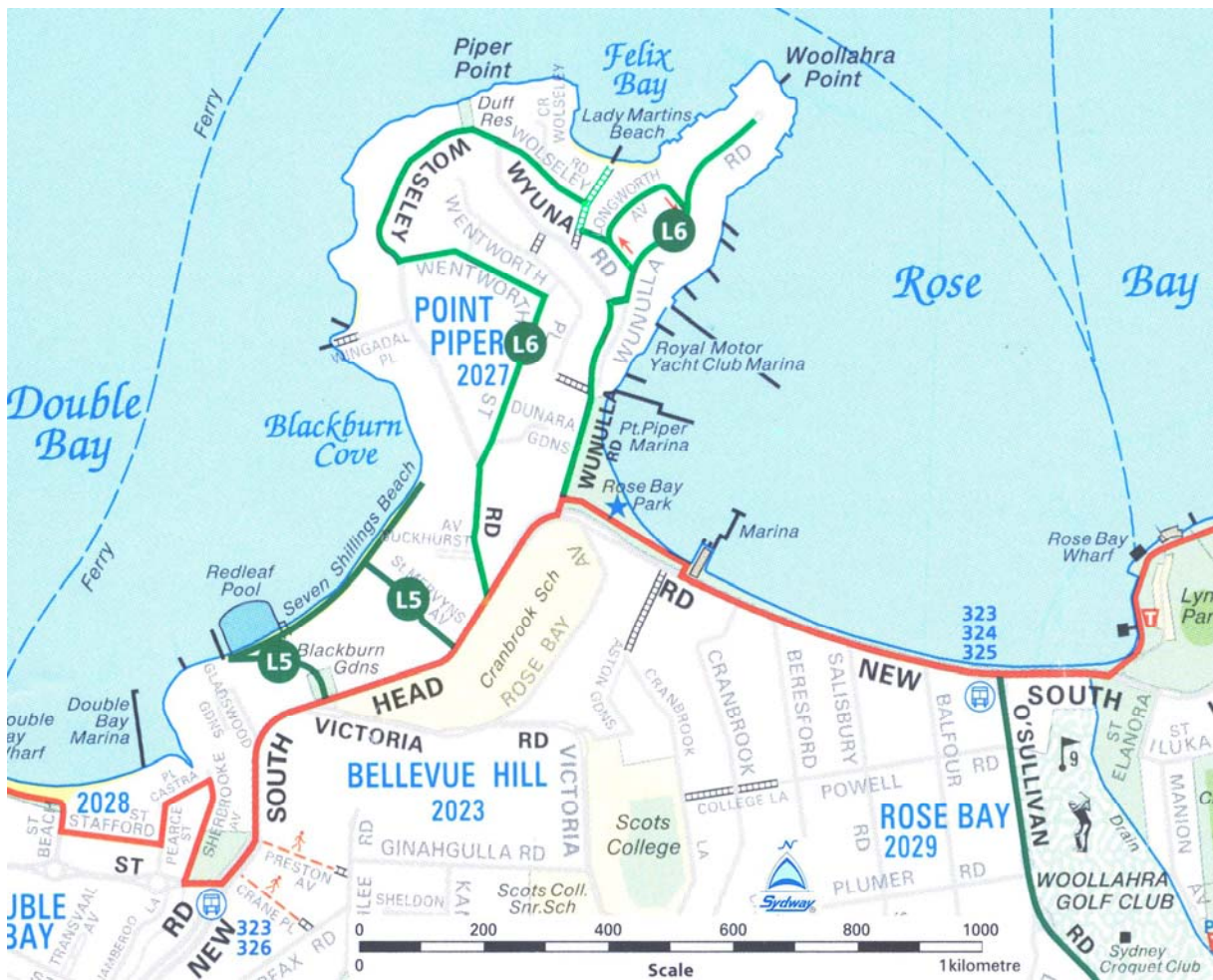


## CIRCULAR QUAY TO SOUTH HEAD AND CLOVELLY LOOP WALK L6: POINT PIPER



- Main Walk:** —      **Loop and Connecting Walks:** —
- Distance:** 2.5km.
- Time:** 1 hour.
- Level:** Moderate, some steps.
- Transport:** New South Head Rd buses.
- Connects with:** Main Walk.
- Facilities:** Toilets: None;  
Picnic spots: Duff Reserve, Lady Martins Beach, Rose Bay Park;  
Shops or hotels: None.

