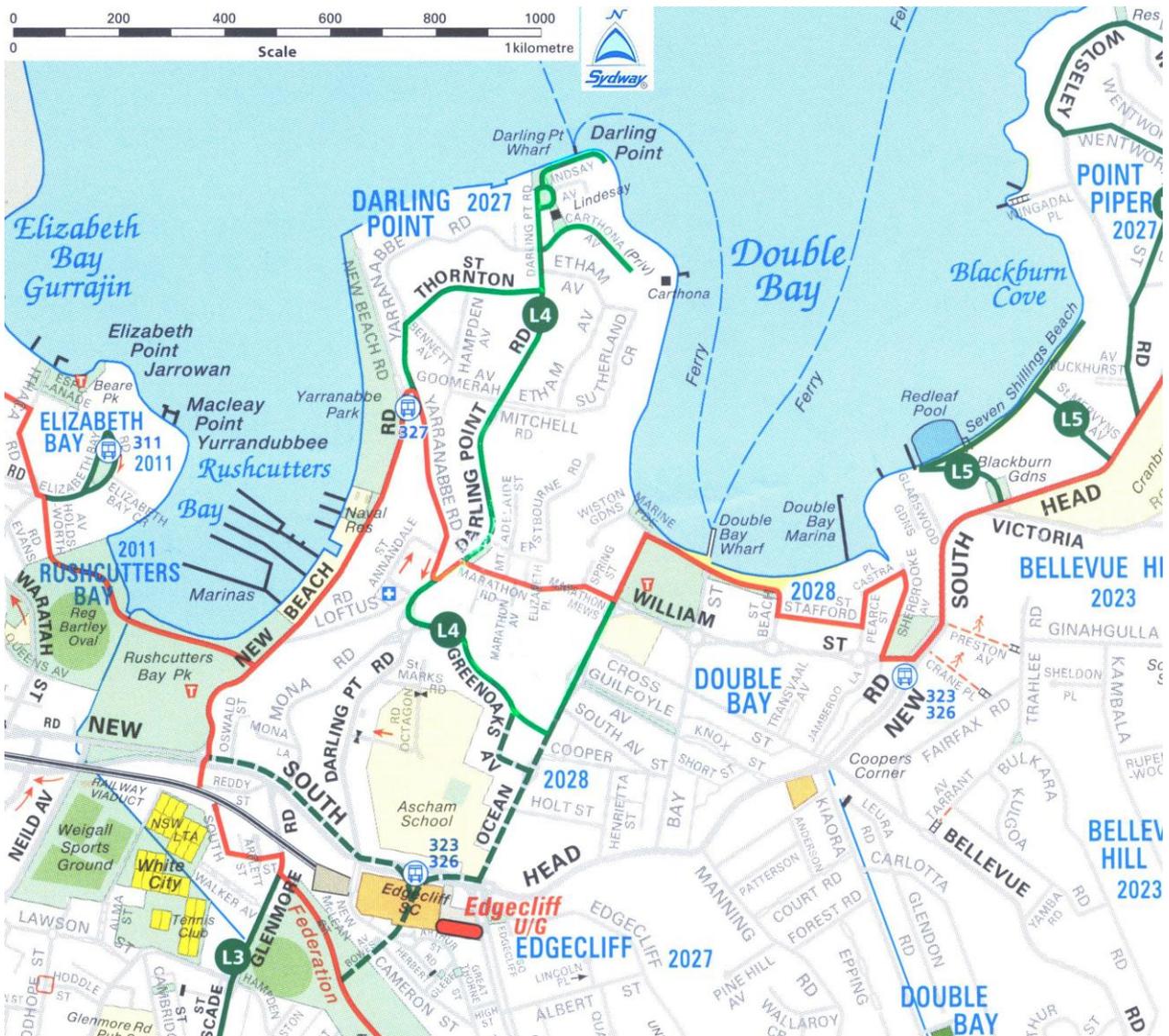# CIRCULAR QUAY TO SOUTH HEAD AND CLOVELLY
# LOOP WALK L4: DARLING POINT



**Main Walk:** ————— **Loop and Connecting Walks:** ————— **Alternative Routes:** – – –

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| **Distance:** | 2.2km Yarranabbe Park to William St; 3 km complete loop (return to Yarranabbe Park). |
| **Time:** | 1 hour 15mins green route only; 1hr 40mins complete loop. |
| **Level:** | Easy-moderate, some steps. |
| **Transport:** | Edgecliff Station; New South Head Rd buses. |
| **Connects with:** | Main Walk and Federation Track (at Rushcutters Bay) and Main Walk (at Darling Point and Double Bay). |
| **Facilities:** | Toilets: Rushcutters Bay, McKell and Steyne Parks; |
| | *Picnic spots*: Rushcutters Bay, Yarranabbe and McKell Parks; |
| | *Shops or hotels*: Rushcutters Bay, Mitchell Rd. |

The closest-in seriously wealthy suburb, Darling Point is a sometimes uncomfortable mixture of brashly oversized apartment blocks and dignified old world mansions watching their neighbours disdainfully from deep gardens. But these historic mansions, in a serene atmosphere with wonderful waterfrontages, offer an opportunity for some elegant exploration.

The early Governor's wives made their point on this part of the Harbour, too, but since almost everybody's wife was named Elizabeth around that period great confusion was narrowly avoided. Mrs Macquarie's and Elizabeth Points and Bay were all named for Elizabeth Macquarie (some think the latter was for Alexander Macleay's wife, Elizabeth); and Darling Point was named for Governor Darling's wife, another Elizabeth. It was originally called Mrs Darling's Point. The Point was subdivided into very large blocks in 1833-35, and the first houses soon followed, although the area remained mostly bushland for some time.

*At the New Beach Road-Yarranabbe Road intersection, the* **Main Walk** *turns right, while the* **Darling Point Loop (L4)** *begins by turning left. Climb Yarranabbe and turn right into Thornton Street and walk to its end at Darling Point Road.*

