

THE BALMAIN ASSOCIATION

ISSUE NO 45; AUGUST 1973

STREET TREE PLANTING '73.

This month the association will continue its programme of street planting - it is planned to plant Goodsir Street with *Eucalyptus sideroxylon* "Faucett's Pink" (Pink Flowering Ironbark). However, as the footpaths are completely paved with concrete a large measure of council co-operation will be required for the scheme to proceed.

Alan Rogers is at present canvassing the street for support and co-operation of residents, probably also with a petition in hand! Special co-operation is required this time as it is the first time we will be asking some residents to allow us to plant within their property boundaries. This is to break the harsh line of street planting and to compensate for the occurrence of overhead wires.

It is felt that whilst council is forging ahead with its street planting programme as quickly as resources allow, the Association's effort should be aimed at introducing innovative ideas (such as closer and irregular tree spacing) in areas which require special attention.

A CLEAN WATCH HOUSE.

In order to maintain the interior of the Watch House in good condition it is felt that regular cleaning, which has to date been somewhat neglected, is now essential.

It is hoped that the Watch House will be utilised more often once the soon to be started kitchen annex and Watch House Park are completed and to this end management is in the process of engaging a cleaner to service the building once a month.

BALMAIN/ROZELLE PENSIONER CENTRE.

An elderly lonely person would look in vain for a Pensioner Centre in the Leichhardt Municipality. More than a year has elapsed since a committee of the branches of the Balmain & Rozelle Old Age & Invalid Pensioners was formed with the aim of acquiring such a centre. There has been little headway.

The Committee bogged down when the State Government declined any monetary help; they were to have contributed one third, the other contributors being the council and the federal government.

Recently however, there has been more heartening news. The federal government has passed legislation under which the Regional Grants Commission gives full finance to this type of project and Leichhardt Council has informed Committee that Mrs. Bull, the Welfare Community Officer, will meet the Committee in the near future for discussion on the project.

NATURAL GAS PIPELINE AND STORAGE.

The Association has been concerned about the proposed natural gas service to Sydney, particularly in relation to storage (see News Sheets 30, 38 and 43). In March we made a written submission to the Natural Gas Pipeline Inquiry.

We have now received a positive reply in the form of a copy of the "Report and Findings of the Commissioner". The report contains information relevant to Balmain and we quote as follows;

"Clause 7.4.7 Gas Storage;

No back up storage is planned to be provided during the early years of operation of the system, there being adequate capacity or "line pack" in the pipeline itself. However as the natural gas market increases the use of suitable aquifers (should any be available) might be considered as reservoirs for back up supplies.

East-Australia Pipeline Corporation Ltd. (wholly owned subsidiary of A.G.L.) advised the inquiry that the disused Balmain Colliery had been investigated and rejected as a possible reservoir for natural gas."

It would seem that our major fear about the colliery being used as a natural gas reservoir has, at long last, been allayed. However, we are still concerned about the route(s) of the distribution system after it enters the city gate and about any above ground installations. We have therefore requested that we be kept informed when the system reaches this stage of detailed design. In addition we have offered our assistance in any Environmental Impact Study carried out on the urban areas so affected.

SYDNEY HARBOUR - A CITY ENVIRONMENT.

