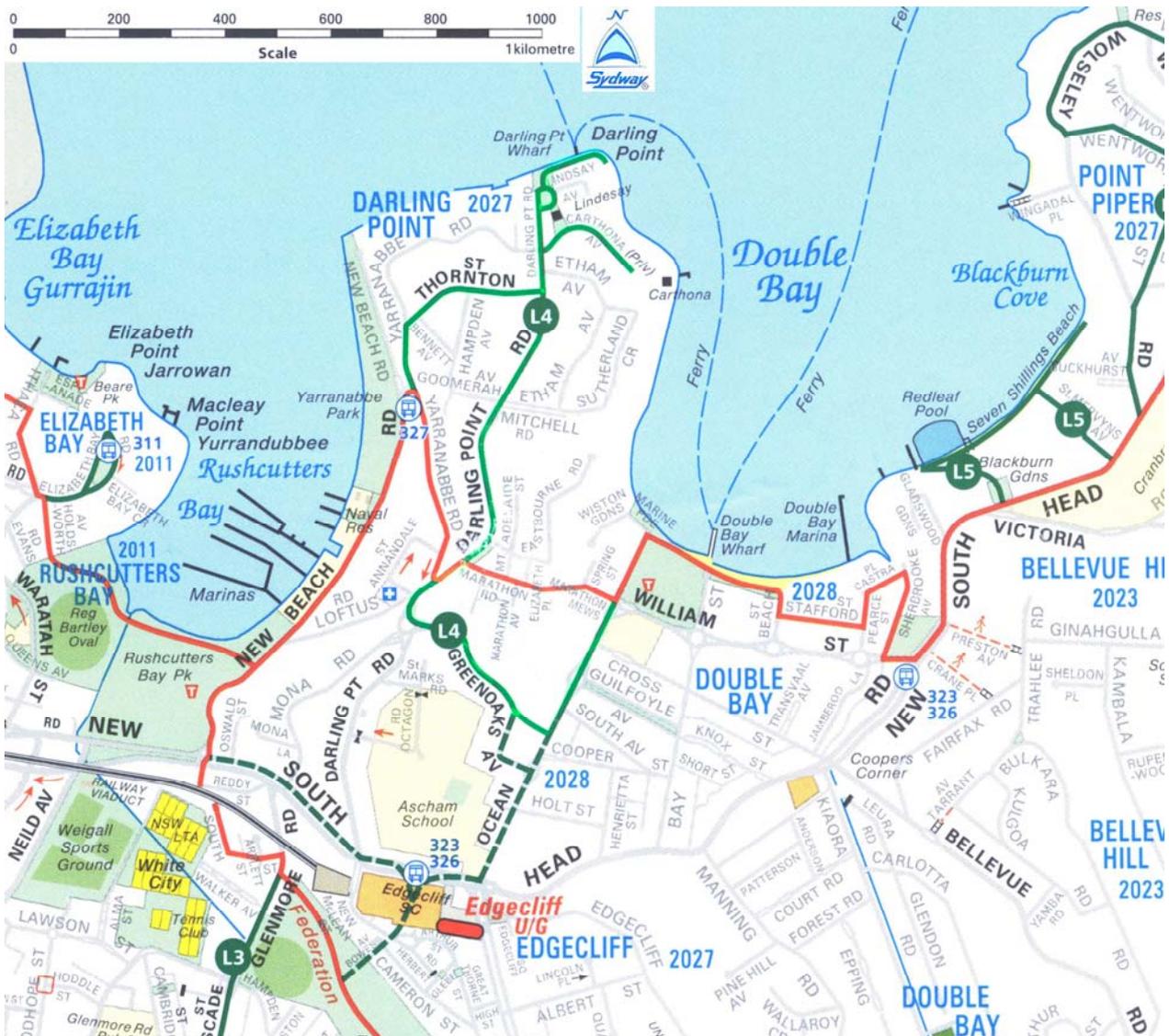


CIRCULAR QUAY TO SOUTH HEAD AND CLOVELLY

LOOP WALK L4: DARLING POINT



- Main Walk:** ——— **Loop and Connecting Walks:** ——— **Alternative Routes:** - - -
- Distance:** 2.2km.
- Time:** 1 hour.
- 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 and McKell 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. Take a short excursion into narrow Carthona Avenue, so enclosed it feels a little eerie. Indeed not much can be seen until the end, though the wash of waves can be heard. There is the back of *Lindesay*; *Beach Manor* with its slate roofs and slightly Dutch touches; and, at the end, a glimpse only of *Carthona*.

Glimpses are about all that can be gained except from the water, of 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. 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*, part of an elegant series of attached villas. 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. A Japanese-style house adds a serene but unlikely touch to the street and immediately beyond it are *Glanworth* and *Lindesay*. 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.

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 special occasions.

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. By peeping around the barrier at the far end, another glimpse can be gained 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* emerges 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.

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 roundabout where Darling Point Road meets Greenoaks Avenue, the church justly grabs attention. But look across the road, too, to the two large, attractive houses. At 9 Loftus Street, *St Canice's*, built in the 1860s for Edward Butler, became Jean Calvin Hospital; while on the opposite corner (with Bridge views between) is red brick *Cloncorrick*. A distinctive Horbury Hunt design, and the only one of that architect's houses (see Loop L7) to survive in Darling Point, *Cloncorrick* was built in 1884 for George Simpson (Attorney-General 1885-94).

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 at Number 14. Take the steps down to *Ocean Street*, turn left and follow it to the *Marathon Mews* steps to rejoin the **Main Walk**.

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* and, further downhill, reconnect with the **Main Walk**.