



The Peninsula OBSERVER

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

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Australian Heritage Festival – My Culture, My Story, 7-30 April 2018 - Helen Carter

Each year the Balmain Association participates in the National Trust's Australian Heritage Festival. This year the theme "My Culture, My Story" celebrates the diversity of cultures that shaped our shared heritage. What better way to depict Balmain's hidden cultural heritage than using the popular art form of photography and it was David Liddle, a well-known local Balmain photographer who was chosen to capture some of those men and women, members of our community from multicultural backgrounds, who have contributed to the identity of Balmain.

David's A2 colour archival digital prints including some earlier black and white images, were accompanied by individual storyboards and the exhibition was mounted on the old sandstone walls of the Watch House. David brilliantly captured the faces of his subjects and their surroundings, often in their work environments. He accorded them dignity and respect. As you gazed at the images what was clearly evident was the uniqueness of the occupations they worked in -



Jens Bagoien (Norway) at work

crafts such as - building and tuning pianos – Jens Bagoien (Norway) and the restoration of Citroen cars – Paul Moine (French); crafts that could be lost. The people portrayed were not the wealthy professional people often depicted in the media today as being representative of Balmain. The storyboards tell a different story – these were people from many disparate cultures and backgrounds and why they chose to live and in many cases establish their work in Balmain. In fact this exhibition shows that Balmain still has its unique community for example, Maurice Giacomini (Swiss) the animator for the film Happy Feet at home working on his computer, Jenny Bell (English), fashion designer from Johnston & Bell, wearing one of her creations in her boutique in Darling Street and Vincenzo Pandolfi (Italian) a musician, chef and chiropractor, cooking in his kitchen at home. Of course the well-known owner of Charlotte, Jason Gherber (Lebanese), was featured with his mother and his staff in a buzzing coffee shop in Rowntree Street.

At the opening of the exhibition, visitors and members were delighted to be able to meet with the photographer David Liddle, who launched the exhibition, and to mix with many of the people in the photographs who attended, some with their families, including grandchildren – bringing people together to share their experiences.

Certainly, after the exhibition, the Balmain Association can add these images to their archives along with David's earlier images, some of which were also exhibited in the cells, from 'Balmain People and Places'. They can later become repositories



Jenny Bell (English) poses in her shop

of memory, creating personal, social and political histories. However these subjects that make up our diverse community and the many other individuals, because of size restrictions were not included in this exhibition but need to be looked after in our archives so this diversity of the Balmain community which we are so proud of, does not disappear.

Photographs from the exhibition can be purchased from David Liddle his email is photos@sydney.net or telephone him on (02) 9810 8552.

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Democracy is still missing - Cr John Stamolis, Independent Balmain

It's a shame that this article is not far more positive about local democracy. Unfortunately even local democracy suffers when party politics at Council gets in the way.

When the Inner West Council merger took place in May 2016, the first decision of the Administrator was to dismiss all Council committees. This included Council's standing committees as well as many volunteer committees such as the resident precinct committees, facilities committees (which manage community resources - Town Hall, Clontarf Cottage) and others (heritage, bicycle and climate change committees).

Sadly, the Inner West Council opened up by disengaging with hundreds of active and committed residents across the three previous municipalities. After such treatment, some people may not give their time and energy to Council again.

Now, a full two years on (May 2018), Council is debating how it will restore Local Participatory Democracy in the Inner West. Unfortunately, here in the Inner West, these discussions are heavily influenced by party politics rather than being a collaborative process with the aim of creating an informed Council. Still, we are one of the most party political controlled Councils in the nation. Councils' debate about local participatory democracy took place at its first meeting in May. The Greens and two independent Councillors successfully resolved to establish open Council committees (as used by the three previous Councils) as well as independent resident committees, similar to the Leichhardt Council Precincts.

Within days, this resolution was rescinded by the major parties and the matter came back to Council in late May. This time, Labor and Liberal had the numbers to get the resolution they wanted, which would see tight Council control over community engagement and committees.

