow and his Irish and from 1876 to 1880 it emerged as the most successful club on five occasions. The Rugby competition in Sydney acquired a recognizably modern shape in 1883 with the introduction of a senior club system of membership competitions.

University demonstrated its football-playing prowess by winning in 1881, 1882, 1883 and from 1887 to 1891. The University soccer team was noted for its fast, open style of play and their matches with a great rival, the Glens club, were noteworthy "from the very contrast in methods and the different personnel in each side".²²

THE ENGLISH TOURISTS: The visit in 1888 of a British team led by A. E. Stoddart (1861-1910), an agile and brilliant wing three-quarter, improved the standard of play and the status of the Rugby game in Australia. Stoddart achieved greater acclaim in cricket, captaining the English cricket team on its tour of Australia in 1904-5. Three more visits by British teams before the Great War, saw M. Wallington's team in 1898, "Darky" Sedgell-Smyth's team in 1904, and a visit in 1908, when the Wallington was on the eve of leaving for England, helped the development of the game.²³

Equally important were matches here and across the Tasman against powerful New Zealand combinations and, of course, occasional inter-colonial matches with Queensland.

The number of Rugby clubs in Sydney jumped from 16 in 1881 to 90 in 1888 with some 3,500 members.²⁴ In 1890 John Jackson wrote:

Cricket and football are truly a national passion in Australia, which has developed some fine athletes, who have upheld the honour of Australia in the old country.²⁵

EARLY HEROES: In winter, masses of enthusiastic supporters flocked to the playing fields and in an era of hero worship the first Rugby star emerged in Sydney. His name was Harry Palmer Abbott, a product of Brisbane Grammar, who at the age of 16 years, first played for Queensland. He became a student at Sydney University and represented New South Wales against Queensland. Abbott (1872-1947), was a tall muscular three-quarter who handled and kicked the ball with care skill, possessed a most perplexing side-step and dominated the back play of the University team, which he captained from 1893 to 1895.²⁶

At the turn of the century the sporting fraternity of Sydney regarded S. A. Spragg (1879-1904) as a football genius, a strapping winger with great pace and a skilful kicker of the ball, who emerged as the hero of the 1890 series against the British team.

AUSTRALIAN RULES AND HOCKEY: Australian Rules, though played in Sydney, remained a relatively minor sport. The other type of football was the Association game, introduced in New South Wales in 1880 by English schoolmaster J. W. Fletcher and two years later the controlling body of the game was created. In 1885 a State wide knock-out tournament was held and from 1888 an annual competition for the Gardiner Cup was conducted under rules similar to the FA Cup. Unable to attract large crowds, Soccer was only played in suburbs of Sydney where working class migrants from Britain settled in solid groups, especially in Pyrmont, Balmain and Granville. The game also flourished at Stret and Wallisland.

The first inter-colonial Soccer match between New South Wales and Victoria took place in 1882 and in the Gardiner Cup, teams from Pyrmont dominated the competition, appearing in 17 finals between 1889 and 1914 when competition was suspended.¹²

RUGBY UNION GRADES INTRODUCED: A champion of the cause of organizing senior Rugby contests on a similar basis to electoral cricket was Lewis Abrams (1862-1928) who told a meeting at Glebe Town Hall in 1894 that "good football teams representing suburban districts would attract crowds between 10,000 and 20,000 people".¹³ Abrams dream became a reality in 1900 when the old club system (whose major defect was that the best young players flocked to the strongest clubs) was replaced by a district scheme based on residential qualifications and, as Abrams had forecast, public patronage and interest in Rugby soared.

But not all were happy with the new scheme of things. According to R. M. Moran (1885-1945) the changes destroyed the old corporate spirit and a tradition:

Now how was the cheer (responsibility of play). This grade football was serious business. We went with the partnership! There was now something in the game entirely new to me, and for which such terms as "vigor" or "adventure" was a euphemism. When you took on a ball to stop a dribbling rush half-a-dozen feet rattled on your life heavy blows at a pace which would not open. Sometimes in a distant suburb when you fell out of bounds the local partisans affectionately took on you.¹⁴

The men of Glebe wearing "maroon jerseys and stockings and white knickerbockers" swept all before them, winning all three grades in the inaugural year. Until 1914 when grade competition was suspended the "Reds" were the team to beat in the competition; between 1900 and 1914 they won the first grade premiership on seven occasions and were runners-up three times.

