

The Peninsula OBSERVER

the news sheet of the Balmain Association • PO Box 57• Balmain • 2041
www.balmainassociation.org.au

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Mort Bay Community Garden - McKell Street, Birchgrove.

Community gardens are an integral part of many different cultures and communities around the world. As Australia has a very diverse and Multi Cultural Society, we should embrace the concept of community gardens as it contributes to community development and creates social bonds.

Space on the Balmain peninsula is at a premium and we need to look at ventures like this more seriously. Gardening is a great learning experience not only for adults but for children. It is also a great opportunity for everyone to interact and socialize within the community – parents, adults, children, elderly, disabled and local businesses.

Some local garden oriented residents decided to meet and discuss a project in the local Balmain area. There are two long standing community gardens in the Leichhardt Municipality: Glover Street, in Callan Park and at White Street, Annandale. Both these gardens allot individual plots for their members.

Recently this group of garden-minded Balmain residents started a similar project. This community garden was planned to be slightly different to the others in the local area. A decision was made to open the garden to everyone

– no allotted individual plots. The proposed area for the garden area was the obvious site at Mort Bay Park - a level area that is open and enjoys long day sunlight. At the time when Mort's Dock was working, this area was used as the Brass Foundry.

The Leichhardt Councillors for Balmain were approached about the idea and the first meeting was held, with Jamie Parker, in pouring rain

at the site in 2010. Next a provisional committee was formed in September 2010 and the inaugural general meeting was held at the Balmain Town Hall on 26th October 2011. The group then applied to Leichhardt

Council for a community grant. This was successful and in November 2011 \$10,000 was secured for capital expenditure. In addition the Council also provided a rainwater tank, plumbing works and signage. This was quickly followed by the first of many working bees starting on 14th April 2012 when the volunteers prepared the area for the first section of the gardens using the no-bend raised garden beds.

Over the three months prior to the official opening, the community garden members worked very hard to complete 50% of the planned first section planting area finished and producing a wide range of healthy produce. Plants included in this first planting are red mignonette lettuce, strawberries, broccoli, peas, raspberries, mint, garlic as well as some replanting of native bushes.

The garden was officially opened by Mayor, Rochelle Porteus on Saturday 28 July and attended by 4 other councilors and over 100 residents. Mayor Porteus was thanked for her support and was presented with the first

lettuce produced by the garden.

In conjunction with the garden, the Balmain Glass House, balmainglasshouse.com.au, has been used to grow seedlings and will continue to do so. The Balmain Glass House Committee has also been holding workshops on growing herbs and cooking with herbs.

Interested? Do check the web site mortbaycommunitygarden.com.au.



At the opening

Thanks to the Mort Bay Community Garden Committee for a wonderful effort in providing such a great community resource.

Source: Web site and Jude Dinley.



The workers

Vale Pat Phillips

Pat was a tireless campaigner for the Ballast Point Park. She spent her last years in a retirement village but happily she was able to attend to opening of the park in September 2002.

In this issue

- P.1..... Mort Bay Community Garden
- P.2. Self-Guided Walks
- Telephone Exchange
- Bays Precinct Submission
- P.3/4.. Adelaide Steamship Company
- P.5..... Balmain's Dunnies
- Ritual Objects
- P.6..... What's On - Exhibitions
- History Week - Threads
- Back to Balmain Day

What we've been doing

Self-guided Balmain Walks

The Balmain Association's new website is able to display illustrated guides to themed walks around Balmain and Rozelle. The walks, utilizing a specially developed software package, will be accessible to visitors from anywhere in the world, via computer, tablet or smartphone. The package, developed by RedAnt media for community groups, has already been successfully trialled by the Glebe Society, and the results can be viewed on the Society's website.

Work has begun on the first Balmain walk, a self-guided tour focusing on colonial architecture from 1840-1860. A second walk is planned looking at Balmain architecture from 1860-1910.

Balmain's rich social and industrial history and diverse streetscapes could lend themselves to a variety of other themed walks. If you would like to volunteer to prepare a walk on a theme that interests you, please submit a proposal to the Balmain Association for consideration. Using the internet in this way has great potential to involve many more people in an understanding and appreciation of our unique heritage.

Meg Wallace

Balmain Association Submission to the Bays Precinct Taskforce – 30 June 2012

The Balmain Association believes that a Moratorium must be placed on all development and new leases in the Bays Precinct until a new overall plan is in place, with full community input.

