

# NEWS SHEET

# 151

PO BOX 57 BALMAIN 2041

the balmain association

FOUNDED 1965

## POETRY LIVES IN BALMAIN

At the launch of "Around Balmain" on 14 March 1986, Peter Luck read the following poem as part of his speech. We reprint with his kind permission.

The love of field and coppice,  
Of green and shaded lanes,  
Of ordered woods and gardens,  
Is running in your veins.  
Strong love of Turramurra,  
Wahroonga and Castlecrag,  
I know, but cannot share it,  
The North Shore's not my bag.

I love the trendy suburbs,  
Rozelle to East Balmain,  
Of ragged kerb and guttering,  
High rents ... no capital gain.  
I love her old den-i-zens,  
But it's a mystery,  
Why they always vote for,  
The Leichhardt A.L.P.

I love her open spaces,  
But now no dingoes bark,  
For higher density housing,  
Has taken all the park.  
The trusty Leichhardt Council,  
The nervous National Trust,  
The Painters' and Dockers' Unions,  
Obey them all we must.  
The tangle of the red tape,  
When politicians lie,  
To keep the dark coal loading,  
While black dust fills the sky.

Core of my heart, my suburb,  
Where residents go mad,  
When sick at heart around them,  
They see the heli-pad.  
When in the grey clouds gather,  
And down here on the ground,  
The drumming of an army,  
An apocalyptic sound.

Core of my heart, my suburb.  
Home of the quarry tile,  
Of disabled puppet theatre,  
Gay Lib, and "Give the While".  
After the Tai Chi lessons.  
Macrame, and throwing pots,  
A chardonnay discussion,  
On capitalistic plots.

An open-hearted suburb,  
Where Premiers never cry,  
All you who have not lived here,  
Won't know until you try.  
While Earth holds many splendours,  
Wherever I may die,  
I know to what old Post Code,  
My homing thoughts will fly.

PETER LUCK  
BALMAIN, 1986

Yes, Bunyip, even the Balmain bourgeoisie have a sense of humour.

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## BALMAIN MEMORIES - BY BARON NEWLYN

### "Cookie"

An opportunity arose for me as a callow youth of sixteen to be taken on by Elliott Bros. (later D.H.A., then Monsanto) as an apprentice to Chemical Plumbing for a period of five years. In all, I was employed at that location for seven years or so, and during that time met some very interesting characters - one of which springs immediately to mind - a chap known as "Cookie". He was of medium height, quite thin but wiry and would have been 60-odd then. Sometime in the past Cookie had lost an eye, its vacancy being covered by a black patch. His rugged features sported a complexion that indicated his fondness of 'rough red' - 'the rougher the better' I can remember him saying.

Cookie's mode of employment was that of acid jar filler - for want of a better description. Briefly, the task consisted of placing an earthenware jar with a capacity of 30 or so litres beneath a spigot, and by turning the handle admitted the desired amount. He would then screw a threaded earthenware cap into the jar, place it to one side and repeat the operation. The performance of this operation invariably led to droplets of acid splashing over his clothing - grey woollen shirt and trousers and rubber half boots supplied by the Company. For reasons known only to himself Cookie would wait until the apparel was in such a tattered and torn state that it excited comments from his peers before he would draw fresh supplies from the company store.

Every work day at noon Cookie would be one of the first to 'bundy off' and would make his way to the "Sackville Hotel" to enjoy several glasses of wine. The regulars there of course knew Cookie worked at Elliott Bros. and of his occupation and had long since grown used to his periodic appearances of near nudity.

Not so a recently hired barmaid, who was privately aghast at the sight of this otherwise well spoken and courteous gentleman almost dressed in a shirt that showed more holes than fabric, and trousers that ended in a ragged fashion at his knobby knees, that in turn were supported by a pair of thin red acid burned legs atop laceless decayed gum boots.

A short time later when Cookie made his usual noon-day appearance, the good-hearted barmaid laid on the bar in front of Cookie a large parcel, explaining to him that it contained clothing to help him out of his sartorial difficulties.

According to eye-witness observations Cookie's face suffused alarmingly, his one remaining eye blinking rapidly as his mouth worked rapidly yet soundlessly. Standing rigidly at attention, his hands balled into tight fists that worked furiously, Cookie uttered a roar that stilled all activity in the bar.

