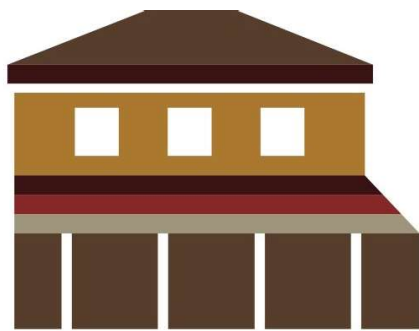




the peninsula Observer

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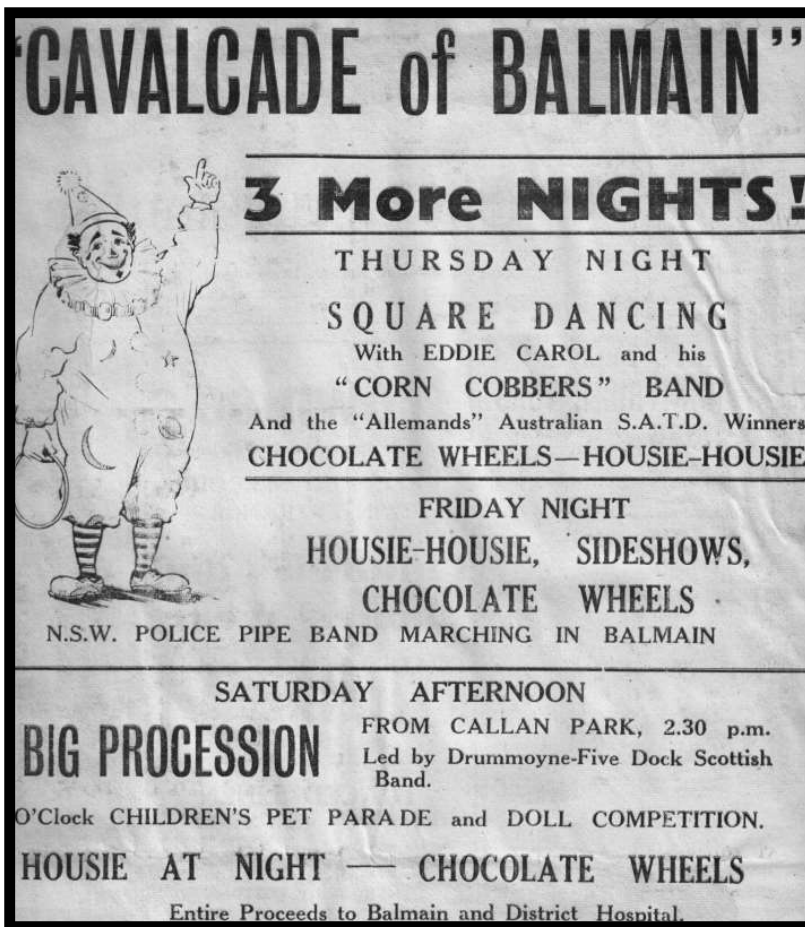
Farewell Kathleen Hamey



9 February 1932 – 24 May 2022

From the Archives

By Helen Carter



In May this year, the **Balmain**

Association received some historical records from the Dickson Family who lived in Balmain during the 1940s.

Mr (Wal) Wallace James Dickson owned a tailor's shop at 253 Darling Street, Balmain.

The records contained a bundle of books consisting of two scrapbooks, a Balmain Chamber of Commerce account book and family photos.

One scrapbook contained press cuttings of advertisements for suits made by Wal Dickson & Son Pty Ltd.

The other scrapbook had "Cavalcade of Balmain" written across it in pencil. I had never heard or seen anything about this event.

The press clippings revealed that this was a week long carnivale (eight days) than ran from 1952 to 1955 in Gladstone Park.

The early clippings showed the first cavalcade ran from March 21 to March, 29, 1952 and its aim was to raise money for the Balmain and District Hospital situated opposite Gladstone Park. Monies raised

were to be used to upgrade the hospital's amenities such as the theatre and maternity blocks.

Shopkeepers who subscribed to support the event received a transfer for their shop windows.

According to the official program the Cavalcade was opened by the then Mayor, Alderman E.C. Erwin at 8pm on Monday, March 24 and every night boasted different attractions such as climbing monkeys, laughing clowns, Housie-Housie, a baby show and a dog judging competition.

An advertisement from March 10, 1955 stated the *Entire proceeds to assist flood victims* and for further details *call in and have a talk to Wal Dickson at*

"The Men's Store" 251 Darling Street, Balmain (the store had been extended and was now from 251 to 253 Darling Street).

