



The Peninsula OBSERVER

the Newssheet of the Balmain Association PO Box 57•Balmain•NSW•2041
www.balmainassociation.org.au

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September 2017

Meet and Greet

Wednesday 28th June 2017 6pm Balmain Town Hall

The meet and greet of History and Heritage groups in the Inner West was a delightful night with the mood set by Ray Alldrige who was Ray Martin's Music Director from the 1990s and vocalist Richard Frank.

The night was a wonderful opportunity for representatives from all the History and Heritage groups of the new amalgamated Inner West Council area to present their profile, location, members and current research areas to the other groups. Now comprising an area of 35 square kilometres, with an estimated population of 182,043 over 27 suburbs, it truly begs for bridges to be built. The Inner West has such a rich history, all the way from Birchgrove and Balmain to the Cooks River in Tempe running north to south then from Newtown to Croydon Park running east to west.

The newly appointed Group Manager of Library and History Services Caroline Macleod opened the event. She expressed the current review of services and the best way we can deliver the service in the future. "The team, in doing this, have discovered some differences, but many more

similarities when it comes to the inner west's communities' history and heritage."

"One of the very clear aspects we have in common is the commitment and valuable input the heritage groups and volunteers contribute to our service and the recording and analysing of the Inner West's Community's history. We are hosting this meet and greet tonight in recognition of this, and your important ongoing contributions."

The newly formed local history team, Amie Zar Local History Librarian, Aleem Aleemullah Local History Librarian, Anna-Bella De Silva Archivist and Shane Teehan Library Officer, presented a brief on the collections and services they manage from the former three council areas Marrickville, Ashfield and Leichhardt. The collections include the Balmain Archives community collection, Leichhardt Local History, Marrickville Local History and Ashfield Local History collections, comprising of original maps, oral histories, publications and exhibitions. The Local History Grant programme was presented and individuals and groups were encouraged to apply for grants to enrich the local history collections and provide valuable research about people, places and events in the Inner West.

Presenters included Duncan MacAuslan from Sydney Bus Museum, Ross Mackenzie on behalf of the Balmain Association, Carole Allen from Friends of Callan Park, Scott MacArthus from the Marrickville Heritage Society, Laurel Horton from St Peters Cooks River History Group and Louis and Sue Castrique from the Addison Road Centre.



Duncan MacAuslan speaking about the Sydney Bus Museum

A wide range of publications were on display and wonderful networks were beginning to form. We all look forward to the ongoing strength of the research conducted, the collections preserved, events to be enjoyed celebrating educating and informing the community about the rich history and heritage of the Inner West.

Amie Zar,
Local History Librarian – Inner West Council Leichhardt.

Photos courtesy Local History IWC.



Caroline Macleod and Shane Teehan from Marrickville

**Balmain Association
2017 AGM
Wednesday 1 November
Agenda and nomination
form enclosed.**

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COUNCIL ELECTIONS – A SNAPSHOT - Diana Garder

With the Council elections due in September and all the controversy about amalgamations and administrators, I got to thinking about the changes in Council over the 50 years I have lived in Balmain.

In the 1960s the Labor Party was very much in control of Leichhardt Council and State and Federal members were selected by the party. No public input at all. The Mayor at the time was Ann Cashman, a puppet head who presided over the Council meetings and agreed with whatever was put forward. I recall going to a Leichhardt Council Ball at the Leichhardt Town Hall and Balmain Association members Rose and Errol Pickard waltzing to the national anthem, "God Save the Queen"!!

As the population of Balmain was changing, people wanted a say in how their local area was managed. A group called "Campaign for Better Council" was formed and a number of locals put their hands up to stand for Council. Philip Bray and Elizabeth Tow were elected in Balmain and there were others in the other wards. Nick Origlass and Issy Wyner, who had been in Council for many years as Labor members, and had been kicked out of the Labor Party for taking the residents' side against the chemical tank farms in Donnelly Street, were elected as independents also. This was 1971-1973 and Nick Origlass, who became the Mayor, introduced Open Council. The barrier was removed between the public and the councilors and anyone could speak to their cause!! A huge step forward!!

