

# The District's Rapid Growth and Progress

## The History of Balmain It's Rapid Rise to Greatness!

### 75th YEAR CELEBRATIONS

**THE** Early Settlers of Sydney were soon attracted to the pretty undulating bush-land, which was years later to be known as Balmain, with its miles of indented water-frontage, oysters clustering on every rock and prawns and fish abounding in every Bay, it was a veritable Picnic Ground — explored by many sports who roamed with their guns shooting fauna, and Gill-birds, which were so numerous that it was generally known as the 'place for Gill-birds.' The many creeks, rocks and caves made it an ideal Sanctuary.

The picnic parties were ferried across Darling Harbour by watermen in skiffs from Miller's Point, Sydney, and as the city grew, King Street wharf was greatly availed of as a starting point. The bush tracks to Garryowen orchard were soon well defined—the novelty of seeing oranges growing on the trees was the attraction, and proved a profit to the orchardist, who charged 1/- for admission, and permitted visitors to eat all they required direct from the trees—none were to be carried away.

It was Governor Hunter, who in the year 1809, presented 550 acres as a grant to William Balmain, a merchant, who attracted attention to this island.

It was, however, the young doctor, who recorded deed in the Titles Office, Sydney, dated 7/7/1801, conveyed by bargain and sale the whole

mand for homes in this favored locality and quote from the "Sydney Morning Herald" of 20/6/1853:—

It is a well-known fact that scarcely a day passes without numerous enquiries being made, for homes in Balmain, by every class of society. "Let it be known that you are about to erect a dwelling house in Balmain and you can secure a tenant before the first stone is laid."

The first 20 years after the subdivision showed wonderful progress in the village of Balmain, which was placed under the operation of the Police Act on September 30, 1850.

Balmain, with the municipality of Glebe, returned one member of Parliament.

On his first effort, by G. W. Allen, Esquire, of the Glebe, who was elected speaker in the Legislative Assembly.

### "HONEST JOHN."

The late John Storey, M.L.A., was one of the district's most worthy representatives. At the time of his death, he was the Premier of New South Wales. His son, Eric, who served in the Great War, died recently, as did his wife, Lady Storey. The late Mr. Storey was known as "Honest John," a title that he richly deserved. Our former Member rose to great heights as a Statesman from the working class. He served his apprenticeship, as a boiler-maker, at the Mort's Dock & Engineering Co. Ltd. The Storey's family work for local charity is still spoken of in the district.



The Late JOHN STOREY, M.L.A.

of his right, title and interest, in the Crown grant to John Gilchrist for 5/- of lawful money.

John Gilchrist had the name Borthwick added to his surname, being descended on a maternal side from Borth, of Scotland.

The next recorded step is a letter of attorney by John Borthwick Gilchrist to Frederick Parbury of the whole of the 550 acres then known as Gilchrist Place, the said Frederick Parbury was given full power to subdivide and sell in lots of 100 acres or less on terms of 5 years or less, and to account to John Borthwick Gilchrist. He was specially instructed to reserve a road 60 feet wide from Darling Harbour to Grose Hill. Mr. J. Reuss was his surveyor, and Frederick Parbury built his home overlooking Waterview Bay and named it "Bray-y-mor" (Welsh for "Waterview") in the year 1835.

Among early sales recorded are 15 acres to George Cooper in 1839; to Mathew Henry Marsh in 1844; to John Beattie in 1845; to John Frazer Gray in 1846; to William Curtis (Thames Street); J. H. Young, James Alderson, William Joseph Locke, H. Mansfield and J. Booth.

The number of electors on the roll were 3383. It was in October, 1859, the residents petitioned the Legislative Assembly to have Balmain proclaimed a municipality and divided into three wards.

