

NEWS SHEET

140

PO BOX 57 BALMAIN 2041

the balmain association

FOUNDED 1965

THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Do you remember the funereal notice in the News Sheet of May 1983? In an announcement that the Annual Elections were forthcoming, it stated that the President and News Sheet Editor, as well as the Membership Secretary would be resigning, and that many committee members were due for a break! At the Annual Elections many people left, taking their experience with them, so that we who remained had to lean heavily on each other, working collectively - determined to survive. It was slow going at the start with the rapid loss of our new Treasurer and our new Membership Secretary. However, a new Membership Secretary, Tim Davies, volunteered not only to take over that job but also the whole organisation of the distribution of the News Sheet as well. Richard Norman returned as Treasurer, bringing to us his long relationship with the affairs of the Balmain Association, and Jeremy Arnott revealed an enthusiasm for editing the News Sheet which relieved most of the committee of that responsibility. When I say most of the committee, I have not mentioned the co-editor, typist, and driving force our Secretary Tikwis Begbie who takes most of the kicks when things have to be done, and who is the very backbone of this committee! Committee members on whom we have also come to rely very much include Debbie and Bob Nichols, whose help and sanity is so often called upon.

What have we done this past year? Most importantly, we have worked to enlarge our membership, and to find out what other groups in Balmain are concerned about. We have opened the General Business times of our meetings to campaigners from other action groups. This has given us a closer appreciation of local issues, and has stimulated a larger attendance at our meetings.

This year, fortunately, has not been marked by such destructive opposition as the threat of the Bridge proposal. However, smaller areas have gathered their groups to protect their lifestyle from menacing proposals by government bodies or private enterprise. For example, a group was formed under the name of 'Maintain Balmain' to join a Pyrmont Action Group to prevent the Maritime Service Board from making their lives hell.

Similarly, with the threat of a Fast Food Supermarket, the Western end of Balmain responded to the need to organise a campaign. The Clontarf Park Action Group's determination has been well publicised in our News Sheet, and their overtures to us have resulted in a much clearer understanding

that they, like the other action groups, small or large, young or old (like our Association) have much in common. They have supported our membership drive, distributed News Sheets and offered us most welcome support.

Beyond Balmain, we have been approached by the Glebe, Annandale and Stanmore Societies to exchange more information and to meet socially. This has been rewarding because we share more than the experience of contact with others. We share the love that we have for our own special part of the older suburbs of Sydney.

At the Watch House, more is being done to support and maintain the building, and more committee members have been able to come during the new Saturday opening times. Attention has been given to our neglected stored material as well as to repairs. The Watch House is being used to raise money for itself, and has been the centre of several social functions, the most striking of which was the weekend showing of Heritage Roses - mainly the work of Jessica Murray, supported by the Balmain Garden Club. This event brought us a handsome donation of \$400.

What haven't we done?

When we proposed putting a map for Balmain 'tourists' at the wharves, we did not realise how much organisation this apparently simple suggestion would take.

We have also to organise a Conservation Plan for the Watch House, at the request of the National Trust. Such a plan involves the future appearance and use of the Watch House, and the means for raising money for that purpose. Some interesting proposals have been discussed but they will belong to next year's Management Committee.

We have also seen the need to revise old publications, such as 'Balmain in Time' and to provide more general publications on the area. You too, probably have useful suggestions for the management of the Balmain Association.

Now I must end by thanking the many unnamed people who have assisted us this year. May the incoming committee enjoy the same co-operative team spirit that pulled us through 1983 - 1984.

FRANCES HEATHFIELD
President.

