

The Peninsula OBSERVER

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www.balmainassociation.org.au

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The Illoura Reserve Foreshore A brief history: Bruce Mackenzie AM FAIA

We were fortunate to have Bruce McKenzie, the designer of Illoura Reserve, at the the opening of the Bell's Foreshore Park on 1 September 2012.

Following is the history that he spoke about on that day: Stage 1 (1970), Stage 2 (1980) and Bells Store (2012).

The 1970s compared to today, was a world apart it seems, and the changes have since been significant. Only just into the world of Decimal Currency and Decimal Dimensioning within society, where we changed from imperial to metric measures. Even the boys of the time, had long hair to below their necks; bell bottom trousers and beards were popular. The girls – had discovered mini skirts and I believe pantyhose. Apart from cultural and economic changes, the 1970s saw the change from a White Australia Policy to a Multicultural Society and the cultural qualities of Australia have changed immensely since then. But never the less – the word environment was hardly ever mentioned, just an Academic Term and an *Australian Ecology* – it did not feature in our vocabulary.

Next I can refer to – *Our New Landscape*, a landscape that was more or less invented at that time. Sydney Harbour Parks turned out to be a somewhat ground breaking event, using local materials in a direct response to the immediate environment and the elements of the harbour. Local indigenous plant species, sandstone walls and cliff faces, wharf poles and jetties, combined to be so evocative of the harbour's sense of place. Assembled together in a way that had not been done before, recreating the charms of the Sydney natural bush and sandstone, much-loved harbourside places and childhood bush playgrounds. Human patterns of use – paths and

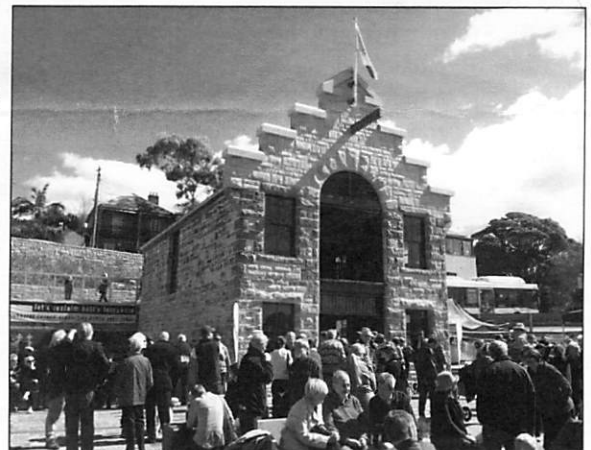
walks, lookouts and picnic areas touched a chord of recognition for professionals and public alike – this is our landscape, this can be truer to our character than traditional parkland, and so many times more pleasurable.

Another important factor that applied at the time: The harbour was converting from its industrial background to one of a recreational harbour. The industrial Port Botany was then being constructed and maritime industry was shifting from Sydney Harbour to Botany Bay. Another outcome of this was the residue of redundant industrial sites and derelict sites becoming available for new uses, one being parkland. The Maritime Services Board of NSW was the client for the design of what was to become Illoura Reserve using its leased site at Peacock Point, Balmain, where John Peacock had once carried out his maritime business. In a state of dereliction and disuse the land was enclosed behind a large steel fence, denying all views to the adjacent harbour. The Board, in the creation of a parkland, was responding to the local community needs and celebrating a 1970 bicentenary gesture of Captain Cook's discovery of Botany Bay. The parkland was divested to Leichhardt Council shortly after.

We responded to the site, its maritime environment, some reference to the old Balmain community and importantly, the indigenous qualities of Sydney Harbour. We also paid respect to the informal site and chose to design to its vague shapes and levels. The informality of park design aligns fairly well with the informal nature of today's population. Stage 2 became an extension of Illoura Reserve in 1980 when the adjacent industrial premises became redundant. Later with the purchase of Bells Store and Fenwick & Co by Leichhardt Council, the new site was restored and subsequently

prepared for the development of a new parkland to complete the Illoura Reserve Foreshore. The extension was designed by ASPECT Studios, Landscape Architecture under the direction of Saccha Coles.

Since 1970 the following parks have been designed and built by landscape architects throughout the harbour: Illoura Reserve – Yurulbin Reserve – Mort Bay – Garden Island – Clark Island – Bicentennial Park Glebe – Bradleys Head – BP Waverton – Ballast Point – Pirrama Park.



The gathering at the opening on 1 September.

The Association has submitted comments to Council on the draft Plan of Management for Illoura Reserve at East Balmain, supporting the original Bruce Mackenzie plan for the site with plantings, retention of public open space and improvements which include better footpath access, improved infrastructure, sea wall restoration, improved maintenance.

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The stone pole walk in 1990

What we've been doing

Submissions: The Association has submitted comments to Council on the draft Plan of Management for Illoura Reserve at East Balmain. Refer cover page for plan details.