The Labor Party hit back however for the next election - signing up many of the party faithful prior to the election and so regained power. Les Rodwell became Mayor again (he had preceded Ann Cashman) and this was the time of Danny Casey and Bill Heffernon in Rozelle East Branch. Danny subsequently became one of the major figures in the Drugs Royal Commission under Commissioner Woodward. Danny's Balmain Welding Co, his allies State Labor MP Roger Degan, Mayor Les Rodwell, William Sinclair, drug dealer and erstwhile publicity officer

for Leichhardt Council and many of his employees were all examined. The Commissioner's comment when hearing about Danny's unorthodox financial dealings was: "I can understand children being willing to believe in Father Christmas".

With conflicts between the old Labor's domination of the area and the new inner urban residents – "Trendies" – branch meetings were sometimes heated. The finale was when the lights went out at the Balmain Town Hall during a Balmain Labor meeting, a fire extinguisher was thrown through a window and the books disappeared so that bona fide branch members could not be verified.

Nick Origlass and Issy Wyner, Balmain Independents, remained on Council for many years. Many names from those times – some good, some bad – Hall Greenland, Evan Jones, Bill Brady and then the Community Independents came on the scene. Led by Larry Hand they were a force with Sue Stock, Trevor Snape, Maire Sheehan, Kath Hacking with solid community support.

The machinations of what goes on behind closed doors was revealed in the film "Rats in the Ranks" by Bob Connolly on the mayoral elections in 1994 with Larry Hand as the star! We were all involved!

Larry who had been Mayor since 1991, was again successful at that election and remained Mayor in 1995, followed by Maire Sheehan the next year. From this time on the Labor Party came back with Kris Cruden and the ALP leap frogged the Community Independents until the rise of the Greens. Jamie Parker became Mayor in 2008 and he used this position to go on to turn Balmain into a Green State seat.

When Open Council was established in the 1970s there were a number of committees set up which involved members of the community. The major one was the Town Planning Committee which was very involved with the development of the Leichhardt Town Plan, but there were Heritage, Traffic etc Committees and much later Precinct Committees which involved a large number of local residents in decision making in their areas. With the current amalgamated Council we have lost all of this accumulated knowledge and we have lost our local representation.

Diana Garder.

**Remember to vote
Saturday 9th September
To elect 15 councillors
to Inner West Council, 3
for each of 5 wards, to
represent 185,000 residents.
Come and meet the
candidates for the Balmain
Ward
Tuesday August 29
See poster below.**

**MEET THE
CANDIDATES**

**FOR THE
BALMAIN WARD
Inner West Council Election***

**Balmain Town Hall
Tuesday, August 29
6.30 pm to 8 pm**

Sponsored by

BALMAIN ASSOCIATION INC. PO BOX 57, BALMAIN 2041
FRIENDS OF CALLAN PARK
Balmain Institute

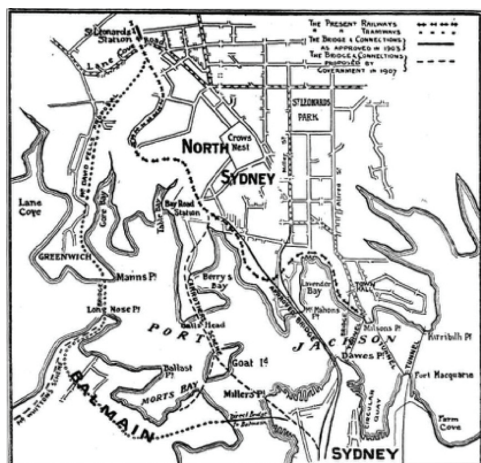
*To be held on Saturday, September 9, 2017.

Bridges and Tunnels - Duncan MacAuslan

Using the Balmain Peninsula as a crossing point to the north shore isn't a new idea.

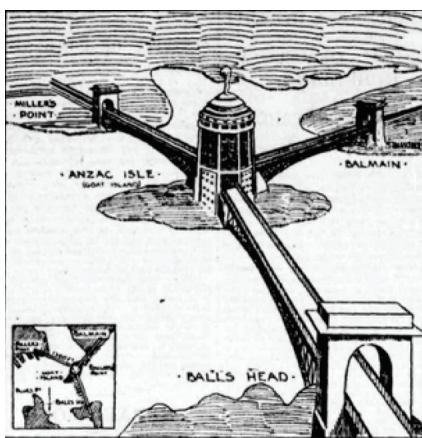
Building a bridge across the harbour was a topic of discussion as early as 1815 when Francis Greenway proposed a bridge from Dawes Point to Milsons Point. Whilst this was the favoured crossing point the distance from Goat Island and Long Nose Point to Balls Head tempted several bridge proponents.