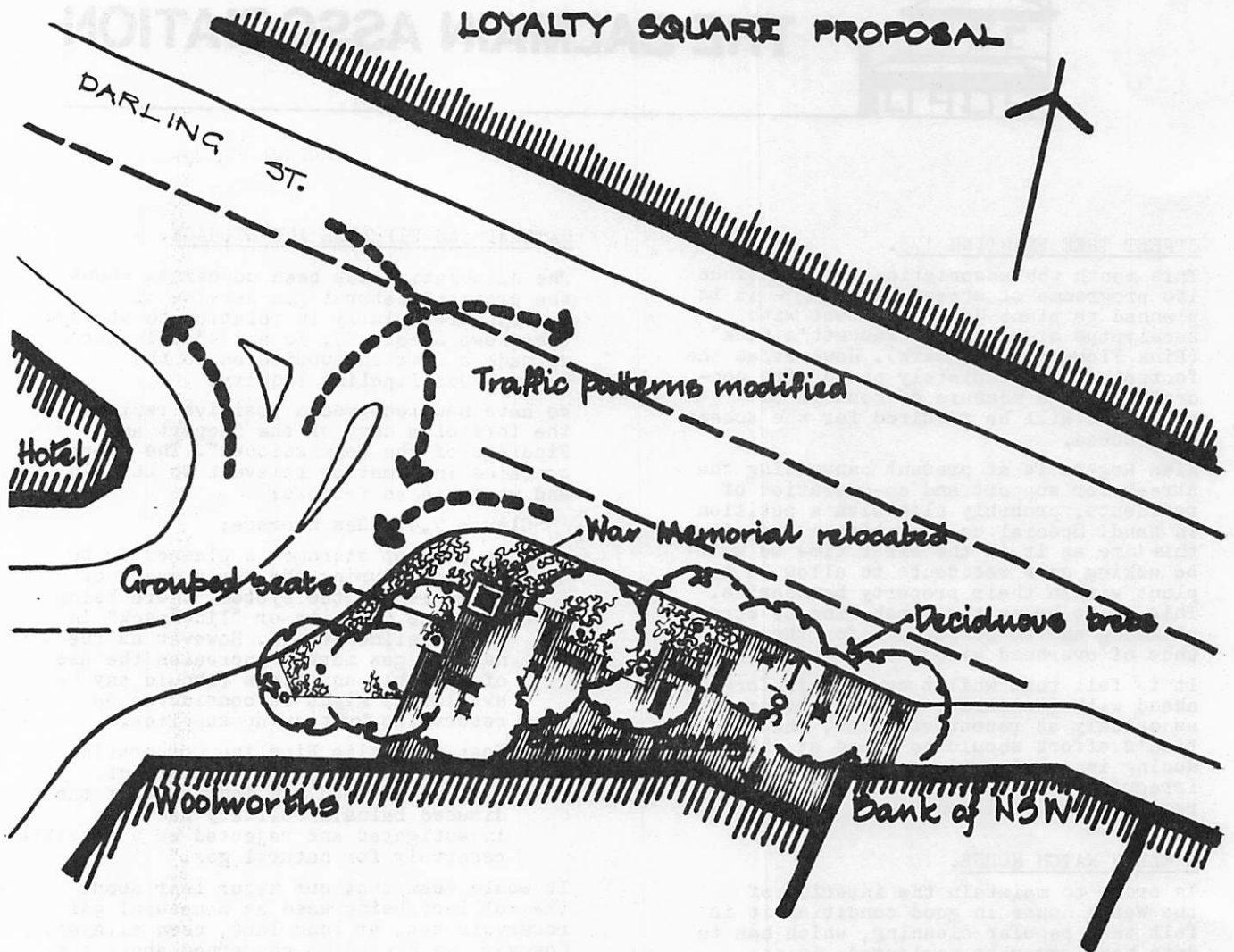
This is the title of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects' 1973 Conference to be held at Macquarie University on Saturday 18th and Sunday 19th of August.

Speakers will include Planners, Architects Developers and Aldermen and on the Sunday there will be a ferry cruise of the harbour and Parramatta River.

For further information contact Mr. Russell Smith, 909 2744.

ANNUAL REPORT.

The eighth annual report of the Association is now in preparation and, as in other years, will be distributed at the Annual General Meeting on August 9th. Highlights of this year's report include the receptive climate Council now has towards recommendations made by the Association and also the highly liquid state of the Association's finances.



LOYALTY SQUARE.

As a result of one of the "Problems and Opportunities" pinpointed by Leichhardt Council's town planning committee, the Association has prepared a proposal for the development of Loyalty Square.

It is envisaged that the road layout would be modified to improve traffic flow as well as provide a sizeable area outside Woolworths which would be developed as a pedestrian precinct. This area would include groups of seats, special paving, plantings and large deciduous trees such as the London Plane. The War Memorial would be relocated to form part of this pedestrian area, a rather more dignified and accessible position than its present site.

Apart from roadworks, lighting and drainage, it is estimated that the cost of the proposed development will be in the vicinity of \$7000. It is hoped that local business houses will support the venture financially.

