



the peninsula Observer

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Mr Deloitte's Orchid House by Helen Carter

Quarton Levitt Deloitte about his construction of a glasshouse or a gardening diary. Certainly, post 1910 there was mention of Deloitte's reputation being the Father of Rowing and his love of collecting orchids in the newspapers however pre 1900 information proved to be a difficult task.

Come with me on this journey of discovery which also opens a window into the fascinating lives of a number of other Deloitte family members who lived along Wharf Road.

QL Deloitte purchased a smaller cottage The Hermitage on two lots at 25 Wharf Road, Snails Bay/Birchgrove in August, 1877 and used the well-known architects Mansfield Brothers to design a grand home designed to be viewed from the waterfront.

Using *Trove* (the National Library's newspaper database) conservatories/glass houses were uncovered in some of Sydney's early suburbs such as Burwood or Woollahra, ordered from a catalogue and imported from England but I found no specific reference to an orchid house/glass house/hot house or conservatory for Wyoming. Terms such as a rockery, a fernery and/or aviary were uncovered at other properties along Wharf Road prior to 1900 when advertisements appeared for their sale or staff wanted. In 1881, Deloitte purchased an adjacent lot to his holding and during his renovations he

Situated in the grounds of Wyoming, Snails Bay (25 Wharf Road, Birchgrove). This rare structure from the late 19th century has recently been one of a number of structures being considered by a sub-committee for Vernacular Architecture of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) during their conference in Sydney. ICOMOS is a global non-governmental organisation associated with UNESCO which has as one of its missions to review nominations for the conservation and protection of sites or properties.

Being a member of the Archive

Committee of the Balmain Association (BA), my brief, when approached was "to date the Orchid House prior to 1900". (a full version of my paper can be read on the BA website).

Background

The Orchid House restoration from its derelict condition post 1990s when the owners purchased the large two storey Italianate marine villa, is a story of devotion and a love of gardening. Unfortunately, no personal documentation was found which had belonged to the owner of Wyoming,

moved with his wife Emily, over the road to one of EH Buchanan's designed terraces in Ballast Point Road.

Historical research prior to the site inspection did not establish a pre-1900 date for the Orchid House because:

- Sheet 5 of the Water Board Plan, traced 14 June 1889 showed no garden structure
- the references to ferneries and rockeries on Wharf Road, Snails Bay found from 1890-1900 could not be linked to Wyoming
- the search terms Orchid House/Green House/Glass House/Plant House did not refer to a structure at Wyoming and,
- the non-existence of a Council requirement for building construction approval prior to 1908 was an impediment.

The site inspection on 23 September 2023 revealed from the outside (see cover), a glass structure, with a ventilation roof opening, on a tuckpointed brick base. Adorned with an iron lace frieze above the roof and a glass panelled side door. The internal inspection revealed, the workings of the roof trusses to operate the ventilation and its drainage. Relicts of the iron lace frieze/finial and pieces of ribbed glass did not reveal any registration marks but the rim lock on the door showed a patent mark - No 60 Jas Carpenter, Patentee - c 1890s.

Post site inspection research revealed

- an almost identical conservatory in a trade catalogue/pattern book at Caroline Simpson Library, Museums of History, by Goodlett & Smith Ltd, Sydney 1890 that showed an almost identical structure as the Wyoming orchid house



Portrait of QL Deloitte - Courtesy of the Sydney Rowing Club

- records in the archives of St Mary's Anglican Church on Darling Street, Balmain showed that two entries of Deloitte family members paid pew rent. EH Buchanan, and the orchid collectors Captain John

Broomfield, Glentworth House and Robert David Fitzgerald II, Adraville were members of the church or held positions. Coincidentally the church used a Goodlet and Smith catalogue to purchase its leadlight windows

- a tender advertisement dated 12 September 1885 in the Sydney Morning Herald indicated that Mansfield Brothers had handed the construction project to the architects Sheerin and Hennessy.

Conclusion

Whilst the above circumstantial evidence was tantalising, and the close knit connections of the orchid collectors in the Balmain community where networking operated in the church environment and the Freemasons it was the photographic evidence c1890s by Charles Kerry and Henry King held at the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Museum, with the benefit of digitisation today, that showed images of the orchid house prior to 1900.

