

the balmain
association

NEWS SHEET

169

FOUNDED 1965

PO BOX 57 BALMAIN 2041

APRIL 1988

My Fellow Members..

From the President

Despite the watery weather, last month was a busy and productive time for the Balmain Association.

On April 9th I attended the second conference of the Urban Environment and Planning Coalition. As you know, I represented the Association at the first conference on November 14th last and was elected to the Steering Committee which subsequently met every Thursday to refine and incorporate conference resolutions into the Draft Strategic Policy Document. We also drafted a constitution and planned the follow-up conference.

This conference consisted mainly of workshops which produced a steady stream of amendments and new resolutions. The general feeling was that the document is shaping up extremely well as a comprehensive and specific blueprint for proper urban planning and management. The only really controversial point was the resolution under Urban Development that "all councils should follow a policy of urban consolidation provided that consideration is given to proper safeguards as outlined elsewhere in this document". These safeguards are indeed stringent and include generous provisions for public open space, but for some delegates the term urban consolidation has been irreversibly debased by political misuse and is unacceptable whatever the context. A special conference may be held to deal with this topic alone. More will be said of that and other aspects of the policy document in future news sheets. The complete document will be made available for members who wish to read it and their comments will be most welcome.

After the conference ratified the constitution, attending groups, including the Balmain Association, were declared foundation members of the Coalition which will now develop independently of the Australian Conservation Foundation. I was re-elected to the Committee which has been expanded from 15 to 20 members.

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WESTPAC DONATES \$1000 TO US!



The Westpac Travelling Museum

Westpac Banking Corporation generously donated \$1000 to the Balmain Association at the opening of their Travelling Museum of Banking at the Balmain Branch on Monday, 28th March. Mrs. Jane Ward, President, received the cheque from the Regional Manager, Mr. Dave Carter, at the function which was attended by the Mayor of Leichhardt, Alderman N. Origlass and many local identities and Westpac management. Chief Accountant, Mr. Chris Doran and his staff dressed in Victorian clothing to enhance the proceedings. The Corporation also paid for the expenses that the Association incurred in preparing the display of local history and early photographs.

Mr. Dave Ramsay, chairperson of the Association's Bicentennial Community Committee, thanked Westpac for their benevolence. He complemented Kath Hamey and Tikwis Begbie on their research and work in setting up their part of the display as well as acknowledging Colgate Palmolive, Bretts Canvas, and Lever & Kitchen for help with flags and photographs.

BALMAIN GARDEN CLUB

A NEW ERA IN ROSES

In the last few years there has been a resurgence of interest in rose varieties that are hundreds or even thousands of years old. Unfortunately, all the older European roses bloomed for only one time of the year- late spring and early summer, and it wasn't until the 18th century that everblooming types were imported from China.

The Romans had one exception, a pink damask that bloomed again in the autumn, probably a mutation from Alexandria, Egypt that was thought to have come originally from Damascus. This rose was grown in large quantities for the Roman market at a Greek colony at Paestum, near where Genoa is now. Pliny the Elder, the historian who perished in the Vesuvius eruption in 79 AD, grew it at Pompeii and it is still obtainable here in Australia under the name of Quatre Saisons (the Four Seasons).

David Austin in England envisaged the combination of the shapes, colours, and perfumes of the old roses with the recurrent blooming of the moderns, and devoted 25 years of his life to that end. As the once-blooming gene was very powerful he found himself blocked again and again, but a few years ago, at last, was able to present roses looking like the Albas, Gallicas, Bourbons, and Damasks of past centuries with the modern ability of recurrent flowering. They created a sensation in 1984 at the Chelsea Flower Show in England. Perhaps he will die wealthy but 25 years out of a lifetime was a big price. Some have been imported into Australia but are still not freely available. I got several from Victoria last year and I believe an old nursery at Thirlmere has some this year.

Mostly they are big growers, shrub-like, and include some climbers and several small ones for small gardens. Pruning is different from the moderns, which only flower on new wood and so are pruned fairly severely to get lots of new growth. The Austin roses will also flower on old wood, a characteristic of the old type roses generally, so it is only necessary to remove the dead wood, and a light trimming to shape the plant. Other requirements are the same as moderns- full sun if possible, and not to be grown under overhanging trees.