BALMAIN THEATRE GROUP.

The Balmain Theatre Group's next production, to follow their recent season of Sean O'Casey's "The Plough and The Stars", is for children. It is an exciting Australian adventure-farce by Eleanor Witcombe called "Pirates At The Barn".

Auditions, open to all, will be held at the

Presbyterian Church Hall, Campbell Street on Sunday afternoon September 2nd for presentation on November 30, and December 1, 2, 7, 8, and 9 with matinees on the Sundays.

PAST ISSUES OF THE "NEWS SHEET".

This is a call to members who have one or more of the following issues of the "News Sheet" and are willing to donate them to the Association; Nos., 39, 41, 1, 2, 8, or 32 (in that order of preference).

We are trying to draw together a small number of complete sets of past "News Sheets" and your donation would be fully appreciated. Please ring David Porter on 827 1081 if you can help and he will call to pick it/them up.

BOTTLE RECYCLING.

Used glass is steadily increasing in value as a recyclable product. Two collection points already exist in the Balmain/Rozelle area so why not assist a local group as well as reduce wastage by taking all your empty bottles to either of these points?

Beattie St. Rozelle, opposite Brown's Hardware. (Girl Guides).

Mort St. Balmain, lower end opposite M.W.S.&D.B. pump house. (Scouts).

leichhardt outline plan

At a meeting on Tuesday, 4th September, 1973 the Leichhardt Council adopted, as official policy of the Council, by a narrow majority, a summary of the planning objectives and policies which have been evolved over the past eighteen months.

This was important, as the adoption of these policies enabled the Council's Forward Planner, Penny Pike, to commence discussions with the State Planning Authority and begin to prepare a Statutory Planning Scheme for the Municipality. This will replace the never-very-satisfactory draft planning scheme of 1968. The Statutory Plan will, after its completion this year, have to go 'through the mill' of certification, exhibition, etc., and then become the legal safeguard for a number of the development control policies in the Outline Plan.

This meeting generated a lot of heat which was unfortunate as the issue of adopting the plan became confused with the Mayoral Election and it is probably fair to say that a larger number of the Aldermen than just those who voted in favour of its adoption at that meeting are in support of the policies in the plan.

Following are a few key extracts from the Outline Plan document.

"What is the Outline Plan?"

An Outline Plan (or policy plan) is a statement of intent. It makes a definite statement of the way in which the Council and the community want this Municipality to develop.

An Outline Plan establishes objectives and recommends policies and actions

- . It does not deal with details but establishes the framework within which detailed plans and special policies can be prepared, and day-to-day decisions made.
- . It establishes Council's policy toward outside authorities and provides a basis of discussion with these bodies.
- . It provides a basis for the allocation of Council's resources, and sets a framework of priorities for Council's works program.

The objectives are:

- 1 Improve residential amenity by conserving the natural and man-made assets of the Municipality (i.e. buildings, views, waterfront), by encouraging suitable redevelopment in sympathy with existing land form and/or surrounding development, and by curbing industrial and other environmental nuisances.

- 2 Retain and encourage the diversity of peoples and activity characteristic of the Municipality with its opportunities for employment, shopping and leisure.
- 3 Develop and co-ordinate the community facilities required to effectively meet social needs.
- 4 Improve the movement of traffic and transport within and serving the Municipality consistent with environmental aims and present needs.
- 5 Translate possible courses of action into a definite program of action planning, establishing priorities for action, the cost of such action, who will do it and over what period of time.

..... Many aspects of the community were examined in detail and the following REPORTS provide the technical basis for the policies and actions recommended for the plan:

- . Residential Land Values and Residential Development. The work for these two reports involved interviews with a number of local real estate agents and a brief study of Council's rates books. Residents' opinions on the amenity of their area were canvassed through questionnaires at public planning discussions. Architecture students carried out a perception study with a bus-load of residents and also residential amenity studies which provided some of the background to the second report.
- . Shopping Centre Survey. The six major centres in the Municipality were examined - Parramatta Road, Norton Street, Rozelle, Balmain, Booth Street and Glebe Point Road. Every shopkeeper was approached in the smaller centres and a sample were interviewed in Parramatta Road. Shoppers were asked for their opinions at three different times in each centre.
- . Industrial Survey. A study of industry in the Municipality was conducted; questionnaires were sent to 400 businesses, and interviews held with a number of them. Agents dealing with sales of industrial land were also contacted, and Government Departments and University libraries were searched for information.
- . Open Space Survey. A study has been conducted, but not yet compiled, partly in response to a metropolitan survey being carried out by the State Planning Authority.