Other Deloitte family members who lived on the Balmain Peninsula were: QL Deloitte's parents lived at Birchgrove House 1850-56 then at Janthenia House, Wharf Road, QL's brother, Marmaduke next door at Devonvillia and other members who lived at Simila and Oneida.

(Photo: courtesy Simon Griffiths, in Gardens on the Edge by Christine Reid, 2018)

The Balmain Association Inc. representing Balmain, Birchgrove and Rozelle
Since 1965 we have aimed to:

- Improve the living, working and recreational amenities of our area
- maintain all features having natural, architectural and or historical value of the area and keep a permanent collection of historical interest
- seek the cooperation of everyone concerned in the realisation of the above.

Members are welcome to attend the Balmain Association meetings at 6pm on the first Wednesday of each month at the Watch House, 179 Darling Street Balmain.

The History Room at the Watch House is open every Saturday from 11:30am to 3pm and every Tuesday from 11am to 1pm.

Website: www.balmainassociation.org.au

Postal: PO Box 57 Balmain 2041

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A wee note

If this quarter's *Peninsula Observer* looks a bit strange it is because the regular editor has been in hospital and the job left to a substitute using inferior software.

Balmain in the silent movie era

Mark Calabretta

Balmain forms the backdrop of a 1925 silent movie, *Those Terrible Twins, Ginger Meggs and Bluey*, restored by the The National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA) and placed on YouTube in 2015 for all to enjoy. Ginger Meggs and his putative twin brother, Bluey, are depicted in situations inspired by the comic strip adventures of "Australia's Favourite Boy".

Director, John Edward (J.E., or Jack) Ward (1866-1955), resided at *Shannon Grove*, 10 Ewenton St, at the time and used its interior and grounds, and the nearby streets as sets for the movie. Apart from its intrinsic amusement value, with a few priceless comic scenes, the movie unwittingly captured images that no one at the time would have thought worthy of preserving: a rabbitoh selling from the back of his horse-drawn cart; a policeman walking his beat and the uniform he's wearing; the state of the roads, kerbing and gutters; the near absence of cars; the local kids enlisted as extras; the interior of a C-class tram, and so on. Today, just short of a century later, they provide a rare animated glimpse into the Balmain of old.

There also are some real surprises. The later scenes of the movie are shot in the ruins of the old School of Arts building in Darling St, which stood near the current Jubilee Pl, and was home to Balmain Council from 1862 to 1876. Precious few photographs survive of the frontage of the grand old sandstone building, demolished in the late 1930s, let alone



views of its sides and interior.

Another great surprise came in identifying the scene of the cricket match. In constructing the White Bay container wharves in the late 1960s, the Maritime Services Board cut a great gash in the Balmain shoreline on the south side of Grafton St, leaving behind a 20m high sheer cliff. This area, known as Pilcher's Paddock, accommodated three early residences, *Heathfield*, *Bleak House*, and *Bankside*, all covered in Helen Carter's recent book *Death by Demolition*. This was the scene of the cricket match, with the wicket itself essentially being the ghostly footprint of *Bleak House*.

A new research article, *Ginger Meggs and Bluey in Balmain*, meticulously identifies all of the Balmain scenes in the movie, illustrated profusely with frame-grabs, and puts them in historical context. Ewenton, Blake, Charles, Darling, Wallace, and Grafton Streets all get a look-in. Detailed maps and period aerial photographs put it all in geographical context.

Ginger Meggs and Bluey in Balmain, may be downloaded from the Balmain Association web site — <https://balmainassociation.org.au/balmain-research>.

Melbourne Cup at the Watch House Di Garder

For very many years a group of local mothers celebrated Melbourne Cup each year with a 'Bring A Plate' party. The party would rotate between the mother's houses so each would take turns in hosting the Melbourne Cup. We would have a couple of sweeps, of course, and we would finish in time to pick up our children from school.

As time went on and some husbands retired, the numbers for this event became more than most wanted to host in their houses, so the Watch House

became the venue for this annual party. We have been celebrating at the Watch House now for well over 15 years and the plan is still the same!

The majority of the participants are BA members. There is a small entry fee which covers drinks; everyone brings a plate, and of course we still have a couple of sweeps! There is a donation to the BA after all costs are



covered. A good social gathering of old friends!