In 1907 Rugby Union reached unprecedented popularity in Sydney and the visit of the New Zealand "All Blacks" brought record crowds. At the Sydney Cricket Ground to see the "All Blacks" defeat New

South Wales 11-3 and the four international matches attracted a total of 163,000 spectators. Large attendances swelled the coffers of the Metropolitan Rugby Union who had no trouble finding the £13,500 needed to buy Ripping Rascals (now Harold Park) at Forest Lodge.

RUGBY LEAGUE INAUGURATED: There had been disquiet among Sydney footballers over the monetary loss they had incurred while playing representative football. In 1907 a former Glebe and Australian forward Alec Burdon (1880-1943), a barber in Glebe Road, was away from work for ten weeks as a result of an injury he suffered in a representative fixture. Burdon sought compensation for time lost from work and medical expenses from the Metropolitan Union but his claim was dismissed in smaller fashion. The red-headed barber was a close friend of Victor Trumper (1877-1915) the idol of Sydney's sporting fraternity, and it was at Trumper and Carter's sports store, 124 Market Street, that footballers and others who felt all was not right with the Rugby game, gathered together in an informal way.

Players of Rugby in the industrial north of England were finding it difficult to play away-matches without losing wages and endangering their employment by having time off. They wanted "broken-time" money but the English Rugby Union recoiled in horror from any such solution and in 1895 completely proscribed any form of payment. A large group of working class clubs broke away, founded their own Northern Union and developed a modified form of the game. The hard-headed northerners who shaped the game, faced the necessity of raising money to pay for players, had to make it attractive to spectators, and they were well aware that what spectators appreciate most is passing movements by the backs.¹⁵ They reduced the team to thirteen, replaced the line-out and reduced kicking to touch.

It produced another good game, Rugby League, an exciting and tough brand of football much to the taste of Yorkshire and Lancashire crowds.¹⁶ The decision of the Union, composed largely of public school and university men, to reject payment, ("the game", they said, "had to be played purely for its own sake") made the game socially divisive and the idea that "rugger" is the more "gentlemanly" game still persists here and in England, with the image of the Rugby player as a white-collar man.

The newly formed New Zealand Rugby League side, at Trumper's invitation, stopped at Sydney en route to Britain, and played three demonstration matches at the Showground under Union rules against a New South Wales side known as the "Pioneers". Each member of the "Pioneers" received ten shillings a match for travelling expenses and the finest footballer of the day, Billy Messenger, joined the New Zealand party for their tour of Britain where he provided a sensation.

The Metropolitan Rugby Union immediately initiated an inquiry "into sundry acts of professionalism" and expelled those who took part in the matches against the New Zealand team. This did nothing to help matters.

Trumper, James Gillinan, Henry Boyle, Tom Castello, Peter Weir and others, responded on 4 August 1907 at Bateman's Hotel in George Street Sydney, by creating the New South Wales Rugby League, aided in an small measure by their receipts of £274 received from the three matches against Bushbuck's team.

The schism had occurred in the rugby game and a hostile conservatively press continued to foster resentment against the new League which encountered problems in finding playing grounds before its first season began in April 1908. Rugby League in Sydney became the working man's sport and in New South Wales there was a close link between some of its organisers and the Australian Labor Party.

THE FIRST LEAGUE CLASH: The honour of establishing the first League club in Australia went to the men of Glebe on the evening of 9 January 1908 when Henry Boyle (1852-1928), Labor MLC for Surry Hills from 1916 to 1917, told the crowd at Glebe Town Hall that:

There can be no play too game without loss to themselves ... if any of the men lost time, the notes that they would draw as footballers would have to make up their minds. If they were hurt whilst playing they would receive £1 a week for 14 weeks with free doctor and medicine until they had recovered.²²

Other League clubs quickly came into existence - Newtown (14 January), South Sydney (17 January), Balmain (20 January), Eastern Suburbs (24 January), Western Suburbs (4 February), North Sydney (17 February), Cumberland and Newcastle followed.

Early League games in the Sydney competition attracted crowds of about 2,000 but by June 1908 the League was averaging only 200 spectators a match. In addition the new code received virtually no coverage in the press and former friends on the playing fields clashed physically in the streets. According to the *Morae Union* in Sydney became clearer after 1908 "because we lost some of the rougher element".

