



THE BAY TIMES

Watsons Bay News and Views

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE BAY

New owners for Watsons Bay Hotel

The Watsons Bay Hotel, which has been owned by members of the Doyle family for many years, has new owners – Arthur Laundry and Fraser Short. The new owners took over the Hotel in November and intend to fit it out with a new look as well as improving the food and facilities.

Commuter ferry in Watsons Bay

Gabrielle Upton MP told the Watsons Bay Association that she is working with the Transport Department on the feasibility of a peak hour ferry service at Watsons Bay. Transport NSW said the department is reviewing all of its ferry services in 2013 to identify potential new services.

Woollahra Council has also said it will lobby the NSW Government about peak-hour ferry services to Watsons Bay. At a council meeting on 22 October, a motion was adopted by the council to approach the Minister for Roads and Ports regarding commuter ferry services.

Woollahra Council's restrictions on dogs

Council rangers have increased their vigilance on dog owners. If you own a dog and aren't sure where you can and can't walk it, and when it needs to be on a lead, go to Woollahra Council's website map outlining restrictions on dogs. www.woollahra.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0012/10074/Pets_Guide_pg8.pdf

EVENTS AND NOTICES

Carols on the Bay, 8 December

HMAS *Watson* and Woollahra Council invite you to celebrate the 20th Annual Carols on the Bay. The festivities will go from 4 till 8pm on 8 December. Local schools and the Royal Australian Navy Band will perform and there'll be a special visit from Santa. There will be limited parking, so please use public transport. In case of wet weather, call Woollahra Council's Wet Weather line 9391 7916.

Festive Fun for kids at WB Library, 19 December

Children aged 7 and over are invited to a party at the Watsons Bay Library on Wednesday 19 December from 10.30am. Activities will include:

- Making culinary treats like snowmen using marshmallows
 - Designing your own card for someone special
- Children will be given a free festive activity booklet to take home.

The party is free, with food and refreshments provided.
NB: Bookings are essential.

Storytime at Watsons Bay Library, 11 December

The Watsons Bay Library invites pre-school aged children to Storytime on Tuesday 11 December 2012.

Food will be served at this event, which will be the last Storytime at Watsons Bay Library for 2012. The final Rhyme Time will follow it on Friday 14 December.

Australia Day Breakfast, Doyles Fishermans Wharf

Wendy and David Doyle, owners of Doyles Fishermans Wharf, will hold their popular annual Australia Day breakfast for Watsons Bay residents on Saturday 26 January. Come along and enjoy a free breakfast!

55+ Club at Watsons Bay Library, 19 December

The 55+ Club is a monthly social event at WB Library for senior residents starting at 11am on the 3rd Wednesday of every month. The last event for 2012 is on 19 December.

During the event, residents aged 55 and older have exclusive access to the library to view new books while enjoying a free morning tea.

Watsons Bay Community Choir

A local choir group meet on Tuesday nights near the Tea Gardens to enjoy singing together. Anyone is welcome to come. You don't have to be a very experienced singer but you must be able to hold a note and read music. The choir is currently looking for a couple of male tenor voices to join the group. Contact Rebecca Miskin on 0403 648336.

Camp Cove Nippers

Over the next few months, Nick Coumbis and Omer Farhy intend to run a nippers program at Camp Cove for local kids aged from five to twelve. The program will be based on traditional surf club nippers programs, with the children divided into appropriate age groups. The focus will be on fun, water awareness and water safety.

There will be ten Camp Cove Nippers sessions over 2012-2013 running from 8am to 9am on Sunday mornings. The ten weeks will be split into two blocks, with 4 weeks from November to December 2012 (25 Nov; 2 Dec; 9 Dec; 16 Dec) and 6 weeks from late January to March 2013 (27 Jan; 3 Feb; 10 Feb; 17 Feb; 24 Feb; 3 Mar).

The cost for the 10-week season will be \$60 per child.

Nick Coumbis has run a nippers program at Camp Cove in the past. With two children of his own (Olivia and Matteo), he believes that being confident and having fun in and around the water is essential for all Australian kids.

The total number of children is capped at 50, so please let Nick know if you're interested, how many kids you'd like to enrol, and their ages and swimming ability.

