

Sites of Historic Interest

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1. Palace Aquarium

This domed Coogee landmark is all that remains of a remarkable seaside entertainment complex opened in 1887. Originally, it covered the whole block bounded by Dolphin, Beach, Bream and Arden Streets. A contemporary brochure described pleasure gardens, swimming baths and a toboggan ride in the grounds as well as a variety of entertainments under the great dome. The term aquarium described the large glass display tanks of exotic fish inside the building - not the swimming baths outside. Records suggest that the original baths were enlarged and became known as the aquarium baths. In 1935, a live shark on public display in the baths disgorged a human arm that provided gruesome evidence in the then much publicised "shark arm" murder case. A motel has now replaced the baths and the original aquarium collapsed in 1984 but it was replaced by a replica in 1994.

2. Wylies Baths

Wylie's Baths were established in 1907 by Henry Alexander Wylie, a champion long distance and under water swimmer. The construction of the Baths coincided with an emerging interest in seaside baths in Sydney at the turn of the century Wylie's daughter was the well known Wilhelmina (Mina) Wylie, (1891 - 1984) who with Fanny Durack were Australia's first two female Olympic swimming representatives to compete in the Stockholm Olympics in 1912. They provided Australia with its triumphs in Olympic women's swimming, with Fanny winning the Gold and Mina winning the Silver at the games.

In 1912, Wylie constructed the high timber boardwalk that enclosed two sides of the pool and supported two change rooms. The deck was elevated by a post and beam construction in blackbutt timber. The posts were embedded into sockets cut into the sandstone cliff face and into the large rocks at the base of the cliff. Originally, they were infrequently cross-braced, further cross bracing and steel ties have been later additions. Wylie was reputedly a builder and apparently used many timber seconds for his work

In 1959 Des Selby Took over the baths and made many structural changes to the boardwalk and change rooms as well as installing hot showers much to the delight of winter swimmers. Both change rooms had cement roofing and wooden panelling and were painted in a distinctive checkerboard fashion in cream and brown. He also added a kiosk and store on the boardwalk.

In 1974 and 1977, the pool and the buildings were damaged by a major storm and the baths were closed. In 1977, Randwick City council re-opened the baths but it closed again in 1992 as the original construction was structurally unsound. In 1994, the baths were restored and won the coveted Greenway Award for Conservation from the Royal Australian institute of Architects. It is still an instantly recognisable icon of the Eastern Suburbs and heavily used by Coogee residents and visitors.

3. Bates Wave Power Generator

Percy Bates was an amateur inventor who was convinced that electricity could be generated by wave energy and in 1920 he lodged a patent application that used the force of the sea surging in and out of a channel to operate pumps. The pumps circulated water through a system containing a turbine connected to a generator. In 1925, he demonstrated his invention at Lurline Bay by producing sufficient power to light up his nearby workshop. In 1928, he assigned his patent to the Wave Power Company Pty Ltd. By 1930, the plant could generate 1,000 watts and in heavy seas, the output rose to 5,000 watts. Although small in scale, Bates invention preceded most of the experimentation that is now occurring worldwide in harnessing ocean energy. Percy Bates died in 1949.

4. Wrecks of Maroubra Beach

Maroubra beach is littered with wrecks - "Hereward" in 1898, "Tekapo" in 1899 and the "Bellbowrie" in 1939. Around the other side of Boora Point is the wreck of the "Malabar" in 1931 and the "Goolgwai" in 1955. Most of these wrecks are no longer visible but at low tide, some of them may still be seen. Most of the wrecks occurred because in heavy fog the navigators mistook Maroubra Bay for Sydney Heads.

