

the balmain
association

NEWS SHEET

176

FOUNDED 1965

PO BOX 57 BALMAIN 2041

DECEMBER 1988

CONTROLLING RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

To be effective, criticism of over-development must be expressed in technical terms that can be enforced through zoning and building codes. Consequently, the Balmain Association proposes that Leichhardt Council adopt the following formula:

all future residential development on the Balmain Peninsula be restricted to the least dense zoning, Residential 2b(1) of 100 persons per hectare, unless there is a substantial increase of pro rata public open space, in accordance with the standard of 3 ha per thousand people endorsed by the N.S.W. Urban Planning & Environment Coalition.

What does this mean? Basically, we are telling the Liberal state government, which, like its Labor predecessor, is targeting this area for urban consolidation, that we can cut through their woolly rhetoric and refuse to be scapegoated for the urban sprawl of Sydney. In postulating a 100 p/ha standard, are we greedy, grasping, selfish, middle-class tendencies with a head in the sand approach to the need to consolidate Sydney? Answer, NO. Why? Because 100 p/ha is over twice the metropolitan average, and the Peninsula's 1.3 ha/1000 public open space is way below the Sydney average of 3.5.

Adopting the formula outlined means that we are doing "more than our bit" for consolidation while insulating ourselves from absurdly unreasonable densities (up to 225 p/ha) which governments have nominated for our area. The formula will help a great deal, but it is not a cure for all of our ills. To improve significantly our open space deficiencies, especially playing fields for children, the state government must transfer state land to local council - site C at Mort Bay and Elcom and MSB land in Rozelle and White Bay.

The formula is limited to curtailing residential development. Commercial development and its particular problems will be dealt with in the next issue, along with the vexed, over-riding problem of traffic. There are a few more myths to be dispelled!

In the meantime, have a safe and happy Christmas and New Year. If you encounter any Balmain basket-weavers, let us know, as the Bicentennial Register has, thus far, a grand total of Nil.

Jane Ward

Update on the Unilever site

The Unilever site has been 'unsold' by Pacific Properties to Leda Pty Ltd and a consortium of coal companies headed by Clutha (BHP) is pushing very hard to buy the White Bay Coal Loader and keep it operating.



PLAQUES WALK A SUCCESS

The sun shone, the harbour sparkled and the wind, both instrumental and climatic, blew strong as the populace assembled at Peacock Point at the end of the walk which inaugurated the Bicentennial Plaques in East Balmain.

It was the culmination of a project first mentioned at a Balmain Association management committee meeting four years ago, further suggested at the Leichhardt Council Bicentennial Committee gatherings, and finally brought into being by some enthusiastic Rotarians who furnished the plaques and the Balmain Association members who provided the historical information.

Rotarians, Peter Kendall and Rod Linklater, deserve particular mention. Peter corresponded, cajoled, persuaded and publicised while Rod installed the plaques as they arrived, saving valuable funds to buy more plaques and ensuring that the sites are treated with respect. The Leichhardt Council also deserves recognition for its donation of funds. Kath Harney and Tikwis Begbie provided the bulk of the historical information while Debby and Bob Nicholls sat on the coordinating committee and organised publicity.

Fortunately, November 13th dawned bright, the tents went up, the maps were readied, and the public began to arrive. Maps were sold at Thornton Park for those arriving by foot, car or ferry; others were available at the Watch House where some of the walkers preferred to start the tour. Darling St. was full of people and the Watch House of visitors - we believe up to 400 may have attended the walk, and some picnickers enjoyed the sausage sizzle and the Australian Volunteers Band as an added bonus.

Dawn Fraser came along to say hello, as did our Mayor and several councillors, including Nick Origlass who had done so much to encourage the project and spoke a few words to celebrate the day.



Watch House Restoration

There is, as some of you may have noticed, considerable movement at the Watch House these days as the builders come and go. For those who may have asked "What's going on - and for those who haven't - read on. Remember last year when the verandah was knocked down? A driver swerved to avoid a taxi and his car and the Watch House both suffered. The taxi disappeared but not before a keen-eyed passenger in a third vehicle had noted the taxi's registration.

That was the start of a long, long saga which included an insurance company changing hands, a taxi driver who insisted that he wasn't there, a letter from the police which went astray, and finally, a court appearance by the taxi driver where his memory did not improve but the magistrate felt it should have and found him guilty of failing to stop after an accident and careless driving.