This plan should direct future uses of the Bays Precinct lands and waterways in such a way as to prioritise much-needed public amenity, public recreation and public foreshore access with enhancement of the harbourfront.

This must occur on sites adjacent to residential communities at the earliest opportunity.

A headland park must replace the industrial/maritime facility at the White Bay Wharf 6 site when the lease expires in 2020, or sooner. The operations at this headland site must be relocated to a more suitable location that is not next to a residential area. The Community consultations have indicated strong support for this.

The NSW Government should seek to build a new Cruise Terminal east of the Harbour Bridge or at another suitable location that is not next to residential communities. The

Telephone exchange or Civic Centre? ongoing



1943



2010

In April, the demolition of the front of the exchange was signed-off by all relevant sections of Telstra. The disappointing news was that Telstra is not prepared to pay for the demolition. However it was agreed that their original estimate of \$1.5 million was likely to have been too high and, if Leichhardt Council sign an agreement with Telstra, a detailed cost estimate will be undertaken by Telstra's contractors (The cost estimate of the estimate is \$60,000!!). Then if LMC wishes to go ahead Telstra will retain ownership of the site (there will be no lease) but the site will be open to the public and Telstra will maintain it. There has to be a negotiated cost sharing and hopefully LMC will be prepared to haggle. On 27 June, a Leichhardt Council media release announced as part of its budget for coming year that \$320,000 has been allocated for a civic square on corner of Mullens and Darling Sts. It is actually Darling and Montague Sts – the site that a committee of BA members driven by Fergus Fricke has been lobbying for the past 12 months or more. So good news and congratulations to all concerned.

What next:

There is a draft agreement that council staff are happy with that needs to be discussed with Dom Galluccio of Telstra. It has taken longer than anticipated but once Telstra agrees, there will be a report to Council possibly in September or October.

To be continued.....

Cruise ships currently being built will be too large to fit under the Harbour Bridge.

The Balmain Association supports the call for a public ferry terminal in White Bay, preferably located between Stephen St (site of a previous ferry terminal) and the large unit development. This would be good use of our waterways and help alleviate traffic problems at White Bay.

The Balmain Association supports the refurbishment of the Glebe Island Bridge for pedestrian and cycle access between Rozelle and Pyrmont.

The Association also supports the retention of the Heritage Fleet at Rozelle Bay.

We ask that the Bays Precinct Taskforce recommend the above actions to the NSW Premier and the Planning Minister.

Christina Ritchie

Per Balmain Association Committee

Contact: chrisritchie01@yahoo.com.au

Jane Ward, President, Balmain Association:

janeyanawd@yahoo.com.au

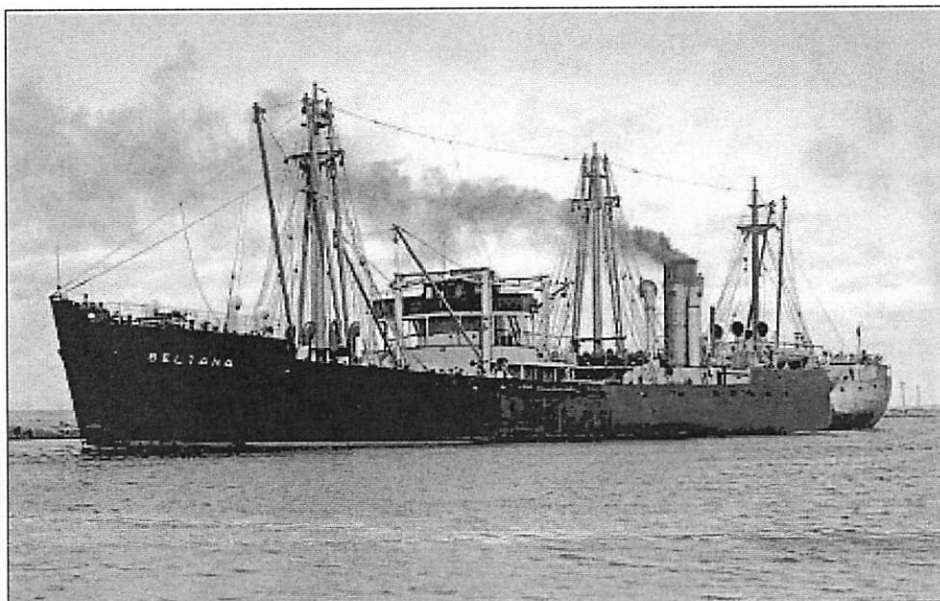
Recollections of Adelaide Steamship Company's Balmain Workshops

In November 1957, I was standing in the grounds of North Sydney Technical Boys High School looking down onto Sydney Harbour. A moored cargo vessel caught my attention, "What made that ship tick?" School held little interest and I wanted to get out of it and find out what the bigger world was all about. I spoke with the vocational guidance representative and picked up a brochure on "Marine Engineering" – no more need be said I was hooked.

