



Walk 10

Cammeray - St. Thomas Park (Cemetery) to Old Tram Depot

NOTES PREPARED BY THE NORTH SHORE HISTORICAL SOCIETY 1994



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We suggest using a street directory to supplement this map.

Walk No. 10

1. ST. THOMAS PARK, WEST STREET, CROWS NEST

This land was given by Alexander Berry, on the death of his wife in 1845, as St. Thomas Parish Burial Ground, with a further gift in 1857. Mrs Berry was the sister of his partner Edward Wollstonecraft. Edward, who had built a farm house, The Crows Nest (approximately the site of the Uniting, former Presbyterian Church) in Shirley Road, died in 1832. Later, he was reburied here with Elizabeth. Alexander died in 1873, aged 92 and was interred with them under the imposing pyramid tomb.

The earliest tomb is the rectangular 1815 sarcophagus of Judge Ellis Bent. His friend Major John Ovens was interred with him, a thicker stone put on top and a stone monument added. They had been removed from Sydney Burial Ground to Garden Island. As the Navy took over there the tomb was brought to St. Thomas. Their names remain on Bent street, Sydney, and in the Ovens Valley, Victoria.

After two world wars and the depression, the cemetery had fallen into serious disrepair; money had run out. Burials were discontinued in 1949. With pressure from its Trustees and local citizens, a 1967 Act of Parliament transferred the ground to North Sydney Municipal Council, to be converted to a park. The conditions of conversion were very strict. No human remains were to be disturbed. Everything possible was photographed. Information from old registers of thousands of burials was card indexed. All readable stones were saved and many repaired. All information was recorded. (Alas, vandals have broken many since.) The park opened in 1974.

Buried here were many of the pioneer North Sydney families - Milson, Blue, Lavender, Chuter, Spain, Bligh and Pymble; Purser, Carr and Old, successive owners of Waverton House. Distinguished men include Rev. W B Clarke, "father" of NSW geology; John Whitton (Engineer-in-Chief, NSW Railways, 1857-89); artist Conrad Martens; Col. George Barney, R E, designer of Victoria Barracks; B O Holtermann, Member of Parliament and patron of photogra-

phy; Hon. Francis Lord, MLC; Sir Thomas Dibbs, banker; William Lithgow, Auditor-General; Isaac Ives, Lord Mayor of Sydney; Commander Gowlland (drowned surveying Sydney Harbour); Commodore Goodenough (who brought Fiji into the British Empire); Dr. R D Ward, North Shore's first resident medical officer and Wm. Guise, first pharmacist here. Hannah McLeod, first Matron of The Women's Hospital, Crown Street, seems to be the only woman herself historic in achievement.

The sexton's cottage was restored in 1983 as a reference centre.

Look to the building on Rosalind Street corner, decorated with plaster heads of ladies in bonnets. Walk north in West Street, crossing Warringah Expressway. Turn right into Amherst Street.

2. TARELLA, 3 AMHERST STREET

Commenced in 1874, the home of Sir Joseph Palmer Abbott, Speaker of NSW Legislative Assembly and Member of 1897-98 Convention to frame the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia. He died in 1901. His grounds were extensive, with coachhouse, stables and windmill. Saved from demolition, it was restored about 1970 and a new coachhouse built. Gates from St. Johns Church Parramatta were set up. (Now business premises)

Turn left into Miller Street and walk northward.

3. CAMMERAY POST OFFICE

This suburb takes its name from the Cameraigal tribe of Aborigines who roamed this shore. Our spelling of their name varies as they had no written language. North Sydney Council's crest features a shield, boomerang and the word Cammeray. The suburb used to be called Suspension Bridge.

This post office in the shopping centre opened in 1958. The original office began in 1914, in Mrs Mary Carter's shop on the corner of Raleigh and Miller Streets. She attended to the post office business in half the shop at a salary of £12 per year, and looked after the drapery and haberdashery in the other half. Before that, the area

was serviced from North Sydney Post Office that had first opened as St. Leonards Post Office in 1854. There were, of course, few residents in the Cammeray area until the early years of this century. Indeed, to serve the entire municipal area, including Mosman, there were, in 1879 only two "letter carriers" (postmen) and a "junior letter receiver clearer", paid £11 a year, from which he had to provide a horse and its feed! The suburb name was changed to Cammeray in 1940.

Turn right into Palmer Street and, from the end of it, look across to the church.

4. ALL SAINTS CHURCH, CARTER STREET

When this Anglican church was founded in 1910 the small district was known by its engineering feature, Suspension Bridge. A neat, small, square building with a belfry was opened on 5 July 1910, as a branch or mission church of St. Thomas, North Sydney. After only two services, a fierce gale blew the church on its side. It was extensively damaged, but its members soon repaired and re-erected it. In 1912 additions doubled the size of the church and a hall was built. Transport by tram brought more population to the area. In 1920 it became a separate parish from St. Thomas. The present brick church was built in 1923 and seats about 150 people who for many years, occupied the old St. Thomas carved cedar pews. The building of Warringah Expressway in the 1960s demolished homes and robbed the district of many families. Churches suffered by their loss. In 1978 All Saints and St. Cuthberts, Naremburn, amalgamated.

On the north corner of Palmer and Bellevue Streets notice the school.

5. CAMMERAY PUBLIC SCHOOL

Opened in February 1915, with Mr A Uren the first Headmaster and 260 children, soon increased to 450. The school bell is on perpetual loan from the United States Navy, from the destroyer, USS Paul Jones.