Nick Coumbis: nick@ingoodnick.com.au or 0425 251 565 or Omer Farhy: omer@thedenimproject.com or 0410 500 080

WATSONS BAY: PAST AND PRESENT

THIRTY YEARS AT THE KIOSK!

Anna Trgo has worked in the Camp Cove kiosk for thirty years and still describes Camp Cove as heavenly. Here we ask her about her time there.



©Stuart Spence

What's the most amazing thing you've seen at Camp Cove?

A young adolescent female seal lying on the beach. When I went up to her she opened one eye. I called National Parks and some of their staff came and sat by her for three days to protect her. At night she'd go fishing and then lie on the beach during the day. Then she went back to Antarctica.

What's been the biggest change in 30 years?

There's more sea life now because it's cleaner. I've seen both penguins and dolphins at Camp Cove. Once I fed some prawn heads to a pelican on the beach and it walked up the beach with me – it wanted more!

Have you ever seen a shark here? No, never.

What's the most popular thing you sell?

Canned soft drinks, water, ice creams and ice blocks. Frosty Fruits are the most popular ice-blocks.

What's the most popular non-food item?

Beach towels for tourists who didn't realise it would be so lovely here and then decide they want to have a swim.

Which famous people have bought things from you?

Raquel Welsh, Elle Macpherson and Robin Williams – he bought a banana smoothie.

What's your favourite thing about Camp Cove?

Being here is just heaven. It gives you peace and harmony with nature. It's a little slice of the world that's just so special. And the locals are so lovely!

BEING A TEEN AT HMAS WATSON

– Samantha Bannister

Moving from dull old Canberra to Watsons Bay was life-changing for me. I was suddenly living in a place surrounded by marching and saluting men in uniform!

I've grown accustomed to things now and sometimes take them for granted. These include mail being delivered to security guards not post boxes; daily access to a gym, three pools, a sauna, a sports field, a church and war tunnels; and people in helicopters making regular visits.

The safety of the base has led to my younger siblings being able to enjoy old-fashioned childhood freedoms. They

can walk over to other kids' homes by themselves; accidentally leave a nerf gun somewhere and find it there three days later; as well as going on thrilling explorations around the base, in tunnels and through the bush.

There are many wonderful things about HMAS Watson, but some annoying ones too. At 8am the Australian flag is hoisted up the mast and at sunset it's taken down. At both times you can forget about going anywhere. Another annoyance is that friends or family can't just 'pop' over for a surprise visit. We have to invite them and then ring the security gate to say our visitors are not a security threat.

A personal difficulty for me is coming back from babysitting in a car at 2am and having to convince a new security guard that I live on the base and I'm not a sailor who needs to be reported for staying out past 11!

I'll never forget my years living on a naval base. I've not only had the chance to battle with pirates on a ship simulator but have learnt to deal with change and the wonders it can bring.

I wouldn't trade living here for anywhere else because of the experiences, enjoyment and memories this navy base has given me during my teenage years.

ALICE RAWSON: THE LAST WB LIFEBOAT



Alice Rawson was Watsons Bay's last lifeboat. Built in 1905, it was named for Lady Rawson, the wife of Sir Harry Holdsworth Rawson, governor of NSW from 1902 to 1909.

The wreck of *The Dunbar* in 1857 demonstrated the need for marine rescue in Sydney. The first lifeboat based in Watsons Bay was a traditional English lifeboat called *Lady Carrington*, which was imported from Britain in 1879.

Alice Rawson was commissioned to replace *Lady Carrington*. She was built entirely of Australian timber at the NSW Cockatoo Island Dockyards. The design of subsequent Sydney surf boats can be traced to the *Alice Rawson*.

Alice Rawson was based at the site of the Pilot Station and served Sydney Harbour until 1946. She carried a ketch rig similar to traditional English lifeboats and was manned by a crew of 12 oarsmen, a coxswain and an assistant coxswain, all generally drawn from the Watsons Bay community.

On Australia Day 1908, the first surf life-saving carnival was held at Manly Beach. Sydney's surf-rescue boats competed there, with *Alice Rawson* as the 'flagship'.

David Sheedy of Dover Heights has campaigned tirelessly for the preservation of the *Alice Rawson*. David is talking to the proposed operators of the Sydney Pilot Station precinct about creating a small maritime museum, incorporating the *Alice Rawson* in seagoing condition.