I wrote to a number of companies which took on apprentices. Most replies were in the negative as they were closing down (eg Poole & Steele - where my grandfather had worked as a boilermaker, Morts Dock & Engineering) or were not taking on apprentices. However, The Adelaide Steamship Company invited me to an interview at their Workshops office in Balmain. I had already developed an interest in joining the navy but found that merchant service held more appeal. The interview was successful I was "given a start" on the 31st January 1958. The wage was to be £5/5/3 per week with two weeks leave per annum and in due course I became an indentured apprentice. A tradesman would have received about £22 per week at that time.

As I walked down the zigzag path from Nicolson Street I could see the SS Beltana laying alongside for its annual layup. I was taken along the wharf past the donkey boiler, compressor room, riggers' shed and sailmakers' loft sheds and sheer legs on the wharf to the machine shop where I was introduced to the foreman and sent to the change room to put on my overalls. The change area, lunch room recreation spaces were near the main gate and time keeping office, where the hours worked and overtime calculated for each man. I was assigned a locker space. The shower spaces were a common area with about 20 showers complete with a Conde's crystal (potassium permanganate) footbath to guard against infection from tinea. The toilet spaces were near the wharf and consisted of three rows of cubicles without doors and trays of newspaper – not provided as reading material (this was not uncommon in those days). Happily the newspaper was to be replaced in later years. I was placed under the charge of a

turner. Whilst I did not realize it at the time I believe to this day he was probably about the best machinist any one could hope to work with. He had a beautiful German lathe and only ever produced the best results. The machine shop was well equipped with several lathes of varying sizes and ages, some were from a bygone age when obviously all had been driven by belts. There was a large Cincinnati planer and a Kearns horizontal boring machine, two radial drills and other smaller drills and power saws.



SS Beltana

The workshops had the following departments each with a foreman and assistant foreman:

Works Manager; Assistant Works Manager; Plumbers; Boiler shop; Blacksmiths Shop; Machine shop; Pattern Makers; Electricians shop; Joiner shop; Shipwrights shop; Sailmakers loft; Riggers shed; Painters and Dockers; Outside fitters.

As well there was the Accounting Department and a Stores and Providoring Department for all the fleet.

The Marine Superintendent and Engineering Superintendent and their staffs were also domiciled in the office. A drawing office which was responsible for the design and development of new tonnage was also housed there along with all technical drawings and specifications of the fleet. At that time the design of the trailer ship MV Troubridge for the Kangaroo, Port Lincoln and Adelaide would have been on the drawing boards. This was soon to be followed with the preliminary design of vessels for the then forming consortium of Bulkships.

The Adelaide Company fleet and many others were maintained in the company workshops. The CSR (Colonial Sugar Refinery) had two vessels, the SS Tambua and the MV Rona which were also regular visitors to the Balmain workshops.

The Adelaide Steamship Company had a controlling interest in Waratah Tug and Salvage and Wallace Tugs and Jones Bros Coal in those days so these vessels often came alongside for overhaul and maintenance.

A lot of other work was obtained over the years on other vessels for which the Adelaide Steamship Company acted as agents. One of the most memorable of these was the MV "Cape Ortegall". She was fitted with a Doxford Engine with a scavenge air pump connected to the crankshaft in the middle of the engine. Some distance off Sydney the bottom end bearing had failed with the connecting rod coming adrift and smashing its way through the crankcase entablature. This resulted in throwing the ship's manoeuvring stand over to the side of the engine room. It was a credit to the engineers on board that they managed to get the engine to operate and come into Sydney under their own power after such a failure. We had the job of restoring the damage as best we could until parts could be made for a permanent repair. I was a little taken aback when the Chief tried to remind me that perhaps I was the descendent of a convict and no more. I thought about that carefully and told him that a lot of convicts were only stealing to find food

Recollections of Adelaide Steamship Companies' Balmain Workshops contd.

and the like for their hungry children and that perhaps a lot of the higher classes in his country had got away with more and that the worst of them very likely still resided in his country. That settled that, he went strangely quiet.