The loss of some of Sydney's best players to Rugby League meant an under-strength Australian Rugby Union team sailed in 1908 for the first tour of Britain. The tourists performance exceeded expectations when they beat England and lost narrowly to Wales and also earned themselves an unexpected bonus by winning a gold medal in the London Olympic Games.²³ The Wallabies possessed a fine winger from Newtown, Charles "Boxer" Russell (1884-1957) who scored 24 tries on tour and an outstanding goal kicker in Phil Carmichael. Dr Moran, the Wallaby captain and Fred Wood, vice-captain, both became incapacitated through injury, so it fell to Chris McKivat to lead the Wallabies in 14 matches which he did with distinction and without incurring his expenses as a player behind the scrum.

In the English winter of 1908 the first Australian Rugby League team, the Kangaroos, was also touring the "Old Country". They drew the first Test but lost the remaining two. The Kangaroos travelled to England on one-way tickets, on the assumption that the gate-money the players drew would pay their way back. They barely made it. Sam Frawley, a member of the team, wrote:

We left Australia cocksure and confident of success, and with high hopes of making even more money than the promised £1 weekly. But fate was against us from the outset ... almost the entire northern population was laid idle by the cotton strike ... people just didn't have the money to pay to watch the Australian party do battle with the locals. Soon our allowance was cut to 12/- weekly and every player was worried about the prospect of ever getting back to Australia.²⁴

The Wallabies played the Kangaroos in a three match series on their return to Australia, winning 2-1. But it was a bitter blow to the Union game when 16 of the Wallabies who toured went over to Rugby League at the end of the 1909 season, after each received a guarantee of £100. The major gain, McKivat, it was said, received £250. The conservative press wrote of the so-called "bribing", creating "quite a revolution of feeling in the minds of those who are for the strict maintenance of amateur sport". Hundreds of football enthusiasts now followed their favourite players over to the new code.

At the beginning of the 1911 football season, the *Sydney Mail*, certainly never a protagonist for the League game, had this to say:

It is just about four years since the Rugby League game first appeared like a speck on the horizon. But it made such tremendous strides that it soon spread over the skyline and then marched forward with an irresistible swing that threatened to overwhelm all competition ... So when tens of thousands flock to the old established Union game, and cheer to the new league, the reason must be found in the excellence of the new idea. In a strictly impartial observer the League game is faster, more open, and generally lighter. There is more scope for initiative and there is none of the dragging delays caused by kicking into touch.²⁵

UNION OVERSHADOWED BY LEAGUE: The decision of Union administrators to suspend all competitive matches for the duration of the Great War further promoted the development of League, giving it an unchallenged four-year period to entertain the football loving public. As late as 1927-8 Australian Rugby had not recovered sufficiently to send a fully representative national team to Britain. The occasional invitation Rugby game was played between 1914 and 1918 but Glebe and Balmain Union clubs, unable to field fifteen players, decided to merge as Glebe-Balmain in 1916. In 1918, when the competition recommenced, playing in maroon guernseys with black shorts, they continued to play under the name Glebe-Balmain. In 1920 the "dirty Reds" found they had no local oval to play on, so Drummoyne oval became the club headquarters. Reluctantly they changed the name of the club to Drummoyne District Football Club.

DAILY NEWSMAN: No footballer had a greater influence on the game in the early years of Federation than Herbert Henry "Dully" Keweniger (1883-1959). By 1900 this compact and sturdy ball centre three-quarter was exhibiting the individual brilliance and flair with Eastern Suburbs that characterised

his play. Messenger possessed surreptitious perception and rare judgement and a repertoire of unorthodox ruses that often confused the opposition. His uncanny sense of position allowed him to stray and yet maintain contact with supports. A low tale himself, he inspired awe among his fellow players and, more than any other player, he helped to put Rugby League on the map. Messenger was also a fine goal kicker who created an individual points record total of 270 in 1911, a record which stood until 1935.

THE DIRTY REDS: In Rugby Union lore the late Victorian and Edwardian period in Sydney belonged to Glendon. Some 31 members of the Glendon club gained representative honours in the pre-1914 era. Among the household names that contributed to the "dirty Reds" dominance, is a tag that referred to their dirty maroon-coloured gearwears, not their over-vigorous play, were forwards Jim Clarkson (1878-1903), Tom Giffen (1888-1900), Sid Middleton (1884-1940), Alec Burdon and two dual internationals in Union, New Zealanders Bill Hordcastle (1874-1940) and Jim Byrie (1887-1958). But it was the backs that stole the limelight especially Fred, McKivat, Hickey and Wogan.