In April 1902 J W Withers in a letter to the Daily Telegraph¹ suggested using Goat Island, 'that place that has hitherto been looked upon as valueless', as the base of a bridge connecting Sydney, at Flagstaff Hill, to both Balmain, on Darling Street hill, and the North Shore. The bridge was to be at a high level. He implied that it would carry trams as 'where the trams go people will settle'



Four years later Alderman Hartnett of Lane Cove suggested 'connecting Mann's Point, Greenwich, with Long Nose Point, Balmain, by a bridge similar to the London Tower Bridge'². Lane Cove Council pursued this to the point of getting an estimate from the government of £220,000 for a bridge 50 feet above high tide and with a 150 feet clearance in the opening span. The Premier of the day, Mr Carruthers, supported this bridge and even suggested extending the proposed Long Nose Point railway across it. Undoubtedly the shortest crossing point below Gladesville it would have been a circuitous journey to use it; this along with the Harbour Trust's adversity to anything that would be detrimental to the interests of the port.

Another proposal was between Long Nose Point and Ball's Head but again it lacked support from either the Harbour Trust or North Shore residents.

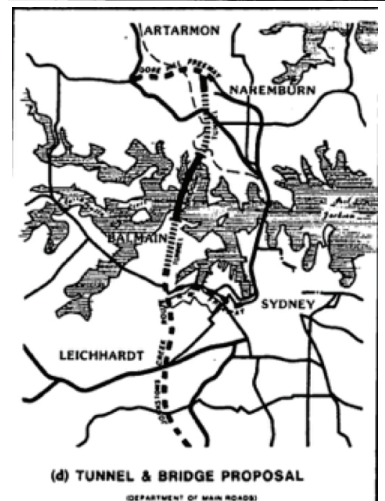
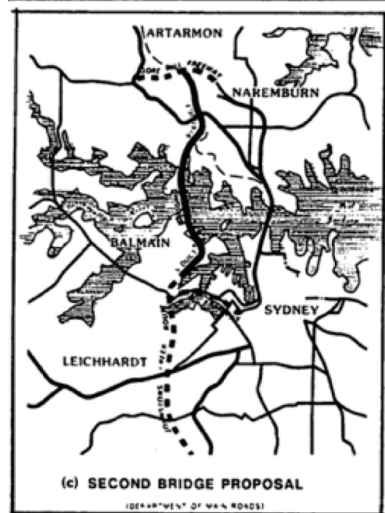
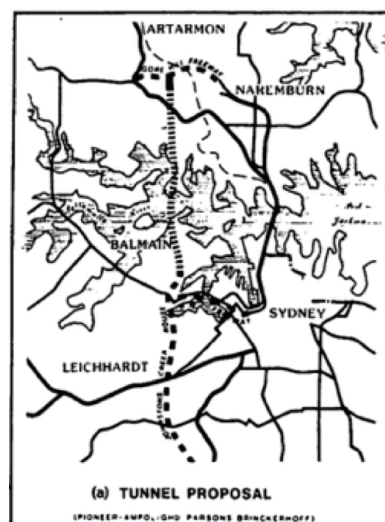


The Goat Island Bridge continued to be discussed into the 1920s and was developed further by engineer F E Stowe. His proposal was to carry both rail and tram connections to Balmain and Balls Head³ as well as pedestrians and vehicles. However, by this time Bradfield's plans for the present Harbour Bridge were coming to fruition and the Goat Island option was set aside.

So the Balmain Peninsula remained 'isolated' from both the North Shore and the City for another sixty years, with the Harbour and Gladesville bridges as the only crossing.

In March 1981, the Balmain Association was approached by the Greenwich Association to support their opposition to a suggested second harbour crossing from Balmain to Greenwich either by bridge or tunnel. It was 7 December 1981 before the Government's four routes were announced in the Sydney Morning Herald (p3):

- A Pioneer Concrete plan for a 5.5Km long tunnel from near Victoria Road, White Bay, to the Gore Hill Freeway at Artarmon.
- A Transfield group plan for a bridge from East Balmain to Balls Head with a support constructed on Goat Island (and associated roads to get to each end of the



bridge). This proposal gave no details of how traffic was to be dealt with in Wollstonecraft or East Balmain.

c) A DMR⁴ proposal for a bridge and viaducts from the proposed Gore Hill Freeway, at Artarmon, to Victoria Road, Rozelle (White Bay junction).

d) An alternative DMR proposal for a tunnel from Gore Hill to Greenwich, a bridge to Balmain and another tunnel to Rozelle. This option would have destroyed Birchgrove oval and demolished houses as far back as Rowntree and Cameron Streets. At the White Bay end the whole valley below Reynolds and Mullens Streets would have been demolished.

