



DECEMBER 1986

NEWS SHEET

157

PO BOX 57 BALMAIN 2041

the balmain association

FOUNDED 1965

*greetings!*

"Due to unexpected industrial activity this month's News Sheet is longer than usual". We hope that this edition will provide some interesting reading over the holiday period. Our thanks to the individuals and groups whose contributions have made possible this Christmas Special. We would also like to take this opportunity to wish our members and readers all the best for Christmas and the New Year. See you in 1987!

ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES

CHRISTMAS DRINKS

As usual on the last Saturday before Christmas there will be wine and cheese at the Watch House. This is on Saturday 20 December from 1 p.m. This will also be your last chance to buy tickets in our Christmas Hamper Raffle which will be drawn on the same afternoon. It will also be an opportunity for you to see artist Mel Freedman's Exhibition - a chance perhaps for some last minute gift buying. All members and friends welcome!

MEMBERSHIP FEE INCREASE

At a Special General Meeting on Wednesday 3 December 1986 it was agreed to make certain changes to the Association's membership fee structure and the administration of billing and collection of membership fees. Normal membership fees have been increased to \$8.00 per year; however pensioners' and students' fees remain at \$1.00 per year.

All fees will now be due on 30 January each year. This new procedure will make our operation more efficient and simplify the work involved in maintaining membership lists. An individual letter will be sent to all members in the New Year explaining the new system. Fees payable in January 1987 will have pro rata adjustments for fees paid during 1986.



ATTENTION ARTISTS

We would like to promote the Watch House as an Exhibition Centre. Any interested artists, potters, sculptors etc. who would like to organise an exhibition are welcome to contact Steve South on 810.1411 a/h or Norman Bull on 810.1611 a/h. The Watch House can also be made available as a meeting place for local organisations by arrangement with the Committee of the Association.

Should you wish to contact the Association on any matter the following may be contacted:

Norman Bull, President - 810.1611 a/h
Debby Nicholls, Secretary - 810.7391 a/h

AROUND BALMAIN

A Second Record of an Historic Suburb
And Some Of Its Buildings

Photographs by
Douglass Baglin and Gordon Clarke
Compiled by Debby Nicholls

One of the proud achievements of the Association in 1986 was the publication of our book "Around Balmain", an updated version of "Balmain in Time". Not bulky in size, it is nevertheless packed with interesting photographs of local buildings and has a very informative, easy to read text. "Around Balmain" is truly a local product as it was researched and compiled by local residents and printed to a very high standard by a family-owned company in Rozelle.

It is ideal for your own collection or as a gift for friends and relatives, especially those who have lived in Balmain themselves and like to stay in touch with the best suburb in Australia.

Available direct from the Balmain Association at the Watch House, 179 Darling Street, local news-agents and bookshops for \$9.95. It can also be ordered by mail - write to the Balmain Association, P.O. Box 57, Balmain 2041 and please add \$1.00 for postage and handling.

EXHIBITION

AT THE WATCH HOUSE

WE START 1987 WITH

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51	52	53							

We are proud to announce that the Watch House has been chosen by 53 part-time artists to exhibit a unique collection of paintings, etchings, drawings and sculptures. The artists all study part-time at the East Sydney Technical College.

The Exhibition takes place over 3 weekends and a different selection will be shown each week.

JANUARY 17 - FEBRUARY 1, 1987

SATURDAYS AND SUNDAYS
11 A.M. - 6 P.M.

179 DARLING STREET, BALMAIN

NEXT MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION WILL BE ON WEDNESDAY 4TH FEBRUARY 1987

7.30 P.M. AT THE WATCH HOUSE, 179 DARLING STREET, BALMAIN

"OUR HERITAGE" - by David Ramsay

In other articles I wrote of the narrow streets and the lack of planning for this historic "Balmain's" future. Most people would ask why should we worry whether it is pulled down or over-developed. Why are Balmain and Birchgrove any different from the rest of Sydney - after all they were sold for a ridiculous sum in the first place! To these people I would say there are two reasons.

One is that in Balmain there is the architecture of England and parts of Europe plus our early Australian architecture - all in one small land mass of less than three square miles. Many of these buildings have some part in our national culture.

These buildings also have a place because of the second reason, which is the people who built them and who lived in them. Balmain's streets are so small because the suburb was based on a captive work force for local industry. Those who owned the industry exploited the workers as much as possible and one way was to build as many houses on a site as they could for as much rent as they could collect. Latter parts of Balmain show the advance of the workers as they gained in the great struggle against this exploitation - the struggle that helped build our nation.