FRED WOOD: Fred Wood was Glendon's half back when Fred Kurtz induced Chris McKivat to come from Camarock to join the Reds in 1905 and McKivat fitted in well at two-eighth.

Fred's Wood (1884-1950) about 15'11" and thick-set, whipped the ball out very smartly and then often kept himself in reserve as a defender behind the movement. Being so strong in his sturdy legs he was not easy to pull down unless assailed by weight. A clever and nippy player, Wood's representative career stretched from 1906 to 1914.

CHRIS MCKIVAT: Chris McKivat (1881-1913) came into his own as a half back on the 1908 Wallaby tour when Wood was injured. Standing 5' 8" and weighing almost 12 stone, McKivat was wiridly, almost heavily built, and gave the impression of strength rather than agility. But, wrote, a contemporary:

"His feet and hands worked in perfect unison with his eyes and behind them all was a quick thinking brain. He never got flustered. He kicked quickly and accurately... His power was accurate and well timed and he was a deadly finisher."²⁶

Rugby Union was unlucky to lose this reliable, hard-driving leader to League just when he had come to his best. McKivat played magnificent football in League and on the successful 1911-12 Kangaroo tour he added to his Wallaby reputation as one of Australia's finest captains. Another was added thrust to the Glendon backline, and gained international caps in both Union and League, was centre three-quarter John Joseph "Duff" Hiney (1886-1950), "a very spectacular player on the field and a very silent one off it".

LARRY WOGAN: By 1912 the ranks of Union had been somewhat thinned by depredations from the now thriving League code. An influx of players from across the Tamar joined Glendon in 1912 and one of those players, a former member of the Ponche club, became the general upon whom the New South Wales three-quarter line would depend for many years. His name



"Chuck" Fraser in his sky-blue 1911-12 Kangaroo jersey. (L) caps are (front) Aust 1911-12, Nov 1912, Sept 1914; (back) Aust Day Sports 1915, Balmain 1916.

was Larry Wogan (b 1890) a man who enjoyed a long and representative career, starting in the New South Wales side in 1912 and finishing against New Zealand in 1924. Wogan was such a fine player (at five-eighth and centre) that he would have been prominent in any period. According to J C Bayne:

He has weight, pace, a splendid feet cut through in which his weight and speed made the hard to stop. He showed in his play that he knew the game very thoroughly.²⁷

CHUCK FRASER: As the era of highlights and bumper caps came to an end, the number of followers of the League game swelled dramatically. To many working men League was their food and their drink. Each district had their idol. No one in the Balmain neighbourhood would hear of a finer player than Silvan bora and bred Charlie Fraser (b 1890), affectionately known as "Chuck". At the age of 18, Fraser, standing only 5' 4", became a member of the 1911-12 Kangaroos, played against Magenta's English team in 1914 and was the trump card in the Balmain premiership sides of 1915, 1916 and 1917, when the "Tigers" won 36 of their 40 games in that era.

²⁶ "Chuck" Fraser was born on 11 January 1892 in Abart Street, Balmain. He is still hale and hearty and his sharp memory is a mine of information on the early days of Rugby League.

"Chunk" Fraser was a clever ball handler who captured the public's imagination, a player who was at home in any position in the back, having played for Australia as a full-back, centre and five-eighth. Fraser showed his class as a footballer by completing ten years in international league, having played against the Englishmen in 1920 and toured with the 1921-22 Kangaroos."

FRANK HURGE: In the days of Glebe working men were abundant in their opinion that the "Kode" possessed the greatest forward the League game had known. In 1911 Frank Hurge became a member of the Glebe first grade side with his two elder brothers, Peter (1884-1906) and Albert (1888-1943), known to locals as "Son". Both former Wallabies. Peter was also a League international, being a member of the 1911 Kangaroos. Playing at lock-forward young Frank showed he would not be overshadowed by his illustrious brothers and missed the tour of England in 1911 only on the score that at 16 years of age he was too young to take on the tough English forwards.

Hurge first represented New South Wales against Queensland in 1912, scoring three tries and he played for Australia in 1924, against Harold Kestell's side. Long-striding, fast and powerful, "Chunky" Hurge was perhaps the greatest try-scoring forward the game has known, scoring 134 tries for Glebe between 1911 and 1929 and on the 1921 Kangaroo tour he reached his peak, scoring 25 tries. His tally of 8 tries in a match against Canterbury in 1929 still remains the record number of tries scored by a forward in the Sydney first grade competition and his goal kicking ability made him very much the complete footballer.