Not surprisingly the Peninsula's population rallied behind the Balmain Bridge Action Group. The Balmain Association fully supported BBAG, and its successor Combined Bridge Action Group. The BA's News Sheet, Peninsula Observer's predecessor covered the activities in detail. Issue 120, May 1982, not only showed the

proposals on maps but also listed all the properties that would have to be demolished for each one.

The CBAG activities included a dinner at the Wentworth Hotel which raised \$14,000, simultaneous protest picnics at Manns, Ballast and Long Nose Points, and a concert at the Opera House featuring the Little River Band⁵.

In the face of such intense opposition in December 1982 the Wran Government announced that the second harbour crossing had been abandoned⁶. In 1987 the proposal for the Sydney Harbour Tunnel to the east of the city was agreed to and opened in August 1992.

Since then tunnelling technology has improved considerably and the latest imposition on the Balmain Peninsula is WestConnex, the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link; nearly all underground.

The WestConnex Rozelle interchange and the Western Harbour Tunnel

are an updated repeat of the 1981 proposal. The interchange, appearing on early maps just a couple of roads intersecting is in fact a multi-level complex of tunnels under almost all of Rozelle, parts of Lilyfield and Annandale. Whilst tunnels have a lower visual impact and surface impact they do have a serious problem with exhaust stacks which concentrate the emission of gases to the atmosphere. The present documentation doesn't clearly identify where the ventilation outlets will be other than 'near the tunnel exits'.

Justification is, as always, based on increasing traffic volumes, congestion costs and trip time savings.

Yet again residents have rallied in protest, in particular in Rozelle, where fresh from defending themselves against the Rozelle Village towers, residents have formed RAW (Rozelle Against Westconnex) – see rozelleagainstwestconnex.org.



- 1 SYDNEY, NORTH SHORE, AND BALMAIN BRIDGE. (1902, April 15). The Daily Telegraph (Sydney, NSW : 1883 - 1923), p. 7. Retrieved August 6, 2017, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article237333702>
- 2 ANOTHER BRIDGE SUGGESTION. (1906, April 11). The Daily Telegraph (Sydney, NSW : 1883 - 1923), p. 8. Retrieved August 6, 2017, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article236842135>
- 3 Balls Head was originally acquired by the government for a coal bunkering depot and housing. Public protest resulted in the remaining land being declared a public park by Premier Jack Lang in 1926.
- 4 DMR – the Department of Main Roads, now part of RMS Roads and Maritime Services.
- 5 See News Sheets 108, 115, 116, 119, 120, 122, 123 and 134 at <http://www.balmainassociation.org.au/newsletters/> Issue 120 gives most details.
- 6 May, J, A Short History of Greenwich Community Association 1944-2014, p. 7, Retrieved August 6, 2017, from <http://www.greenwich.org.au/Documents/GCA%20History.pdf>

More Vandalism in Mort Bay Park - Fergus Fricke

The reinstatement of Australian native vegetation in Mort Bay's "Site C" from a highly contaminated industrial site is nothing short of miraculous. When the original park was laid out and the public housing built (Sites A and B) on what was the former Mort's Dock and Engineering Co. and later the ANL Container Terminal, "Site C" on the western side of Church and McKell Streets was not included. The site was slated for more housing but contamination and an approaching State Election brought on a decision to recreate a pre 1788 woodland. In order to do this the site was capped with crushed sandstone and native grasses, sedges, shrubs and trees planted. The result is a renowned success and a credit LMC/IWC staff and volunteers. It is a sanctuary for native birds and animals including white-faced herons, ring-tailed possums and bluetongue lizards.

Later a basketball court, childcare centre, public toilet and community garden were also established at the northern end of the site. Some other wildlife also showed their presence; destructive homo-sapiens have poisoned, sawn, hacked, sprayed, chopped, lopped and broken trees and saplings. Council has been reluctant to install surveillance cameras in the park but has attached notices on the boundary fence and has delivered notices (copy below) to a number of residences in Short Street which overlook the area where most of the vegetation damage has been done. It is also proposed to have Council Rangers more actively involved. Residents in nearby areas are encouraged to contact Council (9367 9222 or council@innerwest.nsw.gov.au) if they see any suspicious activity. Larger signs on the boundary fence are also under consideration.

