

the balmain
association
incorporated
news sheet

The Peninsula OBSERVER

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BALMAIN ASSOCIATION RE-UNION DINNER

Last year, 2004, the year that the Balmain Watch House celebrated its 150th anniversary, slipped by without much fanfare. It was decided that the 40th Anniversary of the Association, 2005, would not do the same. When that decision was made September 2005 seemed a long way away, but spurred on by a small group of enthusiastic members, some lapsed, the task was taken in hand. The first formal meeting was held in April - a brief had already been prepared ie dinner, garden walks, concert over the weekend 16, 17 and 18 September with students' art exhibition along Darling St. Application had been made to Leichhardt Council for funding under their Community Events Program. Present were Ann Bastock, Diana Garder, Bill Haesler, John Morris, June Lunsmann, David Porter and Jocelyn Morris with apologies from other members who had offered assistance in various ways.

Serious planning followed with monthly and then fortnightly meetings. An important task was deciding on the venue for the dinner, members of the committee had a number of evenings dining out to suss out prospective eateries. As well a mailing list of past members had to be compiled.

Bill Haesler took on the monumental task of organising the concert assisted by Roy Watterson who also acted as MC for the afternoon.

Diana Garder, Janine Oates and Jocelyn Morris prepared the walks and negotiated the open gardens.

With assistance from teachers at local schools and friends, the art exhibition was mounted and appeared in shopfronts and the glass house at Balmain Town Hall.

Behind the scenes activities included preparation of brochures, letters and flyers, collection and presentation of photos, the decorating of the dinner venue, the preparation of maps, signs and collection and return of bollards etc for the walks, the picking up and returning of instruments for the concert. All of which was successfully delegated to various members of the committee and friends. This was a far cry from the "Wine, Cheese and Aerogard Evening" advertised in the first newsletter of the association in 1966.

Sponsorship from Leichhardt Council and Balmain Estate Agency (R & W) was greatly appreciated.



The Re-union Dinner was attended by 98 members, past and present, who took the opportunity to recall the good fun had over the years as well as the wins and losses in planning issues. The birthday cake was cut by Bill Haesler, second president of the Association, and Ann Bastock, the current president.

The interest in the walks has encouraged the association to make this an annual event which will showcase the historical aspects of our suburb to new residents as well the public in general. The concert was a successful event thanks to the students (and parents) who performed.

The shopkeepers and banks were most co-operative and expressed pleasure in having the art works. Some requested that they remain up longer.

In the words of member, Roger Parkes, the reunion dinner represented the past and garden walks the future. So well done everyone and let's keep it up!

June Lunsmann

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – 2005

Another year has flown by, as I am sure you will all agree, and its time again for our Annual General Meeting and the President's Annual Report. Mid-year a committee was formed to prepare Balmain Association's 40th anniversary. I attended most meetings and became awestruck as I listened to this group, most of whom were involved in the original movement to save the Watch House. They were so enthusiastic, full of bright ideas and prepared to work very hard to prepare the celebrations for the 40th anniversary.

The first event held was a re-union dinner at Balmain Leagues Club. What a night! Just on a hundred people came. The first two Presidents could not come as they were not in Sydney at the time so the third, Mr Bill Haesler, and I cut the 40th birthday cake. I left at about 10pm and thought that maybe all those folk who were having a fantastic time catching up might have to be thrown out eventually. Seriously, as I watched them all arrive – greeting each other so fondly and then going over to look at the photos of the fun events and the people who organized them so long ago – I did wipe some tears away!

The next morning we opened the Watch House so that those people who wished to do the Garden Walks could get started early. Nine generous Balmainites agreed to open their gardens for us and the walks also emphasized the character of Balmain. Lots of people came to the Watch House to begin their walks and all day long there was coffee, tea and Devonshire scones prepared for the visitors by June Lunsmann and Ruth MacLeod.

Then on Sunday there were biscuits and drinks provided for all the school children who performed at the concert on the Sunday at Balmain Town Hall. They were great as were all the other performers. We certainly owe thanks to Bill Haesler and Roy Waterson, both brilliant musicians, for organizing as well as performing at the concert.

It was another interesting year for me at the Watch House on quite a few Saturday afternoons. Early in the year an English couple came in and told me that whenever they came to Sydney they always visited Balmain and the Watch House. They live in Essex and explained that they are retired and not likely to pack up and move but if they did it would be to Balmain!

