



The Peninsula OBSERVER

the Newsheet of the Balmain Association PO Box 57•Balmain•NSW•2041
www.balmainassociation.org.au

Vol 53 No 4 Issue 349

Founded November 1965

December 2018

PRESIDENT'S REPORT November 2018 - Duncan MacAuslan

Write a President's Report? Possibly the most challenging assignment for my year as BA President.

First task is to convince the editor to put an illustration on the front cover of this newsletter, looks much more appealing and reduces the amount I need to write.

Next I'm perusing my predecessor, Carolyn Allen's reports from the last few years to gain some idea of what a President's report should contain. Carolyn's reports clearly reflected her deep knowledge of the BA's past and her activism in the Peninsula's events. I have no way of replicating that; I can only thank her after her several years as BA president and her continuing participation on the committee.

IWC

During 2018 the impacts of the elected IWC became more obvious as the new elected Council began its regular meetings and addressing the many issues of the merger. Its three constituent council's demographic and topographical differences are reflected in varying policies such as in heritage and trees. There have been many decisions and subsequent rescissions as the debates continue.

The Dawn Fraser pool has been the subject of many IWC debates and clearly is held in less esteem by IWC's other constituents than it was by Leichhardt. There was a reluctance to commit the considerable funds, \$6 million plus, required to ensure that its heritage buildings can survive the high tides more frequent flooding. It was heartening to see a large community gathering supporting the pool and receiving the funding support albeit subject to two governments changing in the near future.

One of the ongoing concerns is the lack of communication from IWC and amongst the residents on issues affecting us all. Under LMC Precinct Committees met and formed local opinion on matters

such as parks, developments, White Bay, and published newsletters which were then distributed by volunteers to every home in Rozelle, Birchgrove and Balmain. Not only has this not been re-established under IWC but as yet the various administrative committees such as heritage, Clontarf and others have not been set-up. This means that as well as fewer Councillors there are fewer means of participating in the community.

Heritage

During the year the BA has supported the demolition of the Balmain Telephone Exchange and its replacement by a town square, asked for a review the signage at Woolworth's where it over looks the War Memorial and monitored activity at Bell's store.

The BA's history team has received many requests to assist with heritage reports and has been able to respond to most of them. An interesting development has been requests for photographs of the as-built state of buildings. Sadly despite our extensive collection very few pictures exist from the building boom of the 1870s to 1890s; Balmain was not visited by many professional photographers then and possession of cameras by locals appears few and far between.

Ross Mackenzie, Helen Carter and Jenny Longbottom continue this work as well as maintaining our archives.

Exhibitions

Our Heritage Week (April) exhibition highlighted the peninsula's cultural diversity with an exhibition of David Liddle's specially commissioned photographs of local residents from a variety of backgrounds. This proved very popular and was well supported by the community.

For History Week in September the theme was Life and Death in Balmain with many stories of growing up, working and growing old on the peninsula.

Designing and setting up these



Duncan with friend Shirley Pech exhibitions is a significant task and the work put into it by our volunteers is appreciated.

Open Gardens

After a ten year break the BA held a Spring Open Gardens tour. The report on this is elsewhere in this issue and it is for me to thank Di Garder for her significant effort to make a success of this event.

Volunteers

The BA, like many organisations, is purely voluntary, and like many organisations the tasks fall to a few individuals; sadly, fewer and fewer. Thanks to our dedicated by small committee the Watch House is maintained, gardens kept, finances secured and newsletters published.

We are always looking for volunteers in particular to be at the Watch House on Saturdays!

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Update on Recent Issues

PROPOSED NEW ADVISORY GROUP STRUCTURE

Council received and adopted the proposals as outlined in September 2018 issue of the Observer.

Comment by Cr John Stamolis:

Inner West Council shirks local democracy

One of the problems with very big councils like ours is that local democracy is hard to deliver.

The three previous Councils had open Council committees, strong and active resident committees (which were run by residents) and each Council had wonderful volunteer groups assisting Council to run facilities (rooms and halls). Only days after the merger, however, all of these committees were closed down. Council experienced a loss of hundreds of people who had given huge amounts of their time and experience to the community. Last Tuesday night our big Council showed no interest in reinstating or improving what the previous Councils had done. It supported heavily controlled committees made up of Council appointees. The budget for resident committees was farcical and no decision about facilities committees will be made for another 2 to 3 years.