In the interim the National Trust had recommended a builder whose quotes increased as the time grew between the accident and the court case - so we began the repairs hoping for the best out of the court. We will spare you the further minor irritants, such as lost keys, rain, and communication gaps; suffice it to say that the fence and the verandah are now restored and we are told that the GIO will settle 'any day now'. With luck the costs will be almost fully recovered.

The other work being done results from even more years of planning. Back in 1985 we commissioned a study toward a Conservation Plan which was last year approved by the National Trust. Our application for a Dept. of Planning National Estates Grant was finally successful after we agreed to a dollar for dollar basis. We undertook to spend \$2500 on interior renovation and they gave us funds toward stonework conservation. The foyer floors are now of beautifully polished, damp-free timber, the skirting boards and the upstairs window frames have been replaced and door frames have been installed in the exercise yards.

Outside, the \$2500 from the Dept. of Planning has been used on the first stage of the chimney renovation which was considered essential to prevent our neighbour suffering a sudden accretion of 19th century stone in her garden.

Funding for our part of the restoration has come from a number of sources: sales of 'Around Balmain', exhibitions in the Watch House and funds from our gallant crew commanded by Bonnie Davidson are the most notable.

Debby Nicholls

BALMAIN GARDEN CLUB

FERNS

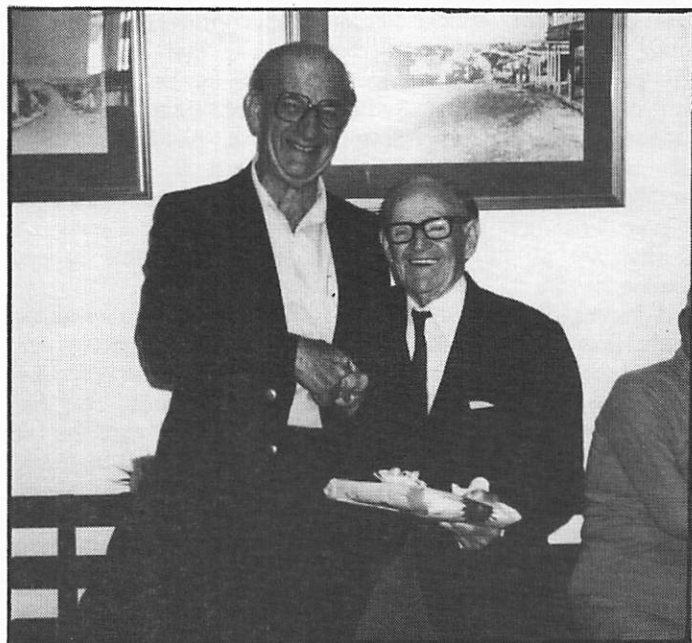
Most everyone knows that ferns need protection from the sun, and are therefore suitable for planting under dense trees.

However, ferns need cover from the wind. Shadecloth solves both problems. A shade house is a good investment. Remember that the softer ferns such as maidenhair are frost tender.

No Frills potting mix is good for ferns. Always keep the soil moist and water the ferns well in hot weather. Ferns do best with slow release plant food such as fern sticks or osmocote. They absorb food from the soil very slowly; liquid manure would drain away too soon. To keep ferns a good deep green colour give them a dose of epsom salts once a month.

Margaret Ford

The Balmain Garden Club have their meeting at 1.30pm on the third Saturday of each month in the Watch House.



A Singing Centenarian

A very special guest of honour, Mr. Bill 'Sagity' Hill, attended the Watch House for afternoon tea on Sat 19th November. The occasion was Sagity's 100th birthday.

Mr. Hill entertained members with anecdotes and sang a song 'Mr. Booze', which was warmly received. He has lived all of his full life in Balmain. Born in Reuss St., his father, a butcher, moved to the Bay St. address when Bill was one year old, and he still resides there, looking after himself with a little help from his family and meals on wheels. He left Birchgrove School at 12 years and worked for Bill Bennett, bootmaker, for 3 years, getting 2/6 (25c) then 3/6 (35c) a week. His right eye was blinded in 1916 in boilermaking. "My mates took up a collection and I got £20 (\$40) as there was no worker's compensation, but they paid me £250 later - the first compo claim paid".

A chat with Sagity about his working life is a history lesson. Many happy returns Bill.

GOURLIES CORNER

The rationing of supplies of motor spirit and diesel oil fuel will commence on 1st October, 1940. On and after that date motor fuel and diesel oil fuel may be purchased from a licensed retailer and on surrender of ration tickets equivalent to the quantity of motor spirit or diesel oil fuel it is desired to obtain. The tickets are available in the denominations of 1, 2, 5, 10, 44 and 100 gallons.