The Balmain Association Inc. representing Balmain, Birchgrove and Rozelle

Since 1965 we aimed 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 realisation of the above.

Members are welcome to attend the Balmain Association meetings at 6pm on the first Wednesday of each month at the Watch House, 179 Darling Street Balmain.

The History Room at the Watch House is open every Saturday from 11:30am to 3pm and every Tuesday from 11am to 1pm.

Website: www.balmainassociation.org.au

A life of contribution

By Fiona Rivers

Kathleen Hamey once described herself as a “compulsive committee member”. Having decamped, with her husband Val, from Blakehurst to Birchgrove in the mid 1980s, Kathleen not only joined many committees but also worked tirelessly for causes such as the built environment, local heritage, knitted with the Balmain Knitters in support of Balmain Hospital and was active in bushcare.

Over the following almost 40 years this passion for service to the community was recognised on several occasions. Kathleen and Val, her husband of almost 68 years, received a NSW Government Heritage Volunteer Award in 2007 and Kath received a Lifetime Membership Award from the Balmain Association in September 2017.

Nine years earlier Kathleen was honoured as a special guest at a Celebration of Community Dinner where her many achievements were articulated by the then Mayor, Carolyn Allen. She was also featured in Davida Peters and Jan Woods publication, *Movers and Shakers, Women in the Leichhardt Municipality*.

Kathleen passed away on May 24, this year. Her passing was marked by a well attended Celebration of Life held at the Balmain Town Hall meeting room and with condolence motions from the Inner West Council and State Parliament.

In her former life or “Before Balmain” as Kathleen referred to it, she was active in the St George Historical Society. Now an empty nester and living on the Balmain peninsula, daughters Glenda and Narelle having left the family home in Blakehurst, Kathleen found herself in “heritage heaven” and threw herself into a multitude of

community activities.

Before long Kathleen was actively involved with the Balmain Association, working on the Watchhouse Saturday roster, the Association’s archives, picture collection and exhibitions. Kathleen also took on the role of the Association’s History convenor from 1990.

As a member of the Balmain Association, Kathleen was active in fights to save Clontarf Cottage and the five former industrial sites from development and was fond of quoting Margaret Mead’s words: *Never doubt that a small group of committed people can change the world.*

Kathleen was also a member of bushcare groups and the Rozelle Bay Community Native Nursery. She successfully campaigned to save the Balmain Glasshouse and Councillor Marghanita da Cruz, during the delivery of the Inner West Council condolence motion conveyed a council proposal to rename the Glasshouse in Kathleen’s honour.

Apart from committee work, Kathleen also collaborated on a number of publications such as *Balmain Cemetary, Grave Concerns* with Bonnie Davidson; 150 years of Pubs in Balmain and Rozelle with Bonnie Davidson and Debbie Nicholls; *Gourlie’s Corner*, co-



Kathleen hard at work

authored by Kathleen and Val and *Streets, Lanes and Places* and *Rozelle Walks* with Bonnie Davidson.

I was lucky enough to be Kathleen’s near neighbour for a couple of years. Shortly after we moved in, Kathleen arrived with an intriguing history of our new house and was a wealth of information about the local area.

As Kathleen once said: “Over the years I have accumulated a great deal of the history of Balmain, a good collection of photos and documents. So many, in fact, that storage had to be found ... under the bed. Our bed is getting higher and higher off the floor.”

Many thanks to Kathleen and Val Hamey’s daughter Glenda Hamey for her assistance in writing this article about a much loved and sorely missed community member.

White Bay Power Station

Some disjointed reflections by a Balmain resident



Pic by David Porter

My first proper job as a 16 year old just out of school was at White Bay Power Station. That was in January 1956.

There were six of us on the laboratory staff at that time and our duties included coal analysis (to determine the calorific value of the coal, using a bomb calorimeter) and water analysis (must keep dissolved oxygen to a minimum otherwise rust will rip through the boiler tubes quick smart).

During my time at White Bay there were no major injuries but there was an incident. Early one morning a turbine shaft went out of alignment. This overheated a

bearing and the bearing and its housing, weighing about half a ton, shot through the roof and landed on Victoria Road. Fortunately, as it was early morning and there was much less traffic on Victoria Road than today, no one was hurt.

Cooling water for the turbine's condensers was drawn into the power station from the Johnstons Bay side and the warmed water passed out into White Bay. Maintaining the water strainers on the inlet side was a favoured job because, in season, bucket loads of Sydney Harbour prawns could be picked off the strainers.

