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## Exhibitions at the Watch House

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The Watch House is proving to be a highly successful "exhibition centre" and is attracting the attention of amateur artists, who often have difficulty finding an opportunity to display their work. As well as helping the artists, exhibitions can help the Association by earning us an income to provide funds to restore the Watch House. Mel Freedman's exhibition in December was an example of how a combination of enthusiasm, effort and teamwork can pay dividends. Mel was so keen to have people see his work that in his spare moments he was out in the street kidnapping innocent passers-by and only releasing them after a guided tour of his exhibition.

If you are an artist in search of a gallery, we would like to talk to you. Contact Steve South on 810 1411 A.H. or Norman Bull on 810 1611 A.H.

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## It's Your Association!

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Don't just tell us what we should be doing - come along and help us do it! The Association meets at the Balmain Watch House, 179 Darling Street at 7:30 p.m. on the first Wednesday of each month except January. The Watch House is also open on Friday nights from 8:00pm and Saturdays from 1:00pm to 3:00pm. These times vary if an exhibition is being held.

Postal Address: P.O. Box 57, Balmain, 2041.  
President: Norman Bull 810 1611 A.H.  
Secretary: Debby Nicholls 810 7391 A.H.

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## Leichhardt Council makes Balmain disappear!

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It will be old news by the time this News Sheet gets to you, but in the height of the Christmas holiday season, Leichhardt Council called a special meeting and voted to abolish wards for council elections. The entire municipality will now consist of just one ward and a separate election will be held for the Mayor. Under this system there will be no "Balmain" aldermen. Thanks for the cute way you did it too, Bill. Would it really have hurt you to have given reasonable notice of your meeting and allowed members of the public to speak? That's one Christmas gift we didn't want.

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## Association Activities

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### Welcome to 1987!

Your Association is looking forward to another year of involvement in the local community. New members are always welcome ....all members are always welcome to attend our monthly meetings (1st Wednesday each month at 7:30pm at the Watch House) and naturally the Committee appreciates any offers of assistance to help with any of our activities.

### Christmas Raffle Winners

The Winners of the 1986 Christmas raffle were as follows:-

1st Prize: F. Davidson (Hamper)  
2nd Prize: I. Semmel (Wine Glasses)  
3rd Prize: B. Davidson (Chocolates)

The raffle was drawn at our "Christmas Drinks" afternoon at the Watch House on December 20th. The proceeds of the raffle were \$250. Thank you to Bonnie for her great effort in organising the prizes and the tickets and thanks also to those who donated items for the hamper.

### December News Sheet Competition

Those of you who read the December 1986 New Sheet may have noticed a competition question which offered a prize for the most amusing explanation of Santa Claus' smile. Not one single entry was received, which could mean that the question was too difficult! We'll consider giving you another chance next Christmas. However, we did receive one letter complimenting us on the December edition, which was greatly appreciated.

### This month's News Sheet

Starting with this issue we are trying out a different format for the News Sheet. This is on a trial basis for one or two issues. It is hoped that the "new look" makes the News Sheet more appealing and easier to read. Comments from members are welcome.

### Fee Increase

The increased Association membership fees and the new system of having a common renewal date for all members are now in operation. The rate for pensioners and students is still \$1.00 per year and the standard fee for other people is now \$8.00. This is a small sum by today's standards and is less than is charged by similar residents' groups. Thanks are due to Tim and Warwick for their efforts to successfully introduce the new system.

**Members who have received a letter from the Association with details of a small fee adjustment which will take their subscriptions up to the end of January 1988, are asked to pay as soon as possible. Non-financial members will, in the future, not receive this news sheet.**

# Historical Questions, Answers & Notes

## Can you help?

Mr Noonan of Dee Why is researching his great Grandfather George Ironmonger who was employed by Capt. Rowntree to milk his cows, care for two horses and chop wood. The Coroner's report in the Sydney Morning Herald of 11th April 1860 on the suicide of George Ironmonger provides a wealth of details and names: the publican Mr. Reed of the Balmain Hotel, a chemist Mr. Parker (druggist of Darling Street - Sands Directory 1858-59), Doctor Evans and Constable Kelly of Balmain.

Mr. Noonan is also seeking information on Henry Cheeseman of William Street circa 1859 and John Cheeseman, butcher of Cooper Street (Ford's Directory 1851), also the whereabouts of "Rose House".

## Thomas Salisbury – engraver

Mrs. Valmai Pearce of Yowie Bay, who was enquiring as to the whereabouts of Midway House in Wharf Road (News Sheet No. 154) has provided further information on her ancestor in the hope that Midway or Medway House may come to light.