The Austins are named, in many cases, for the characters of Chaucer and Shakespeare. My favourite, so far, is 'PROSPERO', size 2ft by 3ft, colour crimson into purple and glorious perfume. Other smallish ones are 'CHAUCER', 3ft by 3ft, pink; 'DAME PRUDENCE', 2ft by 2ft, pale pink and 'CANTERBURY', 3ft by 3ft, pink. Others that grow into big bushes include 'MARY ROSE' (named for King Henry VIII's Flagship that sank 400 years ago), 4ft by 4ft, and it looks and smells like a Damask rose; 'CRESSIDA', 5ft by 5ft, apricot pink; 'THE REEVE', 4ft by 4ft, dusky pink; 'THE MILLER', 6ft by 4ft, pink; 'CYMBELINE', 5ft by 4ft, grey-pink. Some of these could be grown as small climbers along a fence or on a tripod. Larger ones for climbers include 'LEANDER', 12ft, apricot; 'SHROPSHIRE LASS', 15ft, pale pink; 'HERO', 9ft, cupped pink.

I believe that about fifty have been released altogether, including several new ones last year including a lovely glowing pink named 'Gertude Jekyll', after the famous English flower-lady. A modern introduction into these old type roses has been some yellow ones, which were rare in past centuries, only available from Persia. Some Austin roses are myrrh-scented which, to me, smells like aniseed.

Jessica Murray

From the President continued ■■

On the local scene, Leichhardt Council is pleased that the Balmain Association has offered historical advice for the restoration of Birchgrove Oval and its surrounds. Many residents and Association members are interested in this project and we are happy to be involved. Once again the community will be shown the value of Tikwis Begbie's research and Kath Hamey's collection of photos.

In another context our concern for the historical appearance of the area has led us to examine the issue of contemporary advertising. We realise that businesses want to advertise, but we feel that guidelines should reflect the growing community

appreciation of our historic areas. We congratulate Leichhardt Councillors who recently rejected a proposed rooftop sign that would have set new and undesirable for behind parapet advertising. One of our members, Fergus Fricke, is to be congratulated on his efforts to promote a policy to prevent the erection of signs above awning level. We'll investigate this further and keep you informed.

Finally, for this month, Dawn Fraser, the new member for Balmain, is seeking help with policy formation and strategy. The Balmain Association is happy to make the Watch House available for community meetings with Dawn.

Jane Ward



HISTORICAL QUESTIONS,

Mrs. W. Harper of Collaroy is seeking information on *JAMES RONALD MCKENZIE ROSS* who was apparently a first free settler in the Balmain district and was granted 55 1/2 acres of land and a two storey house in George St. near the Sydney Town Hall.

Miss Fitzhardinge of Pymble found family information in Leichhardt Historical Journal No. 15. Her particular request concerns the location of '*PEEL'S COTTAGE*', Waterview Bay at which M.A.H. Fitzharding was born in 1849, and the location of '*SLEIGHFORD COTTAGE*', Waterview where W.G.A. Fitzharding was born in 1854 and Mary Hyde Fitzharding in 1857.

Via Leichhardt Council, we received an enquiry regarding *ANDREW NOBLE CAMPBELL*, J.P., Mayor of Leichhardt, 1932-34. Apart from an extract from the Jubilee History of Leichhardt, '*Leichhardt: its history and progress, 1871-1921*', compiled by A. Vialoux & C.M. Reeves, neither Leichhardt Library nor the Association can be of further assistance. Can anyone help?

Mr. Rose of Lindfield wishes to trace the descendents of any of the 7 children of *ELIZABETH & HENRY GARDNER*: Henry born 1840, Mary Ann 1850?, Elizabeth 1853 and William? [see LHJ No. 12: p 5, 28 & 29] Mr. Rose says Elizabeth was a grandchild of Thomas Rose, who was the first free settler with a family to arrive and be granted land in Australia. He was the builder of '*Rose Cottage*' at Wilberforce, N.S.W., the oldest timber cottage on its original site in Australia.

Mrs. Rosser of A.C.T. requests information regarding *THOMAS ROSSER*, who was born in Merton Village, Swansea, Wales in 1829 and his trade was mariner/builder. The date of his arrival in Australia is unknown. At one time he lived in Mullens St. and died in 1899. Family folklore was that he was a large land-owner in Balmain and that Rosser St. is named after him. Two Sands Directories show him as having lived in Cardwell St. and Smith St., the latter runs beside Section 10 Lot 11 purchased by Smith/Rosser in 1866.

The Association has considerable historical information, however it is usually a question of being able to locate a particular detail. We are constantly endeavouring to improve our 'finding ability'. We are getting there - slowly.

Tikwis Begbie

Further tales from peripatetic members...



No, Roselle has not been banned. We were merely leaving it! Nor has it been fractionalised in an election.

But two travellers in an antique land realised that further research was obviously re-quired in the historical, geographical and political interests of our fellow members.

