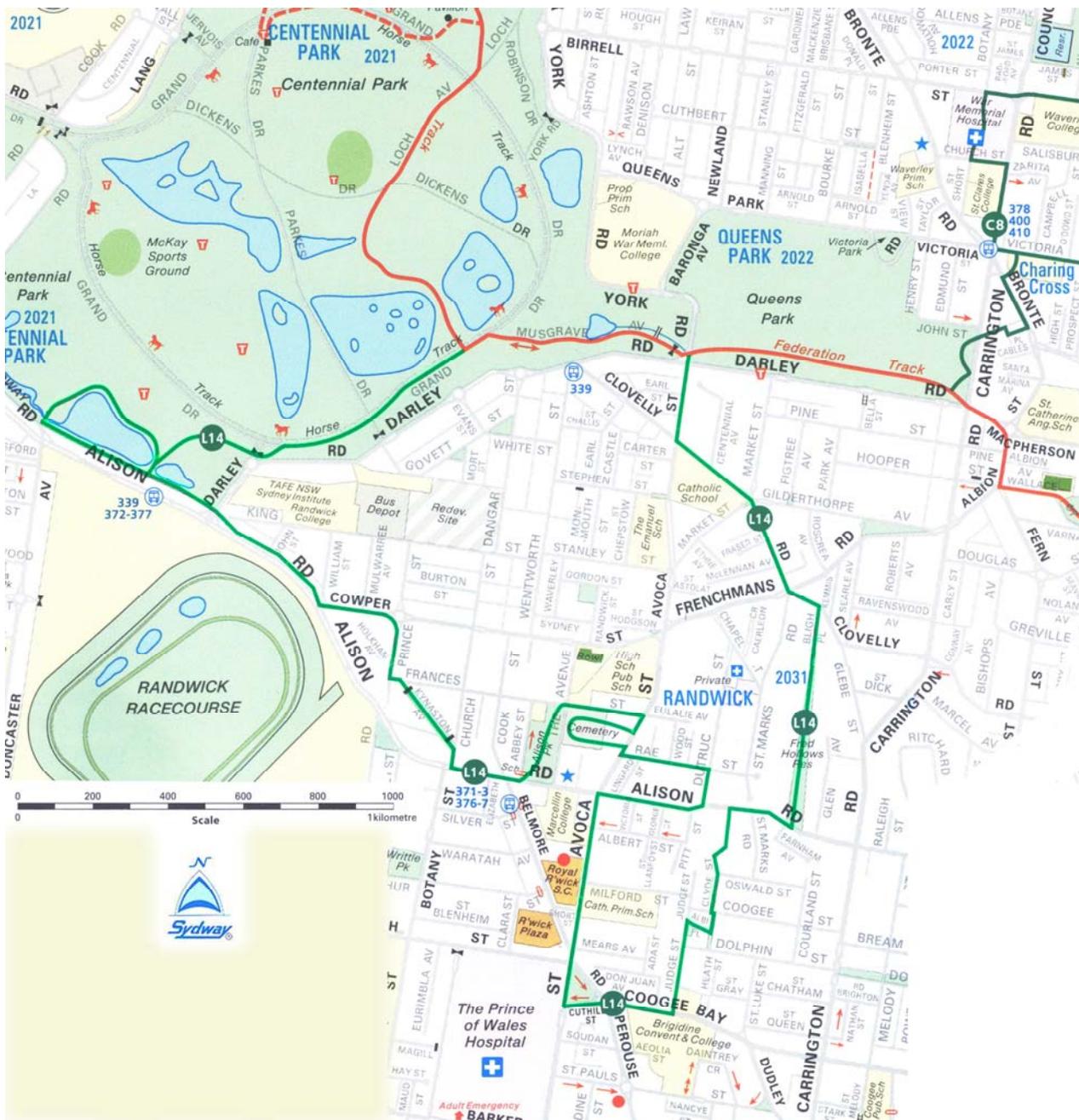


# CIRCULAR QUAY TO SOUTH HEAD AND CLOVELLY

## LOOP WALK L14: RANDWICK



- Federation Track:** —     **Loop and Connecting Walks:** —
- Distance:** 6km.
- Time:** 2 hours, 30mins.
- Level:** Moderate, some steps.
- Transport:** Alison Rd and Randwick buses.
- Connects with:** Federation Track (Centennial Park).
- Facilities:** *Toilets:* Centennial Park, Alison Park;  
*Picnic spots:* Centennial Park, Alison Park, High Cross Park, Fred Hollows Reserve;  
*Shops or hotels:* Randwick shopping centre, Cuthill St, Frenchmans Rd.