So, why is there such close interest from the major parties about what form community engagement takes? It's quite simple. Precinct committees and community action groups have often challenged Council. More so, these groups have led the way on many important campaigns: stop the cruise ship terminal, Ballast Point, WestConnex, Callan Park, the Tigers site, heritage, parking meters, infrastructure spending, children's play

areas and much more. These groups brought major issues to community attention and often forced Council to respond to these.

For those of us who remember the yellow Precinct Newsletter, the precincts kept us better informed than Council did. The newsletter was impartial and well-focused. Now, we only see what Council wants us to see.

In essence, the precincts and action groups have been vital to improving the accountability and focus of local government, and Council have not always welcomed this. Getting rid of resident precincts was seen as a way of controlling or minimising external scrutiny of Council.

Additionally, independent Councillors have emerged from these groups. The Inner West Council today has two Councillors who commenced their years of community leadership in precincts and on major community campaigns (Cr John Stamolis and Cr Pauline Lockie).

It is expected that part of their appeal to voters is that they were prepared to stand up for their community in the face of State Government or Council. They also challenge the heavy party political dominance of the Inner West and offer an alternative and much more local

voice to community issues.

The Inner West Council has the opportunity to commence a new era of community engagement and to tap into the vast skills, experience and background of its community. We are a community of great diversity and talent and this should be valued by Council. Council's focus must be on providing support structures in order to maximise community participation and make this a positive and meaningful experience for people rather than setting up control structures which will control input. Council must also see local participatory democracy as an investment that pays major dividends for us all and it must stop seeing this as a cost. To hear Councillors whining and moaning about the funds that were paid to support the precincts (which, in fact, were a pittance) is embarrassing to say the least. In fact, I can think of no bigger cost on Council and the community than the heavy layer of party politics which controls our Council and makes many things inefficient.

Look at this issue alone; it was debated twice because Labor and Liberal didn't have the numbers the first time round, so they forced us to go through the whole thing again. As a result, we are now left with another incomplete meeting with staff waiting for Councillors to make decisions.

20 years of community activism, advocacy & achievement

Friends of Callan Park 1998-2018

Friends of Callan Park (FOCP) have been doing what we do for 20 years in 2018! A significant element of what FOCP does is to advocate and educate for the site. The numbers on tours and attending events are testament to the keen thirst among the local and wider community to know more about this remarkable cultural landscape.

For much of the last two decades FOCP has participated each year in History Week and the National Trust Heritage Festival, both of which provide unaffordable statewide publicity. For 2018 Heritage Festival FOCP offered walking tours across the site based on the theme of "My Culture, My Story". Such is the interest in Callan Park and Broughton Hall that more than 80 people booked (and there were about 27 on the waiting list). The almost instant response from local and wider community indicates their ongoing engagement with and concern for the future of Callan Park. The tours were a great success – starting at Garry Owen House (NSW Writers' Centre) where people learnt about former occupants, architects, and history, explored the quadrangles and foundations under the former Callan Park Asylum, the heritage Pleasure Gardens, the Gardener's and Farm Manager's cottages, and the Sydney Harbour Bridge War Memorial, Callan Point, Broughton Hall and more. On a perfect autumn day Callan Park was shining!

The Balmain Telephone Exchange Again May 18, 2018

Helen Carter, the Balmain Association's archivist, has been working her way through the collected records from the beginning of time; the time that is of the beginning of the Balmain Association in 1965. Unlike the creation of the universe or even our solar system, the life of Balmain's community activists seems to have been created at or before the creation of the Balmain Association. Nearly twenty years after the creation of the BA was born an idea. The idea was to get rid of the ugly Balmain Telephone Exchange, the carbuncle of a building the on the beautiful face of Balmain and in particular James Barnet's 1886 Post Office and Law Court building. Patrick Conaghan suggested in his 1983 letter to the Minister of Communications, the Hon Mr M Duffy MP, and the Balmain Association that the demolition of the BTE and the creation of a park in its place would be a wonderful way to celebrate the Bicentenary of the First Fleet's arrival in Australia. The idea was taken up by Leichhardt Council's Bicentennial Committee until it saw the response to Patrick's letter from Minister Duffy. Telecom, the government owned organization that was later flogged off to become Telstra, had informed the Minister that the estimated cost of moving the exchange would be about "\$5,000,000". In Minister Duffy's reply to Patrick he stated that, "Whenever possible Telecom conforms with the requirements of all state and local regulatory bodies; however, at this time the demands placed on Telecom to provide an efficient and economic service to all customers nationwide do not, regretfully, permit the Commission to undertake the work you suggest at Balmain."

