

CHILDREN'S LIBRARY AT WATCH HOUSE.

One of the aims in restoring the Watch House has been to provide a children's library. Work has been going forward steadily and some time around the middle of this year it is hoped the library will be ready to open for business.

The Association is very lucky in having about six librarians among its members, all keen enough either to serve on the library sub-committee, to cover or catalogue books, or to volunteer to help staff the children's library when it opens.

Shelving has been obtained from a city public library and the sub-committee is planning the type of furniture needed. Initially the library will be housed in one of the Watch House cells and it is hoped there will be space outside to place tables and chairs.

Generous donations of books have been received from members and additional books valued at about \$25 were donated during the Balmain inspection day on March 8th. Mostly they are fiction with some encyclopaedias and a small amount of non-fiction. The books collected are suitable for children aged to about 12, although later the library may be expanded to cater for older children.

It was never envisaged that the library would be complete but rather the beginnings of a library which could later be merged with a like institution without any loss of books. It could, for example, be incorporated as part of a municipal library in due course.

Meanwhile, our fledgling library will start on a small scale, opening probably on Saturday mornings only in the first instance and extending its business hours later as custom warrants. Further details of the library will be reported in later issues of the News Sheet.

BALMAIN INSPECTION DAY.

Sunday, March 8, saw an inflow of people to Balmain...over 500 in fact...to see the interestingly restored houses of the residents who opened their homes for the Balmain Association Inspection Day. They are Mr. & Mrs. J. Birtles; Messrs. Foy and Gurner; Mr. & Mrs. R. Anderson; Mr. & Mrs. R. Wright and Mr. & Mrs. L. Clinch.

The Watch House was also included in the inspection tour and interested visitors bought copies of the "Houses of Balmain" book (27 copies sold) and the Balmain cards from Association members. Sales of the cards resulted in \$12.60 to swell our funds and the tea stall raised another \$4.20.

A nett amount of \$542.00 was made from the sale of tickets for the inspection tour. Acknowledgment is made here to the residents who made their homes available and to our members and visitors who made the day such an outstanding success.

NEXT GENERAL MEETING Balmain Town Hall 8pm sharp

THURSDAY 16 APRIL 1970

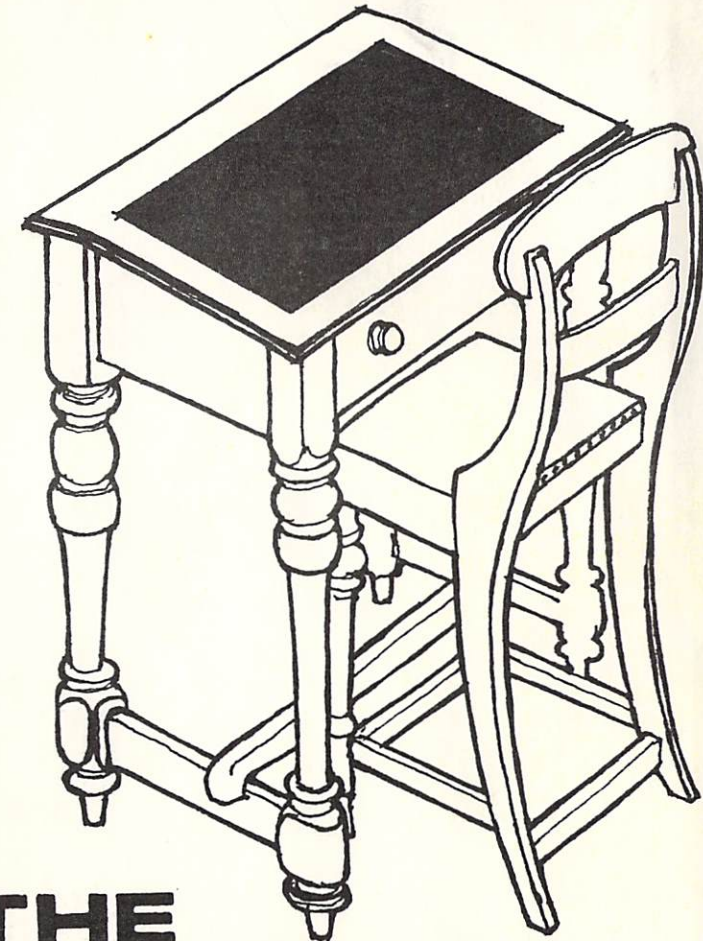
The speaker for the evening will be from Community Aid Abroad.