Point Piper, on most scores, is Australia's wealthiest suburb, its properties heavily dominating the top housing sale prices. Perhaps it is fitting that a small suburb with such a disproportionate part of the nation's private wealth, personal power, social aspiration and political influence should once have had its own Baron. Don't be too disappointed if the locals don't appear much - the tradesmen, gardeners, dog-walkers and chandelier cleaners will, but the actual inhabitants generally keep out of sight.

A great deal is concealed here - often the waterfronts are hidden from the walker by solid phalanxes of brick and masonry as often are the houses themselves. A small protrusion into the harbour with a lot of waterfront, Point Piper would have been an important centre of fishing and gathering for the Gadigal people. As evidence of this, the tip known as Woollahra Point had extensive Aboriginal - and possibly other - engravings. Most are probably lost, but some apparently remain, boarded up under the floors of houses built over them. The carvings were of particular

interest to local resident and aviation pioneer, Lawrence Hargrave (1850-1915), who came to believe that some were not Aboriginal in origin at all. He developed a theory that they were the work of Spanish sailors who he believed must have visited Sydney Harbour 200 years before the First Fleet arrived. Hargrave connected these carvings with others still able to be seen at North Bondi (see Loop Walks L11 and L13). Hargrave also flew his experimental powered model float planes from the waters around Point Piper - adjacent to what became Sydney's flying boat base once international aviation was established.

Leaving aside the remote possibility of earlier Spanish visitors, the Point's European history began as part of a 76ha land grant by Governor Macquarie to Captain John Piper in 1820. Piper had control of customs and all harbour matters, a lucrative position which enabled him to vastly increase the size of his land holding and build the finest house then in Sydney on the Point. He named it *Henrietta Villa* (after the second name of Governor Macquarie's wife, Elizabeth) and it quickly became the most prestigious social venue in town. However, Piper's flamboyant and extravagant lifestyle exceeded even his resources and he was soon deeply in debt. In 1827 it became apparent that he had embezzled 13,000 pounds from the customs revenues which, together with other debts, amounted to millions in modern values. The mortified Piper made a curiously grand suicide attempt, having himself rowed out into the harbour and, to the strains of his naval band, jumping overboard. He survived to retire to a more modest rural life.

Henrietta Villa was bought by one of his debtors, Daniel Cooper in 1827, the Vacluse part of his estate outside the Point being bought by William Charles Wentworth and the rest (Bellevue Hill, Rose Bay, Woollahra) to the firm of Cooper and Levey to whom Piper had owed another 20,000 pounds.

Daniel Cooper (1785-1853) had been transported to Australia in 1816 and became one of the colony's most successful merchants. His nephew, born in Lancashire in 1821 and also named Daniel Cooper, came to Australia in 1843 and was soon following in his Uncle's footsteps. Daniel the younger was already wealthy by the time he inherited his uncle's estate a decade later. He now had estates throughout the colony, including a large chunk around Double Bay, much of which was Piper's former estate. In 1856 Cooper began a great mansion called *Woollahra House* on Point Piper, on the site of the Captain Piper's *Henrietta Villa*. In the same year Cooper became first Speaker of the new Legislative Assembly. He resigned from the Speakership in 1860 and returned to England a year later, became the Agent-General for NSW, was made the First Baronet of Woollahra in 1863, and died in 1902. *Woollahra House* was not completed until 1883 by his son, William. Some subdivision of the Point also began around that time. It was suggested as a replacement for Government House around 1901 (then occupied by the new Governor-General) but the offer was not taken up by the government and the estate was progressively sold off and the house demolished in 1929.