Minister Duffy also stated that, "You may be assured, however, that Telecom will take your views into consideration should any technological or other change make relocation of the present facilities a viable proposition". A little over a decade later the Federal Government began flogging off

"Telecom" and transformed it into Telstra, a fully privatized company that has a more "business-like" approach to community desires and profit. Needless to say there has been no offer by Telstra to finance the demolition of a tiny part of the unused Balmain Exchange and the creation of a small public space in time for the First Fleet Tricentennial celebrations or any time before or after those celebrations. Telstra's ever-increasing estimate of the cost of undertaking the demolition of the front of the Balmain Exchange is, to some degree, understandable as Telstra's share price, reputation and share of the telecommunications market are falling disastrously. In such a situation it would not be surprising if Telstra were being eyed by other "Telcos" for a potential takeover. In this environment any delay of the demolition of the front of the Exchange, especially for another five years (Telstra has suggested this option with a sweetener involving a larger demolition area at an unstated cost) would be stupid and the Inner West Council should insist that the agreement with Telstra that was signed last year should be honored ASAP.

Fergus Fricke



Artist's impression of the preferred Telstra proposal under consideration



What Bruce Petty thinks

The matter of whether to take up Telstra's latest offer was on the agenda at IWC Council on 22 May but the meeting only achieved half the agenda. It was the last item and is still to be discussed at a future meeting.



Fergus Fricke and Brian Mullins, manager of the Telstra Museum at the BTE centenary Celebration in July 2014 Photo courtesy of Inner West Courier.

HEAVEN OR HELL

The Inaugural conference of the Historic Houses Association of Australia (HHA)

The HHA was formed to support the owners of historic properties. It grew out of the Friends of the Historic Houses trust, a group of Friends of some of Australia's most significant house museums – Vaucluse House, Elizabeth Bay House, Elizabeth Farm. The HHA became a national organization in 2014. There are over 50 property owners, some of which are private and some house museums, over 1000 members and over 7000 supporters. The inaugural conference was organized to look at the many issues that are encountered by property owners.

For many house owners it was the first time they had been to a forum that allowed them to tell their story

departments, local Council, heritage professionals and many others. Often the process is made more difficult because of unsympathetic, poorly trained, over-worked staff, and the many rules and regulations set by the various government departments.

There were speakers from the Land & Environment Court, heritage professionals and real estate. For many house owners it was the first time they had been to a forum that allowed them to tell their story and to learn from others.

There was a very real energy in the room as the conference drew to a close and a positive feeling that some of the many points on the whiteboard at the end of the session could be followed up and reported on at a later time.

A cocktail party for all delegates was held at Chippendale

Restorations, Rozelle, a treasure trove for anyone interested in old houses.

