

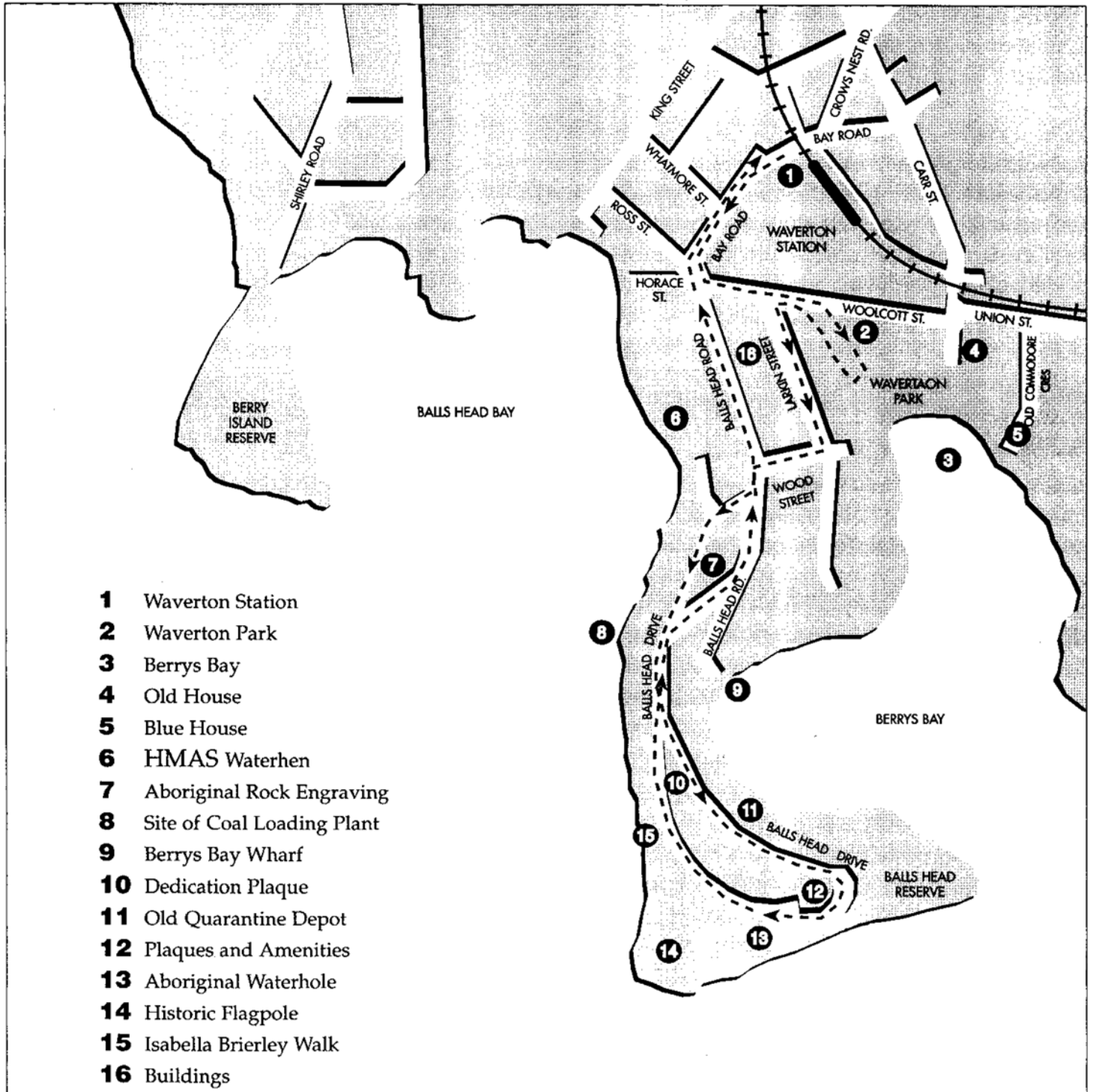


Walk

4

Waverton Station to Balls Head

NOTES PREPARED BY THE NORTH SHORE HISTORICAL SOCIETY 1994



We suggest using a street directory to supplement this map.

Walk No. 4

1. WAVERTON RAILWAY STATION

A sign - "Alight here for beautiful Balls Head Reserve" was replaced in 1988. By foot, there is still much to see and enjoy - fishing, gas barbeques, watching Harbour traffic, or just relaxing. Waverton Station was originally Bay Road. Its name was changed in 1929 to avoid confusion with the road leading from Pacific Highway to Berrys Bay. The property Waverton after which the suburb then became known, was the home of the Old family 1865-1974. A previous owner had named it after the River Waver in Cumberland, England.