[fb.me/CouncillorJohnStamolis](https://www.facebook.com/CouncillorJohnStamolis)

The full report can be accessed via the Agenda for council meeting 11th September 2018 Item CO918(1) Item 2 starting at page 37.

It is hoped that a meeting will be arranged with the mayor early in 2019 to re-instate the resident Facilities Committees such as Clontarf Cottage and Town Hall committees, which operated prior to amalgamation. Ed.

Vandalism of trees in Mort Bay Park.

There have been developments on two fronts. One is that a couple of trees that were thought to be dead are showing signs of life and the other is that the IWC is about to install surveillance cameras in the area where the vandalism has occurred.

Dawn Fraser Baths

I last reported concern about the Baths in the March 2018 Observer (Vol 53 No 1 Issue 346) when IWC was processing a DA to renew amenities in the 2018 winter and prior to the adoption of the Master Plan for the Baths. This DA was subsequently withdrawn.

The Master Plan was approved for exhibition at the August 2018 meeting of Council. There was much reporting of this meeting as included in the motion to adopt the Master Plan was an update on the additional costs for essential works that are needed now to prevent the closure of the Baths. The c1900 southern pavilion needs to be completely restored and raised to guard against expected sea level rises. Funds allocated previously were \$4.5m but the additional work meant cost would be \$6.7m. Controversy at the meeting was not about the value of the Baths or the need for the work to be done, but was about how additional funds would be found.

The Master Plan went on exhibition during September and was then adopted at the October 30 Council meeting (but on November 6).

Meanwhile, although the DA exhibited in December /January was withdrawn, work continued on preparing a DA for the essential work required. As well as improvements in amenities, with accessible and family change and toilet facilities it includes works to raise and restore the southern building. This has now been on exhibition and we will need to wait for responses from Heritage and other authorities required for approval. The proposal is essentially that the Southern boardwalk and structure will be raised about one metre. They are not proposing to raise the masonry central section but will need to raise all the flooring and roofing including upper and lower balconies. This will mean that the proportions will change as this masonry section will not appear to be as elevated above the roofing of the balconies on either side. The peaked roof will remain fully visible above the parapet. The view would not

change from Cockatoo Is, but it does from within the Baths. I am inclined to agree with Council's Heritage consultants that this is justified but I am sure that some will not. For me, it is more important that given the heritage significance and uniqueness of the Baths as well as its significance as a sporting, recreational and social centre in our community, we do all that we can to make sure that it remains a public amenity for the future.

Meanwhile, before the DA is actually approved, IWC has called for Expression of Interest in the works, closing date December 5, 2018. We believe council would hope to commence work April 2019 and swimmers are hoping that a way can be found for the pool to remain open if work is not completed during the 2019-20 season.

Carolyn Allen

Amalgamation of Archives

Meeting 22 August 2018 with Balmain Association, Friends of Callan Park and staff from IWC library.

The report has been prepared but not yet released and the History Strategy will be presented next year.

No official decision has been made regarding the amalgamation of archives so at present the Balmain Community Archives will remain in situ above Balmain Library.

We will look forward to the report next year.

Balmain Telephone Exchange

There is very little to report on since the September issue of the BA Newsletter other than I have had assurances from Councillors, council staff and Telstra that the demolition of the front of the BTE and the creation of a public square is going ahead.

To quote my Telstra contact from an sms sent on 30 October 2018 "We have received approval from Council to proceed and the project delivery team are refining the project plan. We expect the timing for commencement to be agreed over the coming weeks" Fergus Fricke.

This and That

A Distant Meeting

BA committee members secretary Di and Malcolm Garder's and president Duncan MacAuslan's travels coincided in early August and a meeting was arranged in Leith, Edinburgh's port. At a recommendation from my cousin we met at the King's Wark (Wark translates to work but is used in reference to a piece of work such as a wall, building or battlement).

In this case it is a pub with foundations of the first building dating back to 1434. The current structure dates from 1690.

When I was a wean, Leith was not a popular a place to visit with dark tenements, rough pubs, drunken sailors and prostitutes. By 2018 Leith's Shore has become des-res with many warehouse apartments and boutique hotels.