According to one guide book Roselle is: "*Ancient town of Etruscan origins; gained importance after the decline of nearby Vetulonia [not, you will be relieved to hear, the former name of either Balmain or Leichhardt] 6th C BC. The most remarkable recent archaeological findings are of a Roman settlement with streets radiating out from a Forum and remains of an Augustan basilica*".

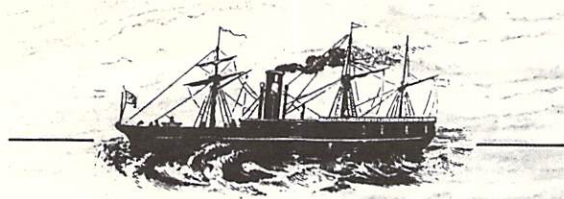
Your intrepid explorers decided that eye witness reports were called for and found that north of the town was a dusty turn-off through a grove of olive trees where a small sign (and several cars with German licence plates) gave witness to the presence of a Site of Interest.

Which it was. There were new excavations of what we discovered were the baths; then came a cobbled path of obviously Roman origin leading us to the Forum with standing pillars and then to a small villa in one direction and an amphitheatre in the other. Much of the original wall can be seen by peering over the edge of the hill on which the city stands. The view alone would have been worth the detour.

Earliest records report that Rusellae, as it was known, was conquered by Rome in the 3rd C BC and supplied wheat to Scipio's campaign in Africa. Inventive readers can supply their own parallels...

Anyone wishing to retrace our route will find the town and ruins some 20 km inland from the coast of Tuscany and 10 km north of Grosseto, a modern city with a hexagonal medieval centre. Your reporters would be more than happy to provide further pictorial and verbal details!

Ciao, Debby Nicholls



Coming soon

MUSIC 2041

The Balmain music society, MUSIC 2041, will shortly provide two events promoting the interest of music on the peninsular.

VICTORIANA MUSICAL EVENING

On Saturday 21st May at the Balmain Rowing Club, White St. (near Elington Park) a Victoriana Musical Evening will feature four members of the Palm Court Orchestra, playing violin, cello, flute and double bass, in their presentation of 19th century music unique in Australia.

Following their program, a sing-a-long is envisaged where popular songs from the era will be sung. A welcoming glass of mulled wine at 7.30pm will precede a three-course dinner (in the manner of Mrs. Beaton) in the Balmain Rowing Club, White St. near Elington Park. Price for the evening - entertainment and meal - is \$25 per head.

Tickets (table bookings arranged) are available at 542 Darling St., Rozelle or at Wall's Pharmacy, 345 Darling St., Balmain, before Monday 16th May. Non-alcoholic drinks will be provided - otherwise BYO. Victorian dress is optional! Details from Beth Willis (810 2941) or Fergus Fricke (810 1179).

RECORDERFEST

At the Balmain Watch House on Sunday 26th June from 2-5pm MUSIC 2041 is holding a Recorderfest. It will be open to all players, young and old of all standards, and is designed to give players the opportunity of playing together so that they may be able to organise groups for continued activity.

Bring your own recorder(s), a music stand (if available), some sheet music to play or exchange, and a donation. MUSIC 2041 will introduce you to other players, and provide the rooms to play in, sheet music, guidance, and tea or coffee. Further details from Helen Bailey-Cooke (810 2278) or Fergus Fricke (810 1179).

Can You Help?

BOOK WANTED FOR HISTORY ROOM

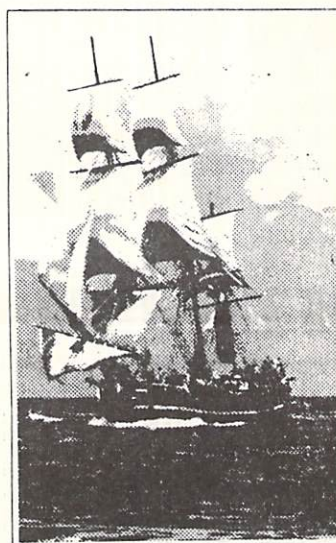
CRICKET BALMAINIA
By Clifford Winning
Official History 1897-1980
Balmain District Cricket Club

INFORMATION WANTED

Photographs of Delloitte's Memorial Gates
Birchgrove Oval, Snails Bay
removed 1960s

The Balmain Association meets next at
7.30pm on Wednesday, 4th May, at the Watch
House.

Our editorial telephone number: 818 4954



FIRST FLEETERS

Mr. Dave Ramsay informs us that the afternoon tea for the Fellowship of First Fleeters has been set tentatively for Sunday, 12th June. All members are invited to attend and any offers of help will be welcomed. Watch this space in the next issue.



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".