



the balmain association

president's report

With the Annual General Meeting on 10th August, 1977, the Association will have completed 12 years of activity.

You may recall that I was not elected President, but was co-opted at the first Management Committee meeting after the elections. I can tell you I was a very reluctant President; but it was my intention to provide experience to train a new President for the following year. But this did not happen.

During this year the highest total of membership has been reached--500--but the Management Committee has experienced a difficult time in recruiting help for our various projects. On a number of occasions meetings have been delayed because there has not been a quorum; pleas for assistance have resulted in one or two responses (or none); people who filled in questionnaires stating they had, say, an hour to spare, opted out on the grounds that they were too busy (who isn't?) and there has been a constant hassle to provide copy to get the News Sheet printed in time to meet deadlines.

And the year ahead is one of crises. Another obnoxious development is planned for Balmain (the Coal Loader). The Boundaries Commission is sitting and there are rumours that recommendations will be made that Leichhardt municipality will be split up and Balmain and Rozelle will be amalgamated with South Sydney and/or Marrickville. A municipal election will be held in September. The decisions made on all these matters will affect residents for years to come. People will have to think carefully about what they want and take action. It is no time to sit on the sidelines and hope that nasty things will go away and not happen.

As I move around the suburb and meet members, I am told that the Association is doing a good job and that the monthly News Sheet is highly regarded. But quite frankly, this happy situation will come to an abrupt end on 10th August next when our Annual General Meeting is held. Unless members are prepared to nominate for the Management Committee and work (and I mean "work") for the Association, there will just be no-one to "do a good job" and produce that "highly regarded News Sheet".

It is my opinion that each member should be prepared to give one year (preferably two) to the Association's work--get elected on to the Management Committee and/or volunteer for work when appeals are made for help on various projects.

Nomination forms are included with this issue of the News Sheet. Think it over--the decision lies with the membership. More experienced members will help the new Committee, but the "oldies" have been carrying the burden too long and they are "too busy" also.

In spite of all these tribulations, the Association has managed to mark up another achievement by publishing a highly commended book--"Half a Thousand Acres. Balmain - A History of the Land Grant" by P.L. Reynolds and F.V. Flottmann. After being refused a Commonwealth Literary Grant, the Association borrowed \$3,000 from the Commonwealth Bank of Australia and went ahead with the venture. Sales have been remarkable for a book which is of most interest to historians and the loan was repaid in record time. Our thanks go to the authors who have waived their rights to royalties on sales.

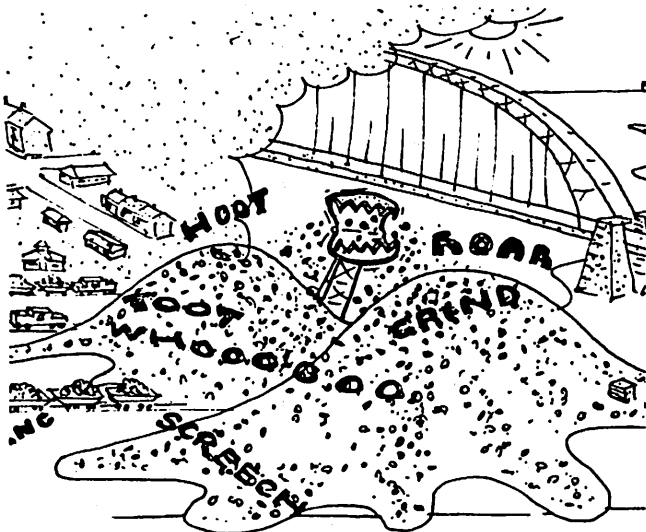
There is one group of members to whom we are all indebted and that is the band which delivers our News Sheet. Month after month they faithfully carry out their deliveries and, when they find they cannot do the job any more, they find a replacement. They represent our only line of communication with the bulk of the membership and the Committee of Management is deeply grateful to them all.

My personal thanks go to Jessica Murray (of the Garden Club) and Mrs. Jantzen for the time they have spent and the area they have covered for sacking out gardens for a Garden Walk which will be held in September next. The result of these endeavours is an outline of an interesting walk in the centre of Balmain.

Margaret Dobson
President.