MEMBERSHIP AND RENEWALS.

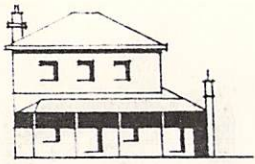
With the financial year rushing to a close, renewals are still coming in very slowly. If you know anyone who has not paid their annual subscription, please ask them to catch up NOW. Our present membership stands at 392 which includes 117 new members. Once again, new members joining after 16th May, 1970 will be financial until 30th June, 1971.

NEWS SHEET

APRIL 1970



THE BALMAIN ASSOCIATION



WATCH HOUSE OPENING.

With the time running out, activities at the Balmain Watch House have speeded up and almost every night and weekends our more energetic members can be seen scraping, clearing, hammering and painting in an attempt to have everything tidy for the official opening.

The Hon. T.L. Lewis, M.L.A., Minister for Lands, has kindly consented to perform the task and the President of the National Trust, Mr. Ivor Wyatt, will also address the gathering. Afterwards a general inspection will be made of the building.

Official invitations have been sent out to those people who are closely related to Balmain and in particular to those who have assisted us in the restoration work over the years. Other civic groups and historical societies who have an affinity with the Association have also been invited.

This News Sheet is YOUR invitation, as a member, to attend on the opening day. The Watch House has a special meaning to Association members for its restoration has been the prime object since our inception over 5 years ago.

Included with this News Sheet is a copy of the booklet produced to commemorate the opening. It is intended that copies of the booklet will be made available to all visitors to the Watch House over the next few years.

Help make the Official Opening a day to recall and join us.

DATE: Sunday, 12th April, 1970.

TIME: 2.45 p.m.

PLACE: The Watch House, 179 Darling Street, Balmain.

RATES MEETING.

It's unlikely that the Association misjudged the feelings of Balmain residents about their new rates but it must be reported that the February 18 rates protest meeting was something less than a "sock it to 'em" gathering.

At best 100 people turned up; apart from our three Balmain Aldermen, Leichhardt Council failed to produce a representative; and finally there were obviously divided feelings about the motion which came out of the meeting.

President Bill Haesler raised some questions about Council financing which required some reasonable answers. For example, while Council expenditure this year will be up 72% on 1967 figures (from \$1,770,022 in 1967 to \$3,045,336 estimated this year), none of the new services promised at the last elections, such as libraries and parking facilities, were planned.

"The general 30% increase in rates called for some explanation," he said, "but none appeared to be forthcoming. This attitude was unlikely to cause any surprise in Balmain."

The three Balmain Ward Aldermen also spoke, but none naturally were prepared to advocate the Council's case. Alderman Wyner attacked the Council's past heavy borrowing policy which he claimed was now catching up with it.

His feelings were that the Council should have struck a "reasonable" rate, even if it had had to budget for a deficit. If this were done the Council could make an approach through the State Government to the Federal Government for financial help to Local Government.

Finally, two resolutions were proposed. One group advocated an approach to the Minister to install an administrator to manage Council's affairs (which obviously

were being mismanaged), the other calling for an approach to the Minister to sack the present Council, for obviously mismanaging its financial affairs, then calling for a new election.

After some debate, the second resolution received the meeting's approval. We now await the Minister's reply.

DRAMA GROUP.

Many evenings and weekends of hard work paid dividends when the "Watch House Company" put on the programme "Just" on the evenings of February 25, 26, 27 and 28. Three plays, "Zoo Story" by Albee, "The Stronger" by Strindberg and "Play" by Beckett, were performed before appreciative audiences. It was generally agreed that the standard both of production and acting was high for an amateur and largely inexperienced group. The over-riding theme of all the plays was lack of communication between people. The examination of this theme was handled perceptively by all writers, each using to effect his technique and knowledge of human nature and situations.

Help and guidance from professionals was greatly appreciated. Particular thanks to Dick McGillicuddy whose equipment and expert knowledge in lighting the plays contributed to the standard of the productions. Also thanks to Gregory Ropert and Elizabeth Hall who stepped in to fill a gap in the acting department following last minute emergencies.

The group has been taking a well-earned rest but will be resuming activities at 8 p.m. on Wednesday, April 8, when a meeting will be held at the Watch House to plan future activities. All members, experienced and inexperienced, are welcome and ideas will be pooled and discussed. Queries before this date please ring Mrs. D. Rogers at 82.3819.