The railway line came from Hornsby to St. Leonards in 1890. To get to Sydney, commuters had previously to walk, or ride in a horse bus or other horse transport, to the ferry at Blues Point or Milsons Point, and cross to the city terminus. Public demand resulted in the extension for the railway to Milsons Point. Three new stations came into being - Edwards Road (now Wollstonecraft), Bay Road (Waverton) and Milsons Point, ready for the opening in 1893. Waverton and Wollstonecraft were built by Eaton brothers, the former being the only station in the State to have the waiting room in the same place as the ticket office. Waverton Station is classified by the National Trust. The station has been rebuilt to its original design and was re-opened for its centenary on 1st May 1993.

Walk south-west along Bay Road, turning left into Woolcott Street and right into Larkin Street. Edward Larkin, MLA for Willoughby, was killed in World War I.

2. WAVERTON PARK

On the corner of the Park, notice gates in honour of the late James Geraghty, MLA who, with Waverton Progress Association, was instrumental in persuading North Sydney Council to acquire two acres here for a municipal recreation area, to include a bowling green and children's playground. This was dedicated in 1944 by the Premier, Hon. W J McKell. Clinker filling from the Oyster Cove Gas Works was used to form part of the park and greens. But trouble began when smoke

arose from the ground, caused by gases igniting, and the filling had to be replaced. The original clubhouse had been built during World War II for a hospital in Indonesia. It was delayed being shipped and, after the War, was purchased by the newly formed Bowling Club. Enlarged, it has survived further fire. The flagpole was donated from Waverton House.

Walk across the park to look down on the playing fields. British Petroleum needed deeper water to accommodate their large tankers at their installations on the point. Arrangements were made with North Sydney Council to reclaim tidal flats at the head of the Bay, creating playing fields with the materials dredged, retained by a sea wall.

3. BERRYS BAY

All Waverton suburb was part of the 524 acres grant to Edward Wollstonecraft in 1820. He and his partner, Alexander Berry, also pioneered the Shoalhaven River area, where they had a large holding, transferring stock, timber and produce to this bay in many of their own ships. After Wollstonecraft's death in 1832, the partnership consisted of Berry and his wife, Elizabeth (Edward's sister).

4. OLD HOUSE

Above the playing fields, on the opposite side, is this three-storeyed house which was, legend says, the house for the manager of the Berry Estate. Most painstaking research, in original documents, has not positively identified this.

5. BLUE HOUSE, 3 COMMODORE CRESCENT

The modernised, two-storeyed stone house, built 1860s, or even earlier, with red hip roof, remains on the border of Billy Blue's 1817 farm grant and is believed to have belonged to one of his family.

Site of Ivy Cliff: Between these two stone cottages stood the graceful Victorian home of C H Woolcott, Sydney Town Clerk 1857-87. The land is now Council reserve. The railway line, built in 1892, cut Ivy Cliff off from Union Street. The 1978 footbridge replaced the original wood and steel construction.

Turn right from Larkin Street into Wood Street, noting that the two storeyed house on the north corner had been the home of artist the late Sir William Ashton.

6. HMAS WATERHEN

Turn left into Balls Head Road, a continuation of Bay Road, as far as the sign: HMAS Waterhen COMAUSMINDIVFOR (Commander Australian Mine and Warfare Diving Forces). The Boom Defence Depot here was requisitioned by the United States Navy and used jointly with RAN 15th March to 30th June, 1943. Waterhen was set up in 1962. Sandstone was quarried from the cliff for Garden Island's Captain Cook Dock.

7. ABORIGINAL ROCK ENGRAVING

A few metres down the road to Waterhen, a track to the left leads to a fenced in area, showing an Aboriginal engraving in sandstone of a large marine animal enclosing a smaller creature.

8. SITE OF COAL LOADING PLANT

This was set up by the Sydney Coal Bunkering Company. A cable railway, built in Chicago 1920, transported 700 tons of coal an hour. Sandstone quarried on the site was built around four tunnels and along the Harbour. The cable traction became the last of its type in the southern hemisphere. In 1976, it was replaced by two conveyor belts each loading 1,000 tons an hour. A new steel wharf was built beneath the old wooden jetty. The depot was Coal and Allied Operations Pty Ltd. Look inside the gate to see an old cable truck and an anchor. The plant is now closed. Cross the road to view Berry's Bay.

9. BERRYS BAY WHARF

Wollstonecraft built a stone wharf on the western curve of the Bay and, nearby, a five-storeyed stone store that stood until demolished about 1920. (Stone supporting oil tanks is believed to have come from that wharf and store.) An 1854 sketch shows a stockyard between the Bay and Balls Head Road. In 1853, Berry let part of the wharf and store as a coaling depot for ships. In 1920, a lease of land to Anglo

Persian Oil Company, now B.P., was granted and has been extended to the year 2008. Boat building was carried on here for over a century. It was also the site of a depot for the torpedo boats of the NSW Colonial Navy. Note the popular marina.

