



NEWS SHEET

162

PO BOX 57 BALMAIN 2041

the balmain association

FOUNDED 1965

THE WATCH HOUSE

POST OFFICE CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

WHITHER THE WATCH HOUSE

As some of you will be aware, part of both the verandah and the fence of the Watch House were demolished in late June when a driver, swerving to avoid a U-turning taxi, hit the opposite kerb and catapulted across Darling Street. Because of the complex nature of the accident, the matter is at present still in the hands of insurance agents but the verandah and fence will both be repaired.

Those of you who have been following these pages closely will be aware that conservation of the Watch House is still very much an interest of the Management Committee. Two years ago we commissioned Meredith Walker to prepare "Towards A Conservation Plan" which discussed possibilities for uses of the Watch House and its preservation.

In May, representatives from the National Trust, the Museums Association and the PWD met with us to discuss the Walker document as well as recommendations from an architect, a builder and a stonework expert, and the Committee is in the process of formulating a long-term conservation plan.

In addition to our desires to preserve the fabric of the building, one of our major plans is to maintain a photographic archive of Balmain history so members with either old pictures and photos or an interest in preserving them are urged to come along to the Annual General Meeting (see back page) or to the Watch House between 1 and 3 p.m. any Saturday.

Concerts at the Campbell St Church.

THE PROGRAMME of concerts to take place at the Presbyterian Church in Campbell Street is as follows.

Sunday	2 August	3.00pm	Bernadette Smith
Sunday	9 August	3.00pm	AMA concert (Beethoven Trio for Clarinet, Cello & Piano, etc.)
Sat	15 August	7.30pm	(Nordoff Therapy)
Wed	23 September	8.00pm	ACO concert
Sunday	20 September	3.00pm	(Schubert Society)
Sunday	27 September	3.00pm	(David Leviston)
Wed	21 October	8.00pm	ACO concert
Sat	24 October	3.00pm	(Janice Boyle)
Wed	28 October	8.00pm	ACO concert
Sat	31 October	8.00pm	Music 2041

If we receive more details as to programmes we will include them in future editions of the News Letter.

The Balmain Post Office will be 100 years old on 20 August 1987! To celebrate the occasion, the Balmain Association is producing a commemorative envelope featuring Bob Irving's beautiful drawing of the building as it appeared in 1909. (1914)

The stamped/franked envelopes will be available at the Post Office on the centenary day at a cost of \$1.50 after which the balance will be sold at the Watch House.

A set of posters featuring the history of both the Balmain and Rozelle Post Offices will be displayed and orders for copies of sets or individual sheets will be taken from those interested.

The Post Office itself will be en fete with its staff in period costume, a town crier, a penny-farthing with rider, and historical displays. The Member for Sydney, Peter Baldwin, will be on hand as will senior representatives of Australia Post.

In the evening Vann Cremer, the Historical Officer of Australia Post, will speak at the Watch House on the history of the Balmain Post Office. Vann and his family are old residents of Balmain and Birchgrove and his ancestor, Sir Francis Suttor, was the Postmaster-General of NSW. The talk will be accompanied by photographs and will be followed by refreshments.

Do join us at 7.30 that night.



THE NEXT MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION - WEDNESDAY 5 AUGUST 1987 AT THE WATCH HOUSE, 7.30 pm.

HISTORICAL QUESTIONS, ANSWERS & NOTES

BIJOU THEATRE

One of our correspondents writes:

"The Bijou Theatre started off as the National Theatre. People such as Kate Howard, then a star, played there. In North Street, there was a huge roller door through which props, etc. were passed for the various productions. My grandmother and family lived in North Street and an aunt tells me that, when they were children, the boys were terribly brave and would actually go through that opening into what was a mystery world. This would be about 80 years ago.

"When I became familiar with the National it was a cinema. My grandmother went every Saturday night, sat in the same seat, and sometimes took me. Her seat was near the side doors which opened on to a small lane, not only for quick exit, but the doors were opened on hot nights because that was the air conditioning.

"I also used to go on Saturday afternoons about 60 years ago and that was terribly exciting. They would have exciting serials like 'Spider Man' and a lady with a high-necked bodice, sitting under a green-shaded light would play the piano with feeling which would have us at fever pitch. Afterward we would all stand for God Save the King.

"The old 'Nash' languished for some years. TV arrived and altered so much of everything. It closed periodically and opened as the Bijou, when Stewart Livermore put on his shows. No doubt he used the roller door again for his props and scenery.

"However, those were days of simple pleasures."

We thank Mrs M Mierendorff for this wonderful contribution to our knowledge of Balmain's past.

ENQUIRIES

Does anyone have a photograph of **HONORAH COLLINGS BELLAMY** who was a member of the swimming and diving team of the Dawn Fraser Pool in about 1925?

Does anyone know where a shop called **MARTIN'S NEW RED HOUSE** may have been located in the Curtis Road area of Balmain? In 1970 the tenant was a Mr. Seaburg. There is a photocopy of a contemporary photograph at the Watch House.



BICENTENNIAL SUB-COMMITTEE

A Bicentennial Sub-committee of the Association was formed at the July meeting of the Management Committee. David Ramsay is Chairman and Michelle South Secretary of the Sub-committee. Watch this News Sheet for progress reports!

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Balmain Association will be held at 7.30 on Wednesday 12 August. New office bearers will be elected and plans for the coming year discussed.

Among the positions becoming vacant are those of President and Vice-President, so your attendance is of vital importance.

We would also welcome nominations from anyone who would be interested in becoming a member of the Management Committee.

As we will be discussing the Conservation Plan for the Watch House we are particularly anxious to hear the viewpoints of long-standing members of the Association who did so much toward the original restoration of the building.

The meeting will be followed by wine and cheese.

NOMINATION FORM

We, the undersigned nominate _____
for the position of _____
of the Balmain Association.



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".