What's Going On



Balmain Town Hall precinct committee

The BA has participated in IWC's committee looking at the future of the area around Balmain town hall. At the last meeting a landscaping proposal was tabled suggesting opening the library into the space between the courthouse and the town hall. The future if the occasional childcare centre was also discussed. The interior of the hall has been painted but the stairwell needs major repair work. Discussion includes what can be done to the main hall to make it more usable and improve the acoustics. This work does not include the Court House which is now owned by IWC.

Perfect Match

IWC's Perfect Match program matches street art proposals with local artists. Two new murals now adorn the peninsula's street.

In *North Street* on the wall of Forli Restaurant is a work by VRS Peque titled *The Portal*. The artist's description is:

The old wall opens to a large imaginary portal, inviting the viewer to discover the story inside. Plants hang to the sides. In the foreground are two large, well-known monumental structures of the Balmain area. A tram passes to the left, a nod to the popular commuter which transported people for many years. On the right, we can observe people, in the company of others, enjoying a snack or drink at Forli the local restaurant.

Left is Arthur Stace, better known as Mr. Eternity, who once strolled the streets of Balmain. He dedicated himself to writing 'Eternity' on the footpaths he travelled, remaining immortalized in the memory of residents and the history of Sydney. To the right, a couple of girls run happily, leaving the past behind and looking

toward the future. At the same time birds cross the sky, from inside the picture portal to outside.

Thomas Jackson's *White Plumed Honeyeater* adorns the wall of *95 Curtis Road*. Thomas's description is:

After traveling the east coast of NSW, it has astounded me to see the plethora of native bird species that exists in areas where we have more trees and less development. It has really got me thinking, 'what would Sydney's coastal areas look like if we had more native trees and green spaces. Would these birds return?' For this artwork I wish to highlight one of my favourite small honeyeaters to spot in these wooded areas, the *White Plumed Honeyeater*. My hope is to 'reintroduce' this special native back into an environment it would have once thrived, Balmain.

For details of other Perfect Matches see <https://www.innerwest.nsw.gov.au/live/living-arts/perfect-match>

Hancock Lane

Council's Main Streets Program aims to improve the vibrancy and safety of public spaces and local streets by improving their character and making them more inviting.

Re-imagining the use of public spaces and regenerating them can enhance the lives of the community and assist economic growth by providing settings to attract visitation and local spend and creating places to go to, not move through.

As a part of the Main Streets Program, Council has developed concept plans for improvements to Hancock Lane in



Rozelle, which is off Darling Street, about 50 metres south west of Victoria Road.

What is being proposed?

Council will work with adjacent shop owners to deliver following improvements and make Hancock Lane more welcoming and enhance its use and activity:

- Outdoor dining spaces and furniture,
- Additional Trees,
- New benches
- Pot plants,
- Paving upgrades,
- Bin enclosure, and
- Investigate opportunities for new mural on facades adjacent to the lane.

See <https://yoursay.innerwest.nsw.gov.au/hancock-lane-rozelle>

Pocket Parks

IWC is developing a Plan of Management for the 55 pocket parks in the Balmain/Baludarri which includes parts of Leichhardt north of the western distributor and North Annandale. There are 43 pocket parks in the BA's area.

Council has developed a 10-year Plan of Management for our neighbourhood and pocket parks across the Inner West Local Government Area. This combined plan outlines current and future uses, development and maintenance of 212 parks. Each park has been individually assessed and details for each park may vary.

