From the 1840s onwards Balmain experienced rapid urbanisation as major industry established itself on its foreshores. Within a few years Balmain had been transformed from a quiet village into a bustling industrial town. The Balmain Industrial Heritage walk offers a snapshot of many of the area’s rich industrial and labour heritage.

The map and accompanying audio guide give you insight into the significant social history of the places that you will traverse and its influence on the lives of many Australians. The MP3 audio guide is available for free download at www.lmc.nsw.gov.au.

To avoid steep hills we suggest you start on Darling Street at the Working Men’s Institute and finish at Illoura Reserve, although this walk can be completed in reverse. You can also complete the walking tour in a variety of other ways e.g. by utilising the ferry route.

Leichhardt Council acknowledges the traditional owners of this land - the Gadigal and Wangal people, who form part of the Dharug nation (commonly referred to today as Eora) and their descendants.

SITE LIST
1. Working Men’s Institute
2. Unity Hall Hotel/ Loyalty Square War Memorial
3. Issy Wyner Reserve
4. Ship Painters and Dockers Hall
5. Mort Bay Park/ Mort’s Dock/ Ballast Point
6. Thames Street Wharf
7. Balmain Watch House
8. Colgate Palmolive
9. Alexander Burns & the Adelaide Steamship Company
10. Illoura Reserve

LEGEND
- Travel Route Loop
- Steep Streets
- Historical Sites
- Bus Stops
- Bus Routes
- Ferry Stops
- Public Toilets

National Trust Heritage Festival 2007

BALMAIN EAST WHARF DARLING STREET

FERRY ROUTE

BALMAIN’S INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE
During World War II, the Sydney industrial suburb of Balmain became a ship repair centre in Australia. Some 3000 people worked at Cockatoo Dockyards, 2000 at Mort’s Dock, plus many more in other yards. Conditions were tough and especially so at the antiquated Mort’s Dock. Isay Wyner worked at Mort’s Dock and Cockatoo Dockyards as a ship painter and docker. Wyner also mentored the Balmain Family to work and gain respect from their peers. His son, Morris was a renowned Australian painter. Wyner’s influence instilled the importance of working class identity and the need for local police and cells to detain short-term prisoners increased. In 1854, the Balmain Watch House was built.

Originally one storey in height, the watch house was Balmain’s first police lock-up. As Balmain grew rapidly, the need for local police and cells to detain short-term prisoners increased. In 1854, the Balmain Watch House was built.

The Balmain Working Men’s Institute was formed in 1868 and its building at 332 Darling Street was completed in 1869. Working Men’s Institutes had aimed to ‘improve the education of working men and instruct them in the trades’. The only condition placed on membership at the Balmain Institute was “respectable behaviour and the opportunities afforded for passing the time enjoyably instead of aimless loafing’. By 1912 the Institute had 700 members, a library of over 6,000 titles.

The Balmain peninsula carries a lot of traffic so always be alert and use sunscreen, carry water and wear a hat and good walking shoes. If using a taxi, remember the speed limit on the entire peninsula is 40km/h. Turning motorists must give way to pedestrians – but do not assume they will see you.

**SOME IMPORTANT SAFETY POINTS TO REMEMBER:**

- Uneven and tree roots may have damaged some surfaces that have yet to be noted or fixed by Council.
- Remains of Mort’s Dock can be seen at Peacock Point.
- No ferries stop at Thames St Wharf on Sundays.
- Call Council’s Road Safety and Sustainable Transport Planner 02 9367 9000 or visit www.131500.com.au for more information on the Leichhardt Council area?

Public Transport

- 441 Art Gallery – Birchgrove via City, Anzac Bridge, Rowntree St
- 442 Town Hall/QVB - Balmain East Wharf (Darling Street)
- Dulwich Hill, Hurlstone Park, Canterbury Station
- Sydney, and his clerk of works, James Charles White were involved in the construction. The Watch House was threatened with demolition in the mid 1960s. Its poor condition was the catalyst for the formation of the Balmain Watch House Preservation Committee, which undertook restoration works to the building.

**LOOKING FOR INFORMATION ON THE HISTORY OF BALMAIN?**

You can access the Local History collection at Balmain Library - a houses an extensive collection on the history of Annandale, Balmain, Birchgrove, Leichhardt, Lilyfield and Rozelle. The collection includes maps, photographs, plans, newspapers, books and journals and oral history information.