These buildings and this suburb exist by right of those who built them and lived in them. The narrow streets which restrain the modern motor cars bear the names of people like Charles Hart, Mort, Gallimore etc., that are our heritage and culture. There were no civil wars in Australia, only battles such as "Vinegar Hill" and "Eureka Stockade", but there was a continuous fight for the right for better wages and human dignity.

In some of the buildings of Balmain lived people who took part in this struggle. Dalley Messenger, "The Little Master" of football; Billy Hughes; as I wrote before a Jim Davidson who was born in Church Street and a Bob Mahony who was a leader in the union movement. But the most important are the unknown ones like John Mcgoogan who was killed by the lack of safety rules for which the unions had to fight - and the women that supported them - to raise the standard of living to what we enjoy today. This fighting spirit comes from the "real people" - not those who pretend!

Some of the real people are Issy Wyner, and Nick Origlass; men who have this fighting spirit to fight for the rights of the people against all the wrong decisions forced upon them by no matter who! It is one of these decisions that is affecting Balmain today - is it better to pack more people and the cars that come with them into areas like Glebe, Redfern and Balmain on top of services that are over a hundred years old!

I believe that this is one the main reasons why the Department of Planning and Environment should be made to see that suburbs like this are not developed by greed yet again. Today's standards ask for a front and back yard where children can play safely and the family can support itself in its own environment. This is what the people of early Balmain gave their time and lives for and it is in the hands of the people who live here now. We have lost many of our historic buildings and we will lose more if this suburb is over-developed. Balmain is a memorial to the "great struggle".

DISCLAIMER

Any points of view published in this News Sheet are not necessarily those of the Committee or members of the Balmain Association, which is a non-political organisation.

BALMAIN MEMORIES - BY BARON NEWLYN

Two further anecdotes of real Balmain life based on experiences of working at Elliott Brothers. Other stories by the same author were printed in our News Sheets 151 & 152.

"THE BOX"

Although several issues of this publication have elapsed since the erstwhile activities of Bill towards his fellow employees were exposed, I feel it is not too late to mention some of the other dodges for which he was responsible.

In the workshop where Bill spent most of his time he had constructed an ingenious device which he installed in what was known to us as the "bludging box". It was given this title because it was strategically placed and gave the user (usually a visiting workman from another section of the plant who had dropped in for a smoke and a yarn) uninterrupted views of the scenario around the workshop.

When the sitter observed a figure of authority approaching he usually had ample time to make good an undetected escape.

The device Bill had made was an affair with a counter-balanced arm which reacted to pressure being placed upon it. On one end of the arm was an extremely sharp needle which rose swiftly between a crack in the box lid, needling the victim's buttocks, and dropping out of sight just as quickly, as soon as the haunches were raised.

When someone dropped in for a brief respite from their labours Bill would graciously offer the socialite the opportunity to use the box, pointing out its advantages against being sprung. His practised patter usually worked well particularly on those who were new or thick.

No soon had the person sat down then he would spring quickly to his feet rubbing his behind whilst glaring and swearing at the box.

(Bill, pottering around innocently.) "What's the matter, aren't you comfortable?" (Victim, still rubbing his rear end.) "It's this box - it's got splinters in it!" (Bill, limping over and rubbing his hand lightly over the lid.) "I can't see any splinters, it feels alright to me - you've been the first to complain you know".

Once again the victim would seat himself and just as quickly as before remove himself, glaring suspiciously at the box.

At times it was extremely difficult not to burst out laughing at the antics of some. I have seen dupes down on hands and knees scrutinizing the box for splinters, rubbing their hands over the surface declaring it to appear smooth and splinter-free yet unable to understand the reason for their discomfort.

I have seen some sit on the box, conversing about this and that whilst restlessly moving from one cheek to another, trying to avoid the "splinter" and while still carrying on in conversation inspect the box time and again, peruse it from all angles then repose on it once again to continue wriggling and squirming in discomfort.

All this came to an end one day during an inspection of the works by management and visitors.

Whether the mechanism under the box was worn or not I do not know, however one of the visiting party - a very large man - flopped heavily upon

the box and received an unusually deep impalement. He leaped shrieking to his feet and ploughed headlong into a group of his peers, scattering them in all directions.

Suffice to say the box was immediately dismantled by (guess who) under orders from the manager. Bill expressed great concern and astonishment over its contents and laid the blame at the feet of person or persons unknown.

"EH?"

