

# CHRISTMAS NEW YEAR

## NEWS SHEET

1987 — 88

PO BOX 57 BALMAIN 2041

the balmain association

166

FOUNDED 1965

### De-myth-ifying Balmain

Dispelling myths about Balmain's role in urban development starts with facts about size.

The Balmain/Rozelle peninsula is very small -- only 310 hectares in size. By comparison, Centennial Park is 220 and Campelltown City 31 178 hectares.

Obviously there are physical limits to the area's population capacity, and local residents should not feel guilty about failing to absorb Sydney's urban sprawl into Tiger territory. Nor should they feel unreasonable in asking for development, traffic and heritage controls in this small part of the world. They should not be defensive in seeking more open space from the limited land still available. Even if we got the lot, we'd still have a smaller park than Vancouver's famous inner peninsula park, Stanley Park, which is 404 hectares. And in a city 1/3 the size of Sydney!

Then there's Paris. When Mr Unsworth waxed lyrical about his proposed Parisianisation of Sydney, Balmain should have put in a bid for a Bois de Boulogne. The trouble is that, at 900 hectares, this superb Gallic greenspace is nearly as big as Leichhardt municipality. Only Mr Brereton could have fitted something that big into 310 hectares...

Meanwhile, the serious assault on urban blunders is mounting. On 14 November I represented the Association at an Urban Environment and Planning conference organised by the Australian Conservation Foundation and attended by 140 people from over 70 groups disenchanted with the government's handling of urban issues. These groups, from all over New South Wales, are pooling their experiences and working together to produce a comprehensive policy document.

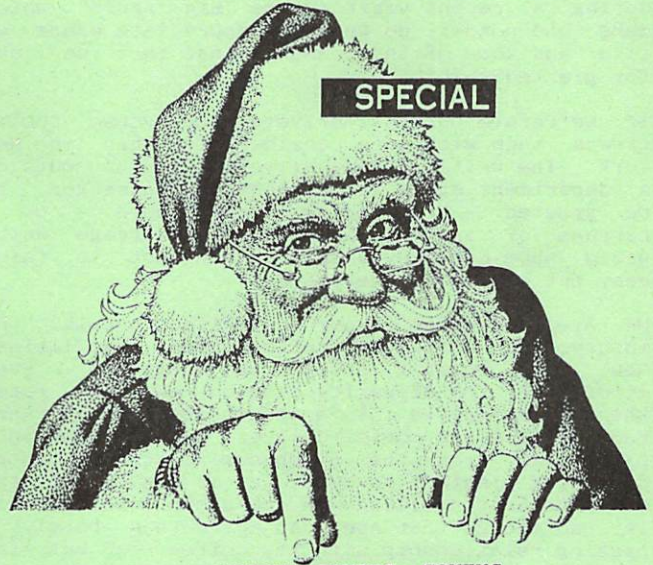
The degree of agreement and precision in the proposals is exciting, and I was proud to be elected a member of the 15 person Steering Committee.

When the document is available, Balmainites should find it a valuable tool in handling present and future environmental battles. They will see how their past struggles have contributed to the collective wisdom and should be heartened into continuing to link up with other groups in facing issues yet to come on our small but coveted 310 hectares.

Meanwhile, chins up everyone, continue your admirable work of beautifying and preserving Balmain, and

have a happy and safe Christmas season

Jane Ward



**SPECIAL**

COMING, COMING, COMING

the Association's

Balmain Bicentennial

PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION

at the

Watch House

Saturday 23, Sunday 24 January

Saturday 30 January  
1988

1.00 to 5.00pm

### "HANDYMAN'S DELIGHT"

A house with 'original features'  
Means piping no plumber can plumb  
And skirting boards covered with creatures  
Which seldom, if ever, succumb:  
The wiring pre-dates Federation,  
The termites are having a fling,  
There's an air of neglect and stagnation -  
What a fortune this ruin should bring!

*Vaughan Evans*

NEXT ASSOCIATION MEETING - WEDNESDAY 3 FEBRUARY - THE WATCH HOUSE, 179 DARLING ST. 7.30 pm.



## Why Balmain beats New York

Several 'happenstances' occurred to the writer during a recent visit to the "Big Apple" which make one wonder: do we fully appreciate where we live and some of the common things that we take for granted?

If we berate our taxi-drivers, the Sydney public treats them with more consideration than in New York. The writer's taxi driver pulled up outside a department store to off-load his passenger, to be greeted - for having stopped there - by a barrage of anatomically abusive language which would have caused your maiden aunt not to faint away but expire on the spot!