RECONSTITUTE BALMAIN COUNCIL PETITION

Much hard work by a small number of devoted helpers has resulted in 4,500 signatures being collected on the petition for a Balmain Council. The response was overwhelming--90% plus--but manpower was the only drawback and with more diligent helpers, more names could have been collected. Arrangements have been made to present this petition to the Minister for Local Government on 27th July.



BALMAIN COAL LOADER.

Stunned residents of Balmain heard the Premier's announcement in June that the Balmain Coal Loader was to be upgraded to provide a bigger outlet for Lithgow coal. Ambiguous statements calculated to soothe the public alarm were made that the upgrading would be funded by the coal-owners and the impression was created that the cost would be too prohibitive.

However, on 20th July, the Premier announced that Cabinet had approved a \$5 million program to modernise White Bay, the expenditure to be met by the Maritime Services Board and the Public Transport Commission. This latter body is an interesting choice, when you think how woefully public transport needs a large injection of money.

Mr. R. Austen, Chairman of the N.S.W. Combined Colliery Proprietors, stated that the plan was an effective way of keeping N.S.W. competitive in world markets "while a major new loader was being built at Port Kembla and a completely new berth for ships of up to 70,000 tonnes was built elsewhere in Balmain."

Freight and rail charges would be saved on coal carried in ships that could now use Balmain.

"But this is purely a holding operation," said Mr. Austin.

Who is kidding who? How "holding" is a new berth for 70,000 tonne ships and a \$5M modernisation program?

A high proportion of west and south-western coal is low-grade and very costly to mine. One of the companies concerned is wholly foreign owned; one has a substantial foreign equity. The south and northern fields at present account for about 85% of the total N.S.W. exports, while Lithgow and Burratorang Valley account for about 15%. It is estimated that by the second half of 1980 their share would fall to about 10% and it would appear to follow that major expansion of coal export facilities should appropriately be located at Newcastle and Port Kembla.

It is nonsense to suggest N.S.W. will be kept competitive on world markets if the western coal-fields benefit from freight savings. A few colliery owners will benefit from lower freight charges and Balmain and the City of Sydney will be covered by coal dust.

Although the loader's annual capacity could be boosted from 2.8 million tonnes to 4 million tonnes over 2 years, will there be contracts for 4 M. tonnes of low-grade coal then?

Low-grade coal means dusty coal. The proposed new open stacking area of 65,000 (at present 28,000 tonnes) will be protected by water sprays. But what about the 4 M. tonnes that will travel through the heart of Sydney by rail trucks (unsprayed) and the coal on the conveyors and in the ships' holds (also unsprayed)?

And that is only the tip of the iceberg. The coal will travel by rail and coal cartage is a very noisy operation. It is stated that a more efficient alignment of railway tracks would cut out much of the shunting now required. Great news! But coal wagons are made of metal; they clatter over lines; they screech and grind to a halt when the brakes are applied; their buffers clang when they come to a halt. And there will still be some shunting and the engines will hoot and the wagons will crash into each other. And the cartage of 4 M. tonnes of coal per year looks like a 24-hour a day, 7 days a week job.

The Association is calling a public meeting on Monday, 22nd August, at the Balmain Town Hall at 8.00 p.m. to discuss this matter. Mr. Wran is unable to attend, but Mr. Ferguson, the Deputy Premier and Minister for Ports and Public Works, has been invited in his place. Invitations have also been sent to the State Member, Mr. Degen, the Mayor of Leichhardt, Ald. Rodwell, the 4 Ward Aldermen, Messrs. Origlass, Hoy, Casey and Heffernan.

All concerned people are invited to attend and air their views.

GOVERNMENT OF N.S.W. CULTURAL GRANT.

The Royal Australian Historical Society has advised the Association that an amount of \$50 has been allocated for work in regional history. This sum will be used to help defray expenses incurred in research on an index of historic street names and the writing of a book on the Balmain waterfront.

GLEBE SOCIETY HOUSE INSPECTION - 16TH OCTOBER.

The Glebe Society is holding its biennial house inspection open day on 16th October and our Association can arrange a block booking of at least 20 or more for \$2.50 per ticket. If you wish to attend, please forward your cheque to P.O. Box 57, Balmain, 2041, by 23rd September and the Association will arrange to get your tickets.

council report

Nominations for the Leichhardt Council elections should be lodged with the Council prior to 17th August, 1977; further details will appear in local papers. Election to the office of alderman, while it may be demanding of time, must certainly be rewarding in regard to the opportunity to represent residents in relation to matters of local interest and concern.