5. Anzac Rifle Range

The rifle range has been used for a long time and there are records of it being used for musketry practice during World War I. Over the years, many rifle clubs have transferred to Long Bay after the closing of the original Anzac Rifle Range at Liverpool. In 1963, a massive landfill program began which covered the heath and gullies of the old range with hard landfill. This continued until 1988 and explains why the old army buildings and road to the target butts are well below the surrounding country. In 1987 about 80 hectares was entered in the register of National Estate as a significant example of natural vegetation. This coastal heath and scrubland occurs in two areas. The smaller (16 hectares) lies northeast of Pioneer Park and contains some 60 native species. The larger area of 64 hectares extends around the coast between Maroubra Bay and Long Bay. There is a draft management plan for the area that transfers the eastern section of the rifle range to public

use. This plan is a topic of great controversy amongst range users and the surrounding community and it will be some years before it is resolved

6. Wreck of the Malabar

On Good Friday, April 2, 1931 the SS "Malabar" on a trip from Melbourne to Singapore when she ran aground in heavy fog onto rocks off North Point in Long Bay at 6:52am. The bump was so gentle that it almost past unnoticed but the ship then slid onto a rock ledge about 50 yards from the cliff face. Lifeboats were launched with all the passengers aboard and towed into Long Bay by the local fishing fleet who were preparing to go to sea as the next day was Good Friday. Even though it was a calm day, the vessel was heavily pounded and these shocks split open the seams in the steel plates. By 11:00am, the crew had abandoned the vessel. During the afternoon, the seas began to build up and early the following morning she began to break up.

The spectacle of watching the 107-metre ship of 4,500 gross tons being split by pounding waves attracted an immense crowd of 150,000 sightseers and scavengers that caused traffic jams and frustrated 30 police officers who tried to keep everyone at a safe distance from the edge of the rocks. The only human fatality occurred when one man drowned trying to retrieve souvenirs. Many others risked their lives and a night in jail attempting to save kegs of whisky, beer and rum.

Throughout the next day, the SS Malabar continued to take water. It heaved and twisted with the terrible grip of the sea and finally split in three parts. Twenty-four hours after the ship went aground; the coastline around Sydney was white with broken flour bags. Calico-wrapped legs of lamb, boxes of butter, and tins of biscuits, condensed milk and dripping floated in the sea and many fishing families dined well off the wreck for the next few weeks. The ship's butcher block was found at Newcastle 36 hours after the wreck.

7. Hospital Cave

Wander up Howe Street to its junction with Prince Edward Street and note a small sandstone overhang on the south-west of the junction. In pre-European times, the Cadigal people used this cave as a place of quarantine for anyone with an infectious disease; later it became known as the 'Hospital Cave'. After the visit of La Perouse in 1788, there was an outbreak of smallpox. A large number of Cadigals contracted the disease and were banished to this place. Many died and there were reports of skulls and bones scattered about the area. It is interesting to note that in 1881 the Coast Hospital was established a couple of kilometres away at Little Bay to cope with a smallpox epidemic amongst the Europeans in Sydney.

8. Christo's Wrapping

On the northern side of Little Bay just below Tupia Head is the site where, in 1969, the Bulgarian sculptor Christo created one of the world's largest works of art in 10 weeks.

Working with rolls of woven plastic sheets 11 metres wide and 305 metres long and 112 kilometres of rope he wrapped up 92,000 square metres of the rocky northern cliffs of Little Bay - over 2.4 kilometres of coastline. The work was barely finished when a

southerly gale blew for two days ripping the plastic to shreds. Only the shipwrecks of earlier years had brought large crowds to the neighbourhood and whilst many scoffed and ridiculed the work, many saw beauty in the brief transformation of a natural landscape to an abstract form. Christo's project sketches of Little Bay and an excellent documentary may be seen at the Museum of Contemporary Art at Circular Quay. Christo has since gone on to carry out even more spectacular wrappings using natural land formations and significant buildings around the world.

9. Lazaret Wall

On the northern edge of Little Bay, there are the remains of a stone wall with an archway for the creek to run through. This is all that remains of the male lazaret (or leprosarium) erected in 1890 as part of the Coast Hospital (later Prince Henry Hospital). The Coast hospital was originally established as a hospital for infectious diseases. By 1888, there were 11 male patients with leprosy and a new lazaret was established in the shallow gully on the northern side of Little Bay to isolate the leprosy patients from the rest of the hospital. Because of the highly infectious nature of leprosy, patients were kept in isolation for the rest of their life and by 1897 there were 40 patients. The lazaret was located in large gardens and lawns with its own tennis and croquet court and the patients had their own bathing house at the northern end of Little Bay beach.