Randwick today is understandably famous for horseracing, but it is full of other delights to those who choose to look beyond. Some of this results from its remarkable beginnings – an attempt by one man to create his idealised new world version of the English town that had failed him in his youth. It was an ideal never quite realised, of course, but his vision has left its mark on the street plan and many key buildings. More of him later. The **Randwick Loop L14** is a substantial and fascinating walk, departing from and finally reconnecting to the Federation Track in Centennial Park.

*From where the **Federation Track** meets Grand Drive south of Willow and Duck Ponds, turn right (south west and follow Grand Drive around past the Randwick or Darley Road Gates. About 200m beyond the gates turn left through Ash Paddock. Either continue south west between two of the Kensington Ponds almost to Alison Road or follow the track to the right around the larger of the two ponds, crossing a footbridge towards Alison Road. Turn left along the sandy crest towards Randwick and Darley Road.*

The Grand Drive is followed again to the Darley Road Gates, beyond which, for a pleasant diversion, climb the sandy rise on the left through the trees down to the Ash Paddock clearing with its BBQ facility. There is an opportunity here to explore a couple of the picturesque Kensington Ponds, base for a variety of waterbirds and the occasional turtle. These were a key part of the Lachlan swamps scheme (see Federation Track) which supplied water to Sydney through Busby's Bore from the 1830s to the 1880s. Along the sandy crest, a few bricks from the Kensington pumping station remain as a memorial to this scheme.

*Cross at the Darley Street lights to Alison Road. Follow Alison Road as far as Cowper Street and turn left into it.*

Randwick TAFE is on the left at Darley Road and King Street. Further up King Street can be glimpsed the Randwick Bus Depot. Both were part of the site of the former Randwick Tramway Workshop which extended beyond the tall smokestack in the distance. Established in 1881 with the beginnings of the steam tram service to Randwick, by the 1920s the workshop was one of the largest engineering works in Sydney. During both World Wars it also manufactured munitions. The end of the trams in the 1950s also brought an end to the workshop in 1961, although part of it continued as a bus workshop for nearly three decades. The now smoke-free stack remains on land currently belonging to the Sir Moses Montefiore Jewish Home.

Along the eastern footpath of Alison Road is Malaysia Hall which provides short term accommodation to Malaysian students and family visitors.

The main interest is on the right, with expanding views of Sydney iconic Royal Randwick Racecourse. The main grandstands (Members', Queen Elizabeth and Paddock Stands) are roughly opposite Darley Road, after which a view of the track itself opens up. Randwick's track has a circumference of 2,213 metres, the straight is 410 metres and there are eight starting points allowing a full range of race lengths. The highlight of Randwick's racing year is the Spring Carnival, three of the feature events being the Doncaster, the Sydney Cup and the Metropolitan Handicap, all of which were inaugurated by the Australian Jockey Club (AJC) in 1866.

There has been horseracing at this site since 1833 on what was known for years as The Old Sandy Track. Early horseracing was organised sporadically through subscriptions from groups of enthusiasts but regular racing began here in the 1860s and the Government reserved the land for that purpose, eventually leasing it to the AJC in 1873 which still controls the site. Racing being both a popular pastime and a fashionable gentleman's sport in the nineteenth century, Randwick prospered and the fine grandstands, other buildings and landscaping were developed. The whole site is now subject to heritage planning. There were at times other race courses in the vicinity as well. The privately run Kensington Race Course was established next door in the 1890s but had an irregular history before finally being resumed in 1950 to become part of the site of the new University of New South Wales.

A race course is not necessarily just a race course, of course – as well as its iconic and heritage significance to Sydney, the large scale facilities of the course have hosted many events unrelated to racing – concerts, trade fairs and expositions, movie-making and, perhaps most reverently, the proclamation of the beatification of Australia's only (almost) Saint, Mary McKillop, by Pope John Paul II on 19 January, 1995. The race course is proposed to again swell with reverence (and John Paul's successor) in 2008 as the host to the massive World Youth Day where 400,000 or more pilgrims are expected to pack the grounds.