Up hill (north) on Yarranabbe Road past *Stratford Hall*, with its striking Anglo-Dutch facade, Thornton Street is a street with mansions past and present. On the corner with Bennett Avenue, *Callooa* (Number 5) remains as a superb many-gabled Gothic mansion, built in the 1850s. On the left, tall apartment blocks retain their names of mansions they replaced, such as the Hordern family's *Retford Hall* and *Hopewood House*. Like many mansions in their declining years, *Hopewood House* has been pressed into service in WWII, as WRAAF accommodation.

To the right, however, a view of *Swifts* opens up. Designed by G. A. Morrell in the Victorian Tudor style for Robert Lucas Tooth (1821-93), of the famous brewing family, it was built 1876-82. Any resemblance to Government House is purely deliberate, though *Swifts* included a larger ballroom amongst its 42 rooms. It replaced a smaller house, also called *Swifts*, both named after the Kent estate of the Lucas Tooth family. Robert Lucas Tooth, once again perpetuating transplanted English tradition, also established an English manor-style dairying estate at Kameruka on the South Coast which stayed in the family until 2007. In 1901 *Swifts* was purchased by another brewer, Edmond Resch (1847-1923). Writer Patrick White, recalls how amidst the anti-German feeling of WWI, his father used to walk him up here from their Kings Cross home so that they could spit on the gates.

Resch's son left *Swifts* to the Catholic Church as the Archbishop's residence, which it remained for much of the twentieth century. The house and grounds were placed under a permanent conservation order in 1984, despite the Church's objections that this would make its sale more difficult. It was sold to a private owner in 1986 and extensively restored in the late 1990s.

*From Thornton Street, turn left down Darling Point Road. Take the short return trip into Carthona Avenue before continuing downhill to Lindsay Avenue and then through a gate into McKell Park.*

The tall apartments in Darling Point Road peter out at this point and pleasant, older houses resume. A short excursion into narrow Carthona Avenue, increasingly enclosed by rock walls and house backs, does indeed reveal not much more than house backs, although they are quite interesting. There is the back of *Lindesay*; *Beach Manor* with its slate roofs and slightly Dutch touches; *Neidpath's* back with its separate "Trades" gate; and, at the end, perhaps a glimpse of *Carthona*.