By 1965, the old lazaret was in deplorable state and new treatments had reduced the infective stage to 12 weeks so a new isolation ward was built in the main hospital area. By the 1970s, leprosy in Australia was under control and only an occasional new case was admitted.

10. Prince Henry Hospital

The hospital was established as the Coast Hospital in 1881 to quarantine the victims of the smallpox epidemic of that year. The site covered 202 hectares of what was then a very remote area and the first sufferers of the epidemic were placed in a "sanitary" camp of tents on the beach. Water was provided by a stream, which flowed into the bay. A more permanent accommodation of timber and corrugated iron was erected behind the bay as a sanatorium to house the infected persons and their families. After this smallpox outbreak, the 'Coast' became a hospital for infectious diseases, the first lepers being admitted in 1883. It was this use of the Coast hospital as a leper hospital that first drew the Aborigines of the southern coast to the area; they came to visit sick relatives. After a visit from the Duke of Gloucester in 1934, the hospital was renamed the Prince Henry Hospital and in 1959 it became a teaching hospital for the University of New South Wales. An antique German clock presided over the busy routine of the hospital from the top of the copper-spired brick tower erected in 1953. This clock, which was made at Blenheim in 1878, survived the fire that destroyed the Sydney exhibition of 1882 and was installed in the original hospital clock tower in 1898. In 2002, the hospital closed and the area was taken over by Landcom for development with 80% of the 84 hectares being retained as public land.

11. Coast Hospital Cemetery

This is a place of haunting beauty. The view north along the coastline is spectacular and because of the openness of the heath country, there is always a wind moaning through the area. This cemetery was originally within the southern boundary of the hospital reserve and contains the graves of patients and staff who died at the Coast Hospital. There are three headstones bearing Chinese inscriptions, dating back to 1883, when a few Chinese lepers were admitted to the hospital. Tragically, hundreds of wooden grave pegs, indicating the burial places of other Chinese people who died at the hospital, were removed in a clean up of the area in 1981. There are gravesites of young children struck down by influenza, smallpox and typhoid in the cemetery. The tragic graves of the young nurses, who occasionally contracted the diseases of their patients, also lie here. Many Aboriginal graves are located in the cemetery and the area is of special significance to the local Aboriginal community. The cemetery is also part of the Heritage Commission conservation proposal.

12. Fort Banks

This was part of Sydney's Anti-Ship Defences during World War II. The counter-bombardment complex included two BL 9.2 inch Mark 10 guns long-range guns, anti-aircraft guns and torpedo launching facilities. These armaments were supplemented by observation posts, plotting rooms, barracks, hospital and an electricity generating plant. Remnants of this very extensive underground complex may be found south of the pistol club.

13. Wreck of the Minmi

The Minmi was a coal carrier returning to Newcastle after a trip to Melbourne, when it struck Cape Banks in a dense fog just after 10:00pm on 13 May 1937. A heavy sea was running and a half-hour later the Minmi broke its back. The crew were in different parts of the ship. The fifteen men on the bow section made their way ashore with the help of a rocket apparatus. However, the nine on the aft section were cut off. The police launch was finally able to cast a line aboard and, despite the heavy seas and the constant rolling of the aft section; seven men were brought ashore safely. One died when he lost his grip on the rescue line and another died of a heart attack. Again, Sydney turned out for the spectacle and on the following two days, 100,000 people visited Cape Banks. An army of caddies protected the golf course greens and 14 police officers controlled the crowd. Remnants of the wreck may be seen on Cape Banks.