*From Cowper Street, cross to and turn right into Prince Street. At the first intersection (with Holkam Avenue and Frances Street) follow park-like Kynaston Avenue to Church Street. Turn right (south) to rejoin Alison Road.*

Kynaston Avenue offers a short but pleasant pedestrian way angling south east to Church Street, following the permanent way of an old tramway route. At the Church Street and Alison Road corner is the 1866 St Judes Fountain with its somewhat enigmatic message.

*Follow Alison Road left (uphill) to Abbey Street and turn into Alison Park, crossing it diagonally north-easterly to the corner of Frances Street and The Avenue.*

Uphill, between Cook and Abbey Streets stands the classically elegant Presbyterian Church erected 1889-90, the design – unusual for Sydney churches – was the work of notable architect, Sir John Sulman. The Greek style continues in its theatre-like interior, which has a fine pipe organ. Its rear buildings have housed the Coogee Boys Preparatory School since 1914. From here enter charming Alison Park, but glance across Alison Road to where, amidst trees and distracting shop fronts, some of the other fine 1890s houses of the area nestle, particularly *Seabird* and *Glanmire*, now incorporated into Marcellan College.

On the eastern side of Alison Park, across the aptly named The Avenue, is the elegant 1888 nine-house terrace, *Avonmore*. Towards Frances Street, note the rear of St Judes Cemetery. There is an impressive 1908 Federation style Fire Station on the opposite corner.

*Turn to the right (east) along Francis Street, then left at Avoca Street. Enter the St Judes Church precinct, circling the church and (if open) the cemetery before returning to Avoca Street.*

On Frances Street, the St Judes Church complex dominates the right as the Randwick Council buildings do the left. At Avoca Street the classical façade of Randwick's 1881 Town Hall can be seen. It contrasts with the first building to the right of the Frances-Avoca corner, the modern Town Hall's predecessor, the first Borough Chambers from 1867. This is delightfully proportioned French provincial style building with interesting heads above the central openings is now the St Judes' Parish Centre.

The St Judes area is a highlight of the walk and understanding its story requires, knowing something about Randwick's origins and the man most responsible for them.

In 1821 the town of Randwick in Gloucestershire was a typical industrial revolution era cotton mill town with a working poor of mill-workers, agricultural workers, cottage-based weavers and quarry workers plus a prosperous minority of landowners and millowners living in estates around its fringe. In that year, the person in question - Simeon Pearce - was born. Son of a clerk in the mills, he grew up aware of the inequity of the town but also that his own prospects were limited. At the age of twenty, faced with the probability of a life of predetermined near-poverty, he broke away from Randwick's rigid social and economic constraints and migrated to Australia, apparently with a fairly literal determination to start afresh.

Clever and industrious, he built up some modest means, married his boss's daughter and put her inheritance to good use buying up virtually all of what is now central Randwick - then thought of as 'Big Coogee'. Its sandy soil stripped bare by hunters and woodcutters, the area had three households and a few market gardens when Pearce began his plan to create the Randwick of his desires in the late 1840s. He promoted it cleverly as a location for superior homes, country estates for the elite - the first being his own, *Blenheim*, named after a mansion in the English Randwick. Soon Pearce managed to attract a number of wealthy merchants to the village. By inveigling himself into an incredible number of official posts he both provided himself with additional income and gained control over land use and utilities.

Using his political and judicial connections effectively, Pearce managed to achieve Municipal status for the village in 1859, rigging the boroughs to ensure that he became Mayor and that his cronies dominated the Council for some time. His village was thus created in his image but his frustrated enemies, led by John Moore (of Moore Park) awaited their chance. Pearce's great successes included the village layout with its High Street and High Cross; gaining for Randwick the first *Bishopscourt*, (before Darling Point) Bishop Barker's official residence; the Destitute Children's Asylum (a charity supported by the highest in society); conducting local fox hunts which included the Governor and other leading citizens; improving road access; founding a local Volunteer Rifles Force; and collaring funds to establish St Judes Church.