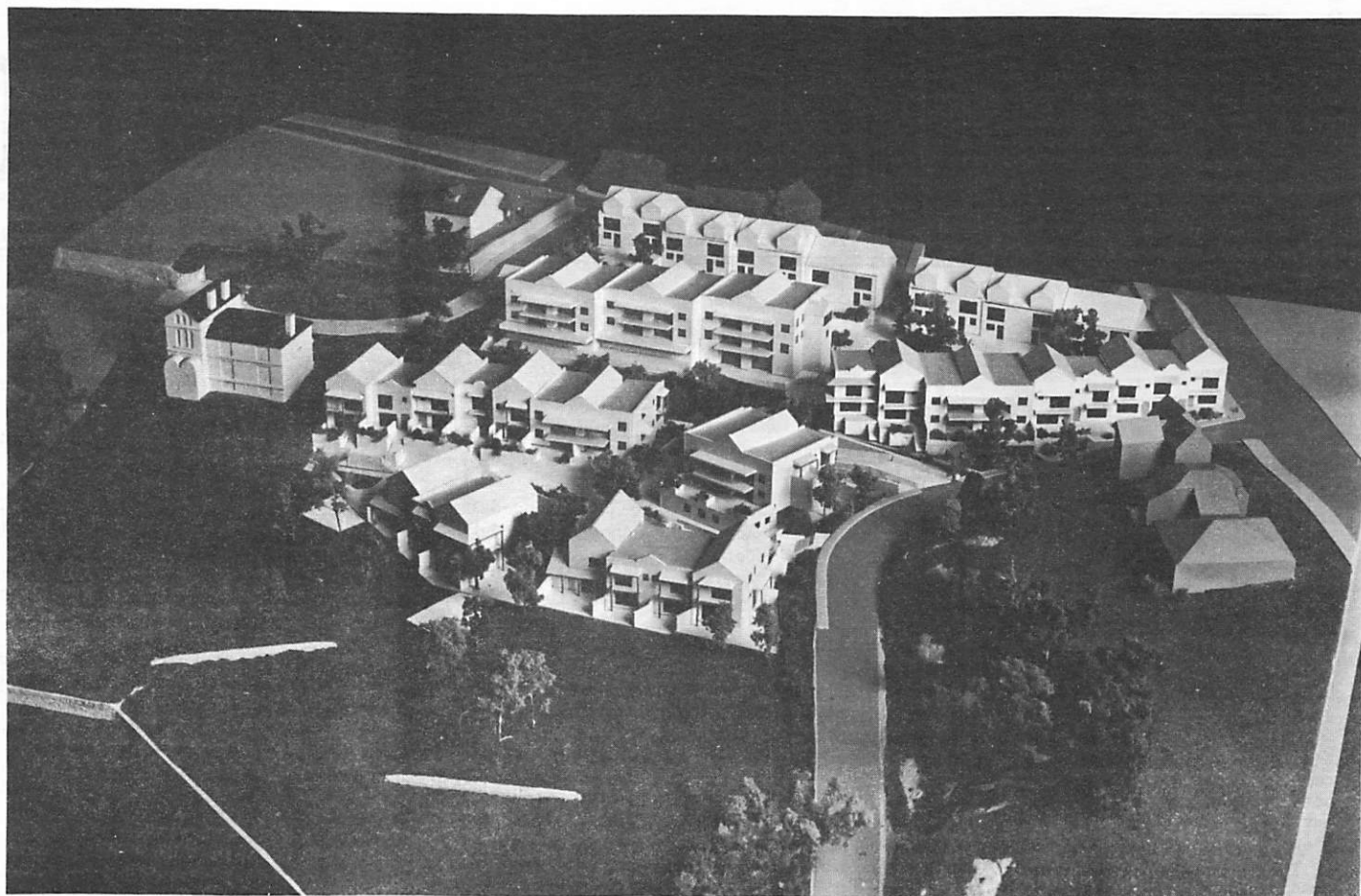
THE DICKSON PRIMER SITE DEVELOPMENT THE PRESENTATION BY THE LEND LEASE GROUP

The presenters of the Dickson Primer site development were Mr. Geoff Brew, a director of Lend Lease Homes Pty Limited and Mr. Robin Dyke of Daryl Jackson Basil Carter, Architects. Also in attendance were Geoff Hall, Development Manager of Lend Lease Homes and Mr. Ian Westbrook of Wilson McCarthy & Co. Pty Limited, Communications advisers to Lend Lease.

Mr. Brew informed those members of the Association who attended the Management Meeting on 5th September, that it was Lend Lease's policy to explain their developments to local residents; and to try and find out what suggestions and/or

objections the community had concerning the proposal in question. He showed the plans of the development, consisting of 40 townhouses and 20 units, and explained the various stages of construction, with the lower portion i.e. the open space or parkland being the initial stage. Mr. Brew also confirmed that Ewenton House was to be completely restored. It was drawn to the Meeting's attention that it was unfortunate that the Maritime Services Board barges continue to lie offshore from the proposed parkland, seemingly serving little if any purpose.

NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD ON 7TH NOV 1984 AT 7.30 P.M.
WATCH HOUSE, 179 DARLING STREET, BALMAIN.



Robin Dyke, winner of the Architects Competition for the design of the development, spoke of his endeavours to create a development that contained the character of Balmain, i.e. a mixture of architectural styles incorporating terraces, gables, pitched walls etc.

The general concern of those attending the Meeting centred on traffic, the long term consequences of additional cars in the area, and the inevitable increase in the local parking problem. Lend Lease is providing parking for 115 cars (4 more spaces than Council requirements).

Lend Lease was congratulated on revising its plans, which has resulted in a reduction by one-quarter of their original housing density; and also for having notified the Association well in advance of their willingness to discuss their proposal prior to implementation.

An official motion was proposed by D. Nicholls that the M.S.B. barges should be removed. Seconded by B. Nicholls and carried unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Expenditure as at 30.6.1984

<u>INCOME</u>		<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	
Membership	977	Petty Cash	77
Donations	139	Hire of P.O. Box	20
Bank Interest	808	Government charges	7
Larrikin Days	59	Watch House (services, repairs and maintenance)	680
Fund Raising	523	Fund Raising	95
Cards, Pamphlets & Badges	269	Newsletter (printing & postage)	658
		Subscriptions	67
Publications	499	Publications	469
Miscellaneous	12	Miscellaneous	77
			<u>2,150</u>
	<u>3,286</u>	ADD excess of Income over Expenditure	<u>1,136</u>
			<u>3,286</u>



CLONTARF PARK ACTION GROUP

c/o 22 adolphus st balmain 2041 ph 8106447

BALMAIN UNDER THREAT

The historic village atmosphere of Balmain is under threat. The costs of renovation/restoration are escalating and land values are approaching the point where it is realistic to consider demolition and rebuilding. This is already happening in isolated cases and higher densities have hastened the day when developers will seek to do the same on a large scale.

Glebe has the Glebe Estate and Government finance. Paddington was discovered in the 60's when the environment was a significant issue. Both have an architectural homogeneity which make Development Control guidelines easy.

Balmain's character is to be found in its small scale and diversity. These factors make it extremely vulnerable to the large scale, terrace style developments which are cropping up throughout the peninsular as more and more industrial and Government land becomes available. Despite their concessions to a Victorian architectural style these buildings cannot be in keeping with Balmain. The threat they pose is all the more real because it will continue.

With the economic recession, the Labor Party, traditionally pro environment, has become instead pro development. Its policy of urban consolidation seeks to reverse the planning principles of the past decade and increase inner city densities.

Development means jobs, Government Housing Development means jobs and homes. In the face of the positive values attached to these, good planning can often be ignored and the future left to take care of itself. Such a policy spells disaster for an area like Balmain. As measured by the economist history has little value. It is filed away with concepts like "aesthetics" and "humanity" to await the next golden age. Such a policy was responsible for the high rise toombstone style of 50's Housing Commission and later provided the impetus for the Green Bans of the 60's.

The Clontarf Park issue highlights an aspect of this problem. Twenty-two Housing Commission units are seen by Labor Aldermen to be more valuable than a pocket park. So self-righteous are they that all opponents are tagged as rich and selfish trendies. Petitions are ignored. The election of pro-park independent Aldermen is dismissed. For them it is not enough that the development is actually a bad one. It contravenes accepted planning principles both in the loss of valuable public open space and in terms of the size and type of building proposed. Furthermore it will totally destroy an historic streetscape which has survived unchanged for over 80 years.

We have asked the State Minister for Environment and Planning, Mr. Sheehan, to detail, in planning terms, why this development should be allowed to proceed. He has failed to do so in two replies. We have asked him to spell out what State Environmental Legislation exists to protect local parks from arbitrary alienation by corrupt or incompetent Councils. He has failed to do so in two replies. Our State Member, Peter Crawford, is more direct, he has failed to reply!