Even with the barest of glimpses, this most English (or more accurately in this case, Scottish) of Gothic manor houses with its creeper, stone battlements, parapets, medieval chimneys and lancet windows, is too important to ignore. Built in 1844 and one of the first homes on the point, *Carthona* was the home of Major Sir Thomas Mitchell (1792-1855), a distinguished soldier-surveyor who became Surveyor-General of NSW (and had a cockatoo named after him!). Mitchell's explorations and his road building (such as the pass at the western end of the Blue Mountains road) contributed greatly to the development of the interior of NSW and Victoria. The *Carthona* site was chosen because of two fresh water streams and the name derives from a Spanish word for "meeting of the waters". Mitchell selected the house design from a British pattern book and carved some of the ornamental stonework himself. In the 1840s, Darling Point was still isolated and not yet genteel and on one occasion another significant resident, Thomas Mort, was held up and robbed of his money and his boots. The residents installed their own watchman after that incident. A twentieth century owner of *Carthona* was Philip Bushell, importer and retailer of tea and coffee.

Back at Darling Point Road, note number 155, *Cintra*. This was the town house from the 1930s until her death in 1968 of the poet, Dorothea Mackellar, writer of Australia's most recognised national poem, *My Country*. Mackellar (1885-1968), was a Point Piper socialite who was in England at the age of 19 when she wrote the poem which contrasted the soft orderliness of that land with her native country's extremes and unpredictability. Mackellar reappears three more times in this series of walks - at the former Scottish Hospital in Paddington (see Loop 3), where she died; at Point Piper, where she grew up (Loop 6); and in Waverley Cemetery (Main Walk and Loop 13), where she is buried.

Just past *Cintra*, follow Lindesay Avenue around. Just past the *Lindesay* pedestrian entrance, a Japanese-style house adds a serene but unlikely touch to the street. Immediately beyond it are *Glanworth* and then *Lindesay*, again. The former, with its powerful columns, was built in 1906 for an American, Peter Britz, who opted for the antebellum plantation-style look and columns. In 1966 the house set an Australian record by being sold for $240,000 to James Fairfax. In 2000, it sold to another media tycoon for $9.5 million. Because of modern changes it is perhaps best seen form McKell Park.

Far earlier is *Lindesay*, first significant house to be built on Darling Point and one of the earliest examples of Gothic architecture surviving in Australia. Named after Colonel Sir Patrick Lindesay (1778-1839), acting Governor for some weeks in 1831, it was built around 1834 for Colonial Treasurer, Campbell Drummond. The architect Edward Hallen borrowed heavily from English style encyclopaedias. Sir Thomas Mitchell resided here whilst *Carthona* was under construction. The last of its many subsequent owners presented it to the National Trust of NSW in 1963 who open it to the public on occasion.

Open the garden gate on the low side of the street and step down into McKell Park, named for the former boilermaker, barrister, NSW Premier and Australian Governor-General, Bill McKell (1891-1985). McKell's humbler origins were well behind him in his last years as a Double Bay resident. It is clearly the lovely garden of a fine house – garden beds edge the lawns, trees frame romantic views of the harbour, over near the gate the servants quarters await the call, and steps lead to the water's edge. All that is missing is the house. Its garden-set foundations have been retained and add a rustic and romantic quality to this delightful place. At several points copper plaques very effectively tell the story of the houses on the site between 1841 and 1983. Most notably, this was the site of *Canonbury*, home of Harry Rickards (1847-1911) (see Loop 13). Rickards, a cockney music hall comedian, came to Sydney in 1871. In 1893 he bought the *Garrick Theatre* and turned it into a variety theatre which he renamed *The Tivoli*. "The Tiv" became enormously popular and from it he established a chain of theatres, and introduced American vaudeville to Australia around 1895, bringing in such artists as Harry Houdini and W. C. Fields.

Do not fail to go down to the waterfront with its public wharf, the remnants of the old stone boathouse and bathing house, and Clarke Island – a popular picnic spot last century – sitting tantalisingly close offshore. Garden Island is to the left and the extent of the infill that ended its island status can be seen. The park has been extended around the waterfront corner to the right, a quiet spot to watch boats moving in and out of Double Bay and if this section is open (from 2010 this has been closed off for 'infrastructure' work), there may be another opportunity for a glimpse of elusive *Carthona*.