Yes folks, could this advertisement be Christmas 1988. Seriously though Mr. Gourlie has in his possession the regulations and an application form for Ration Tickets. Has anyone got a ration ticket for any of the denominations?

COB. 21. COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.
Liquid Fuel Control Board, N.S.W.
National Security (Liquid Fuel) Regulations.

APPLICATION FOR RATION TICKETS.

THE POSTMASTER,

Please supply ration tickets enabling me to purchase

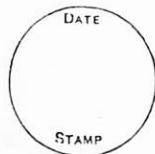
.....gallons of
(Insert number)

.....as authorised by
(Motor spirit or diesel oil fuel)

Consumer's Licence(s) No(s).....

Full name of Licensee:

Ration Tickets Issued: Signature of Applicant:



Date.....

T. H. TENNANT, GOVERNMENT PRINTER. SL 6137

CHRISTMAS IN AUSTRALIA

The first colonial settlers were faced with the task of preserving their British traditions in distinctly non-British surroundings.

A perfect example of this dilemma was how to celebrate Christmas. Most of the early emigrants were reluctant to forfeit their British identity even though they may have welcomed the chance of a new life. Efforts to recreate in Australia the feeling for what the emigrants thought was Christmas nearly always fell short of their intent and served only to intensify the sense of distance. It was not surprising then, that some of the first Christmas Days in the colony should have recorded homesickness and nostalgia rather than joy and fellowship.

Christmas letter from Australia

This morning when I woke and knew 'twas Christmas come again,

I almost fancied I could view white rime upon the pane,
and hear the ringing of wheels upon the frosty ground,
and see the drip that downward reels in icy casket bound.

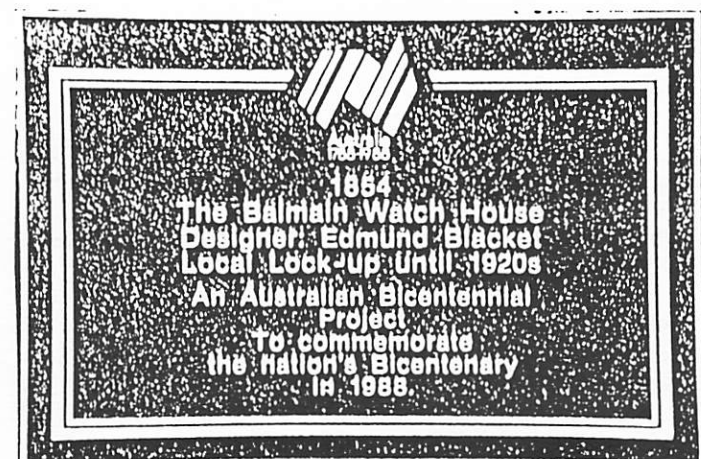
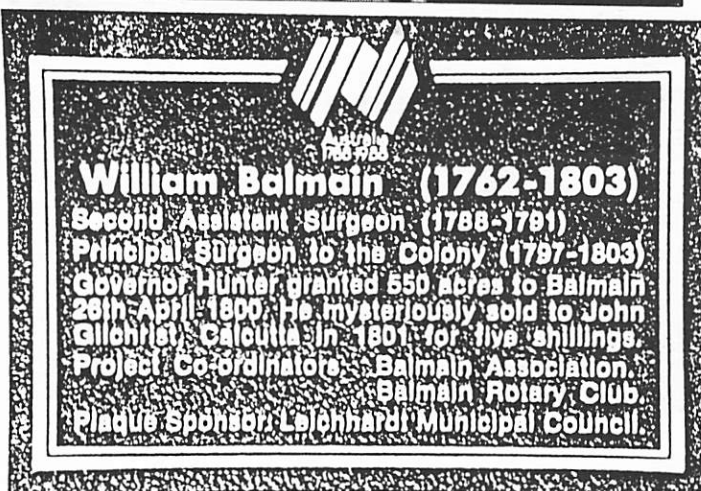
Despite adverse conditions for eating large helpings of hot food and the difficulty of keeping some of its associations, Christmas as a festival was not questioned in Australia. The very ability in summer to cook and eat the fare was seen as a feat of endurance.

BALMAIN PLAQUES

At the commencement of the Trail to commemorate people, places and events, some fifty plaques will have been installed by the year's end. A publication is planned to incorporate the engraved information with intriguing details that space precludes their inclusion.