Walk to the north end of Bellevue Street to view the bridge.

6. THE SUSPENSION BRIDGE

This major engineering undertaking of the 1880s became popular on postcards. It crosses what was Flat Rock Creek Gorge, the plan being to open up land on the other side of Long Bay, which then stretched up the gorge as far as Roseville. The North Sydney Tramway and Investment Company built the bridge at a cost of £42,000 but went into liquidation in 1891. When it opened in 1892, a one penny toll was charged to walk across, to help recover losses. It was not until 1909 that a government tramway was opened to its southern end. In 1913 the Department of Public Works acquired the bridge and extended tramlines across and through Northbridge in 1914. This accelerated the growth of that suburb.

A 1910 article says: "A wonderful structure. One of the most imposing sights in New South Wales - the second longest suspension bridge in the world". (Only New York to Brooklyn was longer). 1,010 ft. long it could carry 10,000 tons. It says it was designed by architect D Ross of Dunedin, with Sydney Professor Warren as consulting engineer, and took two years eight months to build, commencing at each end.

Stone was brought from Middle harbour by steamer and punt. Decking was ironbark; 110,000 superfeet of timber were used. Cast iron palisades and steel were imported from Clyde, Scotland; cables suspending the bridge came from Warwick, England. Its stone battlements represented 112 guns.

Of course, the bridge was planned before motor traffic. In 1935, the Department of Main Roads took over and found the cables weakened. it was closed from 1936-39 while a concrete arch was built such that the bridge is no longer in suspension. Tram lines were not relaid across. The bridge is on the Australian Heritage Commission's 1978 Register of National Estate.

Walk down steps into Pine Street and eastward, past East Avenue, down nearby steps into Pine Street East. Turn from Stratford Street into Cowdroy Avenue to its junction with

Cammeray Road, which leads on to Folly Point. Enjoy the view over Long Bay, where a boat shed stood a century ago (present marina) and look back to the park.

7. TUNKS PARK AND GOLF COURSE

Reclaimed from the head of Long Bay. William Tunks, first Mayor (1867-1883) of the Borough of St. Leonards did much for conservation in North Sydney. The park includes the memorial playing fields of North Sydney Boys' High School to old boys and masters who served in war, and a boat launching ramp.

Look across to Salt Pan Creek (Old Shipwreck Bay). The barque *Itata* caught fire and suffered an explosion at Newcastle. She was towed to Sydney and abandoned on the mud flats here, where her hull and graceful bowsprit housing are still visible - as are the remains of the old wooden coastal steamer *Cobaki*, likewise abandoned after service in World War II.

8. BOAKE TREE

Barcroft Henry Boake wrote many stirring poems about social wrongs, drought, heat and death while surveying in the outback. Best known is his "Out Where the Dead Men Lie". Unable to find work in the depression of the 1890s, he hanged himself in 1892 aged 26, from a tree at Folly Point. A tree commemorates this at the junction of Cowdroy Avenue and Cammeray Road. See North Shore Historical Society plaque. Boake is buried in St. Thomas Cemetery (park).

Folly Point: Various stories suggest follies that give this its name but there is no proof of any. In a little park at the tip, the earth is thick with Aboriginal middens of whitened shells and bones of sea foods.

Beside house No.8, a track leads to Primrose Park. Take this in dry weather, with Willoughby Bay on your left, or follow Cammeray Road back to Grafton Street.

9. PRIMROSE PARK

The shallow head of the bay was reclaimed to make the park named after H L Primrose, Mayor of North Sydney 1926-32 and later

Minister for Health. Mayor Primrose opened the northern end of the Sydney Harbour Bridge in 1932. There are hockey, cricket and football fields in the 25 acres.

Old Folly Point Septic Tanks: A craft centre has been opened in the old engine house remaining from the 1890s sewage treatment works. Water piped (1885) under the Harbour and from Ryde Pumping Station (1892) enabled North Sydney to have a sewerage system. Here too, was running water from Willoughby Falls. Old tunnels and a canal can be seen, leading into the bay.

The track passes through Aboriginal middens. Aborigines are understood to have camped here, near a good water and food supply, until taken to La Perouse. Pass wooden steps leading up to the right and walk on to see the falls.

10. WILLOUGHBY FALLS

A pocket of rain forest at the head of the gully was a favourite picnic spot in the early years of settlement; there is an old engraving in the Dixon Galleries. Yet they could still surprise many North Sydney residents. Return to the wooden steps or take a track to the lookout above the falls, overlooking the park and bays from Grafton Street.

Cammeray Road leads back into Amherst Street and the Miller Street bus route. An alternative is Fall Street; turn left, southwards in Park Avenue, beside Cammeray Golf course, leading directly to Military Road bus routes.

11. OLD TRAM DEPOT c1909, MILITARY ROAD

This opened when the Ridge and Miller Streets depot closed in 1909, replacing it with larger, up-to-date facilities. It was built by a large waterhole, The Oaks, from which the neighbouring hotel takes its name. A big water tower at the corner of Ben Boyd Road and Ernest Street filled the tanks of sprinkler trams to keep down dust along Military Road. This road was carved out of the scrub to haul cannon and supplies to headland fortifications in 1870-71. When trams were discontinued in the 1950s, the site became a bus depot, with a shopping centre called "Big Bear".
