

BOAT HARBOUR POOLS

The ever popular pool we all enjoy at Boat Harbour was actually the second of three pools to be constructed in the vicinity.



First Ladies' Pool:

In February, 1894, Miss J. Hindmarsh wrote to the N.S.W. Government requesting a Ladies Public Swimming Baths for Gerringong. The letter was forwarded to Council for consideration. Council proposed that a small enclosed portion ('from the low to high water mark') of the damaged Government Jetty (Site: present boat ramp) be converted. However, it was not prepared to proceed with any construction, unless Government appoint it Trustees of the old Jetty.

In November 1894, Government approved Councils request and J. B. Taylor, builder of the old Jetty, was asked to submit plans for the pool. A Ladies Committee raised the money and in early 1895 the first pool was opened.

Sadly, it was totally demolished by heavy seas a few months later.

Council immediately requested a Government grant of £50 to construct a new concrete Pool at the site of the current pool.

Second Ladies Pool:

Government carried out a site survey and in February 1897 Council was '*granted a Permissive occupancy of 66 feet by 90 feet of Crown Land*' (Site: present pool) at a rental of 10/- per annum

along with a grant of £50 for the pools construction. Tenders were called with Mr. Hugh Carson, builder of the two Kiama Pools, being successful. After much hassling by Council, Carson completed the pool on 24th February 1898 at a cost of £51.

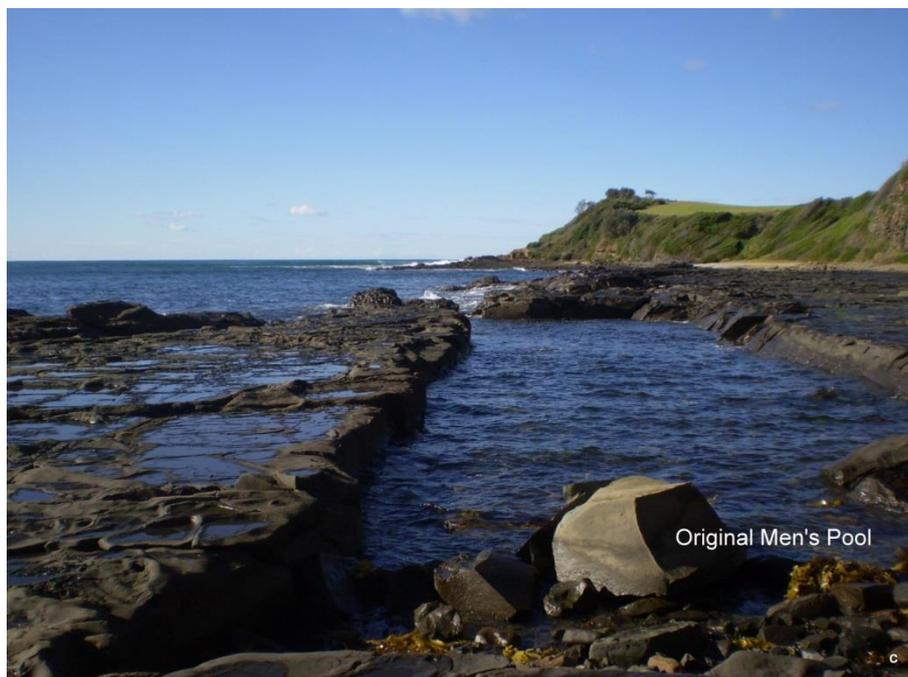


In May 1900, Council requested a further grant of £50 for '*improvements, including the erection of a dressing shed*', and stated that since Kiama was given such a grant, why not Gerringong? In November, a dressing shed (site: present concrete stand) along with a concrete access path were constructed. Further improvements were carried out in 1915, 1935 and 1951.

Men's Pool:

In early 1909, Council sought professional advice for the construction of a 'substantial' permanent shark-proof bathing enclosure 'on the sea shore at Boat Harbour'. It would be '100yards across from shore to shore and have a water depth of 12feet at high tide'. It did not go ahead.

Next, at the Council Meeting of 13th December, 1909 a letter from Rev. J. R. Kay requesting the need for a males only pool in Gerringong was discussed. On January 2nd 1910, Council inspected the



southern side of Boat Harbour for a suitable site to construct a 'small but very nice' Men's Baths—remnants of which still remain. The expected cost, with free Community labour, was £30.

At Council's next Meeting it recommended other sites be inspected and various ways of financing the pool be investigated. On February 2nd 1910, Council made application for a Government Grant.

A Surveyor's report in August 1910 quoted that one thousand locals and a staggering '3500 visitors and tourists during the bathing season' would be expected to use the pool.

Council received a Government Grant of £50 in early 1911. Mr. W. Kenny of Berry tendered for the rock excavation work in June and the pool was finished in late 1911 at a cost of £150.

Over the years, the Men' Baths unlike the Ladies', was always troubled with seaweed and rocks washed in by heavy seas.

Whenever this occurred, Council received numerous complaints from the ladies about men, some 'wearing very unbecoming costumes', charging around and taking possession of 'their' pool.

'Gerringong isn't like a city. Some of our ladies are a little shy and don't want to plunge in with men'.



Concern was also raised about shell-grit contractors walking past the Ladies Pool 'up to 18 times an hour.' Council considered the possibility of erecting nets out in the harbour to snag the seaweed but nothing was done.

By the late 1940s, the Men's Baths were hardly fit to swim in. With mixed bathing now accepted, the Ladies Pool became the Gerringong Boat Harbour Pool and the Men's Pool just a memory.

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