Steve was an ironworker due for retirement, and almost completely deaf. He had an ingrained habit of answering any statement, query or request with the word "Eh?". As a result he had earned the nickname "Eh?" which he bitterly resented, and on several occasions almost came to blows with those who took the micky by asking "Eh?", what did you say?"

Bill hit upon the idea of rigging up a long plastic pipe beneath the suspended timber floor of the work shop (I was employed to assist in its placement) and whenever he and I were alone together in the workshop and saw Steve approaching we would conceal ourselves beneath the floor (it was easily done because of its design) and wait until Steve walked in. Then we would take turns shouting through the pipe "Eh? - what did you say?" This was always bewildering to Steve because he was standing in an apparently deserted area, not a soul in sight and yet he was being taunted.

"Come out!" he would rant, quickly drawn to anger. "Come out and say that to my face, you gutless *****! In answer would come "Eh? What did you say?"

Many times, in between fits of helpless laughter we watched Steve stamp around the workshop opening and slamming doors, peering beneath benches and scanning the roof tops in an effort to find his tormentors. Crimson-faced and shaking upraised fists toward the heavens Steve swore the most terrible revenge on the culprits when he found them. Luckily for us he never did.

HISTORICAL QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND NOTES

Can you help?

Mr. Tomkins of Moss Vale is seeking information on DANIEL McALPINE, circa 1880, who was connected with a travelling theatre.

Mr. Albert Corkhill from Melbourne is seeking information on RICHARD BLAKE CORKHILL, a ship's captain from Cumberland, England, who plied his ships between England, Melbourne and Sydney. Richard Corkhill's residence reputedly was a house called Oakley (now the site of E.H. Brett's factory (ref: LHJ No.12, p 16)

Richard Corkhill's wife was the daughter of William Henry Moore, the one of the first solicitors to arrive in Sydney in 1815 (reference "History of Solicitors in New South Wales" by J.M. Bennett, M.A., LL.M., F.R.A.H.S., published 1984 (a interesting book considering that many of the early members of the legal profession resided in Balmain)).

Mr. T. Collins is seeking further information on "BREEZA", 46 Ballast Point Road, being part of the terrace of six houses called "YERROULBIN"

Considering the fact that Jubilee Engineering Pty Ltd is relocating its premises and the property is up for sale, the Association is most anxious to obtain any memories, recollections and photographs

of the Balmain Colliery and of those who worked there. Surely someone out there has worked in the Balmain Colliery and can help with some more information.

There is a very interesting and informative leaflet entitled "The Coal Mine Under the Harbour" which is available at the Watch House for 60 ¢s.

'JAMES CRAIG'

Now that school holidays are upon us once again, thought should be given to an inspection of the "James Craig" which is moored at Rozelle Bay while currently undergoing restoration. The ship is open to inspection during the week with guides available on Saturday and Sunday. There is an audio-visual together with a display of photographs. Watch the restoration in progress.

LEICHHARDT LIBRARY

Leichhardt Library has produced a pamphlet entitled "Tracing Your Family Tree - A Guide to Genealogical Resources". This publication contains a select listing of books, registers, directories and other reference tools held at Leichhardt Municipal Library.

Intended to be a guide to help with your genealogical research, the list also includes a guide to other institutions and their particular resources to help you.

LOCATIONS:

Central	Balmain	Glebe
64 Renwick St.	370 Darling St.	191 Bridge Rd
LEICHHARDT 2040	BALMAIN 2041	GLEBE 2037

Tel: 560 9346 Tel: 810 3861 Tel: 660 4672

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A suitably appropriate tax-free prize will be awarded to the most amusing entry. Send your answer with your address to the Balmain Association, P.O. Box 57, Balmain 2041.

WE ASKED: 1986, HOW WAS IT?

In 1986 many controversial issues in Balmain proved that they simply will not go away. Many of these issues have featured in the News Sheet over the last year (for many years) so for this edition of the News Sheet we asked two regular contributors - the Mort Bay Action Group and the Clontarf Park Action Group for their thoughts on the theme of "looking back over 1986". In addition we have included an article kindly provided by Alderman Issy Wyner as well as some thoughts of our own.

1.



the balmain association

1986 has been a busy year for the Balmain Association. While our Annual General Meeting is normally the occasion for looking back over past achievements, Christmas too can be a time for some reflection. For the Association the year started with a New Year's Eve Party at the Watch House, but soon afterwards the holiday mood vanished when the Mort Bay Project Community Liaison Meetings were held in the Watch House. Whatever the Community Liaison project proved, if anything, is a matter for debate but there can be no doubt that the Association filled a valuable function by maintaining a building, valuable in itself for historic reasons, which can be used as a meeting place for the local community.