*Return to Darling Point Road and walk uphill, past the point at Yarranabbe and Marathon Roads where the main walk crosses, to Greenoaks Avenue.*

Stepping out from McKell Park into Darling Point Road, *Craigend*, the waterfront house across the street, reflects the travels of its builder. With its Moorish dome, interwar contemporary and deco styling plus a Japanese garden, it was built in 1935 for shipping and stevedoring director, Commander James Patrick (1880-1945). After Patrick's death, it became the US Consul-General's residence for 40 years.

The lawns and gardens of *Swifts* emerge again past Thornton Street but the late Victorian duplexes on the left side of the street are soon overwhelmed by blocks of flats from which hints of the former houses emerge occasionally in gates and stone fences. These houses included *Roseville*, the 1906 home of J. F. Archibald, then Editor of *The Bulletin*, whose name is recalled in his legacies - the Archibald Fountain in Hyde Park and the annual Archibald Art Prize; and *Babworth House*, a 40 room 1912 mansion built for Sir Samuel Horden I (the building survives up on the ridge) which replaced *Mount Adelaide*, the 1843 mansion of Henry Mort, brother of soon-to-be-met, Thomas Mort.

Past Marathon Street, the two Victorian Filigree pairs at Numbers 69-73 with their twin pyramid roofs in the Second Empire Style are delightful, while *Kyalla* at Number 65 has a restrained Art Deco look.

At the Loftus St intersection with  Darling Point Road look across the road to the two large houses on either corner with Bridge views between. On the right hand corner is red brick *Cloncorrick*, a distinctive Horbury Hunt design, and the only one of that architect's houses (see Loops L5, L7 and L10) to survive in Darling Point. *Cloncorrick* was built in 1884 for George Simpson (Attorney-General 1885-94). On the left corner, at 9 Loftus Street, is *St Canice's*, built in the 1860s for Edward Butler. It later became Jean Calvin Hospital.

A few metres along, Darling Point Rd meets Greenoaks Avenue, where the church justly grabs attention. The lovely and beautifully proportioned Gothic-style St Marks Church was built on land donated by Thomas Sutcliffe Mort

(more of whom soon) and designed by Edmund Blacket. After some frustration, Blacket produced a sketch of a thirteenth century church in Horncastle, Lincolnshire. The parishioners liked it and so that is what they got. Built between 1848 and 1864 of Pyrmont sandstone, the soaring spire was added in 1870. If St Marks is open, the interior rewards a visit, particularly for the memorials of the establishment families of the Point.

*Turn left, down Greenoaks Avenue, crossing later to view Bishopscourt and then recross back to the steps just beyond the flats downhill at Number 14. Take the steps down to Ocean Street, turn left and follow it to Marathon Mews opposite William St, to rejoin the* **Main Walk.** *If the steps are closed, continue down Greenoaks Av and turn left at Ocean St.*

Take the footpath on the left side past houses amongst which the English Arts and Crafts style is notable. The street numberings are unusual, but in the front garden of No. 2D, note the statue of "The Dying Gladiator", still in the same place it occupied when this was all part of the *Greenoaks* garden before its 1910 subdivision. Cross the street to the gates and driveway of *Bishopscourt*, or *Greenoaks*.

Up the drive is the largest home on the Point, *Bishopscourt*. This has been the official home of the Anglican Archbishop of Sydney since 1911. The Gothic look, enhanced by the garden and tree growth, was a popular style amongst the mid-nineteenth century wealthy and established, emulating exactly the same kind of homes they knew their English relatives were building on their estates in the Old Dart. Originally called *Greenoakes* (the present road was its original driveway), this extravagant house began in the mid 1840s when Lancashire-born Thomas Sutcliffe Mort (1816-78) was an up-and-coming Sydney auctioneer, wool and agricultural broker and merchant in Sydney. Mort at first commissioned architect John Frederick Hilly, and then by the 1860s, Edmund Blacket. By then Mort's diverse business interests – frequently inspired by public interest as much as profit – included shipbuilding (Mort's Dock), engineering, railways, agriculture (including Goldsbrough Mort), gold and other minerals, insurance and shipping. In particular, he pioneered the commercial use of refrigeration (NSW Fresh Food and Ice Co.) and attempted to begin the shipping of refrigerated meat to England. He died of pneumonia contracted as the result of a soaking received while attending the funeral of one of his farmworkers on his great Bodalla estate on the South Coast. Mort was a collector of artworks and antiques, establishing a museum at *Greenoaks* which, together with the garden, was open to the public. As *Bishopscourt*, the house was further expanded in the 1920s by architect Leslie Wilkinson.

