

WORKING WOMEN AND THE TEXTILE CLOTHING & FOOTWEAR INDUSTRY



The Migration Heritage Project would like to hear from you if you have any memorabilia or objects from the local factories and businesses involved in the textile and Clothing and Footwear Industry (TCF) between 1945 and 2000.

Already local research has produced items of clothing in the Illawarra Museum and in private collections, as well as stories about the working lives of women, or their mothers, who started work as young girls of fifteen – sample hands, fore women, union stewards and machinists.

“My mother worked at Jones in Thirroul and then Friedelle’s ... started when I was four and my grandmother looked after me. My father took me to the factory sometimes in the afternoon when it was time to finish work. I remember she worked five days a week and would still find time to make me a dress for going out in on a Saturday night. She was made a fore woman but didn’t like to get onto the girls about the quota ...”

Large numbers of women have worked in and continue to work in, the clothing, textile and footwear industry in Wollongong. At one time there were 26 or more factories involved in making textiles, clothes of all types, bedding linen and footwear. We want to find out what kinds of work women and men did in the factories, what they learnt and how they learnt their skills, what it was like to work in the factories, what it was like to be a union steward, a factory secretary, a clipper or any of the many other jobs available in the industry.

(continued over)

MHP MEETINGS

The MHP Committee meets the first Thursday of the month (February-December) at 5.30 pm, Meeting Room 1, Level 10 Wollongong City Council Administration Building, Burelli Street, Wollongong. Members and other interested people or groups are always welcome. The meetings scheduled for 2009 are as follows:

6 August, 3 September,
1 October, 5 November (AGM),
3 December

(Venue for meetings provided through the Wollongong City Council Multicultural Services)

MHP COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman

Franca Facci

Treasurer

Mendo Trajcevski

Secretary

Fidelia Pontarolo

Committee:

Gregor Cullen

Rina Montgomery

Olga Romano

Giulia Bonacina

Ludwik Ihnat

Peter Bestman

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Don't forget to visit our website

www.mhpillawarra.com



We want to find objects that help to tell the story of the working lives of women (particularly) in the TCF – and find evidence of what they produced during this time.

Not all the stories are about work!

“The Allen Brothers (including Peter Allen) used to play at the company Christmas party and that was wonderful. They would come and sit with us and chat.”

If you have any objects that help tell the story of the TCF in Wollongong, or know someone who does, please contact Eva Castle, a member of the Migration Heritage Project, on 4228 9787.

Article and Images courtesy of Eva Castle. Eva is currently completing an internship with the Powerhouse Museum, Migration Heritage Centre, and drawing upon the research collected on Women’s Work through the Places Project. ‘Women’s Work’ will be presented at the MHP Annual General Meeting in November 2009. Details to be advised in the coming months.

FIRST GENERATION EXHIBITION VIVA LA GONG



Nissan Huts, Berkeley Hostel, view from the south-west (photograph courtesy of Bruce Pennay)

Viva La Gong will bring the heart of Wollongong alive in November in a festival celebrating the power of creativity to activate community spirit. With a mix of major national musicians and vibrant local performers and artists, this year’s Viva program will reflect the rich cultural heritage of the city, including the Indigenous, migrant, textile and industrial history of the Illawarra.

One particular project which will have a visible presence in the city during the festival is the First Generation exhibition. In partnership with Migration Heritage Project and Wollongong City Gallery, the Viva La Gong Festival will commission photographer Mayu Kanamori, to create a portrait exhibition based on the people interviewed in the MHP Places Project and the places associated with their settlement and life in Wollongong.

The MHP Migration Places project was supported by funds from the Wollongong City Council, the NSW Heritage Council and the Migration Heritage Centre.

The project was undertaken by Louise Thom, Meredith Walker and Glynis Cummins in 2007. Using historical research and interviews, a data base was compiled about a wide range of places in Wollongong associated with Post World War II migration. Detailed essays were prepared on the themes of first accommodation and work places for women.

The photographer, Mayu Kanamori comes to the First Generation project as an experienced photo-journalist and an artist who has exhibited her work in galleries, theatres and arts festivals both nationally and internationally. Kanamori has worked on a number of photographic collaborations and exhibitions with migrant and Indigenous communities in Australia, Japan and Italy. Kanamori’s photographic portraits are consistently admired for their “humility, grace and accuracy” and, as arts critic Robert McFarlane¹ notes the photographer “allows her camera to receive subtle and natural images from her subjects.”

Kanamori exhibited *“The Island of the Ancients, Photographs of Sardinia’s Centenarians”* curated by Sandy Edwards of Arthere at Customs House Library in September 2008, and the images are published in the book, *“The Island of the Ancients – the secrets of Sardinia’s centenarians”* by Ben Hills. These images of Sardinia’s centenarians are

classic portraits of elderly Sardinian's captured in moments of "spontaneous dialogue" with the photographer and represent a beautiful testimony to their longevity.



Mayu Kanamori (photograph by Sandy Edwards)

First Generation will be a large format photographic exhibition on the 27 exterior panels of Wollongong City Gallery and will launch the Viva La Gong Festival on Friday October 30, 2009. The exhibition will feature the colour digital portraits and a selection of old black and white images from the time.