Frank Hurge (1891-1955) came to fame as a deadly opportunist from the lock-forward position where his amazing powers of anticipation enabled him to link with the backs. He was seen at his best dishing down the middle of the field, as someone might for the opposition with his high knee action and outstanding speed. Hurge was a phenomenon in this class of Rugby League, a style of play that had not till then been conceived.

On the 1921 tour of England through Aus-



"Chunky" Frank Hurge in 1912
League's greatest try-scoring forward
Sydney Mail, 29 May 1912, p. 11

trilian Souther Sande Ferguson noted that Hurge be switched from lock to the front row where his strength would be an acquisition to winning the ball from scrums. The eyes of Glebe's old men light up when Frank Hurge is mentioned. There could never be another quite like him, they say.

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FROM p. 15

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Index: LHD Nos. 1-7

ISS No. 1 1971	Page
Editorial: The Foundation of this Journal, A. Roberts	1
"Review of Kindergarten Book", R. Irving	2
"William and Anne Miller", R. Davidson	3
"Robert James Stuart Robertson", A. Roberts	4
"Tongues of the Borneo People to the Separation", R. Whalley	5
"Stumpage Estate, 1841-1842", R. Irving	11
"Fort Stirling W., Belmont", J. Doyle, P. Reynolds, S. Rice	12
A. Roberts, Belmont in Time, A Record of an Historic Subject and Some of its Buildings, G. F. Bennett, A. Irving	13
A. Roberts, Getting for a Cause, A new South community on the shores of the University of Sydney, by A. Smith	14
Previously Published Articles	15
Notes and Queries	20
Editor of LHD, P. Stevens	
Editorial Office of Stirling House, R. Irving	
Belmont House, P. Reynolds	
A Plan for Belmont, R. Irvine	
Belmont House, A. Roberts	

(From p. 24)

The photograph of Russell Public School taken between 1884 and 1891 graphically portrays the monumentality of the public school architecture of the time. Pupils and teachers are dwarfed by the vertical lines of the building. Tall gables exaggerate this feature so that it must have been quite a landmark in the district. High windows allow enclosed the occupants and turned their vision inward - no gazing out of windows here.

Russell Public School was one hundred years old in 1978 and because of its interesting architecture should be important when the centenary of compulsory education is celebrated in 1980.

Publication For Sale

Maureen Byrnes (ed), *Lot 48 Darling Street, Balmain - An Archaeological Enquiry*, (Sydney University Archaeological Society, in press), p. 97, illustrated, \$4.00.

This new publication is a report on archaeological excavations conducted in 1971 and 1972 on lot 48 which is next to the Balmain Racecourse.

The lot is best known as the site of the second Presbyterian Church (see "James McDonald: Architect of Balmain" in this issue), which was in use for only ten years. It then became a shop and residence for the next sixty years. From 1940 to 1971, lot 48 was an unofficial rubbish dump. It is now a park.

The book contains three sections: the history of lot 48, the results of the excavations and the reports on each dig. The reports include a catalogue of artefacts from the excavations, in categories of glass, ceramics, clay tobacco pipes, metal and miscellaneous objects.

ISS No. 2 1971	Page
"The Belmont Cemetery", R. Irving	1
"Cecil Park Hospital for the Insane", D.L. Whitford	4
"The Belmont Water Works", R. Pearson and P. Reynolds	5
"Glenelg Hall, Balmain", J. Doyle	11
"Wood Park Race Track", R. Irvine	12
"Cardinal Neilson House", R. Irvine	13
R. Irvine	14
M. Kelly, Hartweg and J. Irving, by A. Roberts	15
ISS No. 3 1971	
"History of the Second Balmain Presbyterian Church", P. Reynolds	1
"John Lamb and Francis James Brown", R.D. Irvine	2
"My Gravy, the Ashes", R. Irvine	3
"The Architecture of the First Presbyterian Church", J. Irvine	4
"The History of the First Presbyterian Church", R. Irvine	5
"History of John Lamb", A. Roberts	6
A. Irvine, Colonial Heritage - Historic Buildings of New South Wales, by P. and J. Irvine	7