At the Inaugural Walk, Balmain President, Jane Ward, unveiled the plaque honouring William Balmain situated in Thornton Park at the start of the trail. Copies of the original script, containing details of forty plaques, are available at the Watch House for \$1.00.

The illustrations below are reproductions of the William Balmain and Watch House plaques.



BICENTENNIAL RETROSPECT

As our Bicentennial Year draws to a close, I, as Chairperson of the Balmain Association Bicentennial Committee, would like to sum up our year's activities.

Firstly, I wish to thank those members without whose support nothing would have happened. Many thanks to Debby, Kath, Frances, Tiki, Jan, Michelle and Jane, with special thanks to Bonnie for the catering at the Watch House. Last, but not least, I would like to thank my wife Ann and my two sons Paul and Jarrid who letter-boxed and helped when needed.

Our year began with the Australia Day Photographic Exhibition which brought an encouraging response. Then followed the Heritage exhibition in conjunction with Westpac on 28th March which netted a \$1000 donation from the bank. This success was due to the work of Tiki, Kath & Frances.

An enjoyable event was the visit by the Fellowship of First Fleeters on 19th June. At the same time the first of the Commemorative plaques was dedicated at the site of Durham, Capt. Nicholson's house. During afternoon tea at the Watch House, we were entertained by the Australian Volunteers Band, who also attended the Inaugural Plaque's Walk, (reported elsewhere in this issue). Our last event was the Leichhardt Bicentennial Parade held on 4th December.

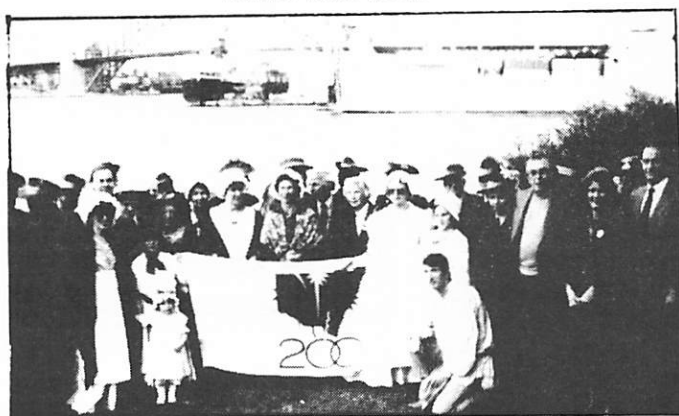
The Association has added a set of our publications to the libraries of four local schools so that the students might learn more of Balmain.

All of these activities has made this a great year and made me proud as Chairperson and as an Australian.

Dave Ramsay



Rotarians John Willis & Peter Kendall, Frank Mullens, Ald. Nick Origlass with Jane Ward at the dedication of Durham House plaque.



First Fleeters and the Australian Volunteers Band at Thornton Park



Balmain Association President, Jane Ward, receiving a cheque for \$1000 from Westpac Regional Manager, Dave Carter.



Jane Ward accepting a gift of photographs from Colgate-Palmolive



"ALL FIRED UP AT THE WATCH HOUSE"

EXHIBITION AND SALE OF

POTTERY AND PAINTINGS

AT

THE BALMAIN WATCH HOUSE

179 DARLING STREET, BALMAIN

DECEMBER 16th, 17th, 18th, 1988 FROM 10 am TO 5 pm

OPENING NIGHT - THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15th, 6 - 8 pm

We cordially invite you and your friends to view our range
of freshly fired ceramics by 11 skilled potters,
and recent paintings by recognised artist

MARIAN PURVIS

Potters

Claire Bartlett
Carolyn Birinyi
Sue Burnett

Thelma Delaney
Annette Ehrhardt
Margaret Hall

Hazel Hooton
Margaret Hunt
Herta Martini

Joy Quin

Betty Riddington

We acknowledge the Balmain Association, whose logo appears above, for their support in making the Watch House available to us.

We are delighted to direct a percentage of our sales towards the restoration of the National Trust classified Watch House in this our Bicentennial Year.