The exterior public exhibition on the Wollongong City Gallery façade will run for a number of months after the festival and will be a celebration of aspects of migrant experience in Wollongong.

The colour digital portraits and other images created by Mayu Kanamori in the course of the project will be an additional contribution to the existing archive of images compiled in the MHP Places Project.

The Viva la Gong Festival will be held on Saturday November 7 with a free all day event in MacCabe Park. The festival will start with a musical fiesta in the mall and move to MacCabe Park, where you'll be able to enjoy headline concert acts together with all the fun of the fairground and the popular children's and family activities.

For more info contact Cultural Services on 4251 4709 or visit www.vivalagongfestival.org

¹Mcfarlane, Robert, Mayu Kanamori: *The Island of the Ancients*, Sydney Morning Herald, Arts, August 22, 2008

Article contributed by Annette McLernon, Museum Development Officer, Wollongong City Council.

FIRST GENERATION EXHIBITION AND WORKING WOMEN.....MHP "PLACES PROJECT" LEGACY CONTINUES

Using the historic themes identified in the MHP's "Investigation Migration Heritage Wollongong" (unpublished), the benefit of the Places Project was the greater understanding of the experience of migration in Wollongong in the 20th Century, in particular: post World War 2 accommodation, work and worship. The population of Wollongong more than doubled between 1947 and 1961 due to migration yet previous heritage studies of Wollongong had not fully acknowledged migration as a significant historic theme in the City's development. The Places Project aimed to address this oversight. The themes of accommodation, work and worship were selected being the shared priorities of all migrants irrespective of where or when they settled in Wollongong and the results of the research into these themes led to an understanding of important places related to migration.

When researchers, Louise Thom, Meredith Walker and Glynis Cummins, formally handed over the Wollongong Migration Heritage Thematic Study (Places Project) to the stakeholders, Migration Heritage Project, Migration Heritage Centre and Wollongong City Council in February 2008, the potential to build on the Places Project research was clearly evident to the MHP Committee.

In March 2009 the Wollongong City Council convened a Places Workshop and invited a cross-section of the heritage, academic and local government sectors for a presentation and discussion of the Places Project and the offer to share the Places Project for migration heritage themed exhibitions, publications or further expansion on the collection so far.

The First Generation Exhibition and the Working Women internship are two such projects drawn directly from the Places Project.

The Places Project was funded by the NSW Heritage Council, Migration Heritage Centre and Wollongong City Council. Illustrated essays "Migrant Accommodation" (Walker, 2008) and "Work Places for Women" (Thom, 2008), databases of places and photographs as well as other Places Project documentation may be accessed through the Wollongong City Council Local Studies Library.

VIVA LA GONG KNITTING AND CROCHET PROJECTS

Hyperbolic Crochet Coral Reef Workshop with the In Stitches Collective

12 noon to 4pm, Saturday July 18,
Wollongong City Gallery,
Cnr Kembla and Burelli Streets, Wollongong

You are invited to come and help build an enormous coral reef made from crochet. Your work will be displayed at the Powerhouse Museum and then return to Wollongong for Viva La Gong. Beginners and experienced welcome.

Bookings: 02 4251 4712 or email:
fcathie@wollongong.nsw.gov.au

Ring or email now to put your name down on the knitters and crocheters contact list for information about other upcoming knitting and crochet projects for Viva La Gong.



GUERRILLA KNITTING WORKSHOP WITH DENISE LITCHFIELD

12 noon to 4pm, Saturday 26 September
Wollongong City Gallery
Cnr Kembla and Burelli Streets, Wollongong

Learn the ins and outs of Guerilla Knitting - the 'graffiti' of the knitting world. Bring your needles, wool will be provided or bring your own if you have some spare bright colours.

Bookings: 02 4251 4712 or email:
fcathie@wollongong.nsw.gov.au

A STOCKTAKE OF MIGRATION HERITAGE OF THE PORTUGUESE COMMUNITY IN THE ILLAWARRA

One of the aims of the Migration Heritage Project is to record the location of migration heritage documents, photographs, objects. To ensure these items that are about migration heritage do not get forgotten or destroyed without any record, the Migration Heritage Project encourages individuals and organisations to take stock of what they may have in their homes or clubs like the Portuguese Club in Flagstaff Road Warrawong.

The Portuguese community has been very generous with their time, memories and objects having been one of the very first communities to contribute to the Migration Heritage Project through the Celebrations Exhibition and their association with the Migration Heritage Project has proven a great support as well as a resource. The following are photographs of the types of objects that are part of the migrant history of the Portuguese community in the Illawarra.



www.mhpillawarra.com

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Joining Fee:	Individual	\$5.00
	Pensioners	\$2.00
	Organisations	\$10.00
Annual Fee:	Individual	\$10.00
	Pensioners	\$5.00
	Organisations	\$10.00

Joining fees payable within fourteen days of receipt of advice of membership approval. Annual fees payable by 30 June of each year.

The Secretary
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We would love you to join but you don't have to be a member to participate.