14. Henry Head fortifications

The Crimean War in 1854 generated a scare throughout the British Far East colonies; this led to the erection of forts on Pinchgut, Bradley Head and Sydney Heads. It also, eventually, led to a recommendation for the fortification of Bare Island and Henry Head in Botany Bay. Construction commenced in 1892 and on its completion in 1895, the Henry Head Battery comprised two breach-loading guns on 'disappearing mounts'. Searchlights as well as observation posts and barracks were added in 1900 and the fortifications were upgraded again during World War II.

15. La Perouse historical precinct

This precinct includes Macquarie's Watchtower, the Cable Station Building, Pere Receveur's Grave and the La Perouse Monument.

15.1 Macquaries Watchtower

This octagonal stone tower, capped by a castellated parapet, symbolises Australia's first decades of European settlement; smugglers plied their covert trade and convicts attempted to escape via the unguarded shores of Botany Bay. To prevent such lawlessness and to control shipping in the bay Governor Macquarie built the tower between 1820 and 1822. It is one of the earliest colonial structures in Australia and it originally housed a corporal and two or three privates, who were stationed there to report on ships entering and leaving Botany Bay and to prevent smuggling. The tower was used for four or five years and then was unoccupied for a long time, until two watchmen were installed. A small branch of the Customs Department was based in the Watchtower in 1831 to prevent the smuggling of spirits and tobacco.

The district's first public school - Botany Bay Provisional School - was opened in the tower in 1868. Customs Officer Michael MacDermott was one of the citizens who petitioned for the establishment of the school and guaranteed an attendance of 25 students. Under the conditions of the provisional school, parents of the students had to provide the school. MacDermott offered a room in the tower and formal education began for the children of local gardeners, fishermen, Customs employees and Aborigines. In 1873, MacDermott erected an additional building about 3.6 x 3 metres for the school's use. Isolation and a falling attendance rate brought the school to a close in 1890, but an increase in the local school-age population prompted its re-opening in 1892 as the La Perouse Public School. The school was relocated to Bunnerong Road in 1910 and by 1944 it was deemed worthy of its present location on Yarra Road in Phillip Bay. Macquarie's tower was restored following a fire in the 1950s and is now maintained by the National Parks and Wildlife Service

15.2 Cable Station Building

This elegant two-storey building is now home to the La Perouse Museum and Visitor Centre. Construction was completed in 1882 to accommodate the personnel and equipment for the Australian cable terminus of the Australasia and China Telegraph Company. In 1875, the company and the Governors of New South Wales and New Zealand agreed to the laying of an ocean telegraph cable between La Perouse in Australia and Nelson in New Zealand. When the service commenced in 1876 the operators were housed in temporary quarters at Frenchmans Bay; they were eventually provided with permanent accommodation in the Cable Station Building. The colonial architect, James Barnet, designed the first stage of the building and additions were made between 1885 and 1888.

In 1903, the telegraph company built a larger station at Yarra Point, which may be seen from the veranda of the old cable station, but they continued to use the Frenchmans Bay building for the accommodation of personnel until about 1917. From 1918, the building became the residential quarters for nurses employed at the nearby Coast Hospital. The Salvation Army occupied the premises in 1947 and used it to shelter distressed mothers and children until 1987 when it was restored and became a museum.

The La Perouse Museum is located in the southern wing of the Cable Station Building. It was opened on the 23rd February 1988 and the exhibition vividly portrays the events, from the planning of the La Perouse expedition to its disappearance after leaving Botany Bay. It was presented to the people of New South Wales by the French government to commemorate the Australian Bicentenary

15.3 Receveur's Grave

This imposing structure contains the remains of Pere L. C. Receveur, the Franciscan priest and scientist aboard L' Astrolabe who died at Botany Bay on the 17th February 1788. In 1828, a tomb was erected over Receveur's grave, the work having been commissioned by Captain B.H. de Bougainville who visited the site in 1825. The old tree trunk bearing the epitaph carved on it was presented to France by the NSW government for the Paris Exhibition in 1855 and is now part of the collection of the Musee de la Marine in Paris.