XMAS MUSIC IN BALMAIN SINCE THE 1860s

What role has music played in the lives of Balmain people over the last century or so, especially at Christmas time? An active and diverse role, so Association member, Susanne Ainger, is finding as she delves into the past, through historical records, interviews and biographies. She writes:

The population of Balmain, one of Sydney's oldest suburbs, was only about 6000 in 1869, yet musical activities during the Christmas and New Year were surprisingly diverse. The School of Arts (in Ewinton St. - destroyed by fire in 1920s) was the venue for many musical evenings. For instance, on December 9th 1869 an evening of Gymnastic, Dramatic and Musical Entertainment was staged there by members of the Nonpareil Gymnastic Club (assisted by 'gentlemen amateurs') in aid of the NSW Deaf, Dumb & Blind Institution. The program included several musical items on the piano, songs, trapeze acts, and a 'laughable farce'. A few weeks later, December 29th, there was a 'Farewell Entertainment' featuring the William Tell Overture, songs and piano items.

One of Balmain's oldest residents, Bill 'Sagity' Hill, who celebrated his 100th birthday last month, remembers some of the antics he and his mates got up to some Christmases. On New Year's Eve 1898, when he was 10, he and a friend, with blackened faces and dressed as Black Minstrels, went door-knocking along Louisa Road (where the richer folk lived - and still do!), asking householders if they'd like a song for a penny or so. The evening brought them 'nine bob each - a lot of money in those days'.

Another Balmain boy, Jim Davidson, born in 1902 in Church St., recalled in his book, 'A Showman's Story' (1983), how, as youngsters, he and three of his pals 'went carolling around the east end, Balmain' at Xmas. He played cornet and his friends sang. Jim got interested in music at the age of nine when the famous Sousa's 60 man military brass band came to Sydney in 1911. He was soon playing the cornet in a local brass band 'in the little church on the corner of Darling and High Streets, Rozelle, near the Amusu Picture House'. Davidson, who died in 1982, started his working life as an office boy for Lever Bros. He became a leading jazz musician in Sydney, worked for the BBC in London and finally returned to a top job in the ABC.

Christmas music in Balmain has often been associated with clubs. The Balmain Worker's Social Club, for example, organised a Children's Xmas Party on December 22nd, 1944, in its Club Rooms, in which youngsters showed their talent 'singing, tap-dancing...and leading in community singing'.

Contemporary musical figure, Bill Haesler, a former president of the Association, jazz musician and historian, a regular commentator in music radio programs, recalls his band playing voluntarily, in the 1970s, for patients in the grounds of Callen Park Hospital at Christmas.

These snippets have been gathered by Susanne Ainger in her research for the book about the social role of music in Balmain. Susanne would like to hear from anyone who has information or photographs of interest. All areas of music are involved - bands, choirs, school and church music, pub music, pop, folk, jazz, rock and classical, as well as details of biographies of individuals.

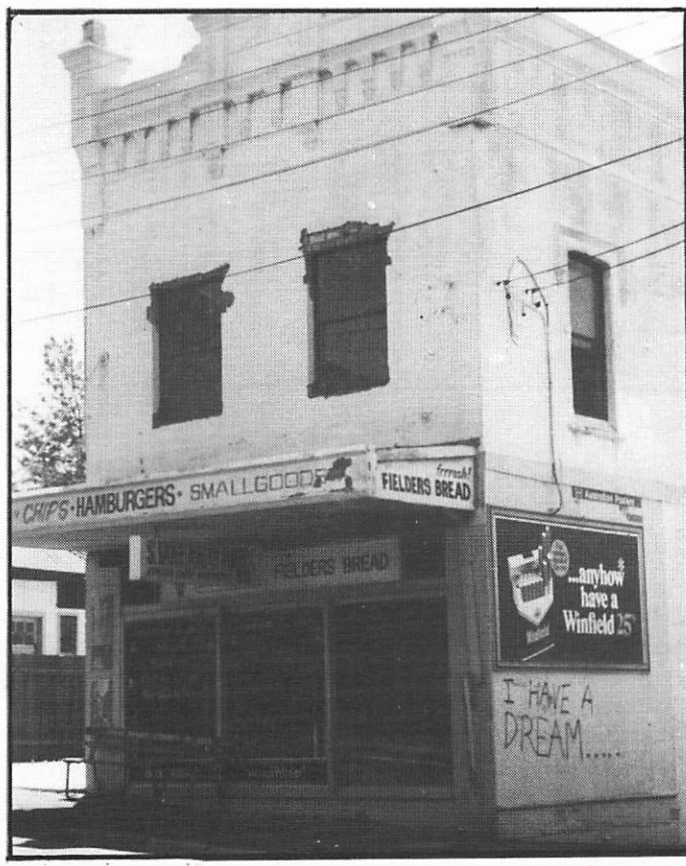
Write to Susanne, c/o The Balmain Association, PO box 57, Balmain, 2041, or drop them into the Watch House, 179 Darling St.