Mayor five times in the Municipality's first ten years, Pearce was eventually rolled by his enemies although he managed one more term as Mayor in 1882. For a time Pearce had been able to exclude the realities of struggle towns

and political enemies from his elegant, idealised Randwick but by the time of Pearce's death in 1886, Randwick was becoming inundated by suburbanisation. The trams arrived in 1880 and the municipality's population tripled to 6,500 in a decade, and then increased six-fold again in the next 25 years, to 35,000 - a very different Randwick and one in which few had ever heard of Simeon Pearce.

However, St Judes, amidst its English trees, is characteristic of Simeon Pearce's story. St Judes – named for the saint of "hope for the hopeless" - is essentially a reproduction of St John's Church in Pearce's native Randwick. He provided the land but the missing element was money. A Frederick Jones had bequeathed money to build a church at 'Big Coogee' and Pearce convinced the executors that this meant Randwick. Edmund Blacket was commissioned to design the church under Pearce's guidance and construction began in 1861. However, when Pearce's rival Charles Moore and his fellow Coogeeans realised what was happening, injunctions and two court cases followed, bringing building to a halt. However, Moore's strong case was no match for Pearce's excellent judicial connections and in 1864 work recommenced and was completed in 1865. Pearce had his village church, but later additions (the 1877 clocktower and 1888 transept), like the later additions to Randwick itself, changed its appearance considerably. St Judes Rectory was added in 1870.

Two of the original bells of St Judes, can be seen by the north side of the church. They were cast in steel on Pearce's order, between 1860 and 1864 in Sheffield. The tenor bell weighs 1.6 tonnes and is the largest of the eight which made St Judes one of the few Sydney churches with a full peel of bells for full circle ringing. However, over time the wooden bell frames deteriorated and the steel bells corroded and it may be some time before the bells of St Judes are heard again.

Behind the Church is the only English-style churchyard in the Eastern Suburbs. The moment it is entered there is a pleasing illusion of serenity as traffic noise drops away and the well-spaced tombstones – clearly reflecting the burgher status of the early Anglican congregation – seem almost on the edge of fields and forest. Small and easily explored, the gravestones of Pearce, Archibald Mosman (who gave that suburb its name), Ann Hordern (wife of Anthony Hordern) and others of interest can be found.

*From Avoca Street, cross to Rae Street, following it to Dutruc Street and turning right, down to Alison Road yet again. Follow Alison Road back uphill to Avoca Street and cross at the lights heading south down Avoca.*

Rae Street begins with an 1883 Wesleyan Chapel and then a fine run of Federation terraces, followed by the six large 1887 terraces, some of which exhibit individual traits in their ironwork. At the corner with Dutruc Street is the gloriously High Victorian *Earlwood*, with its wealth of detailing and the date below the female bust in under the pediments.

From Dutruc, back up Alison Road at the Avoca Street intersection is the 1897 Federation former Post Office on the north-western side and then the *Coach and Horses* hotel across on the southern side of the road. Much altered, this was Randwick's first Hotel (1856) and, appropriately, the terminal for the Sydney coach and postal service. The Veness family ran the hotel and service and other family members operated wheelwrights, blacksmiths and saddlers shops and other stores in this horse-dominated village.

Further south along Avoca Street are some fine terraces and free-standing turn-of-the-century Italianate houses with Devon seaside names (*Ilfracombe, Torquay, Clovelly*). Beyond is the bold blue terrace-like Marist Centre and then Royal Randwick Shopping Centre.

*Enter Milford Street and walk down about a hundred metres before returning to Avoca Street and crossing to Short Street.*

The short diversion across into Milford Street immediately reveals the fine, though crowded, restored *Milford House* (1879). Now a nursing home it was once the residence of Sir John See, several times Mayor of Randwick and from 1901-04, Premier of NSW. A little further down, on the same side, peeping over more recent arrivals is *Nugal Hall*. Rusticated stone, Gothic, gabled and turreted, it was one of the first quality homes Pearce attracted to his village, and was built on a 22 acre estate in the 1850s by architect Mortimer Lewis for merchant Alexander MacArthur. Look into the charming garden with its statuary and pump.

