

NEWS SHEET

167

FEBRUARY 1988

PO BOX 57 BALMAIN 2041

the balmain association

FOUNDED 1965

My Fellow Members

NIPPING MYTHS IN THE BUD

The following letter has been sent to *The Glebe* and the *Western Suburbs Courier*.

Dear Sir,

The Balmain Association wishes to set the record straight on its involvement in the Darling Street Heritage Paint Scheme. The project was not proposed by the Association (*Glebe* 10/2/88 p.8) but by the Minister of Planning and Environment two years ago when a delegation from the Association met with him to discuss local problems.

The project was left aside until late last year when the DEP paid \$8000 to a local architect to draw up a heritage colour scheme for two sections of Darling Street. Any subsequent painting is to be undertaken on a voluntary basis and is to be paid for by the owners of each property, using discounted paint from Pascol. The Balmain Association was then asked to facilitate community communication. We agreed, as this is in accordance with our charter.

Aware of the imminent election, we advised Mr Carr not to politicise and jeopardise the project but this was ignored. Mr Carr involved the local MP in his press release and Mr Crawford has subsequently claimed credit for the project and has greatly exaggerated its scale and importance in his election newspaper, *The Observer* and again in *The Glebe* (10/2/88). He has also incorrectly said that the Balmain Association is 'managing' the project.

Only a handful of people attended the public meeting on 27/1/88. Mr Crawford did not come.

Residents have a reliable assessment of such a paint scheme. They favour conservation of historic Balmain without its turning into a museum, and they are aware that much restoration has already been done without government initiative. As a government project, the paint scheme does not compensate for insensitive, excessive traffic generation and diminishing useable open space.

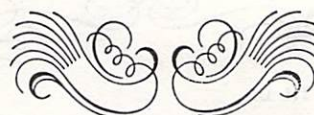
Aesthetically, a far more essential improvement would be the replacing of ugly and hazardous power poles and lines with underground wiring. \$8000 wouldn't even start to rectify this kind of major problem.

In spite of political distortion, the paint scheme has modest merit. The Balmain Association hopes that some community support can be salvaged.

Strategy

With an election looming this is the time for residents to press politicians for information and policy commitments on all issues concerning them, for example - expansion of Mascot airport, developments on power station, Monsanto, Unilever, Howard Smith's, sites the future of hospitals, schools and roads.

Rumour has it that Mr Sheehan has some good pre-election news on Rozelle Bay ...



BIO-DEGRADABLE

Her garden really was superb

She cherished every shrub and herb

But trespassers and children looted

Quickly found themselves composted.

THE WATCH HOUSE

RECENT ACCIDENTS

It almost seems as if we will need a new permanent heading for this subject in the News Sheet.

Darling Street Traffic has struck again!

On the first of February, an enormous semi-trailer pulled up over the kerb in front of the Watch House and backed up...right into the jacaranda tree!

The tree fell across Darling Street blocking traffic for an hour. The driver of the truck disappeared, but a quick-thinking member noted that bits of jacaranda tree were still sticking out of the back of the truck, and it was traced to its parking spot in Cameron Cove.

Other quick thinking members of the neighbourhood grabbed cameras. Apparently there isn't a single legally parked car which has not been damaged in recent months, so residents are accustomed to the tinkle of glass and the crash of metal.

The police were called, and a Ranger from the Leichhardt Council inspected. The verdict was, of course, Too Much Speed and Too Large Trucks.

We have written strongly to Council on the matter and residents were proposing to send photos to the "Glebe". We hope that future pages of this News Sheet will be able to report action being taken to control the size and speed of vehicles in that part of Darling Street.



COME FLY WITH US

By the time this edition of the News Sheets hits the streets, the Association hopes to be the proud possessor of a magnificent new toy....

A FLYMO !!!!

Any member who wishes to Fly-Mow with us can do so by dropping by the Watch House between 1 and 5 any Saturday.

It would be helpful if you let Frances Heathfield know on 818-2307 that you will be there so that she saves the fun for you.

Not only will you have the fun and the pleasure of seeing a lawn well mown, we will ensure you of a cup of coffee, biscuits and the latest Association news.

We hope to see you there.

Can You Help?

Have you been saying to yourself "I would become more active in the Balmain Association if I knew there were a useful job I could do?"