The King's Wark serves great coffees and guid Scottish cuisine.



Di and Duncan enjoying the guid food

Back to Balmain Day October 2018

A successful day with good weather if a bit windy. Numbers may have been down on previous years, particularly those who usually travel from the central coast, but the crowd seemed as big as ever with the parents of the participants attending. As well as the usual sausage sizzle, the local Balmain Hospital and the Balmain Association had stalls in Elkington Park for the annual event. The entertainment began with the Honeybrook Dancers who performed to much applause to be followed by the Leichhardt Celebrity Brass Band. The entertainment continued with the Birchgrove School Band. The raffle, drawn by the mayor, Darcy Byrne, with prizes donated by local business groups, continued the festivities. Local councillor, John Stamolis, addressed the crowd on local issues before the afternoon continued with the Rozelle School Performance group. An entertaining afternoon enjoyed by all. Ross Mackenzie.



Ross assisting local resident with an enquiry

Committee for 2019

At the AGM on 7th November 2018 there were no surprises

President	Duncan MacAuslan
Vice- president	Ross Mackenzie
Secretary	Di Garder
Treasurer	John Symonds
Committee	Carolyn Allen Helen Carter June Lunsmann Leo White
Auditor	Stuart Cameron
Public Officer	Malcolm Garder



We are **still** looking for members who can spare 3-4 hours, 11.30am to 3pm on a Saturday afternoon to assist with history enquiries and sale of publications.

Assistance will be given to familiarise you with access to our archives and book sales.

email to

contact@balmainassociation.org.au

NSW State Election

23 March 2019

Meet the Candidates
for the seat of Balmain

1.30 pm for 2pm

Saturday 9 March

at Balmain Town Hall

to be chaired by Michael Raper

organised by following community groups

Balmain Institute

Balmain Association

Climate Change Balmain - Rozelle

THE SPRING GARDEN WALKS - Di Garder

After 10 years the Balmain Association decided to revive the very successful Spring Garden Walks. The date was set for October 27 and garden owners were approached. Some of the gardens had been open for the Balmain Association in the past and the owners were keen to be involved again. In addition there were three new ones, so a total of seven altogether. The garden owners were pleased to have an excuse to “tidy up” their gardens. The day dawned bright and we were set up at the Watch House to sell tickets from 9.30am, anticipating 100 or so visitors. I was fortunate to get onto local radio 702 ABC and talked to Simon Marnie during the Gardening Show, to promote the event. Costa Georgiadis, the TV gardener, was on the program with Simon and said he would like to come! And so he turned up at the Watch House to buy a ticket much to everyone’s excitement! He visited all the gardens and was most impressed – he may even do a couple of TV programs on some of the gardens!

By 10.30am we had sold out of tickets so we had to print more tickets, more maps, more information about the gardens. We were overwhelmed!

The gardens were a delightful mixture. The very large, lush, exotic foliage garden at Ewenton with large palms, old figs, bananas, strelitzias, cordelias, yuccas and huge blue and shell ginger plants contrasted with the hidden garden with its amazing collection of South American plants which was just up the road.

The communal planting at Camerons Landing was a wonderful surprise. These gardens with massed plantings and numerous large pots extend throughout the complex and at every turn there is a visual delight. Large trees such as banksias, casuarinas, melaleucas and Sydney red gums provide a canopy to the myriad of varieties including nandina, olives, clivias, lavender, camellia, acacia, lilly pilly, westringia and many more.



Costa at Ewenton House.



The front lawn at Ewenton House.



Communal planting at Cameron's Landing.

Balmoral House, a fine example of a Georgian villa, has been extensively restored with its large garden in front. This is a gardener’s garden – a labour of love by the owners over many years. They have created a lovely formal garden with terraces, stone steps and urns, a rose arbour and a magnolia hedge across the front.



The garden at Balmoral House.



The pond in the garden with the beehive.

Hirondelle's special appeal is the many bromeliads, orchids and hanging baskets in the lush tropical garden around the pond at the front. At the rear native frangipannis, citrus, ginger and an extensive herb garden vie for space in a family friendly area overlooking the harbour. Below is the community garden created by this owner along the back lane from a wasteland of weeds.