The petition was signed by 873 of the residents. Among the names on this petition we read Cameron, Mansfield, Evans, Perkins, Grafton, Ross—and, as every progressive measure has its objectors, we find that a counter petition was a few days later presented against the proposed municipal incorporation, signed by 416 persons, among whom were: McBeath, Fenton, Cherry, Nash, Llewellyn, Leach, Gordon; but notwithstanding the extra 43 names upon the second petition, the first petition was duly acknowledged, and Balmain was proclaimed a municipality on the 21/2/60 and was divided into three wards, viz: north, south and east. The east ward comprised the east end from centre of Adolphus Street and New John Street (now St. John Street). The north and south wards comprised the balance of the municipality; the boundary line being along the centre of Darling Street and Adolphus and New John Street, Johnstone Bay and Garryowen Fencé.

took place on the 29th March, 1860, and the following gentlemen were declared elected: E. Cameron, W. O. S. Evans, J. Beattie, J. Burt, Dr. Elliott, John Booth, M. Palmer, Reynolds, Mansfield and Captain Rowntree. The returning officer was Mr. James Shober. The first meeting of the councillors was held at the residence of Ald. T. Rowntree, and Ald. Hugh Mansfield was elected chairman.

The first Council Clerk was Thomas Butterfield, and the first by-laws were published in the Government Gazette on the 24th July, 1860.



The Mayor, Ald. J. Staple...

no rate money has been paid by residents to this date, but debentures amounting to £1100 were disposed of, and a cash credit of £541 obtained on the Bank of Australia, making receipts in all amounting to £550.

The "Sydney Morning Herald" of 14th October, 1861, records: "At the Balmain Council meeting were present the chairman, Dr. Elliott; councillors, Beattie, Burt, Evans, Rowntree and Stenhouse.

A letter from R. T. Ford, drawing attention of condition of Grafton St. Suggested: Property owners do their own repairs, subject to approval of surveyor.

The balance sheet for the first 12 months to June, 1861, makes interesting reading:—

Receipts: Rates to June, 1861: East ward £696/15/3d, south ward £397/12/-, north ward £770/1/9d; total, £1864/9/1d; Government endowment £1864/9/1d, miscellaneous 10/4; total, £3729/8/3d.



Mr. J. Quirk, M.L.A.

Expenditure, By works, Darling St £2551/8/6, Adolphus Street £12/13/6, St. Andrew Street 17/6, William Street 8/-; total, £2565/7/5. Office expenditure, furniture and surveyor's instruments £135/13/6; rent £56/6/6, clerk and surveyor £224/10/6, assessor £90, collector £36/1/6, pound-keeper £19/11/6, petty cash and charwoman £6/11, rates of office £1.

£23/12/6, advertising £39/17/8, fuel and light £2/13/6, sundries £7/3/6, petty cash 16/6, burying dead dog 1/6; total, £728/18/9.

This balance sheet was drastically commented upon at the time. It showed that to collect £1864/4/1d office expenditure amounted to £728. Thus for every 20/- collected it cost about 8/- to collect. Special mention was made of the 1/6 for burying a dead dog; also the items, charwoman coupled with petty cash, £7/9/11; something like half a crown a week for scrubbing the office, etc.

The clerk and surveyor received £224/10/8.

Darling Street seems to have been the favorite street, all through, for upwards of £3000 was expended on it during the first year. William Street and St. Andrew Street were not forgotten—one had 8/-, the other 17/6 laid out in repairs. It is thought that some of the councillors must have lived in that neighbourhood to have merited such lavish expenditure.

The fact that so much money had been used to make Darling Street, is having swallowed up all the rates and Government endowment for the first 12 months.



The Mayor, Ald. J. Staple...



The Late DR. R. STOPFORD, M.L.A.

Some residents became so discontented that early in 1861 they presented a petition signed by 900 residents praying that the municipality be divided from Thames Street waterfront, to be called Strathern. This petition was objected to by a counter petition in November of the same year (1861), signed by 200 residents, and no further notice was taken.

Strathern, it is explained, was popular, for on the north side of Mort Street stood the Strathern Hotel, kept by one Water, who was also a stone-mason (he built the stone stores alongside the dock entrance, Trouton Street). These buildings with the iron bracket, which carried the kerosene lamp to guide the ships to the dock, are still in position behind the present extensive offices.

Another petition was presented in June, 1869, praying that the municipality be divided at Ann Street,

Alfredtown, but this petition shared the fate of the previous one.

The total amount received during the first 15 years by the council was approximately £15,000.