Another instance was when there was a complete failure of a steam duplex general service pump (probably a liberty ship run by Greek ship owners). Our then Works Manager Glenn Morgan and I headed off to a scrap dealer (Strides Yard as it was known) in Blackwattle Bay, managed by Mr Jimmy Stride and his sons Harry and Reg. We explained to Jimmy that we were after a duplex steam pump and reeled off the particulars. He played round with his large ten gallon hat which never seemed to come off his head and walked toward a pile of junk as big as a house with son Reg in tow. "Under that lot there, Reg" he proclaimed. "Come back tomorrow and we will have it out for you. I got it off the yanks at the end of the war". Sure enough the next day the very pump in virtually new condition still fitted with its protective wooden flanges was found. We installed it successfully to a happy shipowner who no doubt could not believe his luck.

Overhaul and maintenance requirements

A little understanding of the requirements in those days is probably necessary.

Ships were built to comply with rules set down by classification societies such as "Lloyds Register of Shipping". Each ship is then assigned a notation of class which allows Insurers and Government authorities to have a clear understanding that the vessel complies with a recognised standard.

To maintain a vessel in class in those days it came up for a "hull" survey every four years. This meant that all spaces and tanks on the ship were examined by a Lloyds survey and certificate issued. Similarly every four years the machinery was to be opened up and surveyed and a "Machinery Certificate issued. Every second year the boiler came up for a full survey. Every three years the tailshaft was to be withdrawn and examined. Every six years pressure piping had to be tested under pressure.

Also to meet the Australian Department of Transport's requirements, cargo gear, running and standing rigging and ships equipment including lifesaving appliances had to be examined and in some instances tested (eg Derricks blocks etc).

The workshops at Waterview undertook all of this for the Adelaide Steamship Companies vessels.

In time we were about to see big changes come to the industry which would alter all that had happened for many years.

Workboats and Launches

Koorie (Freshwater mussel)

Burra (Large stone)

MV Myrna (built 1926) MV Moree

Tugs

St Aristell

St Kitts

St Hilary

Woonah (Seagoing

salvage tug)

Wonga

Warang

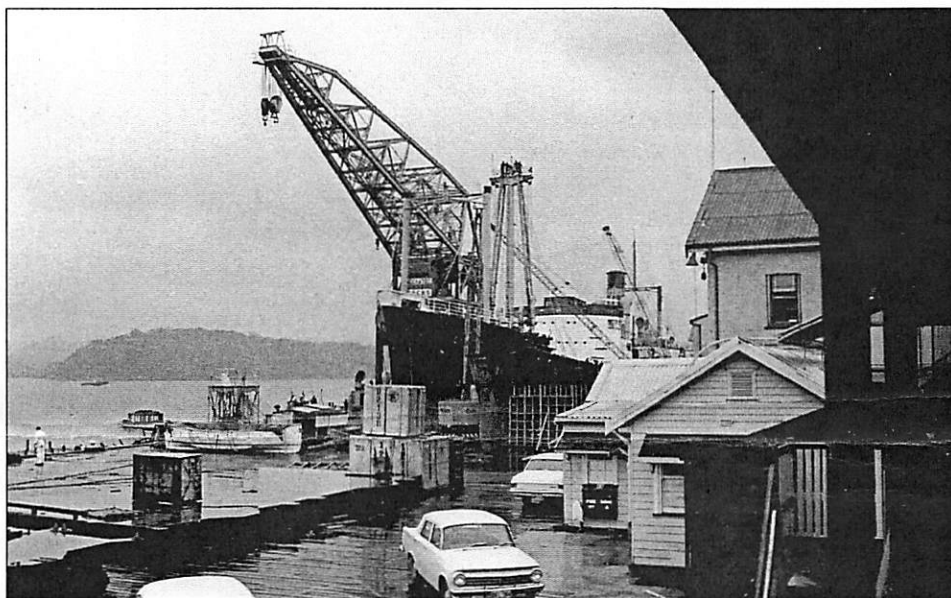
Wallace Tugs:

Bustler and Theresa Ward.