Back up Milford Street, the rear of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church is now on the left. Built in 1887 as the first Catholic Church in the Municipality, it was a spectacular arrival in French provincial Gothic style. On the corner, is Georgian-style *Ventnor* (1858), which from 1876 was the home of another Randwick Mayor, George Kiss, who owned the wonderfully named Kiss Horse Bazaar in George Street, Sydney. Kiss introduced both Hansom Cabs and

Clydesdale horses into Australia. The family sold it to the church in 1963. It is worth diverting southwards for a closer look at *Ventnor* and the Church, the fine interior of which includes stained glass windows from Tours, France.

*From Short Street, turn left on Belmore Road to the major High Cross junction ahead.*

Across appropriately named Short Street is Belmore Road, Randwick's lively and multicultural main shopping street. The building on the corner where the Short and Belmore meet was Randwick's first post office (1878-98), and across the road at No. 126, is an old shopfront, next to which, and set back, is *Sandgate* (it has had several former names) a vintage sandstone cottage erected around 1870 by Simeon Pearce. One of its occupants in the 1880s was wine merchant, Henry Hinton, which almost certainly had nothing to do with the fact that for almost 40 years from 1928, after spending some years as a Red Cross veterans' facility, it was owned by a family named Tippler. It is now commercial premises again.

Continue southwards (left) to the triangular High Cross junction, and pause at the rather odd building at the head of the triangle. Its back part began as the *Star and Garter Inn* in the 1850s and in 1869 was purchased by Captain Thomas Watson, a Sydney Harbour pilot formerly of *Clovelly* at Watsons Bay (see Main Walk, Section 3). Captain Watson added the tower to see the sea and then had Captain Cook sculpted by Walter McGill and erected out the front in 1874 in belated commemoration of the 1870 centenary of Cook's arrival at Botany Bay, towards which the celebrated navigator gazes. He named the house *Cooks Lodge*. Later, the building became a girls' school until the 1890s when the Hannans moved in adding a shopfront for their butcher's shop which survived until 1987. It is currently a restaurant.

Back up Avoca Street is a fine view of the grand tower of Sacred Heart Church, but closer at hand is colourful *Randwick Lodge*, the latest incarnation of *Corona* and *Hygeia*, an Italianate Victorian pair of houses built in 1898 by Elizabeth Callaghan.

*Cross High Street on the western side and continue down Avoca before crossing to Cuthill Street.*

Avoca Street presents a string of three historic buildings now part of the Prince of Wales Hospital. The Hospital originated with another institution – again a Pearce project – the Destitute Children's Asylum. Social change, the Gold Rushes, poverty and high mortality rates in childbirth put hundreds of homeless children onto mid-nineteenth century Sydney's streets. The philanthropic society that attempted to house them was persuaded by Pearce to build its new home at Randwick in 1856-58. The first block met was designed by J. Horbury Hunt (see Loop Walk L7), and added in 1863 as the Superintendent's House. The next block along, in Regency style, was the original Asylum, designed by Edmund Blacket and erected 1856-64. Between then and 1915 when it was converted to a military hospital, it had been home to 6,000 children. The next, the large sandstone Victorian Romanesque-style building, is the Catherine Hayes Block, designed initially by Blacket but completed by architect Sir Thomas Rowe. This was added in 1870 when overcrowded conditions in the original building led to 63 children dying in a Whooping Cough epidemic in 1867. Its name comes from a popular Irish opera singer who donated £800 from a concert towards its construction. Eventually, state welfare took over the Asylum's functions, and it was closed in 1915, the buildings becoming a military hospital and, in 1953, part of the Prince of Wales Hospital.

Cuthill Street, named after Dr. Alexander Cuthill, first medical officer of the Destitute Children's Asylum, forms the southern arm of the complex crossroads which were the central point in Pearce's village and it has a certain nobility despite the traffic and modern buildings, aided by the Asylum buildings behind, the curious former Star and Garter Inn to the north together with Randwick Lodge and the Sacred Heart Church tower. More immediate, on the south side, is the elegant filligree of the 1887 *Royal Hotel*, near to which some Victorian houses survive to various degrees, the best being *Essex* (1890s), close to the pub. The park itself, with its war memorial, was where Pearce's Volunteer Randwick Rifles used to drill.