The highlight of 1986 for us was the launching of our book "Around Balmain" in March. The successful sales of "Around Balmain" will help to give us the finances we desperately need to maintain and hopefully accurately restore the Watch House.

With the assistance of a consultant's report on the preservation of the Watch House, funds were applied for from the National Estate but the application was unsuccessful. At the time of writing other avenues are being tried.

Another event of some note in 1986 was a Meeting with Mr. Bob Carr, Minister for Environment and Planning in September. This was reported in detail in News Sheet No.155.

In between the highlights the Association continues to answer an endless stream of historical enquiries, gives publicity and/or support to other local groups and individuals concerned about various issues and keeps the Watch House open and "alive".

2.

ALDERMAN ISSY WYNER

HOW HAS BALMAIN CHANGED IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS?

The answer can only be: more of the same. Meaning more of what we have been obliged to witness, object to, and suffer, during the past five years or so.

Since the Council elections in September 1980, we have seen the introduction of "corporate management" and "Urban consolidation". These two anti-people factors (eagerly grasped and prosecuted by the ALP) have seriously eroded or destroyed citizens's rights, residents' interests and confidence in the council as the people's parliament and protector.

Over the past 12 months, we have seen:

- the legally established Clontarf Park filched from us and buried under the incongruous blocks of 20 flats;
- permission for the Max Cooper property to be over-developed with some 50 units;
- the loss of the last remaining opportunity for a large regional park at Mort Bay which will now be greatly smothered beneath some 211 flats, town houses, etc; as well, the historic dry dock belonging to the now-defunct Mort's Dock and Engineering Company, to remain unseen by the public;
- permission for residential over-development of the Swadling site in Mullens Street and the old timber yard site in Carrington/Clay Streets.

All this is additional to earlier council approvals for units, town houses, etc., in Grafton Street, on the Dickson Primer land and the old Slipway site. Add to this, the approvals (since last December) of approximately

- 120 applications for additions and alterations to a wide variety of old houses
- 25 applications for new houses
- 18 applications for town houses and flats.

(These approvals do not include the innumerable approvals for garages, carports, swimming pools, decks, verandahs, balconies, fences, pergolas, retaining walls, windows.)

So Balmain today wears a crown of thorns produced by the ALP-controlled Council, comprising the dust, noise, fumes and traffic congestion from the myriad cars which the various forms of development have brought; the over-shadowing, loss of privacy, loss of views and a general reduction in the amenity of our suburb.

Much of this arises from the "new order", entitled "Corporate management", whereby the aldermen are deprived to an alarming extent, of their powers, duties and functions - which have been handed over to non-elected employees of Council. Under these "delegated" powers, town planners, engineers, building and health inspectors, and others, now hold their own secret meetings, and make their own decisions with little or no regard for the effect on the citizens of our community.

Thus, the last 12 months shows a continuing decline for Balmain and promises further deterioration during the next nine months run up to the general elections in September 1987. During the last 12 months, too, the State Government and the Council majority, have cooked up a real witches' brew for the next elections: the ALP majority have proposed a reduction in the

number of wards in the Leichhardt Municipality, from six down to four, with the elimination of the old, traditional suburban names. But, while this would be a serious loss to the voters and the residents, the proposal from the Government is far worse: a proposal to eliminate all wards, and all suburbs, and provide for 12 aldermen to be elected without regard to areas, precincts, suburbs.

Both proposals are damaging to local democracy. Both make the task more difficult for achieving genuine democracy in Leichhardt. If the ground swell is great enough, in September next year, the winds of change will blow strongly through the corridors of power in our municipality and restore to the people the basic social and political right to be fully informed, consulted and brought as close as possible to managing their own municipal affairs. People power must take over in Leichhardt.

3. MORT BAY ACTION GROUP

Progress to date:

1986 was the second year of the campaign, which over the year has clearly become a case of the people of Balmain vs the ALP. Overall we have made some gains - some would say (particularly the ALP) too many. What started as a 500-600 unit proposal for the site, with many exciting extras, such as marinas, on the 1/3 open space, is now a 210-unit development, with a further 90 units still possible but unlikely, and up to 60% open space - if the further units do not go ahead. The exciting extras are also still possible, but unlikely in the present political climate.