If Balmain is to survive it must maintain a mix of age groups and a significant group of long term residents. The most effective way of ensuring this is by encouraging the twenty and thirty year olds who now predominate to stay on, raise their families and grow old in Balmain. Lack of easily accessible open space is the one factor most often cited as the cause for leaving Balmain. New foreshore parks have helped the situation but their main value is beautification of the Harbour. By their nature they are only readily accessible to those already fortunate enough to have harbour views.

Balmain has a very real spirit, something lacking in most areas of Sydney, but if it is to survive and grow it needs an active Balmain Association to support resident groups which spring up in opposition to insensitive developments. It needs your help.

Clontarf Park Action Group meets every second Monday of the month at the Balmain Watch House. Next meeting - Monday 12th November at 8.00 p.m.

THE SYDNEY HARBOUR TUNNEL

NEW PUBLICATION

Lane Cove Public Library has just released the second in its Local Studies Monographs series, The Sydney Harbour Tunnel : Greenwich to Balmain by James Dargan.

James Dargan, a Greenwich resident, has written an enthralling account of the construction between 1913 and 1926 of the tunnel under Sydney Harbour which stretches from Mann's Point, Greenwich to Long Nose Point, Balmain. The existence of this tunnel, and the full background to its building has not been widely known. Neither have the photographs of the interior of the tunnel, taken by the Library's photographer Lois Williamson, been previously published.

The construction of the tunnel, which was to carry power cables for the Northshore tramway and railway system was an epic of courage and endurance. Tunnelers continually struck problems, such as fissures in the Harbour floor which enabled water to rush in, threatening their lives.

James Dargan, who has spent his working lifetime in the Communications Section of the State Rail Authority (formerly the Department of Railways) has written this account as part of a larger history he is writing of the Communications Section of the Department of Railways.

It is available from Lane Cove Public Library for \$3.00 a copy, also available at Brays Bookshop.

DARGAN, James. THE SYDNEY HARBOUR TUNNEL : GREENWICH TO BALMAIN. Lane Cove : Lane Cove Public Library, 1984. (Lane Cove Public Library Local Studies Monograph, no. 2).

NOTICE TO LOCAL RESIDENTS IN THE AREA OF NICHOLSON STREET.

The Editor's attention was drawn to an article in the Australian Business magazine of 12th September 1984, which may interest or give residents of East Balmain some food for thought.

The article referred to 10 warehouses on prime real estate on the East Balmain waterfront, owned by Sibutu Pty Ltd., which is one of the companies belonging to David Ashton. Readers may recall that David Ashton was responsible for the restoration of Grafton House (a residence of former NSW Premier Sir Henry Parkes) and Onkaparinga in Johnston Street. The National Trust protects many of his restorations, which in turn has helped prevent high-rise development in the area.

Mr. Ashton sees the warehouses as part of the total preservation of the Balmain waterfront, so it will be very interesting to see what type of development he proposes for this site.

THE LEICHHARDT HISTORICAL JOURNAL NO:13 - 1984

The LEICHHARDT HISTORICAL JOURNAL NO:13 - 1984 is now on sale at the Watch House, 179 Darling Street, on Saturdays, 1-3 pm; at Joe & Josie's Balmain East Fruit Shop; and at the Australia's Heritage Bookshop, 87½ George Street North (opposite The Rocks Visitors Centre).

The Journal contains articles on St. James' Church (Forest Lodge); Broughton House - Austenham (Lilyfield); and an exceptional article covering the area from Nicholson Street to Chapman's Slipway (Balmain) by Dr. Peter Reynolds.



BALMAIN GARDEN CLUB.

CARE OF SPRING BULBS



The spring-flowering bulbs are now past their prime and commencing to yellow off. Resist any temptation to prematurely cut off foliage even though it has its untidy stage, as the bulbs are ripening and maturing for next year's flowers, and too early removal of foliage will damage this. Sometimes one can loosely plait the old foliage and tuck it sideways under other plants.

The South African bulbs that are now finishing, do well in Sydney. They include Freezias, Sparaxis, Tritonias, Lachenalia, Babianas, and Ixias. Bellodonnas ("naked ladies") and Red-Hot Pokers are two more that are all easy to grow and can be left for years and let thicken up. Of course, a spare piece of ground would be ideal!