In the December 2016 edition of The Peninsula Observer I also wrote about the importance of trees and the vandalism of them in Mort Bay Park. Since then there has been a marked decrease of destruction along the Bay Street boundary of the park and more recently a marked increase of vegetation vandalism below Short Street despite notices on the fence about the activity and the fines which can be imposed. The destructive activity is difficult to understand as the damage cannot have improved any view and even if the destruction was to preserve existing views for the future there are other more distant mature trees in the park that will also block views.

My own preference is to put up photos of the view before the park was established which might be enough to make any Short Street residents convinced they are well off. Other suggestions would be most welcome.



In 1943 when this photo was taken the distant views from houses in Short Street (running from bottom left to top right of the rectangle) would have been non-existent.



Photo taken from East Balmain looking west. Views from Short Street would have been very restricted when the ANL Container Terminal operated from 1968 to 1978.



An aerial view of Mort Bay during the construction of the ANL Container Terminal in 1968.



Celebrate History Week: Pop!

2-10 September 2017

#HistoryWeek17

History Week 2017 seeks to examine, unravel and understand Australian 'popular culture'.



POP at the Watch House

A Bruce Petty retrospective and Jan Wood's interpretation of POP

To be opened by Amie Zar,

Local History Heritage and Archives Inner West Council

so join us

at 2pm Saturday on 2 September.

There will also be a presentation of life memberships.

The exhibition will continue on Saturdays throughout September 11.30 to 4pm.

From Jan Wood

The paintings in the exhibition come from my new series

"From Gramophone to Google" where I hope to use my artwork to springboard memories of life in the 20th Century.

There are 3 Aspects

1. PRE POP ie Pre plastic – Pre 1958 as epitomised by Bakelite (78 records were made of this) and Australia very much a part of the British Empire.

2. POP – 1958 onwards – The Age of Plastic (45's were called Vinyls) The Age of Americanisation and Capitalism with a background setting of the Cold War.

3. POST POP – The Digital Age – Globalisation – The mobile phone. The Age of the Internet.

The paintings encourage the viewer to Google key words and open discourse on what POP means to them.



Bruce helped celebrate Balmain Association's 40th birthday



An example of Jan's PRE POP Cracker night celebrating Empire Day

CALLAN PARK HISTORY OF CEREBRAL SURGERY AND RESEARCH UNIT

BEE MILES, A PSYCHIATRIC HISTORY

Sunday, 10 September 2017 2-4 PM INCLUDING AFTERNOON TEA ON THE VERANDAH

CEREBRAL SURGERY AND RESEARCH UNIT (CSRU)

The Cerebral Surgery and Research Unit (CSRU), cost £1,000,000 (more than \$30 million today), opened at Callan Park in 1958 and was reportedly the envy of neurosurgeons at Sydney's major teaching hospitals. In addition to psychosurgery, the CSRU provided neurological services to NSW psychiatric facilities, together with resources for psychiatric research, both human and animal. The Unit, and its successors—the Psychiatric Research Unit and the Neuropsychiatric Institute—functioned for nearly twenty years at Callan Park.

Dr Richard White will describe the history of the CSRU including its inception in the mid-1950s, its creation and its fate. Dr White worked as a psychiatrist at Callan Park 1971-1975; and is a PhD candidate in History and Philosophy of Science at Sydney University.

BEE MILES: A PSYCHIATRIC HISTORY

Bee Miles was an extraordinary character in the life of Sydney for decades; well-known for her free taxi rides, recounting Shakespeare & clashing with authorities because of her outrageous behaviour.

Associate Professor Robert Kaplan, Forensic Psychiatrist, Graduate School of Medicine, University of Wollongong, has written extensively about the history of medicine &, with Dr Graham Edwards, has written a history of Bee Miles (not yet published).

VENUE: NSW Writers' Centre @ Callan Park
Rozelle (enter Cecily Street gates)

COST: \$25 p/person = seminar + afternoon tea
Children under 15 = free

ENQUIRIES: focp.admin@gmail.com

Photographer:
Hayley Anderson
2015





What's on at the Watch House

www.balmainassociation.org.au

SEPTEMBER

Saturdays 2, 9, 16, 23 11.30 am to 4pm
Balmain Association "POP"

OCTOBER

Saturday 30 Sep and Sunday 1 and Monday 2, 9am-5pm

Harbour Life

Come and see an exhibition of oil paintings by former Balmain resident, Tom Fuggle. The works featured are atmospheric seascape studies capturing moments of harbour life, and include 'The Wake' entered for the Wynne Prize 2017. Tom Fuggle grew up in London and studied Architecture in Edinburgh.