10. DEDICATION PLAQUE

Pause where the scenic road divides to study the plaque with details of dedications. Five more acres have since been added. This Nature Reserve takes its name from Lieutenant Henry Lidgbird Ball, Commander of H M Armed Tender Supply of the First Fleet, 1788. Governor Phillip allowed his Naval chart makers to have a point named after them. On 17th February that year Ball discovered Lord Howe Island. In April, Ball and three men trudged through the sandstone scrub from Middle Harbour to our shore, opposite Sydney Cove. In January 1791 he brought food from Batavia to save the starving Sydney colony and returned to Britain in November.

There is still evidence of Aboriginal occupation, though groups of rock engravings are becoming obliterated. Caves show that Aborigines sheltered there. Seafood was plentiful, as evidenced by the middens of shells and small bones in the soil. Older residents say some Aborigines lived on Balls Head until 1916, when they were removed by the Army in World War I.

Depletion of timber inspired the Naturalist Society of New South Wales to organise an Annual Tree Planting, the first on 25th July, 1931. This was kept up for many years by the Wild Life Preservation Society of Australia.

11. OLD QUARANTINE DEPOT

On the sheltered south-eastern side of the Bay was a ship's garden. This became the Quarantine Depot, a base for fumigation boats and crews. It is now a depot for vessels of the National Maritime Museum.

12. PLAQUES AND AMENITIES:

On a rock, near the wide bend of the Drive, is the bronze plaque of The North Shore Historical Society and North Sydney Council, commemorating Lieutenant Ball.

13. ABORIGINAL WATERHOLE:

Note this natural basin in the high rock. It used to receive seepage from a mossy bank and always contained water. It seems to have been used by the Cameraigal tribe to wet stone axes for sharpening.

Across the drive, past the carpark and toilets, is the Froggatt Memorial Lookout, in appreciation of the work of entomologist, the late W W Froggatt in the reformation and beautification of this reserve, 1931-37. Nearby, a lemon-scented grove and plaque was unveiled in recognition of the interest of the late F J Ludowici.

14. HISTORIC FLAGPOLE:

A detour to the flagpole is worthwhile. It is the highest point on the Harbour shore west of the bridge. In contrast, between here, Blues Point and Dawes Point, is the deepest part of the Harbour - 42.7m at low tide.

This type of pole was used in the early years of settlement to signal information from Macquarie Lighthouse to Parramatta; flagpoles were set at intervals, the messages reaching Government House in 20 minutes.

Follow the track to views over Berry Island, Greenwich, Cockatoo Island, Birchgrove, Balmain, Pyrmont and the city.

15. ISABELLA BRIERLEY WALK:

210 metres commemorates the many years devoted service for the North Shore Historical Society by its Honorary Secretary the late Mrs Isabella Brierley, who lived nearby.

Most of Waverton, all of Wollstonecraft and parts of Crows Nest and North Sydney comprised the Berry Estate (see No. 3). The manager of the Crows Nest farm property was W G (Quilp) Matthews, whose home was on Berry's Bay. Quilp Matthews served the Berry family for 50 years and became known as the Patriarch of Berrys Bay. He had come to Australia to be near his convict brother who worked for Berry.

Fascinating details of these times can be read in the North Shore Historical Society's publication

Alexander Berry and Elizabeth Wollstonecraft by Meg Swords, 1978.

Alexander Berry and Edward Wollstonecraft also took up some 4,000 acres on the Shoalhaven River, New South Wales, and obtained a grant of a further 10,000 acres there, in return for maintenance of 100 convicts for 10 years. On this they established the farming village Coolangatta, which still exists, renovated as a motel. Berry's three brothers and two sisters arrived in the colony in 1836 and settled at Coolangatta. This freed Berry and his wife to return to Crows Nest Farm for most of their time.

David Berry survived his brothers. He died in 1889, well thought of in the district, where the town of Berry is named after him. None of the Berry family had any descendants, so the property passed to a cousin's son, John Hay, who had been born at Coolangatta. David Berry left a legacy of £100,000 for the building of a hospital in Berry town. However, the estate was in land rather than so much cash. To establish the hospital an exchange of land, including Balls Head as a public reserve, was negotiated with the Government.

16. WALK NORTH ALONG BALLS HEAD ROAD:

The buildings on the west of Balls Head Road were erected as temporary structures in the 1940s, under the pressures of World War II. The land is State-owned, the building Federal; the land classified as Special Purposes. Until recently some of the buildings were occupied by students from St. Mary's Cathedral School. The end north to Horace Street is marked on old maps as Bay Road Public School site, but the school was built instead in the former grounds of Crows Nest House.

It is now only a short walk to Waverton Station.