The problem now:

People who are not familiar with the development may therefore wonder what we are still protesting about. The initial proposal was grossly outrageous, but this doesn't make the present, less outrageous proposal acceptable. Traffic, crowding, and lack of active open space and other facilities remain serious problems. So are the 3 & 4 storey units in a foreshore scenic protection area.

Costs:

One particularly galling feature of the campaign has been the lavish spending of taxpayers' and ratepayers' money - our money - on attempts to 'sell' the development. Particularly when the development itself looks as though it will cost \$190,000 per unit! From December to April we had the services of 'community liaison' expert Peter Melser (at a cost of around \$50,000). Community liaison does not seem to have succeeded.

An opinion poll we took of visitors leaving the 'Exhibition & Review' of the plan the day before it went to Leichhardt Council as a Development Application in April, showed 93% completely rejected it. Not that this, or the 770 letters of objection to the D.A. (vs 7 letters in favour!) made the slightest difference to the Council's actions. The D.A. was passed at a special meeting on 22 July. Meanwhile ratepayers were helping to pay for the ALP rag 'The Tiger'; activist Alan Stevenson who appeared on the scene in April

managed to finance 20,000 copies of a 'pro-housing' leaflet; and the Department of the Environment and Planning put out a glossy pamphlet on 'Parks and People', quoting highly selective and misleading figures from their open space survey, which earlier in the year they had tried to suppress.

What the politicians did:

Environment Minister Bob Carr didn't find the time to meet us or speak to us about his own portfolio this year, though he managed to get to two 'pro-housing' meetings in Balmain. One happened to coincide exactly with the Council meeting to pass the D.A. The other was on the day Roses' Emporium was destroyed. He did however meet the Balmain Association in September. Housing Minister Walker refused to see anybody, and in October attacked the Mort Bay Action Group in Parliament. Alderman Nick Origlass, he said, was 'a vandal, Trotskyite and Housing Commission tenant'!

Local Member Peter Crawford did a back-flip in August, and said he would ask Premier Unsworth to meet him and a local delegation. Unsworth however, following what is now a strong tradition of refusing even to hear the other side, turned him down.

STOP PRESS:

Ground preparation on the site started in early September. The Mort Bay Action Group lodged a case in the Land & Environment Court late in October. In November the DEP authorised and organised another dig for the historic dry dock and found it about 1 1/2 metres nearer the proposed housing than it was supposed to be. They may adjust the housing boundary accordingly.

1987:

The political situation remains volatile and even the ALP now recognises that Balmain is no longer a safe State Labor seat. There is now an active Liberal Party branch, supported by a Head Office undertaking to make all the publicly-owned land on Mort Bay open space if the Liberals get into power. One Independent is already running; there may well be others. It seems we are well on the way to achieving our secondary aim - to make Balmain a marginal seat, so we'll never be railroaded again.

4. CLONTARF PARK ACTION GROUP

For a small group of Balmain residents 1986 was a year of loss and disillusionment.

In place of the vacant block on which our children played, long ago purchased for a park, 22 units are being erected.

The Clontarf Park site is only small and as a consequence prospective Housing Commission tenants will be offered flats which are cramped and dark. Only 3 will have a parking space for their cars (although the existing level of on-street parking was enough to prevent contractors getting trucks onto the site!).

After 5 years of concerted effort to have our case

heard we are left with a strong sense of community - a tremendously positive reward despite the loss of our gathering place and hoped-for "village green".

But if the wider Balmain community is to gain from our defeat it will only come in the form of a lesson. The Clontarf issue spotlights the failure of the system to provide an accessible and independent forum to protect small communities from ill-conceived or arbitrary decisions taken by local government.

The Lands and Environment Court is prohibitively expensive and ministerial intervention has all too frequently made a mockery of its judgments.

The Ombudsman and the Ministry of Local Government only act if Council has ignored correct procedure.

As the law now stands it offers the environment little protection against elected governments.

Balmain is particularly vulnerable now that the State Government has jettisoned the urban environment as an issue. The twin policies of urban consolidation and public housing are being invoked to stem the tide of gentrification and shore up the Labor vote. There is a sort of scorched-earth policy in operation whereby ALP philistines destroy their heritage rather than leave it for the appreciation of the invading ALP trendies, who then stand by and applaud to demonstrate solidarity with the working class.

In place of the hodge-podge of small cottages that give Balmain its character and protect the buildings of genuine historical interest we are witnessing the steady growth of pseudo-colonial townhouse blocks.