Roger Bayliss

FORMER WB RESIDENT, NINA GLASSER

Nina Glasser and her husband Neil lived above Gibsons Beach from 1962 to 1982. Nina has fond memories of bringing up three children in Watsons Bay.



Where had you been living before Watsons Bay?

We lived in Coogee in my husband's family home.

What brought you down to Watsons Bay?

My husband had a thing about the water and wanted to live somewhere with a view. We also wanted to live somewhere reasonably close to our children's schools.

Your land included Gibson's Beach? How much of the beach did you own?

We owned quite a lot of the beach until we did a deal with the council whereby we sold the beach back to them in exchange for the ability to subdivide our land and build another house in front of our existing one.

Did Gibsons Beach have lots of houses or was it still bushland?

A few houses were built around Gibsons Beach while we were there.

Did a lot of tourist and locals use Gibsons Beach?

Yes, it was very popular.

Was it okay to swim at Gibsons Beach in the 1960s given that the pilot station was still in use?

Yes, it made no difference. We still swam there.

I believe you used to have a bonfire night at Gibsons Beach every year for Guy Fawkes Night*.

Yes, Guy Fawkes Night used to be very popular in Australia. We would build a large bonfire on the beach and all our friends and family, as well as many of the locals, would come down for it. The children used to love it.

Where did you shop?

Mainly at Rose Bay, though the shopping centre there wasn't as big as it is now. Otherwise Double Bay, which I liked very much.

Was it very social at Watsons Bay while you were there?

Yes, and we had a very good social life. We knew many local families and we mixed with them a lot.

*Guy Fawkes Bonfire Night is an annual event held on 5 November, primarily in England. It commemorates the arrest of Guy Fawkes, who led the Gunpowder Plot that tried to murder King James I. As news of his arrest spread, London people lit bonfires to celebrate King James I surviving this attempt on his life.

Nina Glasser was interviewed by Annika Susskind

WHAT REALLY GOES ON AT HMAS WATSON?

If you live in Watsons Bay you're bound to have seen naval staff from HMAS Watson driving by or walking towards the wharf in their uniforms. And you may well have wondered things like: Is its purpose to guard the entrance to the heads to protect us from foreign invasion? Do they learn how to shoot missiles there?

A group of locals were recently invited on a tour of HMAS Watson by the Royal Australian Navy, where Sub Lieutenant Adam W Kirkwood answered these questions and more, as well as talking about both the current purpose and history of the base.

HMAS Watson is the Australian Navy's main maritime warfare training base. It trains Seaman officers and combat system sailors, as well as providing command training to newly appointed commanding and executive officers.

The Royal Australian Navy first established radar training facilities on South Head in 1942, and HMAS Watson base was commissioned on 14 March 1945. In 1956, torpedo training and anti-submarine training began at HMAS Watson. Later on, training at the base was expanded to an anti-submarine guided weapon system.

The first ship bridge simulator was installed at the base in 1980 so that naval students could be taught how to steer naval vessels.

On the particularly windy Saturday afternoon that our tour took place, we were taken around the old fortifications, where guns were used to survey the harbour entrance. We finished up in the Chapel of St George the Martyr, which has stunning stained glass windows, as well as a bible that was brought over on the First Fleet, which is on display in the chapel's anteroom.

As the sun went down, everyone gathered and fell silent as the saluting of the flag took place in HMAS Watsons' time-honoured Ceremonial Sunset Flag ceremony. Ceremonial Sunset is maintained by navies throughout the world to salute the lowering of the ensign at the close of the day.



In times gone by it was also the custom for Captains of Men of War to prove their gun powder was dry and ready for the next encounter by firing an evening gun and having their marine detachment fire a fusillade of rifles.

We would like to thank the staff of HMAS Watson for inviting us on what was an extremely informative and interesting tour.

Camilla Strang

WOULD YOU LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE NEXT NEWSLETTER?

We are interested in notices, stories, historical information and photos that would be of interest to the WB community. Feel free to submit ideas and stories to content@watsonsbayassociation.org

VOICES FROM THE PAST

"I had a wonderful childhood... spent amidst everything connected with the sea. Plenty of rowing boats on the beach, fish traps, fish nets, sails. I used to have an old dinghy and I often wonder how on earth we made it home sailing from Neilsen Park with those stiff nor'easters that blow across Sydney Harbour..."