Colliers

SS Abersea (Jones Bros Coal) later

SS Koorine (ex Dandenong)



"Myrna" standing off near lifeboat at Waterview Wharf SS Barwon and floating crane Titan 1965

The ships officers would submit their lists of requests, Requisitions, to the superintendents who would check and approve until a final worklist was drawn up. From these lists the foreman of the various departments would respond once the vessel was laid up. Job numbers were given to each task and the hours were booked by the workmen against that job.

The Adelaide Company fleet and some others maintained by the Adelaide Steamship Company Balmain workshops, in 1958 were as follows :-

SS Barossa	SS Bundaleer
SS Beltana	SS Borda
MV Marra	MV Minkara
MV Mulcra	MV Mundalla
MV Meringa	MV Mundoora (built 1961)

would have been on the drawing board.

The passenger vessel MV Manoora was maintained by the workshops but never brought alongside and was always berthed at No 6 Darling Harbour.

I could go on forever but a more comprehensive history and list of boats built and maintained by Adelaide Steamship Company is available at the Balmain Association.

This can be mailed or emailed to you by contacting either Kathleen Hamey 9818 4954, email khamey@tpg.com.au or June Lunsmann 9810 6885, email speal@zip.com.au.

Written E. Ironside June 2012

References

- "Fitted for the voyage" by Michael Page - ISBN0 85179 918 3. - pages 325,326,328
- Photograph of Beltana downloaded from "Old ship Picture galleries" website.

Our thanks to Ed for submitting his interesting memories to the Balmain Association. If you have a story to tell contact Kathleen or June as above.

Balmain's Dunnies - Fergus Fricke

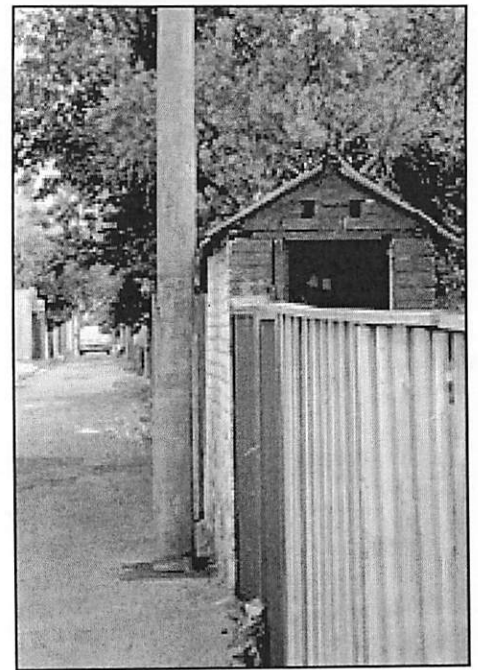
As far as I can remember I had little interest in dunnies, sewerage and related issues before the age of seven when the suburb where I grew up in Melbourne was being sewered. The shafts, tunnels and trenches being dug held great fascination for me in weekends when there were no construction workers around. That interest ended one day when climbing out of a shaft I nearly severed a finger on a broken beer bottle lying on the ground above. I still wear the scar to remind me of the occasion. After that the interest became more poetic or perhaps "literal" would be more correct. Sadly Jonathan Swift's poem, "Celia shits", was not known to me and even it had been I wouldn't have understood it, but I did learn, "Ears, eyes, nose and chin/All the way down to Uncle Jim/Uncle Jim sells lemonade/Round the corner chocolate's made", off by heart as well as the odd dirty limerick which I refuse to repeat here.

While I used long-drops and dunnies from time to time while camping or visiting relatives in the country it was not until I was editor of the Peninsula Observer a few years ago and was desperate (for articles not to have a pee) to fill the December 2007 issue that dunnies and sewerage became of interest again. The response was amazing. The media, including newspapers and radio stations, wanted copy and interviews, and ABC Television filmed me and Balmain dunnies for two days for a two minute item on the 7pm News. What astonished me most, besides the media interest, was the response from locals who sent me photos of their dunnies or invited me to come and see them. As a result I did a bit of reading, got intrigued and prepared an exhibit about dunnies for the Balmain Association's Heritage Week exhibition in the Watch House in 2008. Again there was great interest.

Kathleen Hamey then suggested that I should consider a publication on dunnies for the Balmain Association. In a moment of stupidity I said OK and began research in earnest. I found the subject was huge and after a year or so of gathering information I despaired of ever writing anything interesting and comprehensive in under 500 pages. Frankly I was drowning in sewage, or rather the literature on it, and put the project in the too hard basket.