Leichhardt Council has been only too willing, as an obedient servant of the State Government, to reverse democratically evolved planning policies which aimed at reducing residential densities.

Instead of acting in defence of its local ratepayers and residents it has embraced policies which advance the aims of the State Labor Party.

Our group holds no delusions. Despite the propaganda used against us we do not believe that Balmain would be safe under the Liberals. The answer lies between the extremes - in an electorate which is no longer blue-ribbon Labor but which, as a swinging seat, would be courted by both parties.

The Clontarf Park Action Group therefore makes one final plea

Don't leave it to your neighbour and don't leave it too late.

If you believe Balmain will suffer from a mass influx of 500 residents to Mort Bay, or if you think Mort Bay should be greened as part of Sydney Harbour National Park, then for God's sake speak up.



CHRISTMAS AT SEA

DIARY OF EDMUND EWINGTON
PASSAGE FROM ENGLAND TO AUSTRALIA
NOVEMBER 1854 TO FEBRUARY 1855

The following is an extract from the above diary:

23rd Dec. We have been today preparing for our Xmas dinner and we have got almost all the ingredients to make a good plum pudding three

families and ourselves have joined together and we have pounded upon salt beef with a little Cayenne pepper and butter which makes excellent potted beef our pudding 7 eggs orange marmalade cinnamon raisins flour and 6 bottles of ale and stout 4 bottles of wine to drink the health of absent friends and some preserved gooseberries for Gooseberry fool but our meat consists only of cold boiled pork but still all things considered we shall not do amiss.

24th Xmas Eve. We had today for dinner preserved beef and potatoes and biscuit pudding which is made in this way the biscuit is pounded in a mortar as fine as possible with a little flour and suet and boiled in a cloth and then eaten with butter and sugar and you would not believe how nice they are anyone coming out should bring with them a small pestle and mortar and a filter also a coffee mill for our cocoa and when it is coffee is given out whole we had a short service this morning as there is a very heavy sea running making it very difficult to stand some porpoises darting about but we have seen very few fish or birds and I suppose that being summer time the birds have got to the land sitting on their eggs and the fish deposit their spawn we have seen a great deal of the latter floating on the water it gives it a reddish brown appearance and may be seen above a mile in length so you may conceive what an immense quantity of fish the ocean must contain when I have no doubt there is shoals of it floating about in all directions.

25th Xmas Day broke on us a beautiful morning just a gentle breeze and the ship as steady as a room all hands engaged getting puddings into the copper no joke for nearly 400 passengers there was no service this morning in fact there is no one on board to lead prayers that the majority of the passengers feel respect for the Doctor whose place it is drinks a great deal in fact when he comes his rounds sometimes he can hardly stand we cleaned and polished up all our plate etc. this morning and found a nice clean table cloth and when it was set out a large plum pudding in the centre with white wine sauce and Gooseberry Tart Currant jam and Raspberry. After dinner we all stood up and drank the health of absent friends and I could not trust myself to think too much of home for I found a choking sensation in my throat and could fancy how our health was drunk at home we sent an invitation to the Captain to take a glass of wine with us and he came down and we drank his health and success to the ship we had some Gooseberry fool for dessert and two or three glasses of wine and then went on deck the first joke of the morning was No.1 Mess taking up to the Cook a large pudding all most a sackful which took him aback but however it was sent back to make it into two of course it was a sham one after dinner a party was made up of young girls dressed in white to represent a wedding party one of the number representing the bridegroom dressed in Scottish style but I could not make out for what reason one of the Sailor Boys was dressed as the Ghost in Hamlet and the one who acted the Master of the Ceremonies was dressed something Polonius in the same play but however they went into the Cabin and Captain received them kindly and gave them each a glass of wine we had dancing on Deck all the evening and singing down below some of them singing very nicely indeed the trio of Alls Well was very nicely executed it was kept up till about half past 11 and am happy to say that without any quarreling at all and no one of the passengers worse for drink the only quarreling was in the Captains Cabin between two of the under Stewards who got to blows and the Chief Mate was rather quarrelsome but all things considered the day passed very agreeable it certainly was a most beautiful day and when you looked upon the expanse of wide water the suns rays playing upon it till the longer you looked the more beautiful it

appeared like a lake studded with Diamonds which kept glittering about as if it was raining with them the ship laying on the bosom of it with its white sails and a sky as blue as can only be seen in a calm day at sea it was a time to make anyone feel the littleness of men as compared with the wondrous works of the creator I forgot to say that we had one of the monsters of the deep to make the scene complete a very large shark but he did not stop long which I was glad to see for sometimes they will stop for days together watching the ship and we have one little child very ill do not expect it to live many days and I fancy the feelings of anyone with a child they expect to be thrown overboard. I enjoyed myself exceedingly today the only draw back to it was that Alice was laid down with measles and cutting some teeth very hard and so we were obliged to give a great deal of attention upon her taking it in turn to mind her.