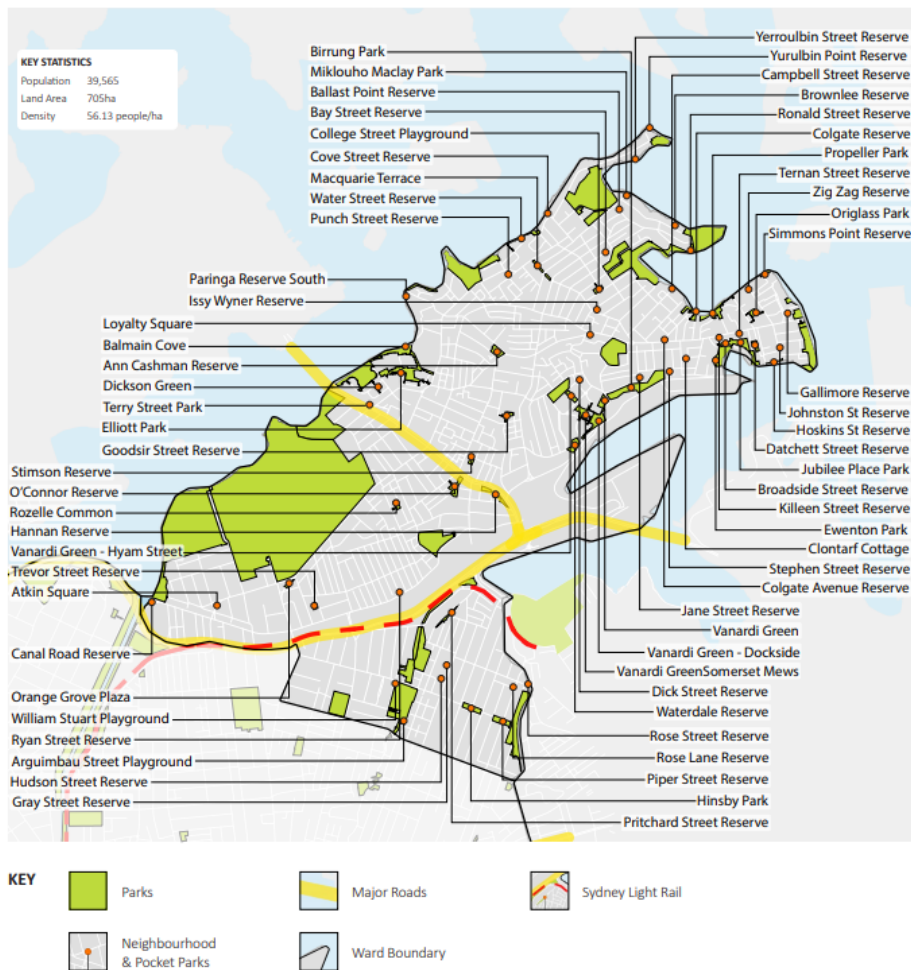
IWC are inviting you to provide your feedback on how we propose to care for these parks over the next 10 years. Community feedback ended on 20 November.

<https://yoursay.innerwest.nsw.gov.au/pocketparkpom>

Your ideas make a difference

IWC is looking for 'Inner Westies' aged 11-18. They are invited to take a five minute survey about them and their community, what they are passionate about and what changes they would like to see.

Inner Westies can complete a five minute survey at <https://yoursay.innerwest.nsw.gov.au/youthsurvey> and be in the running to



win a \$150 visa gift card!

Last day to take part is 1 February 2024.

White Bay Power Station

Nearly 40 years after the lights were switched off at White Bay Power Station, the iconic building will once again energise Sydney – this time as an arts, cultural and community hub. Starting with next year's Biennale of Sydney, the White Bay Power Station will open its doors to the public with a program of short-term events and activations. From March next year, the public will have the opportunity to explore this historic industrial masterpiece at the 2024 Biennale of Sydney.

The Biennale of Sydney is one of the largest international contemporary art festivals, showcasing artists from NSW, Australia and across the globe. The first Biennale of Sydney was held in 1973, making the event one of the longest running of its kind.

White Bay Power Station will be the first location to open during the three-month Biennale of Sydney, taking place from 9 March until 10 June 2024.

The Biennale of Sydney announced

program highlights on 31 October 2023 see <https://www.biennaleofsydney.art/events/>

Ten Thousand Suns departs from an acknowledgement of a multiplicity of perspectives, cosmologies, and ways of life that have always woven together the world under the sun. This central life-giving body, like the world it shines light upon, has otherwise been known under thousands of different words in as many languages. But many of these cultural viewpoints have in fact not relied on a vision of a single sun.