Legal expenses show through the first 15 years, but 1,875 outvotes them all, with £210. For the 12 months ending August, 1875, the four wards contributed £2242; and the office and legal expenses amounted to £8/3, is more than one-third of the gross amount—or about 7/6 for every 20/- raised. Again, the item for ferries, increases in amount year by year, the amount for the last 12 months being £5/3/-. Well may Ald. Mossman on Tuesday, 11th January, 1876, propose, "That this council go into committee for consideration of the financial position of the borough, with a view, if practicable, to decrease the working expenses of this council's affairs; at least, until such times as its funds become in a more flourishing condition." It was postponed because of likely changes in council. With loss of Government endowment amounting for year ending February, 1875, to £568/14/2 it would seem, something should be done, as selling debentures will not last for ever, though accord-

### THE WEEK'S PROGRAMME

- MONDAY:**
  - 3 p.m.: Band Recital, Elkington Park, N.E.W. Government Railway Institute Band. Collection in aid of Balmain Hospital.
  - 4 p.m.: Presentation of flowers to school children by Mayor and Aldermen.
  - Afternoon: Half holiday for school children.
  - 2 p.m.: School Safety Patrol Competition in Rozelle School, presentation of Shield to winning school.
  - 8 p.m.: Balmain Hospital Jubilee Meeting. Vice Regal party will be in attendance in Town Hall.
  - 8.30 p.m.: Reception by His Worship the Mayor, Aldermen and citizens to the Vice Regal party in Balmain Town Hall.
- TUESDAY:**
  - 8 p.m.: 2BL Community Concert in Town Hall. Admission: Adults 6d., children 3d. In aid of wireless in Hospitals Fund.
- WEDNESDAY:**
  - 8 p.m.: Reunion Dinner in Balmain Town Hall.
- THURSDAY:**
  - 7.3 p.m.: Elkington Park baths and park under illumination. Fire Brigade Band, vaudeville turns in park, and swimming races, diving exhibition and polo match in baths. Baths free.
- FRIDAY:**
  - 7 p.m.: Special shopping day, grand parade of bands throughout main business thoroughfare in the district.
- SATURDAY:**
  - 8 p.m.: Balmain Hospital card party, Town Hall.

ing to report of Mullens at a meeting on 11th January, six debentures sold for £98, or only 2 per cent. loss.

The foregoing reveals some of the early struggles and the rapid advance from the village to the municipality, which can now boast an annual income of over £60,000; while the present improved capital value approximates £7,000,000.

For many years Balmain was almost solely residential; but the ever-growing industries of the colony called for deep-water and extensions, hence, many of the beautiful homes of our notable Australian pioneers were sacrificed to meet this demand; and Balmain is to-day one of the most important industrial suburbs of the State—with a population of close upon 50,000 persons.

The local police have found a pay envelope containing money, and the



# Back to Balmain Week

## 75th Anniversary of Municipality

Sunday, 1st December to Saturday, 7th December  
1935

### Programme for Week :

#### SUNDAY, 1st DECEMBER—

Special Church Services (Day or Night).

3 p.m.: Band Recital Elkington Park,  
Railway Institute Band.

Collection in aid of Balmain Hospital.

#### MONDAY, 2nd DECEMBER—

Morning: Presentation of Medallions to school  
Children by Mayor and Aldermen

Afternoon: School Half Holiday.

2 p.m.: School Safety Patrol Competition and  
Presentation of Shield at Rozelle School.

8 p.m.: Balmain Hospital Jubilee Meeting. Town  
Hall. Vice-Regal Party in attendance.

9.30 p.m.: Vice-Regal Reception, Council Cham-  
bers.

#### TUESDAY, 3rd DECEMBER—

8 p.m.: 2BL. Community Concert, Town Hall.  
Admission, Adults 6d, Children 3d. Proceeds in  
aid of Wireless in Hospitals Fund.

#### WEDNESDAY, 4th DECEMBER—

8 p.m.: Re-Union Dinner Town Hall.

#### THURSDAY, 5th DECEMBER—

7.30 p.m.: Elkington Park and Baths under  
Illumination, Fire Brigade Band, Vaudeville  
Turns, Diving Exhibition, Swimming Races and  
Polo Match.

#### FRIDAY, 6th DECEMBER—

Special Shopping Day. Balmain and Rozelle  
Shopkeepers solicit your support.

#### SATURDAY, 7th DECEMBER—

8 p.m.: Balmain Hospital Card Party, Town Hall.  
Admission, 2/-. All invited.

**CECIL STAPLETON, J.P.,**  
Mayor.