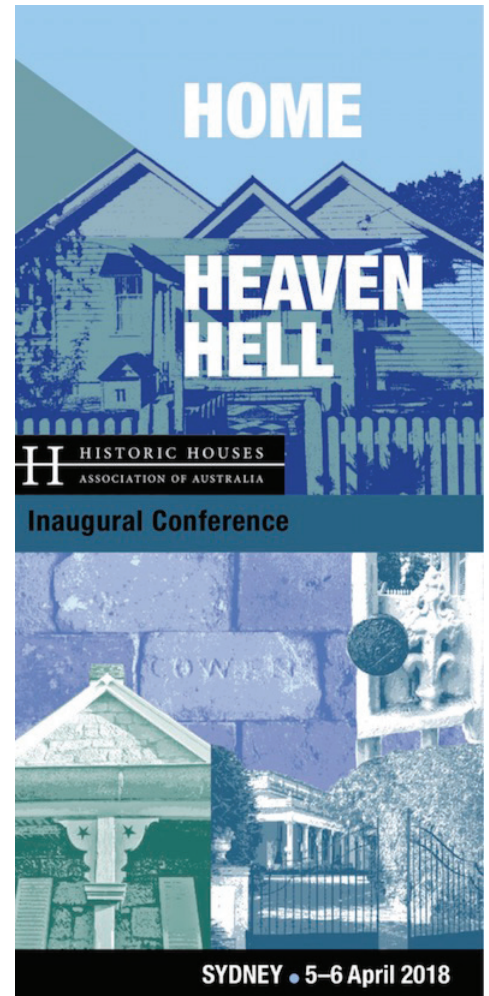


James Hervey-Bathurst's Eastnor Castle

The two key note speakers were from overseas – James Hervey-Bathurst, himself an owner of an historic castle and past president of HHA in UK, and Anne-Sophie Bellamy- Biard from La Demeure Historique, an heritage organization in France. These speakers were able to give an insight into how these issues are handled in their countries.

There were 220 delegates attending the 2 day conference, held at the Conservatorium of Music. They came from NSW, QLD, VIC, TAS and SA representing house owners, heritage professionals, architects and historians.

Many of the speakers were owners of historic properties and they spoke of their experiences in dealing with the Heritage Council, government



Here you can find anything you need for your house from door latches, to lead light windows, chandeliers. Fireplaces, chimney pots and so much more! The night was warm and the venue was perfect on the terrace looking across to the city skyline.

There was an all day post conference tour to visit four historic properties. Two of the property owners had spoken about their experiences at the conference.

The Abbey, Johnson Street Annandale was the first stop, one of the “witches houses” of Annandale. In the early 1880s The



The Abbey, Annandale

Abbey was built by Sir John Young, a mayor of Sydney as his family home based on Freemasonry as he was a very prominent Freemason in Sydney. The current owners have spent over five years and countless dollars in restoring this magnificent property. A large part of their problem was the number of DAs that Council required when the stone wall in the side street collapsed; also the DAs for the removal of inappropriate trees. When completed the house won a National Trust Heritage Award, the Greenway Award for heritage, and an AIA (National) Award for Heritage.

On to Camden Park House designed by John Verge and built for John Macarthur in 1835. The current owners are descendants of the



Camden Park House

original Macarthur family and have developed a management plan for this most significant colonial property, with its intact collection, garden and estate. There are a team of volunteers who assist in the garden, while the family conducts guided tours in the house on request and manages the whole estate on Annual Open Days. The property is under pressure from encroaching suburban development, mining etc. and the owners are very vigilant to avoid future conflicts by keeping dialogue with the relevant government departments. We had a delightful picnic lunch under the trees on the front lawn overlooking the surrounding countryside.

Our next stop was Denbigh, at Cobbitty a beautiful farm cottage that has been extended as the fortunes of the owners increased. The house was



The beautiful farm cottage, Denbigh.

built in 1812 and is one of the finest examples of a colonial Indian-style bungalow, with its original curtilage and attractive pastoral setting.

