

Community life

ROAD TEST

Delving into the dead zones

Architecturally magnificent houses, sunny parks and converted artist studios may all play host to long-dead but still present Inner Westies.

The Abbey

Known for its colourful history and persistent claims that a "lady in white" roams its halls, the Abbey is just one of the Annandale 'Witches Houses' (named for their spires, resembling witches hats) built by former Mayor of Annandale, John Young.

While Young initially built the house for his estranged wife Eleanor, she passed away in England in 1885 and the couple never lived in the property. When *Ciao* spoke to psychic healer, Caterina Ligato, back in 2011 she felt there was a spirit in the house. Although that never seemed to bother the late Dr Geoffrey Davis, who lived in the house for decades with his seven children and was never driven away despite reporting strange occurrences like doors opening by themselves.

The 50-room home fell into disrepair following Davis' death in 2008 and was put on the market for the first time in 50 years. It sold for a record \$4.86 million at auction. Whether you're a believer or not, **it's good to know that the stories didn't effect the property price.**

Camperdown Cemetery

Countless ghost stories surround Camperdown Cemetery on **Church Street, Newtown** – and it's no wonder considering the suburb's somewhat

gruesome past, which is well-documented in the National Trust of Australia booklet *The Darker Side of Newtown and Surrounds*. However, many of the stories are **unsubstantiated urban legends**.

One of the most well-known of these is the story of lovers, **Hannah Watson** and **Captain John Steane**. Upon discovering his wife's infidelity, Thomas Watson apparently cursed the lovers.

The story goes that they died soon after and were buried a few metres apart in the cemetery. Many claim to see **Hannah's ghost emerging from her tomb** but no one has confirmed if the story is true.

Over 18,000 people were buried at Camperdown Cemetery following its establishment in 1848 but after the horrific murder of 11-year-old Joan Norma Ginn, whose body was found among headstones in 1946, most of the cemetery was turned into public space; the remaining headstones were moved to the churchyard space they occupy today, while **the bodies remain under the park.**

Callan Park

Artist Ella Condon's video installation 'Embodied Space' was recently shown as part of History Week, and explored the **lingering presence** in spaces like Callan Park, which have had rather turbulent histories. Her practice engages with embedded history remaining within sites of tension and it was working late in her studio in Callan Park and experiencing the unnerving feeling of a presence that led her to investigate the building's history.

"While the hospital developed an infamous reputation, the goals of its early proponents were apparently humane and well intentioned," says Ella. Unfortunately however, the hospital reached



Photo by Ella Condon

capacity in 1900 and changed from a sanctuary for moral therapy treatment to a gaol that was understaffed and oppressive.

"In the process of my research, I discovered 1,228 people had died in a neighbouring asylum in Gladesville between 1838 and 1893. They lie buried there in unmarked graves," says Ella, whose work arises from these findings. "Space is like a receptive membrane; **walls retain memories** and resonate with energies of the past. Within the structure of this building, echoes and residues of the past remain..."

"My aim is to portray the presence of the patients who were seeking help and experienced this misguided cruelty. The process I have undergone in my studio work involves investigating the site, the empty wards and underground 'dungeons' to capture the abstract sounds and whispers within the cracks and walls of its foundation." Ella's haunting pictures certainly seem to achieve just that. ■ **NM**

Go bold or go home

Taking shape through fun, socially themed arts events, exhibitions, forums, films and visual arts, **Carnival of the Bold** will bring important issues into the mainstream agenda by bringing together artists and leaders who will **inspire and awaken greater public consciousness and create deeper engagement around social causes** (think sustainability, poverty, justice, peace, human rights, animal rights, equality and education).

The event will be held on **Saturday 9th November** at **New Theatre**, Newtown, with the artist line-up including political satire artist **Simon Hunt** (aka Pauline Pantsdown), Indigenous artist **Adam Hill**, African-American storyteller **Ande Kindryd**, comedian **Khaled Khalafalla**, social change photographer **Mikey Leung**, the culturally diverse choir **One World Choral**, **Chris Wright: Poetry Slam** and children's book illustrator and speaker **Melanie Lee**.

Join in for pre-show drinks at 7.15pm or just turn up for an 8pm start. When it's all over, you'll see the world in a bold, new light!

■ **For more info and tickets (\$35) visit <https://carnivalofthebold.eventbrite.com>.**

The Carnival of the Bold is a not-for-profit passion project that two Sydney changemakers are piloting during the 2013 Changemakers Festival. Don't miss this opportunity to help tackle the big issues through art.