ISS No. 4 1971	Page
"A History of Belmont", R. Irving	1
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	2
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	3
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	4
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	5
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	6
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	7
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	8
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	9
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	10
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	11
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	12
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	13
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	14
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	15
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	16
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	17
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	18
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	19
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	20
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	21
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	22
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	23
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	24
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	25
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	26
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	27
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	28
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	29
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	30
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	31
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	32
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	33
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	34
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	35
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	36
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	37
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	38
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	39
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	40
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	41
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	42
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	43
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	44
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	45
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	46
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	47
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	48
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	49
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	50
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	51
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	52
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	53
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	54
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	55
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	56
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	57
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	58
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	59
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	60
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	61
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	62
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	63
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	64
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	65
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	66
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	67
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	68
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	69
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	70
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	71
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	72
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	73
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	74
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	75
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	76
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	77
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	78
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	79
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	80
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	81
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	82
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	83
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	84
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	85
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	86
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	87
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	88
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	89
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	90
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	91
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	92
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	93
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	94
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	95
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	96
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	97
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	98
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	99
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	100

ISS No. 5 1971	Page
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	1
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	2
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	3
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	4
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	5
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	6
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	7
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	8
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	9
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	10
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	11
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	12
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	13
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	14
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	15
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	16
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	17
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	18
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	19
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	20
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	21
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	22
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	23
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	24
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	25
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	26
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	27
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	28
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	29
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	30
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	31
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	32
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	33
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	34
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	35
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	36
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	37
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	38
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	39
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	40
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	41
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	42
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	43
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	44
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	45
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	46
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	47
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	48
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	49
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	50
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	51
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	52
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	53
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	54
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	55
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	56
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	57
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	58
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	59
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	60
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	61
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	62
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	63
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	64
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	65
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	66
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	67
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	68
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	69
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	70
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	71
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	72
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	73
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	74
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	75
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	76
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	77
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	78
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	79
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	80
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	81
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	82
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	83
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	84
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	85
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	86
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	87
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	88
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	89
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	90
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	91
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	92
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	93
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	94
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	95
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	96
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	97
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	98
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	99
"The Belmont House in Balmain", R. Irvine	100

Reviews

A LIFE ON BALMAIN

Robert Irvine is a senior lecturer in the Graduate School of the Built Environment, University of New South Wales and Senior Dixon, a Tutor in Australian History at the University of Sydney, is writing a new book on Balmain from 1860 to 1984.

Feynolds H.I., BALMAIN: 1860-1984. The Oldfashioned Settlement - A Basic Search Plan. The Balmain Association, 1978. Map 1050 mm x 800 mm. Booklet 20 pp. \$15.00 (\$6.00 members).

This Plan and accompanying guide booklet are the most useful publications by the Balmain Association so far. The Plan, which I imagine many Balmainites will choose to purchase independently of the booklet, shows the first subdivision and sale of all the land contained in the original grant to William Balmain in 1800. These first sales of land occurred between 1836 and 1882 and one can see from a glance at the Plan the overall pattern of Balmain's subdivision throughout this period. Documentation on the Plan allows the curious to identify also the name of the original purchaser of any block of Balmain land. This amount of information makes the Plan an interesting document in itself.

The purpose of the booklet is to guide those who want to pursue the history of a parcel of land from its first sale to the present. The Plan supplies information (The Old Systems Title Register, Book number and the number of the particular deed) which enables a researcher to go directly to the

relevant records in the Registrar General's Department and begin the systematic search necessary to uncover all subsequent transactions relating to that land. The guidance offered to help the reader with this task is sufficiently clear and detailed to allow the hitherto uninitiated to proceed with confidence.

Reynolds is at pains to point out that precise dating of the first transaction relating to a particular piece of land does not necessarily reveal the date at which any building was erected.

As most people will be motivated by a desire to discover the age of their home, this research procedure is not wholly satisfactory and Reynolds indicates the sorts of clues that can alert one to the probable date of construction (a sharp increase in the sale price, the appearance of a mortgage over the land, a sketch on a sales plan, etc.). *Santa Sydney Directory* can also be used to trace occupiers of a particular house and may help pinpoint the date of construction, although there are problems about its use. For example, unless the occupier is the title holder and therefore identifiable to the researcher, it is sometimes difficult to know which house in a street is the relevant one, as distinguishing house numbers were not systematic or stable until late in the nineteenth century.