Aspiring candidates should relish the opportunity of giving most sitting aldermen a sabbatical for three years or more as current performances certainly indicate all is not as it should be at the Town Hall.

Can you continue to tolerate the situation where the council has, for example :

(a) Deferred consideration of the future of "Clontarf" indefinitely ... but where will the children play? (See News Sheet April, 1977.) The impression gained from the Town Clerk is that of gross insensitivity by the council to the needs of the children in the area, to the plans of the residents in the area, and to the restoration and preservation of this historic building.

Naturally, if the council defers long enough, "vandals" will further destroy the building so that it will reach such a state to justify condemnation and demolition at the ratepayers expense.

It should be noted that the plans put to council over 12 months ago require no expense to the council and entail the beautification and landscaping of what is now a concrete eyesore. As the council has refused to consider this proposal by residents, then it is only fitting that these same aldermen be refused residents' consideration at the forthcoming elections. They should be answered with the currency upon which they rely.

(b) Failed to enforce development conditions imposed by itself in July, 1976 (see News Sheet July, 1977). It has now been over 5 months since the council has been aware that the occupier of No. 5 St. Andrews Street has been in substantial breach of the development conditions. Apart from window dressing letters from the council to the occupier requiring compliance with the conditions, the council has failed to do anything positive to protect the residents.

It has been admitted at council meetings that the occupier is well known to some aldermen, but surely such friendships should not give immunity from prosecution.

The council recognizes that there are breaches which render the offender liable to prosecution; the breaches continue and nothing is done. As a further poke in the eye to the long-suffering residents, the council has approved an extension of operating hours for the occupier. One can only conclude that, either the council is incompetent to properly discharge its duties or has an interest in not discharging such duties.

The Association does not have the resources to monitor all the activities of the Council; the above cases are but a sample of those that come to its notice.

BALMAIN LABOR PARTY PRE-SELECTION BALLOT.

The Municipal elections, being held on 17th Sept., are now in the news and members may not have seen the article in "THE LINK" of 27/7/77 concerning the result of this ballot.

"The deferred ballot followed a protest against the voting list by the new wave, which now claims a majority in the electorate.

"At the ballot, held in the Balmain Town Hall, voters were closely scrutinised against the list by the deputy mayor, Alderman Dan Casey (Rozelle ward) and Jack Degen senior (Lilyfield ward).

"Mr. Anthony Geoghegan ticked off voters as they arrived.

"Alderman Casey has been making an all-out effort to ensure his supporters are elected in the council's various wards, so that he will control a majority of votes on council.

"The candidate who displaced Alderman Hoy (from No. 1 spot on the ballot paper) is John Peter Ellison, a supporter of Alderman Casey.

". . . . If the "Casey" ticket defeats the sitting alderman for Balmain, Alderman N. Origlass, it will be clear that Alderman Casey's grip on the council will have been confirmed by the voters."

A LETTER FROM A MEMBER.

The Hon. Secretary,
Balmain Association,

Dear Sir,

Since doing my stint as a "Council Watcher" for the Association, I have become increasingly concerned about the difficulty which Balmain residents seem to have in making their feelings felt (and voices heard) by bureaucrats and politicians at local and higher levels.

Although I am a consistent Labor voter, it seems to me that Balmain electors suffer because of the "blue-ribbon" status of the area, and are taken for granted at Municipal and State Government levels, while being ignored by the Conservatives.

The complacent attitude of Leichhardt Council and the State Government's utter disregard of local opinion in the matter of the Coal Loader have crystallized my thoughts into action—that of standing for the Balmain Ward in the municipal elections, as an Independent.

I teach sixth form maths at Sydney Grammar School, and belong to no political party or pressure group, unless you count my being Honorary Business Manager of the Doctors' Reform Society.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) BRIAN BRADY.

41 Booth St.,
Balmain.

CRICKET CLUB'S WINE BOTTLING A SUCCESS.

The Cricket Club's wine bottling on July 17 was well patronised and enough money was raised to buy the Club's kit. All the wine bottled was either sold or drunk on the day. Our commiserations to those who missed out on this excellent wine!