Power generation till the 1950s

was centred in the cities because the technology to transmit power over longer distances had not yet been developed. But coal could be transported anywhere. Hence power stations were built right in the middle of cities.

At that time Sydney's power stations were Bunnerong at Botany, plus Ultimo, Pyrmont, White Bay and Balmain, all close to the city centre. The splats of ash on the footpath, on the washing, everywhere in fact, indicated that there was a power station nearby. In those days it was obvious that air pollution regulation was non-existent.



Pics by David Porter

The post war period was boom times for power, indeed the stations were working flat out and power demand continued to grow. Especially in 1948 when blackouts were common.

At home I remember my mother cooking on an open fire in the backyard to produce many evening meals. Incidentally, no fancy social barbecues in those days. The women did all the cooking, rain hail or shine!

The power shortages generated a rush to expand each power station. Another two turbines were installed at White Bay increasing its capacity by 100 megawatts to 186 megawatts.

But a shipping tragedy and electricity transmission technology were about to change Sydney's smoky atmosphere.

In 1931 the 640 ton collier 'Birchgrove Park' began regular services between Newcastle and Sydney. This run was known as the

60-miler and it was a vital link in keeping the Sydney power stations going.

In August 1956 she left Newcastle in fine weather but half an hour later ran into a very heavy sea, her load of coal shifted and the small ship eventually sank off the northern beaches, with the loss of 10 out of the 14 seamen on board. All the crew came from around Sydney, including the first mate David Waltanen of Pashley Street, Balmain.

Coincidentally the loss of the 'Birchgrove Park' marked the beginning of the end for power generation in Sydney. By the mid 1960s several new power stations were completed near the coal deposits, that were 100 to 200 kilometres north and west of Sydney. The Sydney stations were either closed or mothballed.

White Bay Power Station was the longest-lived power station in Sydney. Born to the Railways

Commission in 1912 it passed through its childhood serving the railways till its first change of ownership; taken over by the NSW government.

It then entered a tumultuous adulthood of poor maintenance, WWII, strikes and blackouts. Cast off as the Electricity Commission of NSW it moved into maturity and supplied electricity till the 'new' Hunter Valley stations came on line. It was eventually retired in 1984.

But of course the cycle continues. We still need electricity and with the life of the 'new' 1960s power stations coming to an end, the next generation will be powered not by coal or gas but by the sun and wind. Cleaner, cheaper and safer, they are now on the verge of taking over.

By David Porter

What's on at the Watch House

Please check the Balmain Association website www.balmainassociation.org.au for up-to-date information on art exhibitions.

Connections

A time to reconnect through art, while everyday life draws us away, art is like the magnet which connects us together through culture, time and experiences.

A collaboration of Turkish inspired art works including Ebru Art (Turkish Paper Marbling) by Serpil Gurkan, made with natural pigments from the earth using century old techniques. Each piece is unique and cannot be replicated.

Come and be inspired by our contemporary limited-edition collection, inspired by centuries old geometric patterns and beautiful 16th Century Ottoman Palace textiles. Handmade with love, each piece created on 100% woollen felt using traditional screen-printing methods.

Instagram: @serpilgurkan

Opening: Friday 16, September, 5pm to 8pm. All welcome.

Saturday 17 and Sunday 18, September, 10am to 5pm.



Julie Miller Colour Stories

Expression of colour is everything! "I love the way colour creates an emotional response, it is my inspiration. My ambition is to capture something transient in what I see and feel in the world around me. This is Balmain, the harbour and the northern beaches where I grew up and still feel drawn to. My subject is nature - whether it's a traditional landscape, still life or watercolours. I use traditional materials of oil paint on canvas and board and watercolour on paper.

I look forward to welcoming you to my exhibition."

Opening: Friday 23, September 6pm to 9pm. All welcome.

Saturday 24, September, 11am to 4pm;

Sunday 25, September, 11am to 3pm.

Weathered

A mixed media exhibition from three artist friends, calling themselves Brush Needle Lens Clay, who originally met singing together in a Balmain choir. They have exhibited previously but are exhibiting for the first time together to create a varied and interesting array of art. The artists are Rhonda Stien, a mixed media fabric artist, Karen Presland, a photographer and collagist and Sue Buckle, a ceramic artist. Inspiration has come from the Woolwich peninsula that consists of a succession of bays and knolls leading down to the meeting point of the Parramatta and Lane Cove Rivers known as 'Moocooboola'.