Community events listings are **FREE**

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What's on

Compiled by Nancy Merlo. Email info@ciaomagazine.com.au

Saturday 19th October

Your Best Body Challenge

As part of a fundraising drive for charity Good Beginnings Australia, the Fitness Factory is offering 6 weeks FREE fitness starting Saturday 19th October – but it's never too late to join the cause as they'll be accepting registrations throughout the 6 week time period. When you register the gym asks for a \$30 donation that goes entirely to Good Beginnings. You are then entered into the Your Best Body Challenge, with an opportunity to win from a \$10,000 prize pool! There are prizes for most weight lost and most increased fitness, plus a

trainer's choice award. Go to fitfactory.com.au/yourbestbody for more info. ■ **Fitness Factory: 249 Norton St, Leichhardt.**

Sunday 20th October

Marrickville Festival

It's that time of year again! Marrickville Festival is on between 10am and 5pm on October 20th and is set to attract record numbers again this year. Come along and experience all the best that Marrickville has to offer including delicious international food, a jumping castle, climbing wall and not one but two 'main stages' of entertainment for young and old – one at each end of the festival – featuring cultural performances

and local bands such as Larger Than Lions and Gang of Brothers. There's also loads of children's activities at the Kids Play Park in Calvert Street car park, off Illawarra Road. ■ **Where: Marrickville and Illawarra Rds, Marrickville.**



Marrickville trawlers

Sunday 27th October

7 Bridges Walk

Have you registered for the Cancer Council's Seven Bridges Walk yet? By registering to take part in the walk – either as an individual or as a team – and setting up a fundraising page you can join the fight against cancer with thousands of other people who, from 7.30am to 4.30pm on the day, will unite in a 26.2-kilometre walk across seven Sydney bridges, including the Inner West's own Iron Cove Bridge. Registration costs \$35 (or \$25 if you register online prior to the event). Dogs are welcome and the event will go ahead in rain or shine. ■ **For more info go to www.7bridgeswalk.com.au.**

Monday 28th October

Pink Ribbon Breakfast

Lingerie specialists Nocturnal Designs will be holding their first Pink Ribbon Breakfast at Norton Plaza (in the seating area outside Flowermart) from 7.45am to



Rant

Anything but fantastic

I have not seen a minute of the *Harry Potter* films, know *Twilight* only as daylight's capitulation, have zero interest in any of the seven(teen?) *Lord of the Rings* epics and have no idea what *Game of Thrones* is.

I do, however, suspect *Game of Thrones* to be a variant of the above-mentioned films and like most such medieval-Gothic-Old Testament fantasies it is **seemingly loved worldwide by those of a socially awkward nature.**

Perhaps my limited experience with the genre risks rendering my words as dark as some Minotaur-like villain inhabiting one of these gimcrack CGI fables.

But like a passive smoker choking on regurgitated toxins, I am exposed to enough of the poison to know **it is not for me.**

Classic science fiction takes us to plausible worlds where even a modicum of scientific truth can vindicate cautionary concerns.

Unbelievable creatures that can talk, humans that have an animal's expertise, vampires with hearts of tarnished gold and geeks flying broomsticks could perhaps serve some sort of moral compass to those with a mental age below twelve. But as truth is stranger than fiction, **surely (science) fiction based in what is true – or could be one day – must be more poignant, relevant and interesting, right?**

Scenarios of warlocks and wizards and caricatures with supernatural powers only serve to undermine what, if any, philosophical point fantasy authors are trying to make.

Then there is the other great ironic fantasy at the heart of such fantasy. **The world we actually inhabit is the amazing one,** full of technology verging on magic, boasting unprecedented personal freedoms and opportunities.

Most of us in the Inner West even have access to clean water, bulk-billing and can fly at near supersonic speed to worlds as foreign as anything on film.

And I suspect the beers and \$10 steaks at your local pub taste better than those chunks of meat you see drunken kings tearing from spit-roasted carcasses or the rank mead they swill from communal jugs during victory banquets.

Better still, **most of us don't live in fear of being eaten by dragons** or decapitated by Vikings.

And when I see dusky warrior-princesses or enchanted maidens with tiny waists and fanciful cleavage, the first thing I think of (well, second) is their **inevitably woeful hygiene.**

You think chivalry is now dead? Even those supposedly gallant knights of the medieval era that inspire so much contemporary fantasy saw little difference between courtship and rape.

I just wonder **how the average Tolkienite nerd would survive** in a world of fantastic dangers where only the fittest most ruthless specimens survive?

It's just escapism, you say? Hey, that's what rants are for.

■ **Words: Jason Dunne, Inner West columnist and the author of *Everyone is Henry Miller*.**

■ **Want to rant? Email info@ciaomagazine.com.au**



Breakfast like a queen

10am on October 28th to help raise funds for breast cancer research. Anyone interested in supporting this great cause is welcome to come along for tea, coffee and some brekky, with tickets just \$8 and plenty of fun, games and raffles to be had. For more information email josephine@nocturnaldesigns.com.au. Don't miss your chance to make a difference in a woman's life. ■ **Where: Norton Plaza, Norton Street, Leichhardt.**

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