*At the eastern end of Cuthill Street cross Coogee Bay Road and walk eastwards to Judge Street, turning left into it and following it to steps down to Albi Place.*

Coogee Bay Road reveals the ocean temptingly, some way ahead. On its southern side, Brigidine Convent and College loom, established there after 1901 in Edward Daintrey's 1859 home which can still be glimpsed. On the northern side, note *Glen Mervyn*, built in 1924 for meat supplier, Thomas Field, and donated to the Red Cross during WWII for a convalescent home. Since 1973 it has operated as a Junior Red Cross home. Across Judge Street is another girls' school, Claremont College, its corner building being the 1882 Randwick Police Station and still labelled "Lock-Up".

Judge Street leads past some pleasant houses before suddenly dipping, via steps, into a steep gully running towards the distant beach.

*At the bottom of the steps turn right into Albi Place and then left towards Coogee Street but, to the right of the drain, take the narrow footpath squeezing between the embankment and the corner house. Cross Coogee Street and take the footpath left and then right into Clyde Street. At its end it veers right into a cul de sac, to the left of which a path with steps leads up to Alison Road yet again. Walk downhill on Alison Road and cross somewhere near Farnham Avenue to take the entrance (left) into the Fred Hollows Reserve, following its track through to the Reserve's head at Bligh Place.*

Coming from Judge Street to Alison Road is circuitous but interesting, but **Fred Hollows Reserve** is an unexpected delight. It is a remarkable survival as the last of the near-rainforested gulleys which once led down from the Coogee Basin, intersecting the rocky outcrops and sandhills of the area. Formerly known as Glebe Gully because in 1857 it was a 16 hectare part of the 'glebe lands' granted to St Marks Church in distant Darling Point, it was renamed in recent years for eye surgeon and environmentalist, Professor Fred Hollows (1929-97). Hollows, a local, became and remains, an iconic Australian figure because of his pioneering work repairing the ravages of eye diseases amongst Australian Aborigines and the disadvantaged of several Asian and African countries. A track with steps, viewing platforms and information plaques winds up through a creek-centred gully still delightful despite intrusions of building waste and exotics. Randwick Council managed to prevent tower blocks being constructed here in the 1960s. Somehow, a rare gully skink species survived here to be discovered in the 1980s. At the top end, formerly a quarry and then tennis courts, the track crosses a creek often coloured orange by algae from iron deposits, before climbing to Bligh Place where the tower blocks did gain hold.

*At the northern end of Fred Hollows Reserve, follow Bligh Place up to Clovelly Road, and turn left following it northerly, across Frenchmans Road and Guildtherpe Avenue.*

The Frenchmen commemorated at Frenchmans Road may have had little contact with the Duke of Gloucester (whose namesake hotel is so dangerously close to the crossing) but were probably the first Europeans to make their way through this area. They were exploring parties from the two ships of Comte de Laperouse which arrived in Botany Bay only six days after Arthur Phillip and the First Fleet in January 1788.

Northwards along Clovelly Road, take note of the slight grandeur of the Randwick Literary Institute on the corner with Market Street. Still a centre for community courses, it was started in 1913, but the war obviously impacted on progress and it was not completed until 1925. Market Street just beyond it has been separated from Clovelly Road here to form a small space called Mary McKillop Place in commemoration of the Saint's beatification at Randwick Race Course in 1995.

*Continue on Clovelly Road as far as Avoca Street before turning right. Follow Avoca Street through and across Darley Street to rejoin the **Federation Track** at the point where it crosses from Centennial to Queens Park.*

Immediately beyond Market Street is the Little Sisters of the Poor's nursing home complex where infamous Sydney eccentric, Bea Miles, died in 1973 (see Main Walk, Section 1). Next to it is St Margaret Mary Church and school leading onto the last gasp of Avoca Street leading down to the junction of Centennial and Queens Park. Here, either turn right to join the **Federation Track** or left to walk either amidst the fine trees of the park to return to the start of the Randwick Loop at the Randwick Gates. An alternative is to walk along Darley Street, enjoying the often fine houses that front the park. Some of these were built after the Centenary Park Lands Act of 1905 subdivided large areas of land next to the Park. A significant example is the grand red-brick two-storied Number 87 Darley Street, *Swan Isle* - about five houses west of Dangar Street - built 1906 for William Farrell, retired Colonel of the NSW Infantry.