Net Practice.

Net practice is held each Sunday at Balmain High School nets, starting around 2.00 p.m.

CENTENARY SPORTING COMMEMORATION.

The Drummoyne & Districts Historical Society has written advising that a member of their Society, Mr. A.J. Fisher, is organising a Centenary Sporting Commemoration in honour of Edward Trickett and Michael Rush, who raced for the World's Professional Sculling Championship on the Parramatta River in 1877, from Ryde to Henley. This was the first World Sporting Championship held in Australia.

These Commemorations are to be held on Sept. 4, (Father's Day) at 3.00 p.m. at the William Beach Obelisk, Cabarita Park, Parramatta River, and an invitation is extended to anyone who may wish to attend.

THE BALMAIN BRIDGE CLUB.

The opening night of the Club will be on Wednesday, 17th August, at 7.30 p.m. VENUE: Balmain & District Sailing Club, at the end of Water St., Birchgrove.

This will be the 33rd Bridge Club in Sydney (65 in N.S.W.). Bridge is the world's most popular--and the most difficult--card game ever devised; but on the other hand, it only needs four players and two packs of cards. If you are playing, you only have to turn up--even alone--any Wednesday night and a partner will be found for you. If you don't play, but want to learn, lessons will be organised and you will be a player by Christmas. Harry Hochmuth, Grand Master and Director of several clubs will give lessons for beginners (\$25 for 10 lessons).

The Director and Organiser of the Balmain Bridge Club is Denise Soos (82 1170), who has already founded two Bridge clubs previously (one in Malaysia and one in Newcastle). Denise is a Balmain resident who has played since school days and she feels that the time has come to get all the Balmain Bridge players together. Already great interest has been shown by neighbouring clubs too, because, once you play Bridge, once a week is not enough!

Denise and her Committee will be happy to meet you at the Club on Wednesday night.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 8.00 p.m.

LOWER TOWN HALL, DARLING ST., BALMAIN

ALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE POSITIONS ARE VACANT

MEMBERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE.

Of the 500 or so questionnaires recently circulated, only about a dozen or so have been completed and returned, the balance are eagerly awaited. It is through the information contained in the questionnaires that organizers of functions and activities and the management committees are able to call on the resources and help of the Association. An hour to spare a year if indicated on the questionnaire can be of great value if utilized at the best time, e.g. acting as supervisors on the Garden Walk; preparing the Watch House for the Village Fair in November; or cleaning up the following day. Please return your questionnaire as soon as possible. This request is made to both members of long and short standing, because it cannot be assumed that those who presently do or shortly will man the 'phones to organise help will be familiar with past achievements or reputations.

BALMAIN GARDEN WALK.

The Association is once more arranging an inspection of Balmain gardens. The last one was held in April, 1976 and was a great success and this year's walk promises to be equally attractive. This time we are visiting the centre of Balmain--there are waterfront gardens and we hope to get permission to inspect a water garden away from the waterfront. Tickets cost \$2.00 each and they can be purchased from the Hon. Secretary, Balmain Association, P.O. Box 57, Balmain. 2041.

This fund-raising activity involves the participation of about 40 members to provide attendants at the different houses. There will be two sessions of two hours each--one in the morning and one in the afternoon. It is a pleasant way to spend the time because you meet lots of interesting people. What about volunteering?

THE BALMAIN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA.

The Orchestra will be having its next concert on Sunday, 7th August, at 2.30 p.m. at the Campbell St. Presbyterian Church, Balmain.

The programme includes Concerto Grosso in G minor by Handel; Brandenburg Concerto No. 4 by Bach; Piano Trio Op. 70 by Beethoven; Simple Symphony by Benjamin Britten.

The Balmain Chamber Orchestra was formed by Richard Slingsby, a Balmain resident music teacher, with the aim of providing an enjoyable weekly get-together of several amateur musicians. The group has members from many different professions, from solicitors to secretaries. The Orchestra regularly rehearses in the Campbell St. Presbyterian Church, Balmain. This Church, built in 1868, is perfect acoustically for rehearsals and provides an excellent atmosphere for the Baroque and Classical programmes the Orchestra presents. For further information, ring Andrew Soos 82 1170.