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- . Traffic and Transport. Studies of existing and future traffic and transport needs and problems have been carried out with information from the Department of Main Roads, the Police Traffic Branch (Accident Research), the Sydney Area Transportation Study (1966 and 1971 Journey to Work Analysis), and the Public Transport Commission (re trains, buses and ferries). Information on dangerous or unused local roads was received from residents at the public planning discussions and action is proceeding for certain closures."

The plan is essentially a conservative one. It identifies those areas where change should not be permitted or where only minor change should be permitted and in these areas only minor changes in scale and character will be permitted. It further identifies those areas where proper development planning studies should be carried out before permitting redevelopment. These are generally areas where industrial intrusion is creating an unsatisfactory existing condition.

It is hoped that Council will act upon the action planning program recommended by the plan for these areas and for the shopping centres.

information

160(C). LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT

In 1972 the Coalition of Resident Action Groups circulated a special notice on the above section of the Act. It is included here for the information of members.

"CRAG refers to the situation of many persons being forced out of their homes by sharply increased rates incurred through their properties being re-zoned from single dwelling sites to high rise or industrial, and draws members attention to Section 160(C) of the Local Government Act which appears to have been inserted specifically to avoid this sort of hardship and of which large numbers of affected people seem to be unaware. This section provides, in effect, that any home-owner who can convince the local council that he has no intention of exploiting his property in either of these ways, but intends continuing to use it as a dwelling for a single family, may have the property re-valued again as a single dwelling. It further provides that any property owner who obtains such a concession, but who later decides to exploit the property, is then obliged to pay arrears at the higher rate for a maximum of five years. After this period, the differences between the original rate and the increased rate are written off. That is, if a person decides to sell his property after having dwelt in it for ten years at the lesser rate, he or the purchaser will have to pay the arrears for five years. The above is not intended as a legal interpretation of the section, nor can CRAG offer opinions on how the section would apply to particular cases. This resume is offered as an indication of the great importance of this section for many home owners, since no doubt considerable hardship is caused by peoples ignorance of their rights under the section. CRAG regards it as unfortunate that the initiative in exercising these rights lies with the property owner, insofar as he must approach Council with his case, and clearly there are not many private individuals who are acquainted with the details of the Local Government Act.

CRAG therefore recommends that members groups make a study of Section 160(C), and that they take all appropriate measures to give its provisions adequate publicity."

stop press new mayor !!

With the recent change of Mayor in Leichhardt Council, the actions of Council over the next 12 months will have to be scrutinised very closely.

We are therefore calling on 20 or 30 volunteers to attend Council meetings on a low-load roster so that decisions affecting Balmain/Rozelle can be noted and rapidly publicised.

If you can spare one or two Tuesday nights per year please ring David Porter on 827 1081 now.

COMMUNITY SERVICES GROUP.

As reported in the last News Sheet, the Association has allocated \$50 to each of the four primary schools in the Balmain area. The money is for use preferably for the construction of an adventure playground, although other schemes of benefit to the children will also be considered.

The Association has offered to assist staff, pupils and parents in planning the playgrounds, and in finding building materials and labour, while the Pensioners Association has offered to assist in the construction of the playgrounds.

Already Nicholson Street and Rozelle schools have commenced planning their playgrounds; arrangements have been made for pupils of Nicholson Street school to visit several playgrounds so that they can help in the design of their own. Another facet is that equipment will be designed to help correct co-ordination difficulties in young children.

NEXT

GENERAL MEETING IS THE
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

THURSDAY AUGUST 9, 8 pm,
LOWER TOWN HALL, BALMAIN.

ELECTION OF MANAGEMENT PLUS

A TALK AND SLIDES ON BALMAIN

BY ROBERT IRVING AND PETER REYNOLDS.