15.4 La Perouse Monument

Constructed in 1828 to commemorate the French navigator, Comte Jean-Francois de Galaup de La Perouse, the La Perouse monument was commissioned by the famous French explorer Captain B.H. de Bougainville. It still plays an important role in the annual celebration of Bastille Day by the Australian French community

When Captain Cook first entered Botany Bay in April 1770, he landed at Kurnell on the southern shore. However, it was his reports of the northern shore that steered future events. Cook mapped the whole bay and discovered a fresh water stream flowing into the bay east of Bare Island. After bringing the First Fleet into Botany Bay 18 years later, Captain Arthur Phillip was less than impressed with the bay and sailed on to Sydney Cove.

As the First Fleet was preparing to depart, the French navigator La Perouse sailed his ships L' Astrolabe and La Boussole into Botany Bay, assisted by an officer of Phillip's First Fleet. La Perouse had sailed from Brest in France in August 1785 on a world geographic expedition. While Phillip was establishing the British colony of NSW on the southern shore of Port Jackson, La Perouse and his party erected a stockade, camping near the present Frenchmans Bay. They stayed for about six weeks and were the first Frenchmen to visit Australia. During their time at Botany Bay the Frenchmen found time to visit Phillip's settlement at Port Jackson (Frenchmans Road in Randwick was part of their walking route).

The La Perouse expedition departed on the 10th March 1788 but never returned to France. In 1827, it was discovered that all hands had perished when both frigates had foundered at Vanikoro, one of the Solomon Islands.

16. Bare Island

Along with Fort Henry, Bare Island was constructed to repel any possible invasion by the Russian Czar's Pacific fleet. Two British military experts arrived in 1877 to advise on defence and the recommendations included fortifications of Bare Island. The plan for Bare Island included 5 gun emplacements connected by bomb proof passages. The fortifications were completed in 1885 and in 1889 work on the barracks within the fort was also completed. In 1890, a royal commission on defence found the concreting of

Bare Island fortifications to be inferior. Despite shoddy construction, the work had cost the then huge sum of £69,000. After its initial completion, the fort was subject to continual repair. By 1902, Bare Island Fort was redundant, its guns never having been fired in anger. War veterans resided in the barracks between 1912 and 1963 and the Randwick and District Historical Society took up caretaker occupancy in 1963 and established a museum in the barracks. In 1967, the island was declared an historic site and placed under the control of the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Due to the poor construction, the buildings are undergoing conservation works and the National Parks and Wildlife Service now run guided tours of the fort. For tour information contact NPWS on 9247 5033.

Map B - Kurnell to Cronulla

17. Cooks Landing Place (G1)	18. Kurnell Ferry Wharf Ruins (G1)
19. Alpha Cottage, Kurnell (G1)	20. Discovery Centre, Kurnell (G1)
21. Tabbigai Cliff Dwellings (H2)	22. Cape Bailey Lighthouse (H3)
23. "Voodoo" (G3)	24. Boat Harbour (F3)
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17. Captain Cook's Landing Place

This is the European birthplace of Australia and all of the memorials are interesting. Take the time to review them all and try to put yourself in the shoes of the Europeans and the bare feet of the Aborigines.

18. Ruins of the La Perouse-Kurnell Ferry Wharf.

Until 1954, the only reliable access to Kurnell was via a small ferry across the mouth of Botany Bay to La Perouse. When Captain Cook Drive was completed that year, ferry patronage dropped and the last ferry from Kurnell to La Perouse sailed in 1961. The wharf was eventually destroyed by neglect and storms. Anyone who travelled in this small ferry during a strong south-easter would never forget the experience!