Watsons Bay gets more beautiful to me every hour, every minute. Sydney Harbour, and that gentle lap of the waves onto the beach, making a tinkling sound as they draw back, washing lightly over the shell grit is music to my ears, just as it was when I was a child sleeping in the front room of what is now the restaurant. I can never forget such a simple, happy memory!"

Alice Doyle (from *Doyles Seafood Cookbook*, 1979)

WATSONS BAY ASSOCIATION NEWS

Council Elections

WBA members Louise McElvogue and Ron Berkelmans would like to thank the local community for their support during the recent council elections. Louise and Ron ran with Rose Bay local Fiona Shand on an Independent ticket in the Vaucluse ward. They made an impressive debut, taking 20% of the vote (they needed 25% to win a seat). Many of the Independent ticket's platforms, such as a commuter ferry service and consistency in planning decisions, have been adopted by new and re-elected Councillors.

Councillors Susan Wynne and Anthony Boskovitz were re-elected in Vaucluse ward and are joined by Ted Bennett. These Councillors promised a range of measures including retaining our heritage and improving our local area. We encourage WBA members to give our local representatives feedback on these issues.

Woollahra Council has welcomed ten new councillors and returned five sitting Councillors. The WBA will be working with all Councillors to build support for the unique needs of our area. Use the contacts details on the Woollahra Council website to keep in touch with our Council.

Gabrielle Upton MP interested in WBA priorities

Members of the Watsons Bay Association met with Gabrielle Upton MP, Member for Vaucluse in the NSW Parliament, to discuss a range of issues in October. These included:

- The push for a regular commuter ferry service from Watsons Bay and how the WBA can support the campaign
- Improving the retail sector of Watsons Bay and the bus stop and turning circle. Woollahra Council developed a plan for this work several years ago but the funding for the development has not been forthcoming
- Support for maintaining the heritage of Watsons Bay
- Parking issues in Watsons Bay
- The future of the pilot station at Gibsons Beach

Gabrielle Upton expressed interest in the WBA priorities and we will update her on our plans for 2013 after our AGM 18 November (see below).

AGM of Watsons Bay Association, 18 November

Please join us for the AGM of the Watsons Bay Association on Sunday 18 November at Glimpse, 27 Military Road Watsons Bay 5.30 pm. Everyone is welcome, so come and find out about the WBA and how you can get involved.

At the AGM, representatives of the WBA will report on its activities during 2011-12 and outline priorities for 2013. There will also be a call for nominations to WBA committees. This is the perfect time to join the WBA or renew your annual membership of \$30.

Glimpse will operate a cash bar and provide complimentary nibbles. For more information about the WBA go to www.watsonsbayassociation.org

Why it's worth joining the Watsons Bay Association

Joining the Watsons Bay Association is important because:

- You become part of a group advocating for local improvements. The more members we have, the more influential we are. The Association is run by volunteers, so we welcome participation in many areas and can utilize any expertise you can bring to the Association.
- You will stay informed on important planning and development issues that affect everyone in the area.
- You will be notified of local events.

Current issues

The key issues the WBA is focusing on are:

- Working to ensure the Watsons Bay Area Development Control Plan (DCP) becomes a strict code of conditions governing development, not merely guidelines
 - Ensuring that the DCP embraces the regulation, use and amenity of open spaces
 - Improving transport to Watsons Bay
 - Helping to upgrade the retail sector in Watsons Bay
- All the issues we are looking at are reported on regularly through our blog at watsonsbayresidents.blogspot.com.au.

Please feel free to comment on or provide feedback regarding any of the issues raised on the blog.

Contact Us

The Watsons Bay Association is made up of local residents and friends of Watsons Bay. Membership of \$30 a year is open to everyone. To find out more contact us on info@watsonsbayassociation.org or by writing to WBA, 4 Victoria Street, Watsons Bay NSW 2030

Want to help out with our newsletter or write pieces for our website?

Have you got a story for our next newsletter? We're interested in events, notices, stories, historical information and photos that would be of interest to the WB community. Feel free to submit ideas and stories for the website or newsletter to content@watsonsbayassociation.org