There have only been three families

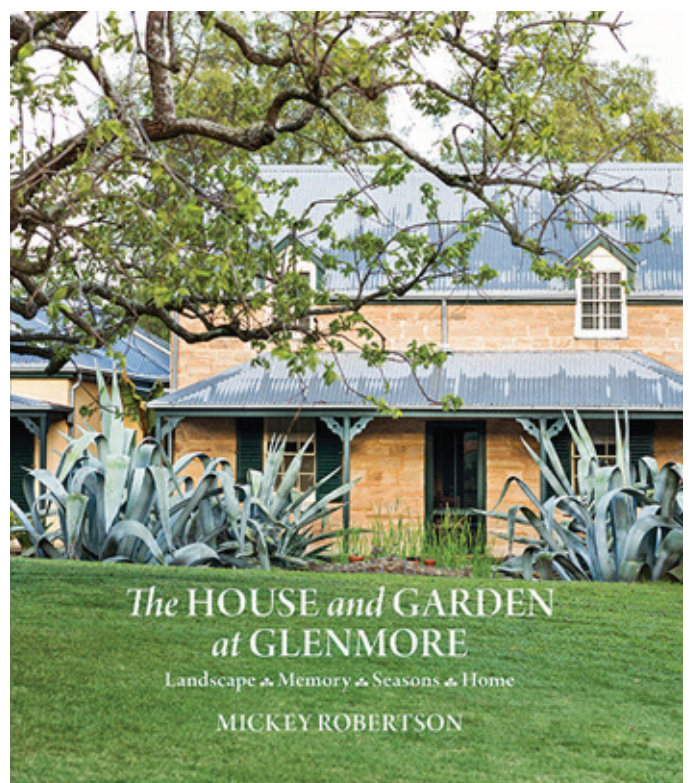
occupying Denbigh, including Rev Thomas Hassall, “the galloping parson” and the current family since 1868. The current owners have made extensive renovations to the house and restoration of the significant

slabs c1828 and a sandstone cottage built c1840 and linked to the earlier hut by a covered walkway. The house was in a derelict state and there was an extensive collection of dilapidated vernacular farm buildings which have been restored by the current owners who purchased the property 30 years ago. The house is surrounded by a large and varied garden including a kitchen garden, herbs and an orchard all intersected by paths, walls and hedges. We arrived just on dusk and so enjoyed the garden in the lengthening shadows with a glass of elderflower cordial.

The tour finished off a very successful three days and hopefully will be the basis of many more to come.

Di Garder

outbuildings, with incredible attention to detail using old building practices. Again the pressure from encroaching suburbia is a problem but the proposed M9, Sydney Outer Orbital will have a huge affect on the curtilage of the property and the owners are involved in local resident protests. Our last stop was Glenmore House at Glenmore, a simple settler’s hut built of ironbark



In response

Response from Woolworths

Abstract from response from Rory Jacobs, Head of Planning and Format Innovation Woolworth's Food Group.

Over the years, our store has seen many changes to better meet our customers' needs. Most recently we invested in significant improvements in September 2014. The external signage was updated and complied with the DA and approval of local authorities and our landlord.

We are currently reviewing the Balmain store again, including the signage which as mentioned in your letter could include photos showcasing the history of Balmain.

After reading the full reply from Rory I am not holding my breath for any "roaring" changes to the "external signage" of the Woolworths Balmain store. At least it is a reply and I would suggest that the BA respond by thanking Rory for his letter and suggesting that the BA and NSW Veterans Affairs be involved in making any recommendations/plans for changes to the exterior of the store.

Regards Fergus Fricke

Update on Dawn Fraser Baths

Good news this time

We are pleased that IWC has responded to BA and community concerns regarding spending on interim maintenance work which does not address long term priorities and prior to the completion of the Master Plan. The DA for works has been withdrawn and they are developing plans to raise the southern pavillion which we argued is essential for the long term preservation of this Heritage Item.

We also understand that the Draft Master Plan will be completed to go to a meeting in late June for approval for community consultation.

Carolyn Allen

Telstra Site

No response as yet.

The matter of whether to take up Telstra's latest offer was on the agenda at IWC Council on 22 May but the meeting only achieved half the agenda. It was the last item and is still to be discussed at a future meeting.

Inner West Council Built Environment Awards 2018

The Built Environment Awards are three separate programs that contribute to and celebrate our understanding of the inner west's built heritage and sustainable practices.

These awards were started by Marrickville Council and are now awarded by IWC for new and renovated projects. The awards are for sustainability and conservation with the main prize being the Marrickville Medal, which is presented for outstanding architectural conservation work and was first presented in 1995. The IWC Sustainable Award was first presented in 2016. There is also a photographic exhibition which is open to Primary students, Secondary students and there is an Open category. The Awards are part of the National Trust's 2018 Australian Heritage Festival which runs throughout April and May.