On a Saturday in April a gentleman from Brisbane came in to find out if we had any information about his ancestor Captain Thomas Stephenson Rowntree. This was a day when we had our own historical photos on display and he went around interested in it all while I located some information on Captain Rowntree on page 45 of our popular book "Streets, Lanes and Places". When he then came back

to me I showed him this and then we both gasped at the likeness between him and his ancestor! Of course he bought the book to take home. On the same day a lady from Canberra came in to look around. She had lived here in Balmain till 1948 and all our historical photos excited her. She had just finished having chemotherapy and told me this visit and what she had seen had lifted her spirits.

One afternoon I also met up with some visitors from Ireland who had come over to catch up with some relatives here. We were chatting about the historical photos and they introduced themselves saying the name Sexton! That was my maiden name so we then chatted about that spot in Ireland where they came from and that my ancestors had lived before they came to Australia in the 19th century!

Once again we have had a year of wonderful exhibitions. "Intertwining" packed the place again on two weekends in May. The exhibition of Tibetan pictures in June was lovely and the artists accepted donations towards the education of children in Dharamsala, a charity they support. In August Krysten Winkley from Rozelle and some of her family from up north presented terrific work and I loved the work too of the "Circle of Clay Artists" who also displayed their work in August. My 2005 report shows that we have had another busy year!

Ann Bastock

2006 MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Balmain Association Annual General Meeting was held at the Watch House on Wednesday 2 November. Above is the President's report to that meeting. The meeting re-elected Ann Bastock as President for a further year, her tenth as President. Also elected were Rita Ellis as Vice-President, June Lunsmann as Secretary, Val Hamey as Treasurer, Bob Ellis as Public Officer. Committee members elected were Jeremy Arnott, Kathleen Hamey, Diana Garder, Roger Parkes and Fergus Fricke. Amongst the items discussed at the AGM was the need for a discussion on the future directions of the Association.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Another useful year but there are heavy future expenditures on the Watch House sandstone walls.

Statement of Financial Position at 30 June 2005

Current Assets	2004	2005
Bank Balance	29574.86	24516.00
Term Deposit	25000.00	35000.00
Cash in hand	24.50	63.90
Sundry Debtors	<u>152.00</u>	<u>248.20</u>
Total Assets	54751.36	59828.10
Creditors	0.00	0.00
Members Funds	\$54,751.36	\$59,828.10

Subscriptions now due for 2006

Household: \$20 per year

Concession: \$10 per year

Organization: \$30 per year

Subscriptions to Treasurer, Balmain Association Inc, PO BOX 57, BALMAIN, NSW 2041



2006 committee members elected at the AGM: from left, Ann Bastock (President), Bob Ellis (Public Officer), Kathleen Hamey, Rita Ellis (Vice-President), Roger Parkes, June Lunsmann (Secretary), Diana Garder and Val Hamey (Treasurer).

BITS AN+D PIECES

Collection on the Web

The Balmain Association has now registered with "Collections Australia Net" (www.collectionsaustralia.net) and Balmain Association can be visited by clicking on "Find Institutions" which provides the link to the Balmain Association website. If you check out the Collections Australia Net site you can see that the Balmain Association can open other pages later. They will accept special announcements such as the reprint of 'Around Balmain'

that is due from the printers shortly. Collections Australia Net have offered to display the BA photo collection in a way that allows surfers to look at our pictures but to protect copyright, as prints can be obtained in poor resolution only. We will start with a few shots and gradually build up a collection.

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A Harbour Circle Walk

The NSW Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources has published the first edition of "A Harbour Walk". The brochure, which was developed by Walking Volunteers in association with DIPNR, provides a map and comprehensive information on a walk around the harbour between the Harbour Bridge and the Gladesville Bridge, linking parks and foreshore walkways with the nearest roads. In an around Balmain it includes a walk along the foreshore through Callan Park, King George V Park and on from Iron Cove Bridge through Sydney Secondary College, Elkinpton Park, Yurulbin Point, Birchgrove Park, Iloura Reserve and around Cameron's Cove, behind the Water Police enclosure. Included in the

brochure are future paths around the foreshore at Ballast Point Park, Jackson's Landing and Darling Harbour East.