The Woolwich dock itself cuts into Hawkesbury sandstone that was laid down by an ancient inland river system. Weathering has resulted in a spur off from the Hunter's Hill/Woolwich ridgeline forming Clarkes Point, which is a popular weekend retreat for many Sydneysiders.

The exhibition highlights the many facets and textures of the landscape and the river – this includes boathouses and wharves balanced with some aspects of the local bushland – flora and fauna and domestic life.

Saturday 1, Sunday 2, Monday 3, October, 10am to 4pm.



Handcrafted – Rethink, Reuse, Recycle

The Society of Arts and Crafts of New South Wales exhibition Handcrafted - Rethink, Reuse, Recycle is a challenge and an experiment to use materials that have been discarded and only used once. We've activated our craft skills and imagination to create new pieces that are valid, amusing and useful for yet another cycle of life and this process of repurposing and recycling can continue yet again. The members of Craft NSW and their guest exhibitors have played and worked with everything from railway sleepers, discarded blankets, used clothing, litter from parks, beaches, streets, and playgrounds. The works are all handmade with skill, enthusiasm and lateral thinking and thus rescuing discards from being yet another addition to landfill or as litter clogging our environment. Instead it has expanded our field of raw materials for our craft and inspiration. Our pieces are valid craft and art to be used or to amuse. The exhibition is part of Sydney Craft Week organised by the Australian Design Centre.

On Meet the Makers day and evening when you can chat with the exhibitors and find out what inspires us to keep creating craft and rising to new challenges. Looking forward to seeing you.

October 7 to 18, 10am to 6pm.

Meet the Makers, Thursday 13, October, 5pm to 8pm.

See Saw

See Saw is a gathering of recently completed collages, paintings, drawings and objects by Sydney artist, Martin Watson.

"These works have evolved over an extended period of time and reflect my changing world. Materials and themes are eclectic, discarded ephemera to pastels and acrylics. Recycled board and canvas give me a freedom to create works that hopefully transcend their humble origins. My art practice is an attempt to reconcile the throwaway nature of consumer culture, to challenge perception and give poetic expression to my everyday experience."

Instagram: @martinwatsonart

Website: martinwatson.com.au

Opening: Friday 4, November 5pm to 9pm All welcome.

Saturday 5, November and Sunday 6, 10am to 4pm.



What's on at the Watch House

A Place to Return

A Place To Return is a group exhibition of the work of emerging artists Deidre Fitzpatrick, Janet Cheetham and Melissa Drew.

This body of work captures the beauty and energy of landscapes that resonate in the artists' experiences. Their observations of architecture, harbour foreshore, and surrounding tranquil bushlands offer a window through which to view the lives of the artists and their communities during the upheaval of Covid-19 and the slow return to normalcy in its aftermath.

Deidre's work has been exhibited in the Waverley Woollahra 9 x 5 Landscape Art Prize.

Janet's work was featured in the 2021 Primavera exhibition at The Shop Gallery and Autunno at the Watchhouse in March this year.

Melissa is a Northern Beaches artist returning to painting after a career in commercial graphic design.

This is Melissa's first presentation of work inspired by her affinity with her local region.

Saturday 19, November and Saturday 20, November 10am to 4pm.



Those Miraculous Hours

Xanthe Muston is a young Australian artist based in Sydney. Influenced by her interest and studies in literature, Xanthe's practice explores themes of memory, identity, and the narratives we construct to make sense of both. Using a range of watercolour, gouache, ink and oil paint, she explores the complicated ways that we recall, preserve, and ultimately fictionalise the past to give us a sense of ease in the present.

Website: www.xanthemuston.com.au

Instagram: @xanthe.muston

Opening: Friday 25, November 3pm to 9pm. All welcome.

Saturday 26, November and Sunday 27, November 9am to 5pm.

Susanna Chen Chow

Susanna Chen Chow has established a prolific painterly practice. She travels extensively around Australia, exploring its diverse landscapes and sites. Her work has been exhibited in numerous art competitions and galleries in Australia and her works have been acquired by collectors in Hong Kong, New York and Europe. She has received multiple awards. Susanna explores sensate and emotive experiences of the Australian countryside using her memory and imagination to capture landscape and floral scenes, translating them into images that evoke the mood and the feeling of the place rather than accurate representations. Her style includes abstraction and figuration demonstrating confident lines and bold painterly marks.

10% of the sales will be donated to the CanRevive Cancer Foundation.

Opening: Friday 2, December 5pm to 8pm. All welcome

Saturday 3, December and Sunday 4, December 9am to 6pm.

