

CIRCULAR QUAY TO SOUTH HEAD AND CLOVELLY CONNECTING WALK C9: TAMARAMA THOMAS HOGAN RESERVE, BONDI TO TAMARAMA BEACH



- Main Walk:** — **Loop and Connecting Walks:** —
- Distance:** 2.2km.
- Time:** 45 mins.
- Level:** Easy-moderate (downhill), steps.
- Transport:** Bondi Junction Station; New South Head Rd, Bondi Rd and Tamarama Marine Drive buses.
- Connects with:** Main Walk (at Tamarama Beach); Connection Walks C2 (Cooper) and C8 (Charing Cross).
- Facilities:**
Toilets: Tamarama Beach.
Picnic spots: Thomas Hogan Reserve, Tamarama Beach;
Shops or hotels: Bondi Road, Tamarama Beach.

This connection route begins in common with Connection Walk C8, coming off connection walks C2 (Edgecliffe to Bondi) and C9 (Bellevue Hill to Tamarama) but separating from Connection Walk C8 (Charing Cross) after Thomas Hogan Reserve. It leads to Tamarama Beach where it connects with the Main Walk opening up to a number of

permutations which could form part of several great circular walks involving Centennial Park or the coast between Coogee and Bondi.

Leave Connection C2 (Cooper) at Banksia Road, Bellevue Hill, at the bottom of the steps down from Bellevue Park.

Turn right in Banksia Road and cross the lights at Old South Head Road, then crossing Penkeville Street to follow Old South Head Rd downhill a short way, before turning right into the cut-off Francis Street and then immediately right again down into Thomas Hogan Reserve. Climb the steps at the back of the reserve to Martins Avenue.

Thomas Hogan Reserve is a delightful discovery, a lawn in an almost hidden little steep-edged bowl of trees, approaching rainforest in its density in complete contrast with the area around it. Originally a bird sanctuary called Glen-Roona Reserve and before the twentieth century known as 'Bondi Glen', it seems to have been part of a garden developed during the first half of the twentieth century by a local landscape gardener, Adolf Schneider, before becoming a public reserve. Its small space contains a rich variety of mature trees – Port Jackson fig, palms, brush box, camphor laurel and more. There is a Guide Hall to one side and in the centre of the reserve at the back, a set of timber steps and platforms leading up to Martins Avenue.

At the top of the steps, at Martins Avenue, Connection Walk C8 begins, leading right to Charing Cross, while this route, C9, turns left.

Turn left at Martins Avenue and cross to the southern side, then turn into Dickson Park as soon as it is met, following the pathway on and around to Wellington Street. Continue on Wellington Street (left) out to Bondi Road.

At the top of the substantial steps to Martin Street, note the house, *Mandalay*, up on the Ocean Street corner. A two storey c1890 Italianate Victorian villa with more than the usual amount of its original setting and fence, its earliest name appears to have been *Barrona*.

Dickson Park, with its pleasing north-easterly views and its curved flagstone paths above a sudden drop through the trees to its lower level, has a feel of being part of some now lost mansion. In fact there is a mansion nearby, but the park is really a 1930s depression-era construction and planting, partly on an old tip. It seems much too pleasant for that, now. The walk curves around into Wellington Street and the mansion, *Scarpa House*, is next uphill at Number 30.

After the stone wall with more contemporary buildings atop, the view across the car park and institutional fencing reveals an impressive two-storey Victorian mansion with excellent cast iron decoration. Built around 1884, part of its grounds and gardens with fine trees are intact along with its carriage loop. A private house until the NSW Government acquired it around, or just before WWI, it was given to the Benevolent Society which turned it into a children's welfare home in 1917. It continues as a children's welfare facility today, with some additional aged care housing built in the grounds.

Across the street, Bondi School, adds yet more heritage character to this upper level of Wellington Street. Bondi Public School was established on this site by 1883 as a single one-storey building. The original building (the central of the three larger ones on Wellington Street) still exists, though enlarged with second storey added early in the twentieth century. Other buildings were added late in the nineteenth and in the twentieth as the area and the school expanded, and there is a range of building styles to be seen including the Mediterranean or Spanish mission look so popular in the Eastern Suburbs. The school also had a separate boys school for a time, one of the Edwardian buildings being built for that purpose. For the most part, the buildings are reasonably intact and set in spacious grounds with some fine trees. The northernmost of the major Wellington Street buildings of the site is used now as an education district administrative centre.