We are spoiled as to our Australian hotels. No luxury such as tea or coffee-making facilities. New York doesn't trust its visitors! Ever mindful of the disparity between exchange rates the writer booked into a modest hotel, but when room service for coffee delivers plastic cups in a paper bag from the neighbouring coffee shop, demanding instant payment, one is mindful of the benefits of travelling 'in one's own country'. It is bad enough that American coffee has barely a passing relationship with the coffee bean but the paper bag was the ultimate in degradation.

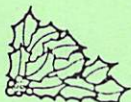
Manhattan is definitely not the City of Sydney when you consider that 1,000,000 cars enter New York daily. I don't recall which tunnel or bridge, but there is one entrance to New York that costs US\$3.50 for the use thereof (\$5.00 in Australian currency), which makes one appreciate the Sydney Harbour Bridge toll. Calculating the annual cost to a commuter causes a brain seizure!

Brains hopefully possess a face which brings me to me to my next point. Our hotels/motels provide a flannel/washcloth. The New York hotel failed to provide such a convenience. When such an item was requested, an article appeared that we usually associated with that which is provided for cleaning shoes. Hesitantly our traveller applied the item - waiting with bated breath to view the requisite shiny surface, regardless of the hue, be it black, brown or neutral! Fortunately the ablutions were accomplished without any tinting effects.

It is hard to qualify the headline but the basis of these comments is that there is no place like home and 'home, sweet home' happens to be Balmain.



Merry Christmas



Dunkery, Barry & Davidson.

A piece of Balmain's history changed hands a short while ago.

Dunkery, in Darling Street, is an 86-year old house built by a Doctor Moran in 1901. It was acquired by Doctor Barry in 1925, and he established his surgery there while at the same time becoming involved with a public co-operative medical dispensary in Beattie Street to help the poor.

Now for the personal bit.

Committee member Bonnie Davidson has sent us the photograph of her mother-in-law, Ruth Davidson, with her five sons. All were delivered, at home as was the practice in those days, by Doctor Barry. The boys in the photograph are the eldest, Jack, 11, George, 9, Lionel, 7, Raymond (Bonnie's husband) 5, and baby Owen, who was four months old when the picture was taken in 1932. Jack died in a road accident when he was 14 years old. The other boys grew up to follow in their father, George's footsteps, and became plumbers, with George and Ray's sons carrying on the family tradition by becoming plumbers too.

The first four boys were born in Ainsworth St Lilyfield while Owen was born at Tennyson, Gladesville.



### MAKE A DATE WITH NEXT YEAR

One Christmas present the Association is happy to endorse is the calendar published by the British-Australian Heritage Society for the Bicentennial celebrations.

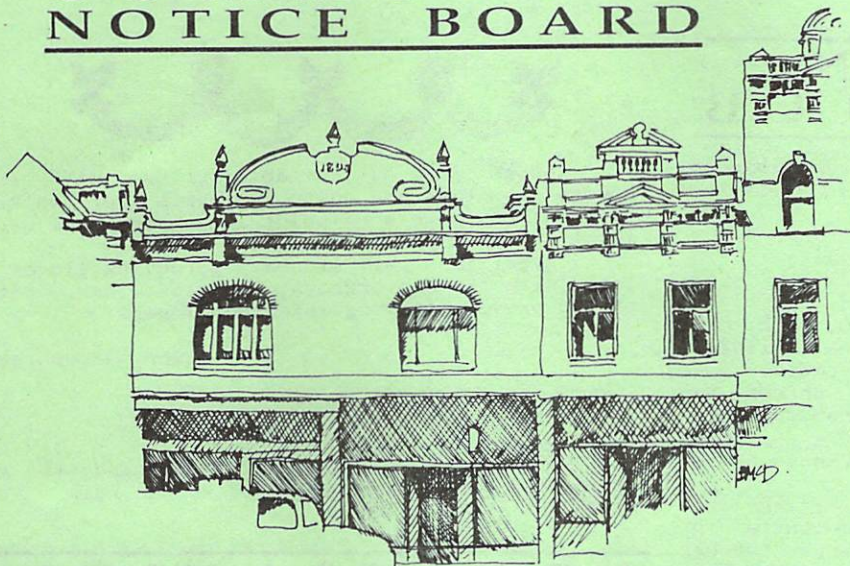
The calendar contains prints of original paintings by noted artist John Howard Wright, who, together with his paintings, was presented to the Queen on the occasion of the opening of the Australian Heritage Centre at St Thomas, Ryde, on the Isle of Wight in England.