A BALMAIN CREATION.

The "Australian" of 16 July 1973 records the intention of a wealthy Sydney socialite to appear at the Gala opening of the Opera House wearing a "black Balmain creation". Of course she is referring to couturier Balmain and not smoky Balmain. It is, however, interesting to note that the origin of the name Balmain could well be French.

During a visit to Sydney in 1947, Pierre Balmain said that a village in Savoy was reputed "to be full of Balmain". It is believed that generations ago some of these migrated to Scotland and begat the ancestors of William Balmain, the William Balmain who gave our suburb its name.

It has been claimed that a Count de Balmain was a guardian of Napoleon I during his exile on Elba. Moreover, Victorian members of the Balmain family are reported to use the French mode and spell the name; "Bellemain" and "Belmaine".

Mrs. William Hope Balmain of Bega, a descendant of the brother of "our" William Balmain, supports this view and quotes the support of Jacobean claims to the British crown and the fact that Mary Queen of Scots had been Queen of France as examples of how closely France and Scotland were linked.

These historical factors obviously gave rise to much intermingling of people and customs and probably made the claim for a French connection justifiable.

FITZROY AVENUE DEVELOPMENT.

The Association has been asked by a number of residents in Fitzroy Avenue, to comment on the proposed development by Parkes Developments Pty. Ltd. on the site of S. G. White's repair yard.

On the basis of the information which we have been able to obtain in a short time, we are of the opinion that the development should not be permitted to proceed in its present form.

Consideration has been given, among others, to the following factors;

1. A group of buildings consisting of two bulky eight story towers only 30 feet from the waterfront and two three story buildings with parking under, at the level of Fitzroy Avenue, will have extremely adverse effects on both the immediate environment and on the foreshore as a whole. The effects will be felt in the following ways;
 - (a) The overlooking of and the blocking of views from Elkington Park.
 - (b) The blocking of views from the street, from houses across the street and from higher up the hill.
 - (c) Changing the scale and character of Fitzroy Avenue - a street of fine terrace houses.
 - (d) Disruption of the scale and character of the peninsula when viewed from the harbour.
2. We understand that the proposed development has a density between 120 - 150 people per acre. If this is so it is grossly inconsistent with both the State Planning Authority's Balmain Study of 1971, which recommends 60 people per acre for this site, and with Council's present planning policies which are based on eighteen months work.
3. There are a number of serious matters relating to access for vehicles to the site and for access for the public to the narrow strip of waterfront land dedicated to the Council.
4. Residents of Balmain affected by this proposal have never had any opportunity to comment upon the proposed development.

It is understood that the applicant, on the basis of their State Planning Authority Development Approval, is at present seeking a Building Approval from Council.

The following action has been recommended by the Association in a letter to Council;

1. That Council should refuse to grant a Building Application on the basis that no Development Application has been granted by Council.
2. That Council should inform both the applicant and the State Planning Authority that they are not satisfied with the proposed development in its present form, stating its reasons why.
3. That the present proposal should be placed on exhibition in order that those affected be given an opportunity to comment upon it.
4. That Council should immediately seek advice from a barrister experienced in local government planning legislation to substantiate its basis for further action.

PUBLICATIONS.

The following books may be obtained from The Ecology Shop Ltd., 189 Clarence St., Sydney :-

"ECO-CRISIS"

Edited by Cecil E. Johnson, John Wiley & Sons, paper-back 182 pp. 6½" x 10". Price \$3.65.
The problems facing our world today are examined and Edward Teller, Linus Pauling, Aldous Huxley and Paul Ehrlich among others pinpoint immediate and long-range targets for effective action.

"THE BASIC BOOK OF ORGANIC GARDENING"

Edited by Robert Rodale and Brian Furner, Pan-Ballantine, paper-back 286 pp. 4½" x 7". Price \$1.25.
This book, based on decades of research and proven results, guides the organic gardener as he learns about soil, compost, mulch, sowing, planting, protection against insects and alternatives to insecticides.

"ALTERNATIVE PINK PAGES"

Written and published by Philomena Horan and Stephen Wall, paper-back, illustrated, 96 pp. 8½" x 11". Price \$1.00.