19. Alpha Cottage

In 1815, Captain James Birnie was granted 290 hectares acres on the peninsula and built a homestead called Alpha Farm. John Connell purchased it in 1828 and in 1851, the property passed to his grandson, John Connell Laycock who owned 4,800 hectares stretching from Kurnell to Port Hacking. It is thought that the name Kurnell and even Cronulla may be derived from aboriginal attempts to pronounce Connell's name. In 1861, the land was sold to the Honourable Thomas Holt for five shillings an acre. In the 1890s, 25 hectares of the Holt estate was resumed and combined with the adjoining block of crown land to make a 100-hectare reserve. The land was dedicated as Cook's Landing Place in 1899. The original Alpha farmhouse fell into ruins; rumours of gold being buried there resulted in the total demolition by fortune seekers. It was replaced with the house, which subsequently became the ranger's cottage.

20. Discovery Centre.

The National Park's Discovery Centre contains an exhibition - 'Eight Days that Changed the World' which is an interpretation of the first contact between Aboriginal people and the crew of the Endeavour under the command of James Cook. There is also a display that provides information about the highly sensitive Kurnell peninsula with its wetlands, heathlands, and woodland forest communities.

21. Tabbigai Cliff Dwellers.

At Tabbigai Gap, it is still possible to detect the remains of the small community of fishermen who cunningly constructed week-enders clinging to the southern cliff-face above the turbulent ocean. These dwellings were originally erected during the Depression. Some included a bedroom, kitchen, bathroom, toilet, outside shower and a large sunny living room. Spring water that seeped through the cliffs was stored in tanks and piped to taps. Today all that remains are some steps, gutters, pathways and stonework.

22. Cape Baily Lighthouse.

Many ships had been lost on the reefs and bomboras around Cape Baily. In 1950, Cape Baily lighthouse was constructed. No mean feat as the only road from Cronulla to Kurnell in those days was a sandy 4WD track that went underwater at high tide. Furthermore, the lighthouse site was nearly 7 kilometres from this track across some major sand dunes and several swamps. Cape Baily is an unmanned lighthouse with a concrete tower standing 60 metres above sea level. Its white flashing light is visible from 25km out to sea. The lighthouse uses a simple but effective mechanism for turning the gas light on at night and off in the daylight. The light is fuelled from bottled gas.

23. "Voodoo"

This reef is one of the earliest and best board surfing sites around Sydney. However, the Cronulla Sewage Treatment Plant has an outlet that made this a very unpleasant place to surf in northeasterly and easterly winds. However, in 2000 the Sewage Plant installed tertiary treatment that dramatically reduced the pollution.

24. Boat Harbour

Fishermen's huts were originally built on top of the cliff overlooking Boat Harbour and several of the large shell middens in this area were flattened. When National parks took over this area, the huts were removed (only to reappear on the dunes north of Boat Harbour). It is an area of aboriginal significance.

25. Bass & Flinders Memorial.

This memorial commemorates the extraordinary voyage of Mathew Flinders and George Bass in a 1.8 metre (6 foot) long rowing boat *Tom Thumb*. In 1795, they sailed this tiny boat along the southern coast from Sydney Harbour to Wollongong and explored every estuary and inlet on the way. On a later voyage on a larger boat *Norfolk*, they discovered and mapped Bass Strait.

26. Salmon Haul Reserve.

This is the site of the Ocean Wharf. In the early days of Sutherland Shire, most produce was shipped out to Sydney and most household goods shipped in across this wharf. Only the rotting piles remain. Later on, the beach next to the wharf was used by net fishermen to haul in catches of Australian salmon that shoaled at the mouth of the Port Hacking River.

27. NSW Fisheries Research Institute.

In 1900, a fish hatchery was established at Cabbage Tree Creek on the southern shores of Port Hacking. By 1901, the hatchery reportedly contained snapper, black bream, garfish, whiting, Tasmanian trumpeter, herrings, lobsters and oysters, and, produced millions of fry for release into the wild. In 1911, the fish hatchery was expanded and a building constructed on Hungry Point, Cronulla to assist in the breeding of fish. This building was the beginning of the NSW Fisheries Research Institute or “The Hatchery” as it has been known to local fishermen for decades. During World War II, the Hatchery became a services camp and, after the war, it was the location of one of the first migrant camps for European refugees. After a few years, it re-commenced operations as a fisheries research organisation.