Thomas Salisbury was born in London in 1843 and came to Sydney in 1854/55 with his widowed mother Elizabeth Barnes nee Barker and brothers and sisters whose ages ranged from 6 to 18 years. Mrs. Salisbury's father was an Edinburgh (Scotland) printer and she had the opportunity to become educated. In 1864 she conducted "Mrs Salisbury's School for Young Ladies" in Oxford Street, Kingston North (Newtown) and did so successfully until 1872.

On 4th July 1868 Thomas Salisbury, who by this time had established himself in Sydney as an engraver, married Janet Cormack. The parents of Janet, John Hunter Cormack and Maria nee Fulloon, had been living in Sydney for 37 years.

Thomas Salisbury conducted his business as an engraver in Sydney from 1858 until his death in 1898. He was a highly acclaimed craftsman and specialised in Heraldic work; also inscriptions, crests, arms, cyphers on jewellery, plate and trophies. In 1871 he had a short partnership with a George Parker, coppersmith and diesinker.

Some of the work done by Thomas Salisbury can still be seen in the form of memorial plaques in St. Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney. Older members of his family can remember being told of how he sat straddle-legged across the back of the famous Botanical Gardens tortoise, to engrave upon its back. He also engraved the slate sundial in the Botanical Gardens (probably now non-existent), and with the aid of his partner supplied Sydney University with "buttons and badges" and "the main crested University Gates". (Verbal information by older members of his family).

Although almost totally deaf from very early childhood, Thomas Salisbury successfully conducted his business from a number of Sydney premises by lip-reading and by hand-signs, and provided well for his wife and family of nine children.

The family lived in Wharf Road, Snails Bay from 1875 until 1886 when the premises were "sold to a Salvation Army Officer" according to older members of his family. The house was a large two storey dwelling accommodating seven children, parents and domestic help. It was from his dwelling that Thomas Salisbury rowed his boat to and from Snails Bay to Erskine Street Wharf each day to carry out his engraving business.

If you think that you can throw any further light on the possible whereabouts of his house, please contact the Balmain Association, P.O. Box 57, Balmain, 2041.

## Sundry Grave Bits & Pieces

During our recent research into 'backyard burials', the following snippets of information came to light:

"Motor Funerals" - the first Sydney firm to introduce an all motor vehicle service - circa 1924 - an innovation of the firm was the provision of tailor-made uniforms.

A funeral in 1924 cost £25 and £4/10/0 for a plot of land.

SMH 7/5/1873 - The first State funeral that took place in the colony was that of William Charles Wentworth - the day was proclaimed a public holiday - shops and warehouses were closed and tens of thousands thronged the streets to see or take part in the public ceremony that was held at St. Andrew's, invitation by ticket - men only in the church.

W.C. Wentworth died on 20/3/1872 in England and as he had wished his body was brought to Sydney and subsequently laid to rest in a vault (14' x 14' - room for ten coffins) excavated in a rock on his estate on the north side of Vaucluse Bay.

SMH 1/11/1952. The funeral procession of William Morris Hughes stretched 2 miles ...

## Balmain Memories – by Baron Newlyn

Another anecdote of real Balmain life based on experiences of working at Elliott Brothers. Other stories by the same author were printed in our News Sheets 151, 152 & 157.

### Boris

Boris was a huge and hulking Mongolian newly-arrived to these shores and did not speak a word of English. He was employed by Elliott Bros. as an acid jar filler which did not require an understanding of the language anyway.

Bill saw his opportunity and patiently coached Boris in mastering the English language - or rather his version of it.

Boris, upon the completion of his course, was able to pour forth a stream of foul abuse and invective liberally sprinkled with base personal insults of a physical and sexual nature that would turn the air blue.

One day, while Boris was hard at work filling his jars, the works manager together with a group of school children and their teachers came upon him while on a tour of the factory.

The group paused to watch Boris whilst the manager explained to them the nature of his work.

About to depart, the manager spoke to Boris, telling him he was doing a good job.

The mammoth Mongolian strode towards them - acid jar in hand - uttering the vilest of abuse and swearing terribly, as he had been taught to do.

Panic-stricken, the manager and his group almost ran in their haste to escape the towering gesticulating swearing Boris as he stood there pouring more filth onto their retreating backs.

Boris was summoned to the manager's office very shortly after with Bill acting as interpleader. Bill was able to explain that "some of the boys" - he didn't know who they were - had put Boris up to it, and as far as Boris was aware he had been speaking perfectly good English.

The manager finally accepted Bill's story and Boris was saved and continued work there for many years.



Caught in the Act! Mel Freedman trying to sell the Association's banner.



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

|                               |         |
|-------------------------------|---------|
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| Organisation .....            | \$12.00 |
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