It is claimed that the full walk can be done in 8 to 10 hours by a fit person not stopping for views (and refreshments of other sorts) but it is suggested most people will want to walk it in bite sized sections of between 2 and 5 hours. Walking times are given for various parts of the walk based on a walking speed of 2.5 to 3 kph. Information is given on how to do this using public transport. Brochures and further information are available from DIPNR at 23-33 Bridge Street, 9228 6111, www.dipnr.nsw.gov.au/harbour (click on "Walking Sydney Harbour"). Brochures are also available at Balmain Library.

Judy Kelly Gives a Perspective on some Issues for Young People in our Community.

Earlier this year, Judy agreed to an interview with the Peninsula Observer. She is the deputy principal at Sydney Secondary College, Balmain campus. Readers will probably know that the inner west high schools have been reorganized, and that Balmain is not a year 7 to year 10 middle school feeding into a senior college at Blackwattle Bay, which was the old Glebe High. Judy has lived in Balmain since the nineteen seventies. Through her profession as a history teacher she has a long commitment to public education and to the welfare of young people. In this interview, she gave us a glimpse of the work being done at the school, and how her ideas about youth and community are being implemented.

Judy's formative years as a teacher were spent at Broken Hill, then Bass Hill in western Sydney. She went on to Burwood Girls' and Cheltenham Girls' before her current posting. Her arrival coincided with the local schools' reshuffle. She has been part of the ambitious and exciting scheme to develop the Balmain campus to educate and integrate diverse groups of students. They include students with physical disabilities, those with learning disabilities, an autism class, and an academically selected group as well. Judy is a fervent believer in public education: "The strength of the public system is that it takes everyone. The diversity is greater. It brings about greater tolerance, greater understanding of difference. I started to see public education as the great equalizer of society, because I'd been to the country, and without our public system, what would happen to kids in country areas? It is a great system that supports all people, with a wonderful tradition, to broaden and to encourage people to question, to think in all different ways."

Judy sees these ideals expressed in practical ways at her school. "Never once in my classes are kids ostracized for being different. There are kids in wheelchairs, and the other kids will always make sure they're OK to get to their next class. They are never left stranded." At the end of term, Judy got some students interested in a "knitathon", knitting squares for blankets for the homeless. The idea caught on, with all ages and genders involved. The administrative staff were teaching male teachers how to knit. The students had to write letters to get donations, because some kids could not

afford wool. They found out what it is like to get knocked back, but not give up. The group that started the project learned how to get others involved by lobbying influential teachers and student. So, from a simple knitting exercise, doing something for disadvantaged people, the kids learned some activism, and political skills. The knitathon turned out to be an inspiration that enabled "that coming together of all different people that can save a community and make it more viable".

As a historian, Judy is particularly conscious of the importance of continuity and connection, between past and present, old and young. She was delighted when an old Balmain person recently gave her a set of letters written by his father from the World War One period. Amongst the tatty, yellowing papers, she found a letter from the Balmain Lacrosse Club, dated July 1916. It was written to farewell a group of its boys, going off to war. Judy sees the importance of belonging to clubs and involvement in group activities. Humble publications, like the Observer (and of course the Association behind it) contribute to a sense of community. "Under the surface in Balmain there is that essence of something happening and that's what I find attractive...the activities like sporting or musical groups. But she worries that some young people can't afford to participate. "We are a very wealthy suburb, but we also have people very socio-economically disadvantaged, and the contrast for them is incredible. I loved reading about Issy [Wyner] in a previous Observer, but we've also got to connect it to the present. I loved his story about unemployed youths storming Elkington Baths, and it's so true for some kids today. It's the same sort of issue, just a different example. They don't have the money and resources to access some of the facilities in the area that we all take for granted."

Pupils at Balmain come from other inner-city communities such as Millers Point, Glebe, and Pyrmont, as well as the peninsula. Judy liaises with local public services, community groups and businesses. She has got a project going between Millers Point Youth Centre, Lend Lease and Sydney Secondary College Balmain. Judy has got Lend Lease employees mentoring students, raising funds, and helping out with school's breakfast club. The breakfast club is for kids who get to school early because of working parents. The cooking room is set

up with newspapers, and teachers' aides give up their time to start early and cook breakfast, and the students help. Bakers Delight Rozelle donates the bread, and the P&C helps with expenses such as the cost of a fridge. Volunteers from outside are helping too. Judy reports how one of her volunteers said: "I live in Balmain, but I don't really know any young people, and I don't want to walk around my community being scared. But now, I know them, and I'm not scared. They are really nice young people."