On the Agenda:

Tigers - Rozelle Village Pty Ltd has made modifications to the plan which was submitted to the NSW Government and rejected earlier this year. The modified plan reduces the height of the towers to 24 storeys, and parking spaces to 509, but is larger than the plan rejected by the State Govt Joint Regional Planning Panel in 2010. The validity of the assessment under part 3A has been questioned. See saverozelle.com website, see box to right.

Anka has submitted a DA to Leichhardt Council for its proposed residential and small commercial development in Terry St. This follows the rezoning of the site from Industrial to Residential.

Roche has taken the battle for its planned redevelopment of the Elliot St Nutraceuticals site to the Land and Environment Court.

Bell's Store: Leichhardt Council is calling for public submissions re the use of the building and its curtilage. The site is zoned community land but allows for a short-term commercial lease. Support has been expressed for a cafe with various artworks by local artists on display and/or for sale with the upstairs area available for a variety of community uses. See the LMC website for details.

Vale Frances Heathfield

Frances was a member of the Balmain Association for 30 years, joining in January 1981 and in April of that year Frances became a member of the management committee helping with the Association's first exhibition in conjunction with the National Trust Festival. Her history teacher knowledge assisted with research for Balmain history leaflets and newsheet items. She was president 1983-1984 and remained on the committee for many years. Frances was community minded and was a member of the Balmain Town Hall Committee and a founding member of the Friends of Balmain Library also convenor of University of the Third Age. Frances died on 19th August 2012 age 87 years. A wake was held by her children for her many friends at the Royal Oak Hotel on the 6th September. Our sincere condolences to her family and friends.

Post Office Park, the Telstra exchange - Leichhardt Council has submitted a Memorandum of Understanding to Telstra and, as of mid Nov, is awaiting a response. New Mayor, Darcy Byrne, has indicated he would like Telstra to bear some of the cost. Federal member, Tanya Plibersek, has said she will write to Telstra urging them to expedite the demolition project.

Proposed Glebe Island exhibition and convention centre is being opposed by Leichhardt Council and local residents due to traffic and potential noise concerns. It pre-empts the Government's response to the Bays Precinct taskforce report in which the Association participated.

Proposals for the Barangaroo site continue to be of interest to the Association which wishes to retain central Barangaroo as public open space and opposes a casino on the East Darling Harbour foreshore site.

The NSW Govt Review of Planning Laws has been pre-empted by bills in Parliament before public submissions have closed. Further proposed Govt planning law changes are expected to be passed before the White paper is on exhibition. The changes are of concern to Council and residents as they appear to expedite development approval at the expense of consultation and local DCPs.

Callan Park Masterplan - Council has amended the plan, without community consultation, in order to approve another sports field in the park for use

HAVE YOUR SAY!

The Balmain Leagues Club site is again before the Council. 2 residential towers of 22 storeys and a commercial /retail component!

Do you want to see Rozelle go the way of Bondi Junction? All the local strip shops would be affected and many would disappear!

Don't let this happen! Write your submission NOW!

Address submissions to:

Dept of Planning & Infrastructure
GPO Box 39, Sydney 2001

Send a copy of your submission to
Jamie Parker MP (local member)

Barry O'Farrell MP (premier)

Parliament House

Macquarie Street, Sydney, 2000

Final date is 10 December but don't leave it until then - **DO IT NOW!**

Di Garder

by a particular club. 'Friends of Callan Park' opposes the amendments. Uses of particular areas within the park are awaiting the outcome of NSW Govt deliberations and the setting up of the Trust.

Thirty-minute free parking trial in the main streets has received a positive response from the public. Meetings are proposed to discuss the possible permanent introduction of this measure.

Heritage-listed White Bay Power station - The site is receiving minor attention and maintenance work by SHFA. It may be opportune for interested members of the Association to consider suitable future uses for the buildings and site. Christina Ritchie

SELF-GUIDED BALMAIN WALKS

As explained in the September newsletter, the Balmain Association's new website is able to display illustrated guides to themed walks around Balmain and Rozelle. These will be accessible by visitors from anywhere in the world, via computer, tablet or smartphone.

The first Balmain walk, a self-guided tour focusing on colonial architecture from 1840-1860 has now been completed and expected to be uploaded onto the BA website early next year. It is planned to launch this exciting addition to the website during the National Trust Heritage Festival in April 2013. Hopefully it will be closely followed by planned future walks. Thanks to Meg Wallace who liaised with RedAnt media as well compiling information and the researchers Ferg Fricke, John Morris, Kathleen Hamey and Diana Garder who took the accompanying photographs.

National Trust Heritage Festival: Community Milestones

18 April – 31 May 2013

Community Milestones of Balmain Peninsula

An exhibition of important achievements from April, 1800, when the 550 acres were granted to Dr William Balmain to April 2013, when the first e-Walk guide for the Balmain Peninsula will be launched on the Balmain Association's website.