Watch for all of these to come on the shelves of the nurseries and supermarkets in February and March. Rannunculus has a short spring flowering, with bright colour, but only one season can be expected. The same with Tulips, Hyacinths and Crocuses, even with putting them in the crisper of the fridge for 6 weeks before planting out. Our winters are not cold enough and the summers are too hot for them. Much the same applies to Daffodils here. Most only flower well for one season. Jonquils do better, and can be left for years in the ground.

The Spanish Bluebells do well, preferably with shade half the day and moist conditions. Snowflakes (Leucojum) (not snowdrops in N.S.W.) are a hardy bulb and are the first to flower in late winter and early spring. Can be left for years, even flower better if apparently overcrowded. Not easy to get. Have to be begged from people with old gardens!

Sprekelia (Jacobean Lily) rather resembles an orchid, with a red flower, another to plant with top well above the soil in the same manner as the Bellodonnas. A good tuber for full shade is the Clivia, will flower in spring under dense trees whose roots do not worry it at all.

Agapanthus is another sturdy tuber (summer-flowering) that can take sun or shade, and under trees. It has very strong roots. Suitable for back row, though smaller types have become available in recent years.

Jessica Murray

FATHER JOHN TERRY

1984 is the 120th anniversary of the death of Father John Terry, who was deeply involved in the early days of St. Augustine's parish and in the life of Balmain at the time.

Noted Church historian, writer and raconteur, Father Edmund Campion will be giving a talk on Father Terry and the Balmain of his day on TUESDAY, 23RD OCTOBER 1984. The talk will be at 7.30 pm in the hall of BALMAIN PUBLIC SCHOOL in Eaton Street.

Father Campion is a highly informed and entertaining speaker, so it promises to be a most enjoyable evening.

ALL WELCOME

(Enquiries to St. Augustine's School on 810 2640, 9 am to 3 pm.)

At the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING on Wednesday 22nd August 1984 the following members of the Balmain Association were elected on to the Management Committee for the forthcoming year:

President : FRANCES HEATHFIELD
Vice-President : JEREMY ARNOTT
Secretary : TIKWIS BEGBIE
Treasurer : RICHARD NORMAN
Committee Members: LES HENLEY
BOB NICHOLLS
DEBORAH NICHOLLS
WARWICK PURSER

WILLIAM MACLEAN

The Balmain Association has been given a collection of glass negatives and positives, photo prints and letters etc., by Miss Dorothy Maclean of Lawson NSW, donated in memory of her father William Maclean. His family came to Australia in the 1840s during the gold rush and William was born in Balmain in 1883.

He rose to senior rank in the pharmaceutical trading, but his twin hobbies of ornithology and photography occupied most of his leisure time.

The exact contents of the collection are as yet unknown since the glass plates are too fragile to be handled by inexperienced hands. The plates are now in the care of the Mitchell Library for safe keeping; and the Association hopes ultimately to have copies of the photographs on view at the Watch House.

"YOUR CHINESE CONNECTION?"

What was your father or grandfather doing in July 1900?

If he was a local resident, and employed at Mort's Dock or any of the other local factories, he may have been a member of the New South Wales Naval Brigade. New South Wales sent a contingent of 250 men, most of whom came from Sydney.

Local author Bob Nicholls is writing a book entitled "A Fine Body of Men", to be published by Allen & Unwin, on the Colonial Naval Brigades sent to China in 1900 to help put down the Boxer uprising.

Anyone with any mementos of the incident please get in touch with Bob Nicholls on 810-7391.

JOIN the balmain association

meaning DALMAIN BIRCHGROVE ROZELLE

OUR AIMS ARE TO:

- * improve the living working and recreational amenity of our area
- * maintain all features having natural architectural and/or historical value
- * compile and record the history of the area/keep a permanent collection of items of historical interest
- * seek the co-operation of everyone concerned in the realization of the above



the balmain association

MEMBERSHIP FORM

(OPEN/RENEW)

PO BOX 57 BALMAIN 2041

NAME:

ADDRESS:

TELEPHONE: (HOME) (WORK)

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION (including News Sheet delivery in Balmain Birchgrove Rozelle)

Single	\$ 4.00
Family or Household	\$ 6.00
Pensioner or Student	\$ 1.00
Organization	\$12.00

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