The award ceremony this year was held at the Kirkbride Theatre at Callan Park, an appropriate choice. I represented the Balmain Association at the ceremony and there were representatives of the other historical organisations in the IWC area present. The judges were heritage professionals and architects, including the architect for the winner of the previous year's Marrickville Medal. This



The Thornley St Terrace before and after.

was "Lerna", 1 Ballast Point Road, Birchgrove by Vaughan Architects. Elizabeth Farrelly was the guest speaker and she talked about creating sustainable density in the Inner West. A presentation of all the finalists in each category was shown and the judges' comments on each were read out. A number of the properties were on the Balmain peninsula.

The winners for 2018 were:

Marrickville Medal for Conservation: Thornley Street Marrickville, a riverside terrace house.

Inner West Sustainable Building Award: 102 Beattie Street, Balmain

Inner West Urban Photographic Competition Open: Julie Gabriel Canterbury Road

Entries for the 2019 Built

Environment awards open June 25 so if you are aware of any buildings that might qualify check the IWC website. Also it would be good to encourage some of our local schools to participate in the photographic competition.

Di Garder

Recent WestConnex Rallies - June Lunsmann

King George Park

On April 14, a fine sunny day, several hundred people attended a rally organised Rage Against WestConnex (RAW) with co-sponsorship from a range of anti-WestConnex action organisations, in King George Park, Rozelle.

Organisers said: "The entire Balmain peninsula is under sustained attack from the NSW government. The

Rozelle Interchange, the Iron Cove Tunnel and the Western Harbour Tunnel mean the compulsory acquisition and demolition of homes and businesses, as well as using parks including Yuralbin and part of King George Park and the old Balmain Leagues Club as dive sites."

RAW convenor Peter Hehir chaired the rally and speakers included

Greens MLC Mehreen Faruqi; WestConnex Acton Group (WAG) co-founder and Inner West Councillor Pauline Lockie; NSW Greens Member for Balmain, Jamie Parker; and



Mary Court, from the Penrith Valley Community Unions.

People from the rally then marched to the abandoned Balmain Tigers Leagues Club building, where a large banner against WestConnex was dropped from the top of the building. For more information about the continuing protests go RAW's website www.rozelleagainstwestconnex.org



Balmain Town Hall

On Saturday 26th May, there was standing room only at the public meeting called by Inner West Council to address issues surrounding the WestConnex in particular the Western Harbour Tunnel. The meeting was one of several that had been convened to discuss the impact on Rozelle Public School which has an enrolment of 680 children.

Sunil Badami, EMCEE/Writer, a parent at the school was an excellent EMCEE but unfortunately the only elected representative from our Council or State to have allocated time to speak was the Mayor, Darcy Byrne.

Scheduled parents presented their concerns such as lack of filtration of the stacks, predicted 5000 truck movements per day creating noise and dust possibly for as long as 5 years. One statistic pointed out was that The Harbour Tunnel project covers 18 postcodes and all will be affected by the stacks, 4 in Rozelle.

David Birds, Group Manager Strategic Planning, IWC gave an overall explanation of where everything was



Every chair was taken and numerous people sat on the floor and lined the walls.

going and what to expect with the dive sites, the storage and removal of material as well as the positions of the stacks. An earlier comment by the mayor, Darcy Byrne, was that they obviously had no idea of what they will come up against when dealing with people from Louisa Rd, Birchgrove, with the planned dive site at its end.

David Birds excellent presentation will be available on the IWC website.

It was disappointing that there had been no proposed motion to reject the plan.

Highlighting the concern of Rozelle PS parents was an article in the Inner West Courier by David Barwell, February 13, 2018 and is still available on their website. <http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/newslocal/inner-west/news-story/08590d74168c20234289ea37f6021c1a>



What's on at the Watch House

www.balmainassociation.org.au

JUNE

Saturday 16 and Sunday 17, 10-4

The Architecture of Birds

Claire Armstrong, Vicki Ratcliff, Evan Armstrong and Helen Mackay are four Pittwater artists with very different styles and approaches. The exhibition depicts their individual response to birds and their love affair with nature and birds. They invite you to deepen your connection with the environment of birds.

