



## THE MASONIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

**Bro. Douglas Baglin:**

Photographer, Author and Conservationist.

Paper No. 198

Prepared and presented by J.T. Ruxton.

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The State Library of New South Wales holds many thousands of photographs and transparencies donated by Douglass Baglin. There is also a large collection at the Hunters Hill Library. Douglass Baglin was passionate about photographing and preserving heritage buildings. Of particular interest to him were the sandstone buildings in Sydney, particularly Hunters Hill, and with his wife, Elaine (nee Brodie) lived for 37 years in Villa Floridiana in Sea Street in that suburb

Villa Floriadana had been built in 1854 by Joules Joubert, the first mayor of Hunters Hill. Douglass began taking photographs of the French, Italian and English houses of the suburb which were being threatened by development. The thousands of photographs taken by him became the central visual record of the suburb. The pictures were used to protect the historic precinct and played a part in the declaration of a large part of Hunters Hill as a conservation area.

His photographs were the main pictorial record in the book, "The Heritage of Hunters Hill" published by the Hunters Hill Trust in 1969, 1977 and 1982. Douglass Baglin collaborated with the historian Beverley Sherry in the book, "Hunters Hill, Australia's Oldest Suburb" (David Ell Press, 1989)

Douglass Baglin was born in 1926 at Bondi and attended Sydney Technical High School before beginning the study of civil engineering. This career was cut short when he enlisted in the RAAF in 1944, aged 19 years, training as a pilot. That soon changed when the war ended and he became a commercial photographer, opening a studio at 100 Pacific Highway, St. Leonards in 1951.

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In 1959 he was a member of (Bro) Sir Edward Hallstrom's expedition to New Guinea, recording the first European contact with the people of the Jimmi River Valley in the film, "Papuan and Pygmies". This film was made in 1974 when Douglass was hired by the geologist, John Barry, to cover a geological expedition to the Pacific Islands.

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Douglass and his wife, Elaine, lived in Villa Floridiana until he retired in 1988 and purchased Merrendee Station 40Km west of Mudgee to become a farmer. The photography business had been previously sold. Although he became a sheep farmer in retirement he held a great love of native animals. He was appalled at the hunting of kangaroos and took many photographs of the cruelty sometimes involved. He also took wonderful photographs of kangaroos and a very large one of a joey feeding from a bottle adorns the walls at Dural's Kangaroo Co-Operative Environment Centre. When this Co-Operative had rehabilitated young kangaroos to be returned to the Mudgee area he would welcome their release on his farm.



He was Australia's official photographer for the America's Cup Challenge in 1967 and his photographs have been published in Life, National Geographic and Bunte of Germany.

More than 80 books have been published, perhaps the two most well known are "Sandstone Sydney" and "Dinkum Dummies". Among many others are such titles as "Australian Pub Crawl", "Ben Hall", "Australian Verandahs", "Rough as Guts" and "Australian Museums".

Douglass Baglin died on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2010, his wife, Elaine having pre-deceased him.

Douglass Baglin was initiated passed and raised on 20<sup>th</sup> March 1950, 17<sup>th</sup> April 1950 and 15<sup>th</sup> May 1950 respectively in Lodge Double Bay, No 331 UGL of NSW & ACT. He called off on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1975.

Ref: North Shore Times 15.10.2010  
North Shore Times, 5.11.2010  
Zoominfo  
Anecdotal: John Early  
Records, UGL of NSW & ACT.



IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT: Douglass Baglin with his wife Elaine in 1959.



**TRUST WORTHY:**  
Douglass Baglin  
tireless Hunter  
Hill heritage  
campaigner.  
Inset, Baglin  
and his wife Elaine  
(seated) with  
fellow  
protesters,  
trying to save  
historic St Malc  
in 1959.