SUCCESS WITH CHINESE PAINTING EXHIBITION

The exhibition held by Bronwen Van Leeuwen and her mother Patricia Quinn, at the Watch House on December 5-7 was an outstanding success.

At the official opening on the Friday night, some 60 guests enjoyed the atmosphere of the Watch House which proved to be the perfect venue for displaying the work of these two most talented artists. A brief speech by the President of Sydney Rotary Club, Mr. Alan Stannard, took care of the formalities and from then on the main purpose of the evening was to participate in a colourful, cheerful social occasion.

On the Saturday and Sunday many more people called in to look, buy or watch the Chinese brushwork demonstrations. Viewers were encouraged to 'have a go themselves' and quickly found that creating the delicate brush strokes was not as easy as it looked. The exhibition attracted Balmain passers-by who had never been inside the Watch House before and the Association's membership list has increased as a result.

Proceeds from the exhibition will help the Association achieve its aim of preserving and restoring the historic Watch House.

CONTRIBUTIONS WELCOME!

Anecdotes of Balmain life; letters to the editor; notices of local events of interest, publicity for other local groups and so on - we would be pleased to publish them for you....free of charge!

PUBLIC NOTICE

THE BALMAIN WATCH HOUSE
179 DARLING STREET BALMAIN

IS OPEN AT THE FOLLOWING TIMES:

FRIDAY - FROM 8 P.M.

This a BYO social evening - the night out you have when you don't feel like "going out"

AND ALSO

SATURDAY - 1 P.M. TO 3 P.M.
Coffee and conversation available (free)

BALMAIN ASSOCIATION MEETINGS ARE HELD
AT THE WATCH HOUSE AT 7.30 P.M. ON THE FIRST
WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH - ALL WELCOME

PUBLICATIONS PAST AND PRESENT ON BALMAIN

In spite of the fact that Balmain always seems to be "getting into the news", published material on the history of Balmain is somewhat scarce. The standard reference is the Hogg Manuscript at the Mitchell Library (Sydney) and the other outline history was written by Elliott Napier and is recorded in an R.A.H.S. Journal of 1928. Both of these are catalogue entries at the Mitchell. In fact it is not difficult to spend hours there following leads given by catalogue entries, particularly in the Town and Country Journal towards the end of the 19th century. There is no actual written history of the development of Balmain. Below is a list of sundry publications current and some regrettably now out of print:

1. Balmain Watch House (leaflet) \$0.60
2. Balmain Walks (leaflet) \$0.60
3. Balmain Places: (leaflets)
 1. Mort's Dock \$0.60
 2. The Coal Mine Under the Harbour \$0.60
 3. Gladstone Park - The Pigeon Ground \$0.60
4. "Half a Thousand Acres" (book) \$9.95
This is a history of the original Land Grant to William Balmain.
5. Leichhardt Historical Journal No.14 \$8.00
The Journal includes articles and photographs on the Birchgrove, Rozelle and Lilyfield areas.
6. "Larrikin Days"
100 years of growing up in an Australian suburb, written to celebrate the centenary in 1983 of the Nicholson Street Public School, but developed into an original social study.
7. The Birchgrove Public School 1885-1985
- Publication to celebrate the Centenary of the School.
8. "Retrospect" - Balmain, Its Birth and Development. [Out of print]
Written at request of the Council of the Municipality to commemorate its Seventy-fifth Anniversary, 1860-1935 by Alderman Reginald Thornton and A.W. Sommerville, F.L.C.A. (Town Clerk). A copy of "Retrospect" is accessible in the Balmain Association archives.
9. The Houses of Balmain by J. Wong (1969)
containing an interesting time chart of Balmain history. [Out of print]
10. Balmain Sketchbook, drawings by Cedric Emanuel with text by Olaf Ruhen.
First published in 1975.
11. "Banners Unfurled" by Issy Wyner
History of the Painters and Dockers' Union.
12. "The Balmain Book" by David Liddle \$19.95
A book of photographs of people living and working in Balmain today.
13. "Around Balmain" \$ 9.95

All items marked with a price are available from the Balmain Association; postage not included.