Opening Friday 15, 6-8.30pm by Simon Duffy, head of conservation and science Taronga Zoo. All welcome.

Sat 23, 10-4.30 and Sun 24, 10-4

From the hART

The 22nd annual exhibition from Balmain hART stART Studio, with expressive artworks, abstractions and landscapes, rich in exploration of colour and texture. This exhibition is for people who enjoy paintings in modernist styles.

Drinks with the artists Sat 1-3pm All welcome

Sat 30 June and Sunday 1 July 9am-5

*Tom Fuggle, Beth Massey, and J*sh Butler*

Three emerging NSW artists, Tom Fuggle, Beth Massey, and J*sh Butler present an exhibition that promises to be full of colour and variety with everything from illustration on wood to photorealistic oil painting.

Opening: Friday 29 6.30pm All welcome.

JULY

Each day from 7 to 15 July, 10am-5pm

Working with Light

The Sunrise Group's exhibition showcases the images of a group of photographers from the award winning Norths Photographic Society. The work of each photographer reflects their experience in working with light whether it's at sunrise over the northern beaches, a pattern shot or still life.

Opening: Friday 6, 6-8.30pm All welcome.

'Norths Photographic Society website is <<http://nslps.org.au>>.

Saturday 21, Sunday 22 and Saturday 28 and Sunday 29, 10.30-4pm

Sculpture in Balmain

The Sculptors Society is excited to be exhibiting at the Balmain Watch House and is hoping to promote sculpture in the area, with visitors having the chance to see a variety of sculpture in all different materials from bronze to marble, ceramic to wood. An opportunity to show our works in an interesting venue.

www.sculptorssociety.com

Opening: Friday 20 5-7pm all welcome

AUGUST

Saturday 4 and Sunday 5, 10-4pm

The Essence of Nature

The MoDeMa group are exhibiting their latest mosaic creations, inspired by the beauty of Nature.

Light, colour and the changing seasons are captured using a variety of mosaic media.

Opening: Friday 3 6-8pm All welcome
Saturday 11, Sunday 12 and Saturday 18, Sunday 19, 10am-4.30pm

The Thirsty Beast

Open Studio Printmakers is a dynamic group of artists who explore the medium of printmaking. Although a long standing art form, each printmaker creates distinctive and contemporary works on paper. Lino and wood cuts, screen prints and etchings are just some of the methods you will see and which create these

exciting images. Framed and unframed works will be exhibited and available at reasonable prices.

Official opening: 3pm Sat 11, All welcome

Saturday 25, 10-4 and Sunday 26 10-3

Lines and Shapes

Michiyo Miwa is a Sumi-e (Japanese inkwash) painter. Her main subjects for paintings are plants and landscapes around the Blue Mountains area. Jillian Culey is a fibre artist, working predominantly with locally harvested fibres, experimenting with various techniques including, twining, ribbed construction, random weave and string making.

Join us for drinks and nibbles on Saturday and Sunday.

www.branchingout.com.au



We need your stories!!!

The History Council of NSW's flagship festival, History Week 2018: 'Life and Death', will explore life's defining moments and the impact of death on communities across time including stories about life's milestones, how we commemorate people's lives and rituals and burial practices. History Week will investigate how death has been feared, used as a form of punishment and shattered communities.

BA will present **Life and Death on the Balmain Peninsula** looking at the Life and Death of Industries, the Balmain cemetery and personal observations.

If you have a story to tell please email to contact@balmainassociation.org.au and title it history week

or drop into the Watch House one Saturday 11.30 to 3 or Tuesday 11 to 1 or post to Balmain Association PO Box 57 Balmain 2041.

Looking forward to hearing from you.



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 at the Watch House is open every Saturday from 11:30-3
Postal: PO Box 57 Balmain 2041

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