A beehive in the small cluttered, terrace garden just down the road ensures that the plants are fertilized and the owners enjoy the honey. What was once a pile of rubbish has been transformed into a busy garden with a pond, succulents, many varieties of citrus, mango, avocado and colourful plants at every turn.

Wyoming, a marine villa with its garden right to the shore of Sydney Harbour has been comprehensively restored under the careful eye of James Broadbent, historian and

Congratulations to Di for reviving such a wonderful event and a big thank you to the garden owners and to all the volunteers from all who attended.

conservation consultant. The pond with water lilies and lotus, the huge cacti, many varieties of frangipani and the restored original orchid house all complement the Victorian house. On the lower level there is a taverna, a sunken garden and lawns to the water's edge.

By the end of the day over 320 very happy visitors had enjoyed these special gardens!!

A big Thank You to the garden owners for their generosity, to the many volunteers who gave their time on the day and to Cobden & Hayson for their wonderful support with printing posters and promotion.

Maybe we can look forward to some new gardens in two years time!!

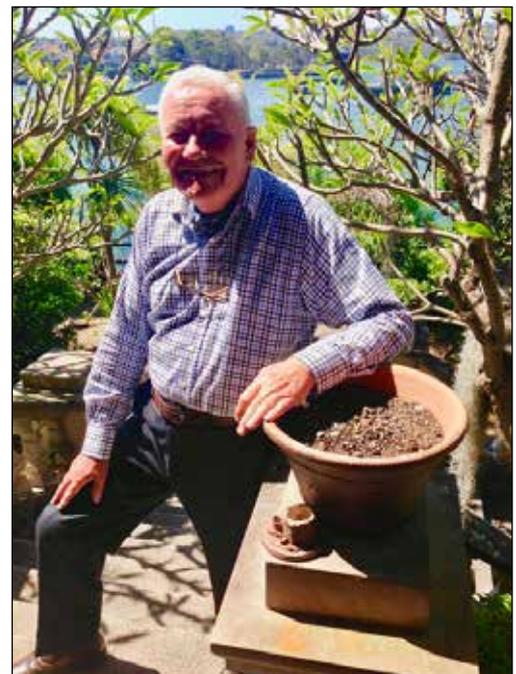
Di Garder



Di beside the huge cactus outside the glasshouse at Wyoming.



Volunteers enjoying a well deserved wind-down at Hirondelle.



James Broadbent, historian and conservation consultant in the garden at Wyoming where he oversaw the restoration.

White Bay Cruise Terminal - Duncan MacAuslan

State MP for Balmain Jamie Parker held a meeting at Balmain Town Hall on 13 October to outline his strategy for the future of the White Bay Cruise Terminal. Over 100 residents attended, and all were in favour of doing something to reduce the noise and air pollution when ships are docked there. The meeting was addressed by Kate Horrobin from *Stop Cruise Ship Pollution* who gave an insight into the health risks the cruise industry poses to local residents. Bunker fuel used by the ships in Sydney has 3,500 times the maximum sulphur permitted in diesel fuel used in cars, trucks and buses but is much cheaper to use than other marine fuels. Many countries in North American and Europe have established Emission Control Areas which preclude ships from burning bunker fuel within 320 kms of their coastlines. Australia has no plans to do so. The current Sydney Harbour regulations permit ships to use bunker fuel while cruising, one hour after they have docked and one hour before departing dock.

White Bay has no shore to ship power and so vessels must run their engines to drive generators whilst docked. Melinda Pavey, NSW Minister for



Ports, was quoted as saying “The cost to implement shore power significantly outweighs the emission benefits...”. It is estimated that it would cost \$28million to install power at White Bay which when spread across the over 2.8million cruise passengers expected to Sydney over the next two years would only cost \$10 per passenger.

The action plan for 2018/9 comprises:

- Compel govt to implement stage 2 low sulphur regulations which would mandate low sulphur fuel at all times in Sydney Harbour.

- Write to Carnival Australia’s CEO, Ann Sherry, demanding that they apply the same policies on pollution in Sydney as they do in Europe where low sulphur is used.

- Push the NSW Government to install Shore to Ship power.