The Balmain Association possesses copies of all these publications, including issues 1-14 of the Leichhardt Historical Journal, and issues 1-156 of the Balmain Association's News Sheet that was first printed in April 1966.

Balmain Garden Club

THE GARDEN CLUB meets on the third Saturday of each month (except December and January) at 1.15 p.m. at the Watch House, 179 Darling Street, Balmain. All interested welcome.

CARE OF HOUSEPLANTS

Almost everyone these days has a few house plants and no doubt, they do give a feeling of life and interest to rooms. Unfortunately, many old houses do not have good enough natural lighting for plants to thrive. Where I live, only the kitchen window sill is ideal. It must be remembered that there is really no such things as a house plant.

All varieties were originally out-of-doors, and most frequently on the ground floor of forests in tropical or sub-tropical areas, which gave them warm, humid conditions with equable temperatures, and mostly not direct sunlight.

A great variety of plants are available now. Years ago it was mainly the old aspidistra with occasional fish ferns for variation. When I was a junior student nurse long ago, one of my chores was the care of six aspidistras in a ward. They were taken out onto the balcony every Sunday morning and watered. This was followed by a sponging of their leaves with a soft cloth dipped in milk and their brass jardinieres had to be polished "until you could see your face in them" as the saying went.

MAIN ESSENTIALS in house plant care are plenty of light and not overwatering. They do not like draughts or sudden fluctuation in temperatures. Most do not like direct sunlight and if near a window facing north or west, may need a light curtain. But if light is not sufficient, growth will be poor and spindly. Plants thrive better if grouped together which helps to create the micro-climate they like.

HUMIDITY: this is essential for most houseplants, so keep them away from radiators, open fires, stoves, and tops of T.Vs. Frequent spraying of foliage with a fine mist helps. A shallow tray of water nearby is also useful. In many houses, a well-lit bathroom is ideal for plants.

WATERING: this should only be to the needs of the plant and considering the time of the year. Just keep moist in winter and once weekly should be enough. Like water to be lukewarm in winter. In summer it may be necessary to water daily. In autumn start to lessen frequency. Always use sufficient water to ensure soil is completely wetted, by noting excess draining away from the hole at the base. Always remove water from the saucer in which the plant stands.

FERTILISERS: only during actively growing period, usually spring and summer. In autumn, growth stops, so discontinue feeding. Bought potting mixes do not have sufficient nourishment for continued healthy growth, so extra feeding is necessary. Many types can be used. Fish emulsion or seaweed (if not too odorous!) or other sorts such as Aquasol, Thrive or Zest etc. Use strictly as instructed on container, as if overdone can be harmful.

REPOTTING: houseplants can stay in their original pots for a year or longer. Knock the plant out of pot by tapping on the base, and remove most of the old soil, and prune roots if necessary. The new soil should be a little below top of inside rim of pot to allow space for watering. Drainage is most

important for all plants. Place a curved piece of broken pot over centre hold with other bits near side holes, put in some small pieces of plastic foam, or small pebbles, gravel etc. Place plant in pot, and firm the new soil around it. There is a new material on the market to help in keeping plants moist called Agroscap. Must try some this summer to see how it goes.

GENERAL CARE: nipping out growing tips will encourage side shoots and make plants more compact. Spray leaves regularly to remove dust. White oil (1 teaspoon to 1 pint water) will give a gloss. A spell in a shade house now and again will benefit plants. Also, in mild weather, hosing down outside will flush out salts in the soil, helping to keep houseplants healthy.

If insect pests noted always take plants outside to spray. Derris powder probably the safest to use. Leave on a few days to kill the pests, and then hose off. Direct all sprays underneath the leaves, where pests congregate.

JESSICA MURRAY

BALMAIN BOYS DO FLY!

In September a small crowd at Birchgrove Oval witnessed what is believed to have been the first ever parachute jump from an airship. Two parachutists, one of whom was Paddy Draper, local resident and member of the Association, made a precision landing in the Oval after jumping from the Swan Lager Airship.



the balmain association

meaning BALMAIN 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



MEMBERSHIP FORM

Return to: Treasurer, P.O.Box 57, BALMAIN 2041

NAME:.....

ADDRESS:.....

TELEPHONE:..... HOME:.....

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

Please circle NEW MEMBER / RENEWAL

Single/Family/Household	\$ 8.00
Organisation	\$ 12.00
Pensioner or Student	\$ 1.00

Add \$5.00 to above rates to have News Sheet posted
Cheques made payable to "The Balmain Association".