A multiplicity of suns conveys ambiguous images. It evokes a scorching world, both in several cosmological visions and very much in our moment of climate emergency. But it also conveys the joy of cultural multiplicities affirmed, of First Nations understandings of the cosmos brought to the fore, and of carnivals as forms of resistance in contexts that have surpassed colonial oppression. The 24th Biennale of Sydney works with these different layers of meaning, acknowledging the deep ecological crises derived from colonial and capitalist exploitation while refusing to concede to an apocalyptic vision of the

future. This politics of doom are seen as an attempt by the same forces that have caused these multiple crises to control possibilities to overcome them. The 24th Biennale of Sydney proposes instead solar and radiant forms of resistance that affirm collective possibilities around a future that is not only possible, but necessary to be lived in joy and plenitude, produced in common and shared widely.

Cockatoo Island

The Sydney Harbour Federation Trust (Harbour Trust) invites you to provide feedback on the Cockatoo Island / Wareamah Draft Master Plan.

The Cockatoo Island / Wareamah draft master plan envisions a future for the island that:

- Acknowledges the traditional ownership of First Nations peoples to the lands and waters of Wareamah, establishing, protecting and interpreting First Nations values of place.
- Conserves, interprets and protects the outstanding universal values of place as stated under the sites' UNESCO World Heritage listing.
- Rehabilitates the lands and conserves the built form to retain and enhance the unique character of Cockatoo Island / Wareamah.
- Revives the 'working harbour' industrial site, transforming the island to support a range of new and appropriate uses that connect the island into the fabric of day-to-day Sydney life.
- Supports and enhances Sydney's cultural and creative life, providing capability that drives significant and sustainable visitation and tourism.
- Evolves to provide an economically resilient and self-sustaining long term future for the island as a highly valued nationally significant cultural heritage asset

Arrival Square – a new, additional ferry wharf at the 'Ruby Steps' welcomes visitors into the island's new arrival and orientation square. Heritage features are

highlighted, and the square is activated with events, educational, creative, Country and cultural activities, signature food and beverage.

Fitzroy Dock – completed in 1857, Fitzroy Dock was the largest engineering project in Australia, carved from sandstone by convict labour. Currently submerged, the draft master plan considers draining this extraordinary structure, adding unique interpretive and light shows to become a premium island experience.

To have your say about the Cockatoo Island / Wareamah Draft Master Plan, visit www.harbourtrust.gov.au/cockatoo-island-consultation and review the summary of the draft master plan.

Submit feedback by 5pm Wednesday 13 December 2023 (AEDT)

Rozelle Interchange

This complex interchange is due to open soon. The date 23 November was reported but there is no formal announcement at the time of going to print. Rozelle will benefit from the diversion of traffic into the Iron Cove link which will mean most through traffic will not use Victoria Road. Discussions have begun on what changes will be made as a result. However IWC has no planning authority for the road and Transport for NSW is still formulating a future strategy incorporating greening and better access for businesses. It will wait a year to see what impact the changes have on traffic levels.

Western Harbour Tunnel

Stage 1 tunnelling has reached Beattie Street and in the next three months is planned to reach Jacques Street where it is 70m below the surface sounds like thunder plus drilling and rock hammering.

Stage 2 tunnelling has started from Cammeray.

The Western Harbour Tunnel Stage 2 Modification exhibition period has now closed. The team are currently preparing

a Response to Submissions Report for the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. The Minister will consider the feedback and our Response to Submissions Report before making a decision on the proposed changes.

The project team expect the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) to publish their decision and Response to Submissions Report in coming months. If approved, work involving the Tunnel Boring Machines would start in 2025.

About the Modification Report

The Modification is seeking to amend the approved Western Harbour Tunnel project which was granted planning approval in January 2021. It proposes changes to how we cross under Sydney Harbour between Birchgrove and Waverton by changing the construction methodology from the approved Immersed Tube Tunnel (IMT) method to Tunnel Boring Machines (TBMs).

The proposed changes, supported by the BA, will reduce construction impacts on the community and environment by:

- no dredging of Sydney Harbour
- reducing the overall number of construction support sites from five to three -
- no construction support sites required at Yurulbin Point, Berrys Bay, White Bay North or Victoria Road
- cofferdams no longer required at Birchgrove and Balls head in Sydney Harbour
- no impacts to Birchgrove Ferry Wharf and ferry services
- reduced impacts to ferries and boats on Sydney Harbour
- using the latest technology in tunnelling (TBM).