This is a unique collectors item which will not be on sale in shops. The paintings are reproduced on high-quality presentation paper by one of Australia's leading printers.

The calendar, which measures 45 x 60 cm, is available, posted to your home address, for \$20.00. Of that sum, \$1.00 will go to the Association and a further \$1.20 will go to the Museum of Pioneer Industries.

To obtain the calendar, please send your cheque for \$20.00, made out to the Balmain Association, at PO Box 57 BALMAIN 2041 and we will do the rest.

# COMMUNITY NOTICE BOARD



## PAINTING THE TOWN - PART TWO

You'll recall that back in June we mentioned something about a new paint scheme for sections of Darling Street. Well.....

In early December the State government announced that it will fund a local consultant - Association member and architect Brian McDonald - to prepare suggested paint schemes for two sections of Darling Street. These are: -

- \* the row of shops between Loyalty Square and Gladstone Park in Balmain.  
(sketch above)
- \* in Rozelle, the row of shops from the junction of Victoria Road and Darling Street towards Lilyfield.  
(sketch below)

The idea is that Brian will prepare a colour scheme for the sensitive repainting of building facades and provide guidelines for style of the shop signs. The paint scheme will be based on the buildings' original colours. The shops in Balmain were erected in the 1880s and 1890s, while those in Rozelle date from early post-federation days.

The Leichhardt Municipal Council has been involved in the scheme, as has the Association, in fact there is some thought that we may have suggested it in the first place !

The scheme will not take any precious public money to implement, apart from Brian's fee. When the suggested colour scheme has been prepared it will then be up to individual owners of properties to slap the recommended heritage colours on the facades of their buildings in their own time. However it is hoped that their efforts will encourage their neighbours in adjoining blocks to do the same, and the end result should be a new look and revitalised appeal for the whole of Darling Street. Of course this will take a great deal of time to bring to fruition, so don't expect miracles.

There will be a public meeting before Christmas to discuss the whole idea. It will include a film and colour slides shown of other successful street improvement schemes. Unfortunately we had to go to press before details of where it will be and when were finalised, so we suggest you keep your eyes and ears open so that you can participate in this new community project.

**HOLIDAY  
CHEER!**



# BALMAIN GARDEN CLUB

Gardening correspondent Jessica Murray abandons the plants this month for that other inhabitant of the backyard --- you !

## PERSONAL in the GARDEN

Perhaps you have been thinking you might do a few things in the garden during the holidays. Maybe tidy up that grotty corner, remove some rubbish, take out those 'do nothing' shrubs and plant something better, cut back that bougainvillea, ivy or some other climber before they take over the entire place, even perhaps remove a few weeds before they make seeds etc.

But care of self is necessary, writing from experience. Recently, in just a moment's inattention, I shoved a big garden fork through leather into a foot, with all its consequent bother.

Lots of unpleasant things can happen easily. Quoting from the magazine "The Australian Nurseryman" which gave a year's statistics for England, the most accidents occur from ladders; 250 000 people needed hospital attention after injuries received in garden tasks. There were 10 000 people who injured themselves with forks and spades, 3500 with shears and secateurs, 6000 with lawn mowers, 1400 after falling out of trees and 1800 accidentally drank garden chemicals. Incredible as it may seem there are still people who put left-over sprays of pesticides and herbicides in lemonade bottles and put them under the kitchen sink and who leave rakes and hoes lying on the ground with prongs upwards to give the unwary a terrific crack on the head, perhaps breaking spectacles or nose, so don't even leave tools leaning against a wall with the prongs facing outwards.

In summer sun, wear a hat to protect skin and eyes. Remember, this is really a black man's country and it is not without reason that the native needed his pigmentation and heavy eyebrow ridges for protection. In the dry heat of South Australia sun stroke cases occur when people are foolish enough to go bare-headed, and they are admitted to hospital comatose with a body temperature of 105° to 107° (pre-metric figures).

They seldom recover, and are left with brain damage if they do get better. Perhaps due to the humidity here, all this does not seem to occur, but the skin cancer statistics are extremely high and certainly preventable.

When picking up old timber etc. watch out for spiders. I recently found red-backs under the handle of a large plastic flower pot. Some of our spiders have not been completely studied. I have personal knowledge of a man who, when painting a house at Botany, was bitten on the hand by a Black House spider, commonly considered to be not poisonous. He developed a progressive gangrene, which finally resulted in amputation of the hand. Later, on there was another case of gangrene occurring after a bite from a large brown garden spider.