The themes of getting people together, breaking down barriers, and allowing people to learn and expand through shared activities permeate conversation with Judy. She doesn't talk about herself, but about what she has learned and what she can contribute. It's clear that she values relationships more highly than material acquisitions. She always seems to put things in a positive way, and had to be pressed to speak in terms of what fears she has for the future: "The dangers are we could become an unhappy community. If you look to alternative thinkers like Clive Hamilton, they are saying we have never been so well off, yet we have never been so miserable. That's my greatest fear for Balmain: that we could become a long strip of shops full of rich, miserable people. I go into clothes shop and I think 'Who can afford this?' It's stunningly isolating. It could become a place where people come to be entertained instead of a place that is entertaining because of who is here. My other dark fear is, you go to meetings, and most of the meetings are about development, about yet another person is losing sunlight because people are buying small houses and wanting them to be bigger, which means that you take away someone else's amenities in order to do that. The whole philosophy is 'No neighbour is going to tell me what to do.' At the end of the day that is going to be a real loss. But when we all work together, doing something really positive, great things can happen. For me, when you live in an area a long time, you just have a feel for it, and I think it's that lovely connection with people. It's vital to try to make a link between the groups and to get people understand. Why did we come to the area in the first place? There was something that was different, and what was it? I think it's that ephemeral sort of thing...a feeling...of caring about people."

Ruth MacLeod

Nature in Balmain

"The spring has sprung the grass has ris, I wonder where them birdies is"
Anon

Well, we don't need to worry about where those birdies are. In the last thirty-five years the number and variety of birds in and around Balmain has steadily grown. Why? In the early seventies, urban Australia discovered native plants. Local councils started to streetscape with bottlebrush, to plant more gums in parks and to create areas in parks for the small birds to nest and hide from predators. At the same time, home gardeners embraced the idea of planting grevilleas, banksia and callistemons. Now every nursery carries a wide range of native plants and their cultivars.

I frequently walk from Annandale to Birchgrove, and in all seasons sight some fifteen to twenty different birds. Around White Bay Creek I have seen Kingfishers, and once only in early summer, a Spangled Drongo. These are more commonly seen in

Vaucluse. The birds that have become more common in recent years are Rainbow Lorikeets, Butcher Birds, Fig Birds and Cockatoos. It is sad that some of our smaller birds such as Blue Wrens and Silver Eyes have become rare due to the lack of cover in which to nest safely away from the increasing numbers of Currawongs and Magpies. One great area to hear and sight Blue Wrens is the north side of Ballast Point, where a large dense thicket of lantana provides the perfect home for small birds. Let's hope the landscape designers of the planned park include two or three large thickets of native shrubbery as homes for small birds.

If each of us puts in just one native plant we will provide thousands of new dining spots for our feathered friends. For advice and ideas visit www.cboc.org.au and click on Bring Birds to You. This is a great site, and will recommend the type of plants, and suggest ways of creating nesting areas for small birds. However, if you don't have

access to the Internet there is an excellent publication: "Birdscaping Your Garden" by George Adams, published by Lansdowne. Here are three choices that I know the birds just love: Grevillea Ned Kelly, (very attractive and flowers all year round); Banksia Oblongifolia; and Bottlebrush Harkness. Visit the Cumberland State Forest at Pennant Hills. It offers beautiful short walks, a native garden centre run by State Forests and an excellent coffee shop.

One last idea for the New South Wales State Government: build a world class "walk through Aviary" at the north end of the White Bay Power Station. London, Singapore and San Diego have wonderful examples of this type of aviary.

In these water saving times, remember native plants need little water, and don't to forget to mulch! Happy bird spotting!

Clive Abbott, garden maker and bird lover.