- Co-ordinate noise complaints by copying emails to Jamie at balmain@parliament.nsw.gov.au so his office can keep a database of them.

Copies of Jamie’s and Kate’s presentations can be found at <https://www.jamieparker.org/wbct>. Draft letters are also available there.

Westconnex Update

At the time of writing the Westconnex website claims the project is 43% complete (<https://www.westconnex.com.au/>). Given that two major components the M4-M5 tunnels and the M4-M5 Link Interchange are still in planning it is hard to accept the meaning of this figure.

Peninsula residents have formed two groups voicing local feelings towards the project. Rozelle Against Westconnex (RAW, <http://rozelleagainstwestconnex.org/home/>) is concerned about the multi-level Rozelle Interchange and the Iron Cove Link. The Western Harbour Tunnel Action Group has serious issues with the under-harbour tunnel proposed from the Interchange to the north shore (where there are several other action groups). It is easy to summarise the reasons against Westconnex:

- Unnecessary
- Increased and focused atmospheric pollution
- Increased traffic levels and bottleneck
- Severe risk of harbour pollution during tunnelling.

Significant disruption to communities during construction

Preference for public transport

Rather than detail these here it is best to read the 556 submissions to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the project at <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/committees/inquiries/Pages/inquiry-details.aspx?pk=2497#tab-submissions>

It is quite clear that there are no residents in favour of Westconnex anywhere in Sydney. No obvious community demand for such a large and unwanted project. It seems the whole project is being forced on the community by developers and compliant politicians who have lost touch with the community.

It has been described as a means of transferring funds to the developers. The outlandish salaries being paid at Transurban, Westconnex’s owner, include over \$7million to its Chief Executive. The average wage for its employees is estimated at \$98,000, around 1.4% of that.

The recently reported rush by the Minister for Planning to sign approvals shows contempt for the voters who won’t get a say until March. How tight the contracts are may then be tested.

Duncan MacAuslan.



Jam sold at rally organised by Rage against WestConnex April 2018

Nutritional Information

- 99% Fact Free
- Preserved from the 1950s
- Not for human consumption
- Unfiltered smokey flavour
- Contains political nuts

Secret ingredients
Asphalt, Asbestos, Carbon Monoxide and Lots of Spin

Remembrance Day at Callan Park

Sydney Harbour Bridge War Memorial

.. a bridge across time, countries, hearts and minds...

Smoking Ceremony to mark the Centenary of the ANZAC legend

Armistice Day, Sunday 11 November 2018

Callan Park's waterfront Repatriation wards were places where veterans were able to convalesce.



Raymond Finn with smoking eucalyptus leaves

Overlooking Callan Point, a replica of the Sydney Harbour Bridge was unveiled in 1931, a War Memorial dedicated to all those who served. Indigenous Digger, and draughtsman, Douglas Grant, who fought in WW1 enlisting in the 1st AIF in 1916, designed the Bridge whilst recuperating at Callan Park with fellow Veterans in Repatriation 'Ward B' who helped to build it. In full ceremonial dress of the Centralian Lighthorse, it was appropriate that Indigenous man, Raymond Finn of the La Perouse Community led a commemoration to honour the legacy of

Douglas Grant and his fellow veterans in 'Ward B'.

Contemplating reflection and gratitude at the Sydney Harbour Bridge War Memorial, our intimate gathering united in healing land and spirit, as a small fire of eucalyptus smoke and gentle tones of didgeridoo wafted through morning sunbeams.

A showcase of jacaranda in full bloom provided the perfect backdrop to our slow procession around the War Memorial that included placing of red poppies, laying wreaths with La Perouse flora, and young family who lovingly wove ribbons through fencing and around two trees resembling sentinel. Poignant speeches were given by special guests Raymond Finn and Taressa Mongta from La Perouse Community, Independent Cr John Stamolis Balmain, and Hall Greenland, President Friends of Callan Park. All reinforced the contribution and sacrifice of these war heroes,

the culturally significant Aboriginal history of the site as a whole and the therapeutic healing qualities at Callan Park. Raymond and Taressa referred to the significance of Douglas Grant's design and its representation of a bridge between cultures. Particular reference was made to the generosity of open green space and trees and the Aboriginal middens at Callan Point, aptly described by Taressa as "a microcosm of peace and harmony".