The Modification is also proposing a new construction support site at Emu Plains along with some changes at existing support sites at the Rozelle Rail Yards, Glebe Island and Ridge Street, North Sydney.

Balmain Association — AGM and Christmas Party

Sunday 17 December, 2pm at the Watch House

What's on at the Watch House

Please check the Balmain Association website
www.balmainassociation.org for up-to-date
information on art exhibitions



December and January, Tuesdays 11am till 2pm, Saturdays 11am – 3pm

Antique pictorial postcards provide a significant repository of historical images, often uniquely recorded. Besides offering a tantalising glimpse into the past, the human element captured in the fleeting messages preserved on the back imbues them with a charm all of their own.

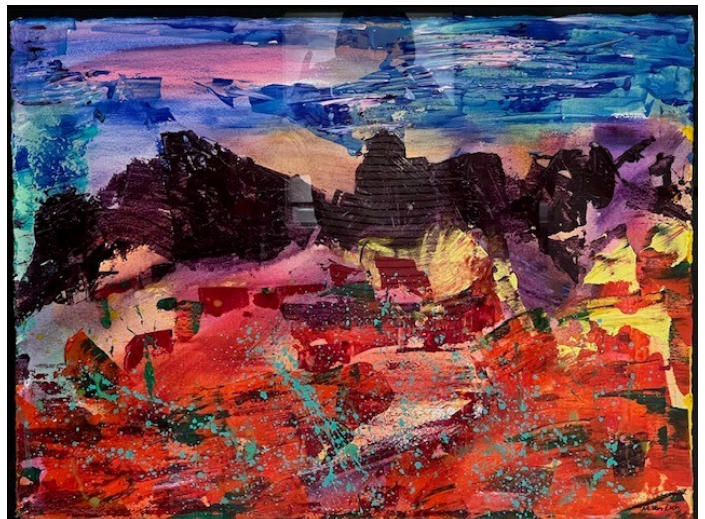
Here Mark Callabretta has assembled a catalogue of postcards, widely sourced, featuring Balmain scenes or relating in some way to the Balmain of old, which includes Birchgrove and Rozelle, and also the surrounding islands – Glebe, Goat, Cockatoo, Spectacle, and Snapper. While

concentrated between about 1905 and 1915, they span over a century, beginning as early as 1880.

Making Memories

10 and 11 February 2024:

Merle Van Esch, a 77-year-old local artist, will be debuting her paintings which take inspiration from the natural environment and local landscape.



Just a Sec

Opening night Friday 23 Feb 5-8 **All are welcome to attend**

Sat 24 Feb 10-4

Sun 25 Feb 10-2

Sophie Witter and Jane Witter are sisters and artists. Sophie recently has two works selected for the National Emerging Art Prize 2023. Sophie's paintings explore the process of making art in the midst of a hectic and full life. Her work is varied and includes still life, abstracts and landscapes and is characterised by an intuitive, colour filled energy. Jane's colourful works cross a variety of mediums including textile and paper collage and painting and she is interested in the intersection between objects, memory and the moment.



What's on at the Watch House



Unfamiliar Territory- works on paper.

16, 17 and 23, 24 March, 10am to -5pm

Helen Brancatisano's exhibition explores the notion of the passages we move through in our lives. We are inevitably confronted with the relentlessness of change and our experiences are deeply connected to the time and place in which we find ourselves.

The exhibition consists of drawings, monotypes and ink works.

A general invitation to the opening on Sat 16th at 2 pm

Two Pretty Birds

29 Mar to 1 April

10 am- 5 pm all days, general invite to opening, opening on Friday 29 at 6 pm!

Chloe Cassidy is a local Balmain artist who sells work both nationally and internationally.

She has worked in a variety of mediums but is most drawn to watercolour because of its fluid and unpredictable nature. This medium aids her to produce wonderfully whimsical paintings based on her love of nature and the natural world. This is her second exhibition at The Watch House.

Francine Courteille is a Sydney based artist and a graduate of National Art School. Her paintings capture both native and non native fauna in textural oils. Her most favoured subject matter is influenced by her love of foxes and birds and she has studied them in a variety of works and mediums.

Chloe and Francine invite you to perceive their subject matter as beautiful and sentient beings in their combined exhibition *Two Pretty Birds*.