ARCHITECTURAL IMPROVEMENTS

A highly creditable addition to the business premises in Mullens Street has just been made at the instance of Mr. R. Burns, picture framer, etc., in the form of a well-built and attractive shop at the corner of Mullens and Stewart Streets. The building, which is of the composite style of architecture, has an elevation of about 23 ft., and with its balcony taking the circle of the corner, supported by neat fluted Corinthian pillars with Grecian brackets, the whole being painted green picked out with gold (the windows being black and gold) makes a presentable front. The parapet above the roof of the balcony is ornamented by a ball in the centre and two figures representing spring and summer at each corner. The whole building has two coats of cement outside which helps to give it an attractive finish.

As regards accommodation, there is a neat little shop and five rooms, besides workshop, scullery, and bathroom. The workmanship throughout is of a first class description, and does credit to the contractor, Mr. J. Ong, and to the plasterer, Mr. J.H. Read, and the painter, Mr. Lowe. The architect, Mr. William Eland, has certainly planned a very nice building and given great satisfaction to his client, especially considering the total cost of the building is under £800. Mr. Burns, the proprietor, intends, we understand, to open his new premises with a display of his attractive wares this evening and the shop will be worthy of inspection.

THE OBSERVER & WESTERN ADVERTISER. Saturday July 30, 1887.



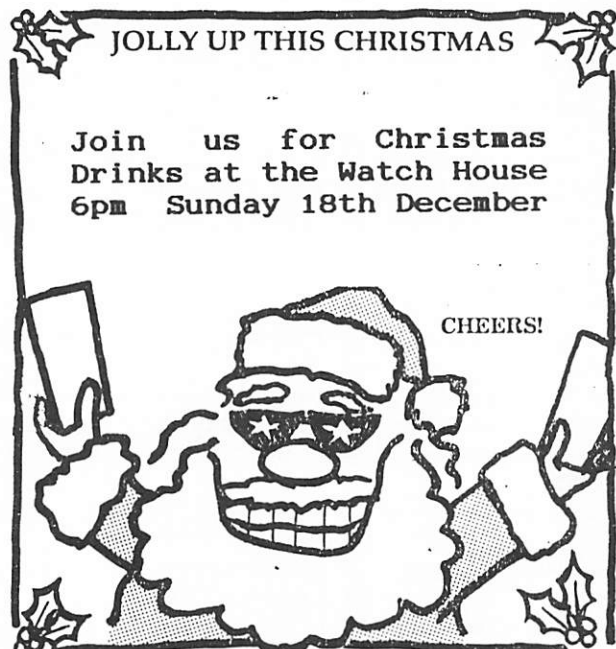
Carols and Candles

Music 2041 will hold its second Carols and Candles evening at 7.30pm Sunday 18th December in Gladstone Park. Come along and join in. Proceeds of the sale of candles and programs will go to Balmain Hospital. Anyone wishing to join the choir is most welcome. Inquiries to Beth Willis on 810 2941. (St Augustine's Church if it rains)



EXHIBITION AT THE WATCH HOUSE

- December 9th - 11th
Paintings - Jan Melville
- December 15th - 18th
Ceramics - 'All Fired Up'



SEASON'S GREETINGS



The well-known and beautifully restored Balmain restaurant 'The Manor House' built by Edmund T. Blacket in 1870 as his own house will be the venue for a Christmas Luncheon for nearly two hundred aged pensioners from Leichhardt Municipality on December 11th courtesy of our local M.P. Dawn Fraser and the Manor House management. This lovely thought will be much appreciated by the pensioners.

Saturday Afternoon at the Watch House

*The Watch House is open Every Saturday from 1 to 3pm.
Call in for coffee.*

The Balmain Association meets on the first Wednesday of each month (except January) at 7.30pm in the Watch House 179 Darling Street Balmain.

Our editorial phone is 818 4954

Send mail c/o PO Box 57, BALMAIN. 2041.

Contact Steve South on 810 1411 for renting of the Watch House.

Just to remind....



Membership renewals are due at the end of January.

For a truly modest sum you get

- membership of the prestigious Balmain Association
- regular delivery of the News Sheet
- the warm, inner-glow that comes from knowing that your subscription contributes to the well-being of the area and its inhabitants through the Association's activities.

and much, much more.



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".