Lyn Latella, Executive Friends of Callan Park.



The Memorial Harbour Bridge with Jacaranda backdrop



Hall Greenland, Clr John Stamolis, Raymond Finn, Didgeridoo player, Taressa Mongta, Clr Marghanita Da Cruz

~ Lest we forget ~

This event was supported by Friends of Callan Park, Inner West Council Aboriginal Liaison Officer, Deborah Lennis and the La Perouse Community. NOV 2018

Friends of Callan Park: 1998-2018 20 years of community activism, advocacy and achievement



What's on at the Watch House

www.balmainassociation.org.au

MARCH

Saturday 2 and Sunday 3

Lindsay Williams to be advised

Saturday 9 and Sunday 10, 10am - 4pm

Balmain inspired

This is the Balmain Peninsula Park Painters 15th annual exhibition at the Watch House. Artists exhibiting again this year are Mary Cullen, Susan Grant and Jennifer Kerr. Hope you can make it.

Opening Friday 8, 5.30-8pm All welcome.

Saturday 16, 10-4.30 and Sunday 17, 10-4pm

Life Evolving with Art

Christeene Britton

There is a definite journey for both the artist creating and the collector investing in a new and exciting piece. Both are on a journey of discovery. 'Life Evolving with Art' is a visual journey documenting the development of my art as it carries me into the future. I will be showcasing a collection of textural acrylics pieces, contrasted with colourful inks and watercolours that are full of life and intrigue. Do not miss the debut solo of this latest collection.

Opening Friday 15, 6.45-9pm, All welcome.

Saturday 23 and Sunday 24 10-4.30pm

Invasive

An exhibition from Rachel Vosila examining a selection of non-native plant species and the impact these have on their surrounding native ecosystems. This is explored through the anthropomorphism of their invasive characteristics and embedded into objects to tell these stories.

• <https://www.rachelvosila.com/>

Opening Friday 22 6-8.30pm All Welcome

Saturday 30 and Sunday 31, 10am-5pm

From the Studio to you

The exhibition is about meeting the world and abstracting its contrasts, from landscape to natural elements, from cliff faces to coastal places to contours of private and common significance.

Brenda Livermore, Tracy McCarthy, Karen Steele, Bernadette Facer, Kate Lovejoy-Furnell and Susan McLeod.

Opening Friday 29 6-8pm All welcome

APRIL

Saturday 6

No exhibition - History Room open 11.30-3

18 April to 19 May

National Trust Heritage Festival.



Join us for Christmas Cheer 2pm Saturday 8 December

We will be presenting an encore of Life and Death in Balmain examining the Life and Death of the Industries, the Balmain cemetery and many personal observations.

Don't miss this second opportunity at the Watch House on Saturdays 11.30 - 3pm: December 15, 22, January 5, 12, 19 and February 2, 9, 16, 23

Come along to the Watch House and we can help you search through the listings to discover your ancestors.

Look at the many photos and pictures and catch a compelling video which gives an insight into Balmain's industrial past.

We look forward to seeing you!

RSVP for catering for Christmas party

June at june.lunsmann@bigpond.com phone 9810 6885

Friends of Callan Park

Christmas party

6.30 Monday 3 December at the NSW Writers Centre

Please join us to celebrate the launch of our next book on Broughton Hall.

Are you ready to celebrate Australian heritage in 2019?

2019's festival will bring together an array of events across the nation from **18 April – 19 May 2019**.

The theme this year is **Connecting People, Places and the Past**.

Balmain has been the home of many people who have made significant contributions in the past so our will highlight seven such people: the industrial heritage of Thomas Mort's dockyard, Henry Perdriau's ferries and rubber manufacture, the Elliot Brothers chemical manufacturing, John Booth's sawmills, John Bell's shipbuilding industry, Maybanke Anderson's contribution to social welfare particularly women and children and Mrs A'Beckett who set up a Ladies school and applied for land for subdivision.

The Balmain Association Inc Representing Balmain, Birchgrove and Rozelle

Our aims are to:

- Improve the living, working and recreational amenities of our area;
- maintain all features having natural, architectural and or historical value of the area and keep a permanent collection of historical interest;
- seek the cooperation of everyone concerned in the realization of the above.

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