Your assistance and ideas will be greatly appreciated contact Kathleen 9818 4954, khamey@tpg.com.au or June 9810 6885, speal@zip.com.au

The Girl who Loved Ned Kelly

Balmain's connection to this enduring story Paul O'Keefe

I remember quite well as a child being told stories by an old aunt about our family's connection to the Kelly Gang. My Great Great uncle Steve Hart was a member of the Kelly Gang killed at Glenrowan in June 1880 alongside Dan Kelly and Joe Byrne.

I was told also another family secret that my Great Great Grandmother, Ettie Hart, Steve Hart's younger sister was the childhood sweetheart of Ned Kelly. The Hart and Kelly families were all extremely close and all these kids had grown up and socialised together.

Before moving to Balmain our family had lived in the North East region of Victoria, just a few miles south of the town of Wangaratta.

But after the events of Kelly Gang, many of the Steve Hart's sisters moved far away to Balmain, to obviously start new lives. Ettie's only daughter had moved to Rosser St near her aunts when she married. But in 1923 she tragically died from complications from child birth. Her husband (ironically a Sergeant of Police) was now left a widower to bring up these six children alone. Ettie moved from Victoria to Balmain to care for her now motherless Grandchildren, but even more tragedy would strike the family only 3 years later, Ettie would take ill suffering from advanced ovarian cancer. She

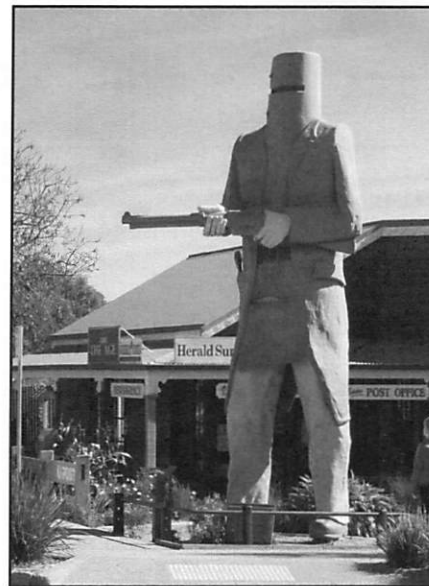
would die in Balmain Hospital in September 1926, taking to her grave the greatest untold love story, I believe in Australian History.

But it wasn't until I was in my 20s, that I was given a book written by the highly respected Professor of Australian History, John Molony based at the Australian National University in Canberra. His book directly named my Great Great Grandmother as the love of Ned Kelly.

This book completely backed not only my family oral history passed down but also intrigued me to find out more. In the last 10 years I have been painstaking researching her and my entire family's involvement in this defining period in Australian History.

It's been a fascinating quest for me to find out more about this remarkable woman. Since then I have uncovered many obscure historical documents that not only directly name her but all pieced together, tell an amazing story.

During my research I recently uncovered highly confidential Victorian Police Reports previously hidden away for over 130 years. One of which states Ned Kelly is "married". Also uncovered a more sinister and cryptic police plan from the Chief Commissioner of the Victorian Police to use Ettie as bait as they knew Ned Kelly was visiting



Statue of Ned Kelly in main street of Glenrowan

her constantly. To the point I have pieced all my research into a lecture that I now deliver around at Historical societies and Libraries.

But my greatest find was two years ago at my old family home in Balmain, an old scrapbook of my Great Great Grandmother's hidden amongst other family items. On the inside you can clearly read her name Ettie Hart Three Mile Creek Wangaratta and it contains the most beautiful but extremely sad poetry of a lost love. One line reads

"Like brother you have gone to your rest where suffering can no longer harm you"

...was it written about Ned? I'd like to hope so.

More about Ned

On a recent trip to Kelly country, we visited Glenrowan. Over a copious morning tea of homebaked scones and sponge cakes, I asked about Ned Kelly. Our hosts and their neighbours, all long term families of Glenrowan, said such a thing as the hunting of Ned would not occur these days. They regarded him as a typical teenager who, because of constant harassment by the local police, in order to survive became an outlaw.

At Jerilderie, waiting for dinner at the local watering hole, we were introduced to a Mr Taylor who claimed to be descended from one of the Kelly gang. Unfortunately we were called to the "dining room" and he had left by the time we had finished. I've been unable to find any connection between Kelly and Taylor but it seems that all the towns and a fair proportion of the population in that area claim Ned as their own. Photo at right is a recent installation in Glenrowan. Seriously wounded Ned had struggled to a copse of trees now known as The Kelly Copse. He managed to mount his horse leaving behind his bloodied cap and rifle which were later found by the police who then realised that some of the gang had escaped. The small post under the tree marks the spot where the rifle was found. J Lunsmann.