The stairs beyond Number 14 lead to Ocean Street which, followed downhill to the left, reconnects with the **Main Walk** at Marathon Mews.

*To complete Loop Walk L4 as a loop and return to Yarranabbe Park, turn left into Marathon Mews and climb the steps to Marathon Rd, following that uphill to Darling Point Rd.*

After the stairs have been climbed, pause for breath to look in the (un-named) indent from Marathon Road, where numbers 1A (*The Gables*) and 1B (*Tuscany*) lead in to set back Nos 3-5, *The Annery*. This lovely Arts and Crafts style house was built for George Montague Merrivale in 1884, the unusual name coming from an ancestral home and hamlet in Devon, England. It is now part of a complex of surrounding apartments.

Across Marathon Road, are some classic inter-war art deco red brick units, *Trentwood* (No. 2), with another pair of terraces on the uphill corner. A little further uphill is tiny Marathon Avenue. The Avenue begins with a fine run of four 1880s Victorian filigree style terraces. These are fine examples, but one of their little known claims to fame are the fact that Numbers 1 and 2 were owned in the 1940s, at least, by (Lady) Jessie Street. Jessie Mary Grey Street (1889-1970) is a figure of enormous significance in Australian feminist history. A hundred metres south of the start of the Main Walk, in Loftus Street, are the Jessie Street Gardens, a park dedicated to some achievements of women in Australian history. Jessie Street was married to Kenneth Whistler Street, subsequently Sir Kenneth, Chief Justice and Lieutenant Governor of NSW, but it was a relationship of powerful equals living very much their own lives. Jessie Street campaigned for women's rights in the workplace, for peace, and stood unsuccessfully several times as a Labor candidate for Federal Parliament. She was the only woman on the Australian delegation to San Francisco in 1945 when the United Nations was established, becoming a founder and Vice-President of the UN Office of the Status of Women in 1947. In the 1960s, as a campaigner for Aboriginal rights, she drafted the amendments to remove discriminatory references to Aborigines in the Australian Constitution which, in 1967, were overwhelmingly supported at a referendum. She died three years later, in the Scottish Hospital in Paddington where another famous woman from Darling Point (and one met earlier in this walk), the poet Dorothy Mackellar (see also Loop Walk 13) had died two years before.

Beyond the terrace, a garage wall declares the name 'Orme', and Number 5. It is hard to see much of the house from here (a little more can be seen from Marathon Lane) and this large originally Victorian gothic 1875 home was extensively remodeled in the 1930s. Its original name, *St Vigeaus*, was changed to *Orme* in 1899 by a new owner.

*Turn left briefly on Darling Point Road, then cross to enter Yarranabbe Rd. Follow it downhill to Yarranabbe Park, completing Loop Walk L4*

At the Marathon Road corner tall apartment blocks are to the right including the white circular tower across the Marathon Road corner which must be hell for furniture layouts. Turning left, Nos 69-73 and No. 65 are met again.

Directly opposite, Yarranabbe Road is something of a cross-section of this suburb, with architecture ranging from gothic to contemporary, picking up Victorian, Arts and Crafts, Federation, Art Deco and oversized bland flats along the way, together with occasional superb harbour glimpses. Across from the junction with Darling Point Road, Number 1, with its gaily striped gables, is a grand (and made grander) example of the Arts and Crafts / Federation style. Downhill at Number 28, *The Stables* (Number 28) are pure charm. These are the sort of stables that could make you want to be a horse, although its hard to imagine that it was ever actually anything but a fine stone gabled house. Number 36 seems to have been inspired by *Lindesay*, the oldest house on the point (met earlier in this walk).