*Turn left off New South Head Road into Wolseley Road, but continue uphill on Wentworth Street rather than veering left. Wentworth turns left and then drops towards the harbour where Wolseley Road is rejoined. Continue on it to its end near Lady Martin's Beach.*

Immediately beyond where Wolseley Road veers left, look across to Dunara Place for yet another connection with the poet Dorothea Mackellar (see Loops 3, 4 and 13). The house *Dunara*, readily seen down the private road, was built in 1882-84 for physician, businessman and MLC, Sir Charles Mackellar, and it was here that his daughter, Dorothea (1885-1968) was born and brought up.

The steady climb up Wentworth is worth it when it hooks left. Here on the peak are some of Point Piper's finest old houses. Cross the street to the harbour side and look back to the corner, above which is the imposing *Kilmory* (1912) at Number 6. This Arts and Crafts style mansion was designed by J. W. Manson and built for Sir Alexander MacCormick, the Sydney surgeon who donated his Paddington private hospital to the Presbyterian Church to become The Scottish Hospital (see Loop 3). During WWII, *Kilmory* was commandeered by the military as were a number of large houses in this area, becoming Eastern Area HQ, essentially administering all operational RAAF units from the Tropic of Capricorn south to the Murray River. By mid-1942, about 500 personnel were based at the house, including WAAAFs quartered nearby at *Redleaf* (see Main Walk Section 2). After the war, *Kilmory* was used by Riverview College for a time before becoming a Franciscan retreat. It is now privately owned again.

Now cross to the harbour side and take a peek over the vine encrusted wall at Number 21. The house is a rather late design (1964) by Leslie Wilkinson but nevertheless in his trademark Mediterranean style complete with lantern on the roof. However, it may be the gardens, tennis court and view that speak loudest about the serious money invested in these places. Next door along, *Ardenbraught* (Number 23) is a fine sandstone faceted house from about 1900. Like *Kilmory*, it was designed by J. W. Manson, but has quite a different, baronial feel in its warm stone. Also like *Kilmory*, this house served in WWII as well. A plaque on the gate records that this modest house (now 8 apartments) housed an

entire squadron of the Royal Netherlands Naval Air Force from 1945 to 1947 while they operated their Catalina flying boats from nearby Rose Bay.

There are some more fine, if smaller, houses as the hill is crested, and wonderful harbour views open up across Clark Island to the Opera House and Harbour Bridge. Down Wentworth Place, to the right behind its gates in a fine garden, is the massive rusticated stone mansion of *Ulig Lodge*. Built about 1900 for Lachlan Beaton, it has been owned by many establishment figures, including the Rutherford family for more than 40 years, descendants of a Cobb and Co founder. It was also, perhaps a touch unexpectedly, the home of the Estonian Consul-General for 21 years until 1997.

'Very large' is one description that could be applied to the Roman villa recently constructed on the right corner with Wolseley Road. This was the site of older homes which included Westwood Girls' School. Next door down Wolseley Road, at Number 69, an ornate gateway leads to a house built in 1955 for General Sir Leslie Morshead (see Loop 1) by Lesley Wilkinson, many of whose houses grace Eastern Suburbs harboursides.

On the left side again, *Bayard* (Number 116), *Rockleigh* (Number 120) and *Cliff Towers* (Number 124) were built at the end of the 1880s, the last for Captain Samuel Charles, a merchant whose Kiama dairying interests appear to have led him to establish the butter trade with the UK through Agent-General, Sir Daniela Cooper. Don't miss the charming courtyard of the more recent Number 118.

Many steps lead down through vegetation to Duff Reserve, a house-block-sized waterfront with a small pergola and delightful harbour views. Next to it beyond it, *Cordoba* (Number 132) is a little hard to miss in its rather startling colour. Another Mediterranean style house, it is actually a conversion from an earlier and differently styled house, known as *Deloraine*.