Across the street, are St Patrick's Church and Convent and a Montessori kindergarten and primary school. It doesn't take much detective work to see that the Montessori school occupies a former Catholic school building (opened in 1939) for St Annes Primary. The former Catholic school was part of the group around St Patrick's Church. Towards Bondi Road, the Convent building (built late in WWI) is still fairly original, replacing a cottage convent established here in 1896 by the Sisters of St Joseph. Next to it but facing Bondi Road is the gabled brick church, built around 1927 to replace the original St Patrick's.

Cross Bondi Road at the uphill lights in front of the church and then turn downhill along Bondi Road before taking a right turn into Avoca Street. At the end of Avoca, turn left into Philip St, then right into Tasman Street.

Bondi Road is lively and busy around this point, with traffic and shops and a multicultural offering of eateries. However, Avoca Street has had its traffic from Bondi Road cut off, allowing this very pleasant tree-lined street to be enjoyed far more. It is a street of mostly semi-detached or single-storey Edwardian / Federation style terraces with a charming feel, despite a few later 'improvements' to some of the houses. The architecture is similar in Philip and Tasman Streets until the Birrell Street corner is almost reached. The row of semi-detached Federation houses at Numbers 2-12 Tasman Street are excellent, relatively intact examples of the style, with typical features such as tiles and coloured glass, turned wooden verandah posts, gables, slate roofs with terrace cotta ridging, chimney pots and tuckpointed bricks. It is important to point out these buildings' significance because, inevitably, attention strays to the idiosyncratic extravagance of the adornments to the two-storey Victorian former corner shop and residence on the opposite corner with Birrill Street. Now an alternative health centre called *Birrill Street Manor* (Number 330), it does succeed in attracting the attention of passers-by.

*Cross Birrill Street and then turn left, downhill. At its end at the Cross Street corner, take the steps down to the upper reaches of Tamarama Park and follow the path down, cross Tamarama Marine Drive and enter the beach end of the park where the **Main Walk** is rejoined.*

The steps down into the upper part of Tamarama Park are impressively extensive steps (and even more so on the way up!). Notice the couple of almost hidden cottages which somehow survive on the far left of the stairs reserve.

The upper parkland is a fairly open, quiet area, dominated somewhat by the buildings above (one in particular!). Tamarama Marine Drive requires careful crossing, especially on summer weekends, before entering the pleasant picnic reserve behind the tight crescent of Tamarama Beach.

Tamarama Beach is small but perfectly formed and just as subject to occasional wild surf as any of the others along the coast. Behind it an understandably popular park is wedged in between the tight crescent of the Marine Drive. Across Marine Drive at its western end, Tamarama Gulley continues in a much larger and barer space between a circle of hillside totally dominated by one of the lesser architectural triumphs of 1960s planning and development.

Until the 1880s, the whole gulley was a delight of glens, ferns and waterfalls, known as Fletchers Glen, and considered the most beautiful spot on the coast. Naturally that made it ripe to be ruined for redevelopment and in 1887, when the tramway reached here, the Bondi Aquarium was born in the park immediately behind the beach. As well as fish (and a penguin), it featured swings, merry-go-rounds, razzle-dazzles, shooting galleries, tightrope walkers, Punch and Judy shows, a roller-coaster railway and a roller-skating rink, all illuminated by electric light. The Aquarium burnt down in 1891, but its remnants struggled on until 1906 when it was replaced on an even greater scale by Wonderland City. This predecessor to Luna Park had sideshows and stalls, underground rivers and cave rides, a large amusement building (*Katzenjammer Castle*), an undulating roller coaster snaking between the cliffs, a 3 kilometre miniature steam railway circling the entire park area, an elephant named Alice and even a mini-airship on a cable carrying passengers from clifftop to clifftop. It didn't survive too long. After a series of difficulties, Wonderland City closed in 1911. By then the beach was being called Tamarama, and gaining its own appeal. The Surf Club was established in 1906-07 following a drowning, and the public park opened in 1920.