There is an easier and more accurate way of dating the construction of a house and that is by information contained in the local council's Rate and Assessment Books. However while there are some fortunate Sydney house dwellers who can trace the history of their house in this fashion it is not available as a method of research to Balmainites. All Balmain Rate and Assessment Books prior to 1907 have disappeared. Not surprisingly as the surviving Council Minutes refer to several major scandals involving longstanding non-payment of rates by prominent Aldermen.

Although recognising that Reynolds's interest has been in tracing the history of the troubled Balmain/Glebe Estate (which includes present day Bursello but excludes Birchgrove) it is a pity that the project was not extended to include Birchgrove. Although originally a separate grant, the area has long been an integral part of the peninsula suburb. From a contemporary perspective its exclusion appears rather arbitrary. I suspect some Birchgrove residents may feel somewhat piqued.

However it is gratuitous to criticise this research project for what it has not done. In getting together the basic information relating to the first sales Reynolds and his colleagues have performed a painstaking chore for which many will be grateful. I expect to encounter many copies of the large rian on Balmain walls in the near future.

Lesley Lynch

A Pictorial History of BALMAIN Peninsula from 1788
(Shelly Bay Publications, Balmain, 1977)
Author unknown. 875 mm x 535 mm.
Price \$4.05.

This map, shows Balmain and Bursello east of Victoria Road. It is literally a mosaic of historical information, in written and graphic snippets sprinkled over an outline of the streets and water-line of the peninsula. The map is colourful, visually busy, crisply produced, and timely - an informal and easy-to-read presentation.

It is sad, then, to report that many inaccuracies make the document less authoritative, less valuable, than it might be.

The price is modest for a five-colour printing on fair quality paper - though the choice of colours, like the general graphic style, is idiosyncratic. It gives a good impression of the water-locked character of Balmain, yet, apart from locating a bit of Mull's Head and Goat Island, the map fails to relate Balmain to its surroundings. Glebe Island is not there, nor is Iron Cove Bridge, and the connection with Bursello is unclear. It is a pity that the map did not go just a little further and define the whole of the original Balmain land grant, where it all began.

A graphic statement, particularly one presented with such visual clarity as this map, has the potential of being positive, even definitive. Here, however, the authors cannot make up their minds about the period they want to portray. Modern Victoria Road is shown, for instance; but Robert Street, for generations a main entrance to Balmain, is omitted, thus obscuring part of the historical context. In Mort Bay the reclamation of the basin for the famous nineteenth-century engineering complex is shown in broken outlines (this reclaimed shoreline is still roughly the same today); yet the original shoreline of Small's Bay (it was reclaimed to make Birchgrove Park much later than Mort's Dock) is not shown at all. And although some 1970s buildings are identified, no attempt was made to show the dramatic extent of the vast White Bay reclamation.

The map locates a multitude of historic sites, using sketches to illustrate the structures which occupy many of them and, as well, a bewildering range of symbols - rectangles, circles, dots, colour patches, or only names - for others. Additional parcels of history are scattered over the map at random. The streets are indicated by a variety of means - lines, dots and coloured strips - and too few of them are named. Some present-day businesses are pinpointed, without context and for no apparent reason. These and other idiosyncrasies create a patchy effect, as though the map grew by accident rather than by design. More seriously, the result is that it is hard for someone who does not already know Balmain to locate the things depicted.

There are many errors, a few of them quite serious. The boundary of Whitfield's Farm (Birch Grove) is incorrect; it should be at Cove Street, not Bone Street (neither street is named). Birchgrove House was never the oldest in Sydney - it was erected in 1810 (not 1812); the house is also shown on the wrong site. Several other buildings are wrongly sited: Black House (and Fletcher's Pad-dock - they were south of Craftern Street and met at its east end); Woodleigh (down Black Street, not Duke); the Primitive Methodist Church (it was on the other side of Darling Street). J F Frankl did not invent shipboard refrigeration (an American engineer did), and Balmain Rowing Club is not the oldest in NSW. Johnston's Bay (not Johnston's) should be shown as White Bay at its west end, north of Glebe Island. Will Murdoch, Edmund Blacket and Hampden Villa are some of the names mispelt.

Whilst there are some refreshing new details given, most of this "pictorial history" has been collated from existing sources; it would have been nice to see them acknowledged. The strength of the map lies in the topographical discoveries and relationships which it facilitates. "A Pictorial History of BALMAIN ..." is the first map of its kind to be published, and deserves commendation for that, but it has too many shortcomings for it to be considered as anything but a beginning. We still await the definitive production.

Robert Irving