The eastern side of the Wyuna Road intersection is taken up by the very interesting (and interestingly named *Mimihau* (Number 93) built early in the twentieth century for W.S. Haswell, Professor of Biology and, later, Zoology at Sydney University. It was enhanced by a later owner with fittings and stone from *Woollahra House* after its demolition in 1929.

Wolseley Street drops fairly steeply, but flattens into a cul-de-sac. At its end, some elaborate iron gates are companion to one of the most interesting, and possibly ancient, letter boxes in Sydney. A block or so before this, a fairly innocuous lane and steps leads left down past the Royal Prince Edward Yacht Club, established in 1923 and named as part of the general excitement amongst the establishment of the Prince of Wales' (later the short-reigned King Edward VIII) 1921 visit to Sydney. The lane opens onto secluded Lady Martin's Beach. This small public intrusion into the otherwise privatized waterfront is a pleasant place to squat and observe a little of the Point Piper lifestyle. Lady Martin was the wife of Sir James Martin, who was several times Prime Minister and later Chief Justice of NSW. Left, after Martin's death in 1886, with a mere 15 children to take care of, Lady Martin leased *Woollahra House* for some years.

*From the Wolseley Road cul-de-sac, opposite the Lady Martin's Beach lane, steps and a ramp lead left across the front of a house before ducking uphill between properties. About half-way up, turn left into the green steps which lead into Longworth Avenue.*

On entering Longworth Avenue, the site of *Henrietta Villa* and subsequent *Woollahra House* is reached. Nothing remains of either actual house (although a block of flats has assumed the latter name), but to the right, at Number 4 Longworth Avenue, is an interesting stone-based apartment block with an arched entryway called *Wyuna Court*. The additions are obvious but the building was originally the very attractive stables belonging to *Woollaha House*.

At this point, **two options** present themselves. Following Longworth right (east) for a quicker exit from Point Piper, or turning left (northwards) for an additional loop of about 750 metres.

#### **Option 1:**

*Continue east along Longworth towards Rose Bay and at the turn into Wunulla Road, climb the steps on the right up to Wyuna Road. Turn left and follow Wyuna downhill to its junction with Wunulla once more.*

Above Wyuna Road, more mansions look down from Wentworth Place and steps do lead up for those with upward mobility. Following Wyuna and Wunulla Roads down opens up a sweeping vista of Double Bay and its surrounds.

#### **Option 2:**

*Turn left (north) down Longworth until it meets Wunulla Road. Turn left in Wunulla and walk down to the cul-de-sac at its end. Retrace the route but continue along Wunulla to its junction with Wyuna Road.*

The buildings of Longworth Street – many in the Spanish Mission style - and the occasional harbour views make this an interesting street. Wunulla Road continues left to the end of Woollahra Point. Number 58 was built in 1900 by Lawrence Hargrave, the aviation pioneer, and the carvings referred to earlier were in this vicinity. In fact some of them remain, including a 7.5m whale under floorboards below the Biarritz Flats, down the gated lane at Number 62; and similarly under the floor of the beautiful Spanish Mission example of *Herewai* at Number 55. *Herewai* was built for a Mr Hudson in 1930, replacing a cottage where the famous photographer, Frank Hurley once lived.

Back along Wunulla towards its second junction with Longworth is the Royal Motor Yacht Club, established in 1905 (1910 on this site) and supposedly the first body to be called 'motor' anything in Australia.

*The two options have now rejoined Continue along Wunulla road towards New South Head Road to meet the main route again.*

The main route reconnects at the point where wooden steps and platforms lead to the left down to Rose Bay Park and the beach, but just beyond that, on the corner with New South Head Road, is one last building of interest – the Rose Bay Police Station. This was *The Lodge*, gatehouse to *Woollahra House* situated at the start of the house's entrance road, it may be older than the house was but has been greatly altered, particularly after being turned into a police station in the 1930s.