What's on at the Watch House

www.balmainassociation.org.au

FEBRUARY

Saturday 9 and Sunday 10, 10am-4pm
Inspiring Exhibition in support of SAWA
(see more below).

This exhibition and sale of works by recognised exhibiting artists will raise much needed funds to support SAWA (Support Association for Women of Afghanistan). Artists donating their works include Carole Griffin, Peter Handran-Smith, Jan Melville, Merrick Fry and Jan Wood. Supported by the Balmain Association all money raised will go to SAWA NSW. For more information about SAWA visit www.sawansw.org.au

Opening Friday 8th February, 6- 8.30pm
Saturday 16 and Sunday 17

Currently not booked, may continue the above exhibition, for update check our website.

History room will open Sat.11.30-3
Saturday 23 and Sunday 24, 10am-4.30pm

'Landscapes, Flowers and More'

If you missed their 2012 exhibition you can catch up now. Large bright and contemporary canvases by renowned artists Helen Ross and Christine de Stoop. All for sale at affordable prices.

Opening Friday 23 6pm to 8.30pm
All welcome.

MARCH

Saturday 2 and Sunday 3, 10am-4pm
Three of Light

Mixed media works on paper and fine art photographic images by artists Grazyna Wollman, Karen Visser and Robyn Kennedy. Grazyna, a mixed media artist works with gouache, acrylic and textiles to create beautiful colorful floral and abstract pieces. Karen will be exhibiting a series of fine art photographic images - emerging botanicals, sensual in their form, intricately unfolding, curiously intimate. Robyn, a mixed media artist has a passion for creating art that blends and layers unusual and exquisite textiles, with papers, photographs and intricate metallic thread embellishment.

www.robynkennedy.com.au

Saturday 9 and Sunday 10, 10am - 4pm

"Visual Feasts"

The Balmain Peninsula Park Painters are holding their 9th annual exhibition. More about this exhibition in the next issue.

Opening Friday 8, 5:30 to 8pm

Invitation to Launch and "Christmas Drinks"

Saturday 8th December, 4pm at the Watch House

Getting to the Bottom of Balmain's Dunnyes

A short history of the sanitation of a Sydney suburb by Fergus Fricke

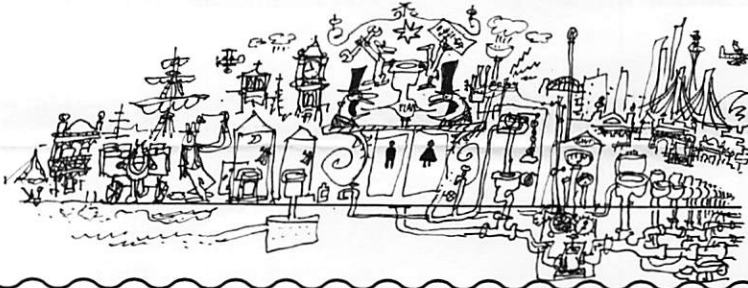
To be launched by The Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP,

Federal Member for Sydney and Minister for Health.

If you are looking for an unusual Christmas gift with a local flavour you should sniff this one out. Should it not be what you had in mind for a present then buy a copy for yourself and learn what life was like in Balmain in the 19th century when there was no reticulated water supply and there were no sewers. What you now take for granted saved Sydney from self-destruction but where did the poo go in the past and where does it go now? For the price of a few rolls of toilet paper you can buy this book and find out answers to these questions and others. The few remaining dunnyes are both an endangered species and a reminder of a critically important part of our history.

Bookings essential June 9810 6885 or Kathleen 9818 4954 or email bookings@balmainassociation.org.au by 1 Dec. 2012.

\$20 a copy but secure your copies at the launch for special price of 2 for \$30 for association members. Then available at the Watch House, Saturdays 11:30am to 3:00pm or balmainassociation.org.au/publications for an order form and at local bookstores.



CALLING ALL ARTISTS AND COLLECTORS

The Balmain Association is sponsoring an exhibition and sale of works to raise much needed funds to support SAWA NSW (Support Association for Women of Afghanistan) and is seeking donations from exhibiting artists, and collectors who may wish find a new home for some items. All profit will go directly to SAWA.

If you have an item to donate to this inspiring exhibition contact June at bookings@balmainassociation.org.au or 9810 6885 for an entry form or download one from Balmain Association's website balmainassociation.org.au.

Entries to be submitted as soon as possible, and before Friday, 18 January, 2013. SAWA raises funds to support Afghan women and children in Afghanistan and Pakistan where many have fled to difficult refugee situations. SAWA supports Heward School in Pakistan. More information sawansw.org.au.

**Exhibition will open Friday 8 February at 6pm
and continue on Saturday and Sunday 10am to 4pm**

RSVP essential by 3 February: bookings@balmainassociation.org.au or 9810 6885

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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