Well, your hour has come! A Correspondence Secretary is needed as soon as possible.

The only requirement is that you be able to type and preferably that you own a typewriter or word processor/computer - and an ability to spell and punctuate and draft responses to letters would be a distinct advantage!

The time involved is not great, and the rewards are considerable: the gratitude not only of the members of the Management Committee but of those hapless members of the community who may now be awaiting an answer to outstanding enquiries!

Enquiries may be directed to Debby Nicholls 810-7391.

Do give it your serious consideration.

PARTURITION.

Safe & Almost Painless.

DR. FAWCETT.

DR. FAWCETT, Homopathic Physician and Accoucher may be consulted at his residence corner of Park Road and Premier Street, opposite the Wanstead Post Office and Tempe Railway Station from 1 to 4 and at 763 HARRIS STREET Ultimo, Sydney, from 7 to 9 p.m. and from 10 to 12 p.m. who has for a long period carried on a practice with a view to rendering the period of Pregnancy as free as possible from the pains and weaknesses usually associated with it. Good accommodation for Ladies with every attention during Confinements and all ordinary afflictions, by Miss Sussex, who is an experienced and Clever Nurse.

EXHIBITIONS AT THE WATCH HOUSE

THE GODS HAVE DESCENDED

Friday 11 March - Sunday 13 March

Jan Melville from De Peinture Art Studio in 10 Johnston Street will exhibit works on paper in mixed media and pastels.

Included will be The Great Ferry Race, Balmain, of the 1880's, Camel 8, and a smaller series on Sydney Harbour in pastels.

Members and friends are all welcome.

HISTORICAL QUESTIONS, ANSWERS & NOTES

Mrs. Walsh of Enfield has been enquiring about 208 DARLING STREET (see News Sheet No. 130, May 1983 - "Uncovering our Past" by Peter Reynolds) circa 1878.

Mr. Lavis of Perth wants to know if anyone knows of the whereabouts of HUTCHESON'S PADDOCKS in 1844?

There is a reference in the City of Sydney Directory 1844 to a Jesse Moon, gardener of Hutcheson's Paddocks.

Mrs. McCaskie of Wyoming, N.S.W. writes to enquire about her great, great grandparents JOHN & CATHERINE McCASKIE who settled in Balmain in the early 1850s. Their oldest daughter MISS ELIZABETH JOHNSTON McCASKIE apparently was a well known Balmain resident, living here for 90 years. Her sister AGNES MOODIE GUNTHER (nee McCASKIE) and brother JAMES were it appears also well known local identities.

MRS. CATHERINE HALIBURTON McCASKIE remembered Balmain when Darling Street had only a house here and there and when a great part of Roselle was mere bush.

JAMES McCASKIE served time as a coach builder and blacksmith and conducted business on the corner of Crescent Street & the southern side of Parsons Street. Records show that Section 19, Lot 4 (the area in question) was purchased by *MC ASKIEY ET AL in 1861. The Latin expression "et al" means of course "and others".

* Attention should be drawn here as to how names alter possibly either through usage or by incorrect recording.

The Association had the pleasure of assisting Dr. Robert Simpson, the surgeon to the recent First Fleet Re-enactment. Dr. Simpson was making enquiries about surgeons of the actual First Fleet, one of them being William Balmain.

The Power House Museum has acknowledged our gift of lace swatchbooks by saying the books reflect the development of textile design and production techniques over time, and are a wonderful resource for research and display. The lace collection will be featured in the new Powerhouse.

NEWS SHEET EDITOR

In this News Sheet Bob Nicholls bids you a fond farewell as editor and takes great pleasure in noting that he will be replaced by Val Hamey.

Do please assist Val by sending him any pieces of information you think would be of interest to the readers of this bulletin: happenings in Balmain, historical notes, opinions, cartoons, poetry or quotes.

Heritage Exhibition

AUSTRALIA DAY

The rains came but so did the people, more than we had ever dreamed. On Saturday we opened the doors wondering if anyone would brave the downpour. Five hours later we were politely suggesting that people come back next day.

And again they did - in their hundreds.

And what drew them to the Watch House? A newly mounted exhibit of photographs from our archives, containing a historical romp up Darling Street, a detour through Mort Bay, a few old photographs of Balmain residences and a Mystery Section of houses we hoped could be identified.