How long is it since you had an anti-tetanus injection ? I admit I could not remember mine. The injection has much improved, with little likelihood of unpleasant reactions as occasionally occurred in the old days. Admittedly, with the dwindling number of horses around, tetanus cases are much fewer, as the horse was considered to be a natural carrier of the causative organism in its intestinal tract, but spores live in the soil for a very long time.



Things are not suitable for use with lawn mowers as toes are quite valuable for walking balance, so there's no point in getting them carelessly chopped off.

Invest in a pair of heavy gardening gloves to cope with those overgrown bougainvilleas, roses etc to prevent getting infected fingers.

Happy Gardening !

Well, after reading that I'll stay indoors and watch the whole yard go to rack and ruin. The risk just isn't worth it.

## ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES

The Association manned a stall at the Rozelle Festival on Saturday 28 November. Not only was it a fun day but also, through the efforts of - Bonnie, Jenny, Pat, Jean, Kath, Ros, Carol & Steve, Michelle & Steve and Dave the coffers were swelled by the tidy sum of \$306.40 at the end of the day.

Thank you, Thank you, Thank you!



## ROTARY CLUB OF CASTLE HILL

### THE GATHERING OF THE AUSTRALIAN PIONEER FAMILIES

#### MONSTER FAMILY HOOLEY

We've had details from the Rotary Club of Castle Hill about a pioneer family get-together they're planning for the 17th and 18th of September next year.

This event, which has been endorsed by the NSW Bicentennial Authority, has a planned target of 25 000 family members. So far they have received confirmed acceptances from 42 people representing 57 families and about 4 000 people. However, Rotary wants to enlarge their address list, so if you consider you come from a long established family - whatever the definition of that is - why not get in touch with:

Peter Wood 680 1858 (work), 634 3445 (home),

or

Bob Milne 634 2421.

Should be an interesting day, particularly if your name's Smith. See you there.

## HISTORICAL QUESTIONS, ANSWERS & NOTES

Mrs. Christine Watson of Springwood, NSW is looking for information of a David Gunter Jones and family who lived in Belmore Street, Balmain in the late 1800s. Jones was a stonemason/architect who is supposed to have built a house at 16 Belmore Street Balmain. There is evidence of a David Jones whose address in the electoral rolls was listed as Evans Street, just around the corner from Belmore Street. Perhaps the Evans Street home was the one he built and the whole family lived in Belmore Street on their arrival in Australia. No evidence of David Jones' death has been found though it is believed he died while quite young and Mrs. Watson was told he lost his home through gambling.

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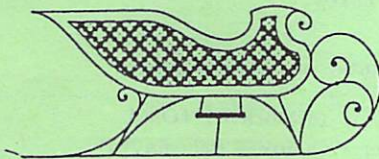
The History Division was the recipient of a cheque from Mrs. Jean McVey on account of 'shoe-leather, etc'. How nice to know that the silent research carried on voluntarily by members of the Association is appreciated.

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The Balmain Association wishes to extend its thanks to Margaret Parkes, Reader Services Library, Leichhardt Library for her interest in the Association's archives, her help with enquiries and her co-operation in the cataloguing of the Photographic Collection. The Association wishes her well in her new position with the New South Wales Tourism Commission and welcomes Lyn McKennon who is Leichhardt Library's part-time Local History Librarian.

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In the light of the Conservation Policy the Balmain Association is in the process of adopting and since one of its future policies is the acquisition of memorabilia only associated with the Balmain Peninsula, the Association has recently donated two swatchbooks of English machine-lace samples circa 1923 to the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences. A comment that the swatchbooks were in extremely good condition, considering their age, is an indication of their 'lack of use' and an excellent reason for their donation to the Museum where they will be available for research on a more broad basis.



## Can You Help?

Vidette (Lenardville)

Mr P O'Meagher is seeking photographs and information for Phase Two of the restoration of Vidette (Lenardville), 14 Louisa Rd, Birchgrove. Please phone 810-8407 if you can help, particularly with the front of the house and the garden.

The entrance doorway and ground floor windows are not original.



Reporter Kath Hamey writes:

### CHRISTMAS WITH THE FIRST FLEET

Extracts from the First Fleet by Jonathan King.

Christmas Day was marked by a special dinner for the officers, but for the seamen it was work as usual. No mention was made of Christmas fare for the convicts.

Tuesday 25th December 1787.

Lieutenant Philip Gidley King records nothing of Christmas celebrations upon the Commodore's leading ship *Supply*, just noting instead that they were pleased to have the wind firmly "in the north west quarter."