From time to time Kathleen kept encouraging/niggling me to do

something and in 2011 I committed myself to completing "Getting to the Bottom of Balmain's Dunnies" by the end of 2012. It has been a difficult but rewarding task. As much as possible the Balmain story is told using articles, accounts of council and public meetings, and letters published in the Sydney Morning Herald from the 19th and early 20th Century. In the book there is a general chapter on the history of human waste/sewage disposal and others on health, water supply, Sydney's sewers and how Balmain residents coped before being connected to the Bondi Ocean Outfall Sewer, which was largely completed by 1913. And you might be pleased to know it will be told in much less than 500 pages and will be published by the end of this year, in time to give someone a Christmas present with a difference and to celebrate the centenary of Balmain being saved from appalling infant death rates and drowning in its own effluent.



While there are still some dunnies left lurking behind dunny lane fences many have been replaced by garages or garbage bins and are now an endangered species.

Ritual Objects: dead cats and other things - June Lunsmann

Ian Evans recently gave a talk in Glebe about Ritual Objects. This reminded me of the time he visited our house in Ballast Point Rd following his report in the SMH 29 April 2004. Kathleen Hamey also recalled an incident in Cove St that was reported in the Observer June 2004, where bones were discovered in a cottage under the fireplace. Glebe police were called as it was thought that the bones could have been those of a child. The bones were confirmed to be non-human possibly, those of a cat, but not until after sparking interest in a possible murder in the 1870s.

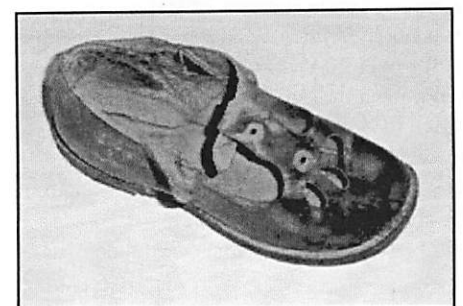
The shoe pictured below was found behind the fireplace of our house in Ballast Point Rd. I thought some naughty children may have dropped it behind the fireplace but on reading Ian Evans's article I contacted him and he came to investigate. On discussion about the actual position of the shoe it became obvious that it couldn't have been dropped through the flap to the flue. The fireplace is in a circa 1890s extension and the family living here at the time had several children including daughters. Shoes are the most common objects discovered particularly children's and are typically well-worn and in most cases only a single shoe will be found. Families were frightened of

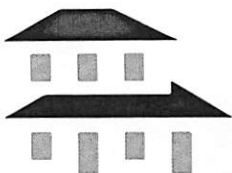
losing their children to illness, which many associated with evil spirits and believed that the power and innocence of the young, expressed through these ritual items, would be strong enough to defeat this evil.

What to do if you find Ritual Objects:

Notify your local heritage authority and contact Ian Evans at the World of Old Houses. Photograph the object, in situ if possible, with a tape measure to indicate its size. Record details of the find, including the date, address and circumstances of the discovery, plus the precise location within the building.

- References:** 1. Ian Evans www.oldhouses.com.au/docs/ritual.html
2. Concealed shoes: Australian settlers and an old superstition by Duncan Kennedy BBC News, Sydney, www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-16801512.
3. The Peninsula Observer, June 2004.





What's on at the Watch House

www.balmainassociation.org.au

SEPTEMBER

Saturday 29, 10am – 5pm and Sunday 30, 10am – 5pm

KALEIDOSCOPE

A kaleidoscopic exhibition of colourful and creative expression. Come along to see the diverse artistic contributions by participating USYD artists.

OCTOBER

Saturday 6, 9am–5pm and Sunday 7, 10am – 3pm

FRESH PAINT

This is the third annual group show featuring Sydney artists: Judith Strachan, Kerry Lonsdale, Lilian Wong, Maggie Wong and Shirley Peters. They each enjoy the medium of two dimensional picture making, but the five individual art practices are unique. Observe their growth and development over the past three years, with their talent and enthusiasm still very fresh!