THE BALMAIN GLASSHOUSE

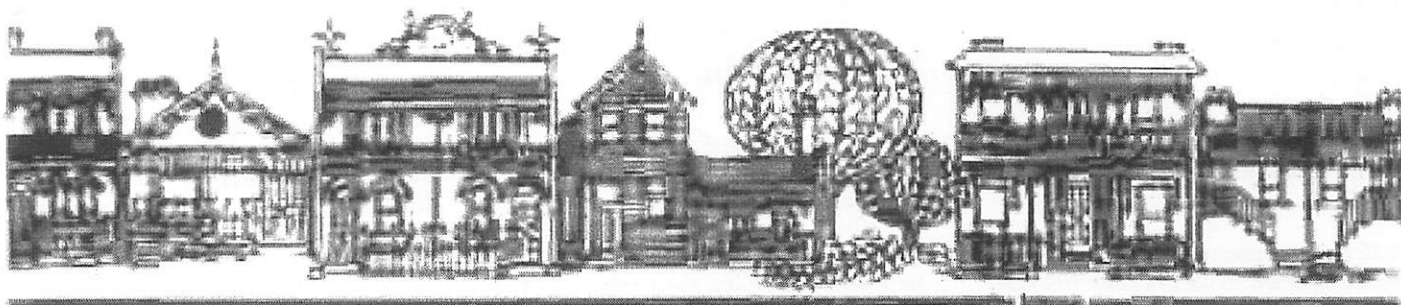


Councillor Carolyn Allen and Kathleen Hamey at the official opening of the restored Balmain glasshouse on 29 October 2005. Kathleen was the mover and shaker behind the restoration project that was funded by Leichhardt Council and community contributions.

The Balmain Glasshouse will be used as an annex of the Rozelle Bay Community Native Plant Nursery to propagate local seeds and cuttings. This is a cheap but slow process but eventually the nurtured plants will be used to beautify local parks.

Plantings have begun on the ridge of Elkington Park overlooking the pool, at Booth Street end of White Bay Park. A planting day was also held six months ago at Peacock Point near the 'grand steps'. Bush regeneration plants for Callan Park are raised at the nursery.

Volunteers are most welcome. No experience required. Tools supplied. The Nursery is at the end of Chapman Road, Annandale. Contact Kathleen 9818 4954.



What's on at the Watch House

3, 4 December: REFUGEES' ART SHOW

Works by asylum seekers and refugees including children, Some of the artists have now released from detention, some are still behind the no longer existing razor wire but now electric fence at Villawood. Artists represented come from Algeria, Afghanistan, Sudan, Russia, Croatia and elsewhere. Other donated art will also be on display and for sale, the proceeds of which will go to "Balmain for Refugees"

Opening Friday 2nd December

5.30pm to 9pm with Refreshments.

Saturday and Sunday 10am to 5pm

Admission Free

Enquiries: Jennifer Porter 9810 6081

10 & 17 December

7, 14, 21, 28 January

The Balmain Association's Photographic Archives.

Highlighting Architects and their Balmain buildings, personalities who gave their names to streets and scenes of Balmain "now and then".

Saturdays 11.30am - 3pm

The artists for February and March 2006 are as follows:

4, 5 February: available

11, 12 February: Balmain Peninsula Painters

18, 19 February: Sydney Gallery School

25, 26 February: Suzanne Voysey, paintings and collages

4, 5 March: Hartstart Studio

11, 12 March: The POSIE group

18, 19 and 25, 26 March: Janet Carter, Jan Moore and Valmai Warley – paintings in watercolour and mixed media; fine art prints relating to landscape.

Waste

An average Sydney household generates 2.43 kg of waste each day (both rubbish and recycling) or 17 kg a week. 75% of this goes into landfill. The remaining 25% is recycled.

Of the proportion going into landfill, 30.9% is food waste, 11.6% is paper and cardboard, 1.1% plastics and 8.7% other recyclables. All of these can be composed or recycled.

Sydney residents use nearly 3 million plastic bags a day. A great number of these end up clogging waterways, sully our parks and streets and killing native animals. Less than 1% is recycled.

The Balmain Association Inc Representing Balmain, Birchgrove and Rozelle

Our aims are to:

Improve the living, working and recreational amenities of our area; maintain all features having natural, architectural and or historical value of the area and keep a permanent collection of historical interest; seek the cooperation of everyone concerned in the realization of the above.

The Balmain Association meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 5:00pm in the Watch House, 179 Darling Street Balmain. The Watch House is open every Saturday from 12:00 - 3:00pm.

Our editorial contacts:

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Our Web site:

<http://balmainassociation.aussiehosts.com>

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Organizations \$30

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