On *Scarborough*, Private John Easty records only "cloudy weather with fresh breezes," and gives their position as latitude 42°50' (south) and longitude 108°00' east.

Second Lieutenant Ralph Clark on *Friendship* says "...this been Christmas day kist your dear Image as usual on Sundays - God wish you Betsey my Dear Beloved wife and Sweet Boy both a Merry Christmas and happy New Year and many many of them. O God Grant that I was at home with you to eat of your Goose and Apple Piy for I shall have only a Poor dinner here. Never Betsey did your poor Ralph live so ill as I doe at present. Never will I goe to Sea without laying in Some Sea Stock. If my Mess Mates will not I will drink Both your health as I doe every day although only in Water but it is with a Sinceer wish. So God Bless you."

Chief Surgeon John White reports nothing except that he had by now been able to get the dysentery under control on board the *Charlotte* "it was got under by an unremitting attention to cleanliness, and every other method proper and essential for the removal and prevention of contagion. It gives me pleasure to be able to add that we only lost one person by the disease."

Sergeant Scott says on *Prince of Wales* "Being Christmas Day, Dinned off a pice of pork and apple Sauce a pice of Beef and plum pudding, and Crowned the Day With 4 Bottles of Rum, Which Was the Best Wee Could Afford."

Lieutenant David Collins, Judge Advocate, from the officers mess of *Sirius*, says, "Christmas found us in the latitude of 42° 10' South and steering, as we have done for a considerable time, an east-south-east course. We complied as far as was in our power with the good old English custom, and partook of a better dinner this day than was usual, but the weather was too rough to admit of much social enjoyment."

On the *Lady Penrhyn*, Surgeon Arthur Smyth noted: "We are now about 2000 miles distant from the South Cape of New Holland with a fine breeze which carries us at the rate of 8 1/2 knots. This being Xmas day I gave a quantity of currants out of the Box of necessaries to the 3 Marines on board to make a plumb pudding also to the Boatswain and Carpenter's Mess. The Captain allowed them a reasonable quantity of Grog to cheer their hearts and to distinguish this day as being the most remarkable in the year & which generally brings with it Mirth and Glee to the hearts of All, except the truly Miserable."

26 December.

The determined *Supply* pushed on with the winds on the west to north west quarter and its crew little affected by hangovers gained from any excessive drinking the night before.

Things were different on board *Friendship*. Clark says "Several of the Marines got much in Liquor yesterday." Even so the brig managed to go "by the Log last 24 hours 172 miles." Otherwise all seemed quiet and in order after the momentary diversion on the 25th.

# Annual Christmas Open House

DRINKS

at

THE WATCH HOUSE

The Committee  
invites you for  
Christmas Drinks

on

Saturday 19 December

from

1.00 to 5.00pm.



I understand that this is what last year's drinkies ended up like.



## ART & THE WATCH HOUSE

Norman Bull & Steve  
South, our exhibition co-  
ordinators, report on the  
recent exhibition  
"Three of a Kind".)

Professional and creative are the best words to describe our recent exhibition 'Three of a Kind', a combination of two photographers - Geff Brambley and Soul Lukas - with exceptional painter Uwe Waegner. Through rent and commission the Association made a gross profit of \$662, which, offset with an expenditure of \$256 for hanging chain, which is of course re-usable, gives us a nett income of \$406, making this one of our most successful exhibitions. The exhibition was brought to a close by a poetry reading and recital of ancient Bengali songs. During the afternoon of the final day Virginia Foster, from the Wayside Chapel, spoke to the visitors about the work being done with homeless children. Her talk was followed by the auction of three of the pieces of art from the exhibition. A total of \$460 was donated along with the artwork to the Errol Flynn refuge on behalf of the artists and the Association.

Since then, John Turvey has displayed poetry from 13th to 15th of November, and later in the month Jan Marsh and her students exhibited some of their works from the 19th to the 29th. There hasn't been time to make a full report on the success of these two groups, but by all accounts they were both successful.

David Owen will be exhibiting over the week-ends 12 & 13 and 19 & 20 of this month. One of his works would not only make a super Christmas present but would also be a splendid way to help the Association into the bargain.

Just to remind...

Membership renewals are due at the end of January.

For a truly modest sum you get : --

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**Balmain Association**
- \* regular delivery of this News Sheet
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**knowing your subscription contributes**  
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inhabitants through the Association's  
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and much, much more.

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

Return to: Treasurer, P.O. Box 57, Balmain 2041

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