The Exhibit was the brainchild of David Ramsay, Chairman of the Bicentennial Sub-Committee and Activist Extraordinaire. It was his hope that on the Australia Day weekend photographic exhibits would flourish all along Darling Street, and we are grateful to St Mary's for aiding us in this respect.

Colgate/Palmolive provided us with a most interesting display of photographs of their history, and Bretts have donated the original Bicentennial Flag as an invaluable addition to our museum.

The run-up to Exhibit Weekend were action-packed with Kath Hamey culling, sorting and labelling and an active team mounting, preparing display boards and hanging photographs.

Our thanks are due to the Sun-Herald and Sydney Morning Herald whose inclusion of our activities in their Bicentennial Columns gave such an impetus to Balmain residents and former residents to come and see what the exhibit held.

What pleased us most, however, was the interested response of everyone who arrived. Most stayed for a considerable period of time; many had stories to tell; all commented favourably.

We are happy to say that the three days were also extremely useful financially and our coffers have recovered from expenses involved in mounting the exhibit. We thank all of you who contributed so generously and hope you will come see us again.

BALMAIN GARDEN CLUB

Jessica Murray, whose authority in matters horticultural must, we are sure you will all agree, have been enhanced and confirmed by the inclusion of the statistics incorporated in our December edition in our sister publication's Column 8, writes this month about ...

Borers in Gardens

Hosts for Borers: Eucalypts, Melaleucas, Banksias, Prostanthera, Grevilleas, Acacias etc. Most species of borers prefer to attack living plants as they usually need moisture for their life style. They will invade both healthy and already weakened plants and often enter at injured points, such as rough prunings etc. and lay their eggs.

The damage is mostly done by the larvae of mostly beetles and moths, also some weevils, the latter being fond of wattles, although another weevil is interested only in Flame trees and yet another concentrates on pittosterums.

Signs of Attack: Exudation of gum, and build up of web, sawdust and excreta on the site of invasion. On removing all this, a hole will usually be seen, or loosened bark covering the hole. Use a piece of pliable wire and probe the hole and possibly destroy the grub. It may have gone deeply into the heartwood. Spray into the hole if possible, using Rogor, kero, or Folimat. Aerosol cans of Rogor and Folimat are now obtainable and this is a great help. Seal up the hole with soap or grafting wax.

Sometimes, if a shrub or bush looks sickly, a hole might be found right at ground level which is easily overlooked. I have had rose bushes, pussy willow, crepe myrtle and figs attacked in that manner. Sometimes the attack was further up and the first thing noticeable is a branch dead or dying. There are moths that lay their eggs on the tip of plants, which then die back after the depredations of the larvae. This is frequently observable in Grevillias and Bottlebrush shrubs.

To lessen attacks all pruning sites should be sealed with bitumen paint. Of course, starved plants should be helped with fertiliser and water. They can sometimes struggle on for years, but severely damaged plants and dead and dying trees should be removed to lessen infection of healthy ones.

In early stages of borer attack you may notice only the yellowing of branch tips. Moths and beetles are most active in hot humid months. Sometimes a branch becomes ring-barked by larvae and the branch dies and falls off in a storm, long after the destructive insect has left that particular site.

It sometimes appears that native plants are not meant to be long-lived and become so infested that the endemic bush fires provide a happy release from misery and clean up the bush and provide regeneration of the site by germinating new seeds of native plants that require heat to develop.

Termites: so-called 'white ants' but no relation to ants, develop colonies under the ground making feeding tunnels and entering trees through the roots and going for the heartwood, working upwards so that the tree eventually becomes unsound and collapses. Treatment for termites is not for amateurs as it involves nasty chemicals such as lead, arsenic, chlordane etc., and it also needs identification of the particular variety of termite, as some need different chemicals. They are sneaky things, munching from inside and leaving a shell which is finally noticed when destruction is complete. I remember a door suddenly falling off in a house, where termites had not been suspected.

IN MEMORIAM

The Association learned with great sadness of the death on 29 January of Denise Soos, long time member and loved member of the community.

We extend our deepest sympathy to Andrew and all the other members of the family. She will be sadly missed.



the balmain association
representing
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 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 should be made payable to "The Balmain Association".