The Balmain Watch House Preservation Committee welcomes new members.

**ISSY WYNER RESERVE**

During World War II, the Sydney industrial suburb of Balmain became

1. **WORKING MEN’S INSTITUTE**

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2. **UNITY HALL HOTEL/LOYALTY SQUARE WAR MEMORIAL**

The original Unity Hall Inn was located at the corner of Nicholson and Darling Streets, East Balmain. It received its name from the meetings of the Balmain United Independent Order of Oddfellows (Freemasons) which were founded in 1865 and its building at 332 Darling Street was completed in 1869. Working Men's Institutes had aimed to 'improve the education of working men and instruct them in the trades'. The only condition placed on membership at the Balmain Institute was “respectable behaviour and the opportunities afforded for passing the time enjoyably instead of aimless loafing'. By 1912 the Institute had 700 members, a library of over 6,000 titles.

3. **ISAY WYNER RESERVE**

During World War II, the Sydney industrial suburb of Balmain became

the largest ship-repair centre in Australia. Some 3000 people worked at Cockatoo Dockyards, 2000 at Mort's Dock, plus many more in other yards. Conditions were tough and especially so at the antiquated Mort's Dock. Isay Wyner worked at Mort's Dock and Cockatoo Dockyards as a ship painter and docker. Wyner also mentored the Balmain Family to work and gain respect from their peers. His son, Morris was a renowned Australian painter. Wyner's influence instilled the importance of working class identity and the need for local police and cells to detain short-term prisoners increased. In 1854, the Balmain Watch House was built.

Originally one storey in height, the watch house was Balmain's first police lock-up. As Balmain grew rapidly, the need for local police and cells to detain short-term prisoners increased. In 1854, the Balmain Watch House was built.

4. **SHIP PAINTERS AND DOCKERS HALL**

Built in 1915, the Ship Painters and Dockers Hall was used by the Ship Painters and Dockers Union from 1915 until 1990 and was the scene of similar contributors to the community such as (Nick) Origgis Park.

5. **MORT BAY PARK/ MORT'S DOCK/ BALLAST POINT**

In 1854, Englishman Thomas Mort had an area at the south-western end of Waterview Bay now known as Mort Bay, excavated to create a storage facility in 1930. The company operated there until the 1990s and its poor condition was the catalyst for the formation of the Balmain Watch House Preservation Committee, which undertook restoration works to the building.

6. **THAMES STREET WHARF**

This Late Victorian building, thought to be constructed in 1895, is possibly the last century ferry structure remaining in use. Sydney Harbour. Harbour. Docks and dockyards were repossessed and sold to the Adelaide Steamship Company in 1900. The company undertook major alterations and over the next 68 years successfully operated a ship repair and engineering service to the large Adelaide Steamship Fleet. At one time the workshops employed more than 600 workers, mainly local men.

9. **ALEXANDER BURNS & THE ADELAIDE STEAMSHIP COMPANY**

Developed by timber merchant Alexander Burns who used coal fire steam engines to power saw milling operations, it's workshops are often visited by local residents, the NSW Government acquired the site for parkland in 2002. The site is currently under re-development.

8. **COLGATE PALMOLIVE**

In the early 1920s U.S. firm Colgate-Palmolive began operations in Broadstairs Street, Balmain. Later re-named Colgate Avenue. Within two years the company was employing over 150 people, becoming a major Auckland or British company. The company undertook major alterations and over the next 68 years successfully operated a ship repair and engineering service to the large Adelaide Steamship Fleet. At one time the workshops employed more than 600 workers, mainly local men.

10. **ILLOURA RESERVE**

'Bloula' is an Aboriginal word meaning 'pleasant place'. For most of the 20th Century a major portion of the reserve was a maritime repair and construction storage depot for the Maritime Services Board. In 1970 the Board's site was handed over to Leichhardt Council and converted to parkland.

Landscape Architect Bruce McKenzie, was awarded a prize for excellence by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects for his design of the reserve. The design included the re-use of timber pilings. In recent years the extension of the park at Peacock Street, which is also to be developed for parkland by Leichhardt Council, will provide an important link to the reserve.