Opening Friday 29 6pm-9pm All welcome

Website: www.tomfuggle.wordpress.com [Tom Fuggle](http://www.tomfuggle.com)

Friday 6, Saturday 7 and Sunday 8 10am to 5pm

MARKING TIME

Chris Donaldson's exhibition consists of over forty photographs in both digital colour, and film & darkroom produced black & white, marking significant moments in time and place from inland Australia to the streets of New York - from Venice to London - Iceland to Peru and much in between.

Opening Friday 6, 6-8.30pm All welcome
Saturday 14 and Sunday 15, 10am to 4pm

Around Us II

The group is returning after their successful exhibition in 2015. This exhibition showcases six artists and the scenes from the world that surrounds them. Cecilia Hwang brings together her friends Mee Lee, Samuel Keem, Ida Arakel, Lorraine Kolenko and Ellie Hwang to bring a diverse collection of different mediums and styles.

Opening Friday 13, 6.30pm all welcome
Saturday 21, Sunday 22, Saturday 28 and Sunday 29, 11am to 5pm

Touch

South Coast artist Hela Donela comes back to Balmain with her third annual exhibition at the Watch House.

The exhibition explores the theme of TOUCH from various aspects.

Hela absorbs simple moments of life: beautiful and painful and processes them into paintings, taking the viewer to take a moment in a hectic world - to pause and feel.

Opening Friday 20 6.30 - 8.30 all welcome heladonela.com

NOVEMBER

Saturday 4 and Sunday 5, 10am to 4pm
Painting with Friends.

Five friends who have painted together for the last 10 years. This will be their third exhibition at the Balmain Watch House a great place to invite friends and family and Balmain people to see our work.

pammieduffin@gmail.com

Saturday 11 and Sunday 12, 10am to 4pm

Impressions of Balmain and Beyond 2017

Artists include Barbara Hamilton (watercolours and acrylics), Carlie Lopez (sculpture), Jenny Saunders Thompson (watercolours), Corinne Gaston and Stephanie Maratz (acrylics and ceramics) and Allan Coker (photography).

This exhibition features a wide variety of realistic and more modern interpretations of our beautiful harbour environment and suburbs, as well as reflecting our recent travels.

Opening Friday 10 6-8pm All welcome
www.balmainpainters@weebly.com

Thursday 16 to Sunday 26 11am-5pm
TREES

Denise Barry, Deanna Doyle, paintings, drawings/mixed media, Pamela Pauline, fine arts photography.

"In the past all of life was based on trees."

The 14th Dalai Lama

Today, we respect that significance and honour their majesty.

This exhibition came spontaneously for the three of us, we were all expressing our art, our passion, independently on "trees". So, it spoke for us.

Opening Friday 17, 6-8.30pm. All welcome

DECEMBER

Saturday 2, 10am-6pm and Sunday 3, 10am-4pm

An EXHIBITION of COLOUR!

FIONA DAVIS and HELEN ROSS are two Well Known Balmain Artists showing works depicting colour, movement, emotion and most of all happiness!

Opening Friday 1, 6-8pm Fiona and Helen would like you to join them for celebratory drinks.

Back to Balmain Day 2017

As we said last year, despite the council amalgamation, we've been told that funding (Insurance cover) and support are in place for this year's Back to Balmain picnic.

**So it will be the usual Elkington Park
Sunday, October 30 from
10-30 am**

Again we are looking forward to the Rowing Club providing the sausage sizzle and in the unlikely event of wet weather that their premises will be available.
Michele Hacking
mjhacking@gmail.com



Jack Thomson who launched his memoir Jack's Story : Growing up in Balmain in September 2016 with Asa Wahlquist who had encouraged Jack to write story, B2B 2016

The Balmain Association Inc Representing Balmain, Birchgrove and Rozelle

Our aims are 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 realization of the above.

The Balmain Association meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 6:00pm in the Watch House, 179 Darling Street Balmain.

MEMBERS ARE INVITED TO ATTEND.

The History Room is open every Saturday from 11:30-3 and Tuesday 11.30 - 1pm

Postal: PO Box 57 Balmain 2041

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