Opening Fri 5 pm - 8pm All welcome

Saturday 13 and Sunday 14, 10am - 4pm

Brandling Art Society's Exhibition

Brandling Art Society was formed over 25 years ago and today has a membership that as diverse as it is active with some members having a following both locally and internationally. The Brandling group meet Tues and Weds 10 to 2pm in Marrickville. If you are interested in joining them, there is no tuition, but payment made for model fees and hire of the premises Contact Ros Lawrie on 0401 031 495.

Opening Fri 12 pm - 9pm All welcome to come and enjoy a glass of wine and the art works.

Saturday 20, Sunday 21 and Saturday 27 and Sunday 28, 11am to 5pm

Birds Of A Feather Exhibition

Ruth Aldrich and Judy Brownlie are two well known award winning artists. They have been exhibiting for many years together. Painting Plein air, from the city to the country. They also enjoy portrait, still life and life drawing. Both have Studio Galleries occasionally opening to the public. Ruth is a watercolourist and also works with pastel and mixed media. Judy is an oil painter, watercolourist and also pastel, mixed media & print maker.

NOVEMBER

Saturday 3 and Sunday 4, 10am to 4pm

Balmain Art School Exhibition

Come along and see the wonderful work produced by the students of Balmain's oldest art school. Stephen Wilson has been teaching art for over 20 years and works with all ages to draw out the best in his students. The work varies in both size and price, mainly in oils however other media will be exhibited.

Opening Friday 2, 6 – 9:00pm Come and join the artists., all works for sale

stephenwilson@balmainartschool.com.au

Saturday 10 and Sunday 11, 10am to 5pm

Wednesday Drawing and Painting Group

The group is holding its annual exhibition. More than 100 works will be on show; most will be available for sale at very reasonable prices. This group has been making art outdoors around Sydney for over 12 years. Artists working together in public feel more relaxed and confident than when working alone. It is a great way to appreciate and personally record the beauty of our wonderful city and harbour environment.

We work 'en plein air' from 10am until about 12.30pm at scenic venues around Sydney. No tuition is given but a lot of advice and encouragement is available. The only costs are your own fares and art materials.

Contact Len Rieser – 9810 5759 or email: len_rieser@bigpond.com

Opening Friday 9 6.00- 8.30pm All welcome

Saturday 17 and Sunday 18, 10am to 5pm

'Rice Cycles'

A joint exhibition by Gary Notley-Smith and

Rowena Gibbs, celebrates the ongoing cycle of life in Rural Bali – where the paddy fields ablaze with luminous green and the shrines and temples are dedicated to rice goddess 'Dewi Sri'.

'Drinks with artists' on Sat from 1-4pm

Saturday 24 and Sunday 25, 10am to 5pm

"Nature and Nurture"

An exhibition of paintings by Lucy Corkhill and Robert Moss.

Opening Fri from 5pm – all welcome

DECEMBER

Saturday 1, 10am–5pm and Sunday 2, 10am–4pm

"Conversations with France"

Following her successful exhibition in 2010, Catherine Harry is returning after three months looking at great art and painting in France.

Opening Friday 30th November at 6pm – 9pm, all welcome.

Website: catherineharry.com.au

History Week September 2012: "Threads"

What they wore and how they made them, defining a person's status and style.

The Balmain Association will look at the threads that have contributed to the rich tapestry of Balmain.

There will be

- a display of swimwear from the Balmain Swimming and Waterpolo Club, the oldest club in Australia, dating from 1920s to 2000.
- an exhibition by local artist, Jan Wood, *A Patchwork of Memories*, depicting Balmain from 1950 to 1970's.
- a photographic exhibition of the historical threads - personalities, industry and leisure in the 19th century.
- what a sewing room may have looked like in the olden days.

Saturdays: September 1st, 8th, 15th and 22nd. open: 11.30am to 4pm.

BACK TO BALMAIN It's on again . . . Sunday 28 October 2012

10am service at St Andrew's Congregational Church with a guest speaker with links to "old Balmain" and hearty community singing.

Followed by the picnic at Elkington Park with the opportunity to meet old friends - a sausage sizzle, coffee & ice-cream vendors, information & entertainment. Local bands including Leichhardt Celebrity Brass & school groups, Honeybrook Dancers, a Tigers' Memorabilia, Balmain Association and Community Garden representatives. This year, finishing with Sally King's Jazz Group – previously known as Sally & the Mustangs.

FREE bus travel is available from the Central Coast – please contact Beryl Gibbons on 4334 1698 More information: Kath Hacking 98182504 or email mjhacking@gmail.com

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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