Like many others in this city, we cannot live happily within the mainstream Australian culture. There are alternatives to 9 to 5 jobs, beer drinking, hire purchase, valium, forced leisure, and suburban living. The 1973 edition provides a comprehensive guide to organisations, sources of help and information and other resources.

"HOUSEHOLD ECOLOGY"

Written by Julia Percivall and Pixie Burger, Ure Smith, paper-back, 230 pp. 4½" x 7". Price \$1.50.

Written to provide "hundreds of imaginative, positive suggestions that any consumer can put into practice immediately--and effectively."

The following book may be obtained from the National Trust of Australia (N.S.W.), 123 Clarence Street, Sydney.

GEORGIAN ARCHITECTURE IN AUSTRALIA.

Photographs by Max Dupain. Commentary by Morton Herman. Social Histories by Marjorie Barnard and Daniel Thomas. Ure Smith, 144 pp. laminated paper cover. 9½" x 7". Price \$2.50.

This book contains over 100 photographs of the best surviving buildings in N.S.W. and Tasmania.

The following can be obtained from The Hon. Sec., Balmain Association, P.O. Box 57, Balmain, 2041.

LEICHHARDT HISTORICAL JOURNAL. Vols. 2 and 3. Price 50c. each, plus 7c. postage.

BALMAIN IN TIME by Peter Reynolds and Robert Irving. Price \$1.75, postage included.

HOUSES OF BALMAIN. Photographs by John Wong. Price \$1.00, plus postage 18c.

INQUIRY INTO THE NATIONAL ESTATE.

The Federal Government plans to conduct an inquiry into the preservation of the National Estate and has invited the public to present submissions to be put before the Inquiry.

The Association has lodged a submission on behalf of the Balmain Peninsula, pointing out the inroads into the residential amenity made by noxious industry in Balmain. It is hoped that something positive will come from this Inquiry.

Balmain is constantly being quoted as an example of regeneration of old houses successfully being carried out. The Leichhardt Council Planning Committee is slowly developing its plans for the whole Municipality and it would be an exciting prospect if the Council could lead the way in town planning with Federal co-operation.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

Once more the time has come around when all Executive and Management Committee members retire and elections to appoint new officers will be held on 9th August next.

Bob Beverley will be moving out of Balmain to live in Canberra and so will not be standing for re-election.

Members are urged to nominate for any position which would best suit their talents for making a positive contribution towards the running of the Association. The response to date is far from encouraging, so please rally around, nominate and attend the Annual General Meeting on Thursday, 9th August.

ARCHITECTS - HELP!

For years the Association has talked about building a kitchen annex at the Watch House. We have a plan and the money--what we need now is a specification and a builder to do the work. Would an architect volunteer to donate a few hours of his time to prepare a specification and obtain quotations for the work and follow the job through to completion? Also would the same (or another) architect examine the Watch House structure--especially the storm-water drainage--and advise Management on the best solution for preserving the Watch House.

Members may have forgotten that the original restoration of the Watch House was done by voluntary labour and a lot of the work was done by handy-men and women. Some short cuts were taken and these now need rectifying. The terms of our lease with the National Trust of Aust. state that we must keep the building in good repair.

Would those kind and public-spirited architects get in touch with Roger Johnson ('phone 827 1797) to get access to the Watch House and the plans.

OUR FAVOURITE CORRESPONDENT.

Over the past year or so, the Association has received long and interesting letters from a member, Mr. A.E. Harrold of Clayfield, Brisbane. Mr. Harrold lived in Johnson Street, Balmain East, and went to school at Nicholson Street School. He has almost total recall and has furnished us with a plan of all the houses in the Johnson, Pearson and Paul Streets area and the names of the people living there when he left the area. He tells us that he left Nicholson Street school in 1898 and has sent a donation of \$10 for the P. & C. Association of that school. Our Association has much pleasure in passing on this donation.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

I wish to open/renew my membership with the Balmain Association and enclose \$ _____ * subscription.

Name _____

Address _____

*Subscription: Full membership \$2.00
Pensioner 20c
Junior 20c

Send to:
The Hon. Treasurer,
The Balmain Association,
P.O. Box 57, Balmain, N.S.W. 2041