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NEXT MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION WILL BE ON WEDNESDAY 2ND JULY 1986

7.30 P.M. AT THE WATCH HOUSE, 179 DARLING STREET, BALMAIN



## THE BALMAIN GARDEN CLUB

### URGENT REQUEST



## CLONTARF PARK ACTION GROUP

### MONTHLY MEETINGS

2ND MONDAY OF EACH MONTH AT THE WATCH HOUSE  
179 DARLING STREET (BY COURTESY OF THE  
BALMAIN ASSOCIATION)

### NEXT FUNCTION

4TH ANNUAL "BONFIRE BAR-B-QUE & CRACKER NIGHT"  
SATURDAY JUNE 7TH

ENQUIRIES: RING WALLY 810 3046

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### ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES

The Association is interested in using the Watch House for suitable exhibitions of art, sculpture etc. This historic old building could provide the backdrop your work deserves! Enquiries are welcome on 810.1611 or 810.1411 after hours.

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The fireplace in the Watch House "Charge Room" has been cleaned and pronounced fit for use on our Friday night gatherings. Donations of firewood welcome.

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Did you know that the Association is twenty one years old this year? Celebrations are being planned including a possible "ghostbusters" party for September.

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Mrs Jessie McMahon has kindly prepared a detailed tape on which she describes the Watch House as it was when growing up there as a member of the last resident police family. Thankyou, Mrs McMahon.

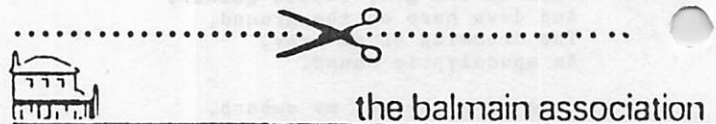
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## JOIN the balmain association

meaning 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 the 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 (OPEN/RENEW) PO BOX 57 BALMAIN 2041

NAME: .....

ADDRESS: .....

TELEPHONE: ..... (HOME) ..... (WORK)

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION (including News Sheet delivery in Balmain Birchgrove Rozelle)

|                      |         |
|----------------------|---------|
| Single               | \$ 4.00 |
| Family or Household  | \$ 6.00 |
| Pensioner or Student | \$ 1.00 |
| Organization         | \$12.00 |

Add \$3.00 to above rates to have News Sheet posted.  
Cheques made payable to "The Balmain Association"

The Balmain Garden Club are busy with their usual task of growing cuttings for sale, to assist the local hospital and are now short of suitable empty flower pots; required sizes (measured across the top) are 4 ins., 5 ins., and 6 ins., with the 5 ins. being the most favoured.

We use hundreds of pots every year, so if you have any you do not require please leave inside gate of the Watch House, 179 Darling Street, or if more convenient to you, at 1 Rose Street, Birchgrove.

Even if you do not have any at the moment, keep us in mind and do not put any of those three sizes in the rubbish bin!

Thanking you in anticipation.... JESSICA MURRAY

THE GARDEN CLUB meets the 3rd Saturday in each month (except December and January) at 1.15 at the Watch House, 179 Darling Street, Balmain. Good gardening library available for members. All interested welcome.

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"Cookie" continued from P1

Barely able to articulate, Cookie inflicted upon the good woman a verbal thrashing that the regulars spoke about for years later. Suffice to say he cursed her up hill and down dale, finished by accusing her of all sorts of social and moral crimes, then spun on worn rubbed heel and stalked from the bar, leaving behind him a crying near hysterical barmaid and a crowd of drinkers laughing fit to bust.

To my knowledge Cookie never darkened the door step of the "Sackville" again, instead he would catch a bus from Victoria Road which took him over the Iron Cove Bridge to a wine bar in Drummyne where he could imbibe in peace and quiet. He still had his pride.

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### THINGS TO DO IN WINTER.....

The Watch House is open to members and local residents EVERY Friday night from 8.00 P.M. for a B.Y.O. social evening. This is an ideal opportunity to meet other Balmain residents.

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### "AROUND BALMAIN" PUBLISHING TRIUMPH

Nearly 1,000 copies of this book have been sold since being released in March. It is available at the Watch House and selected retail outlets for just \$9.95. Act soon as stocks are limited.

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### .....AND MORE THINGS TO DO IN WINTER!

The Association meets at 7.30 P.M. on the first Wednesday of each month at the Watch House. As is usually the case with voluntary organisations, your Association's meetings are attended by a small band of enthusiasts. The same group also does most of the work of the Association.

Acting on doctor's orders to take a break and get away from the Yuppy-bashers for a while, most of the attendees have fled the country for the next couple of months. Monthly meetings are going to be like prayer vigils during the cold nights of winter unless some energetic members of the silent majority venture forth to cheer up the survivors.

In August the Annual General Meeting will be held, at which Office Bearers for the next twelve months are elected. If you would like to know more about the workings of the Association or would consider standing for election to the Committee at the AGM, we would be pleased to see you.

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