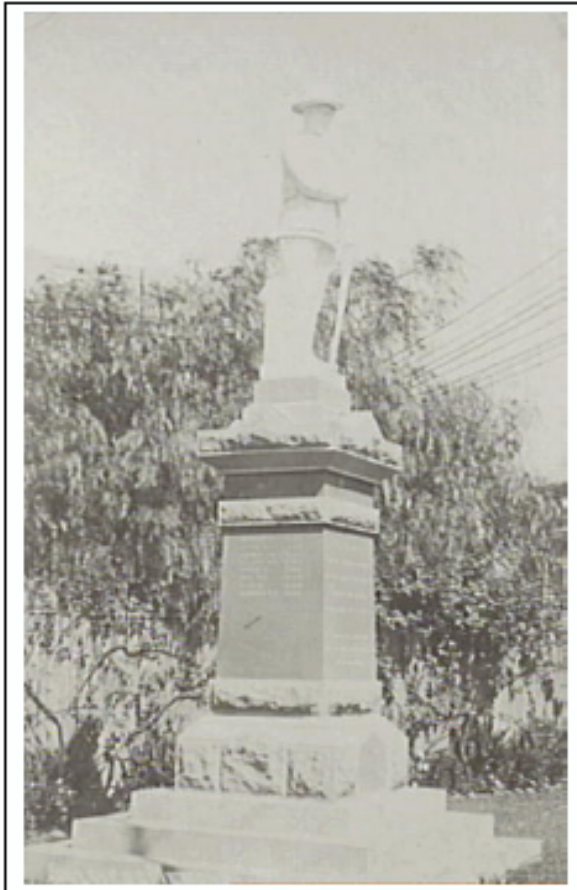


Set in Stone

A walking tour of monuments and memorials in North Sydney

Distance: 3 Km
Approximate time: 2 ½ hours
Grading: low to medium



Introduction

Set in Stone explores the ways in which the community has commemorated the people, places and events that have contributed to the life of North Sydney.

Throughout North Sydney a variety of monuments and memorials can be found remembering some of the people, places and events that have been influential in the development of the North Sydney community. These memorials range from the practical, such as drinking fountains, benches, etc., to the merely decorative, such as illuminated manuscripts and foundation stones. The most common form of commemoration in the North Sydney area are the bronzes plaque affixed to a building, wall or fence.

The historical story told by the monuments and memorials in the community is an incomplete one. The majority commemorate white males with few memorials to women or minority groups, notable exceptions being those erected in memory of Doris Fitton, Mary Gilmore and Estelle Hilliard. Some of the memorials have caused controversy, the example of Ben Boyd being particularly noteworthy (Ben Boyd memorial located at Neutral Bay).

Of course, in some cases the imbalance is understandable. For example, it is a fact that it was largely men who joined the armed forces and that explains the reason for the large number of men listed on World War I honour rolls and memorials. There is, however, no reason for the paucity of women's names on the honour rolls, representing women who went to war as nurses.



Our walk begins at Don Bank Museum

Walk along Oak St and cross Edward St

The Australian Catholic University - Mackillop Campus occupies the site of **Rockleigh Grange**, the home of artist Conrad Martens from about 1838 until his death in 1878. The house was substantially enlarged and rebuilt by Mr Larke. The Hon. John Hughes, M.L.C. owned the house until his death in 1912. Hardie & Gorman auctioned the estate in 1913. The Catholic Church purchased Rockleigh Grange converting it into the Apostolic Delegation. The property became a Catholic Teachers' College in 1978 and is now a campus of the Australian Catholic University.

Cross over Riley St and walk along Edward St, turn right into Mount St

The **Mary Mackillop Place/St Josephs Convent** is a fine group of religious buildings which are of national significance as it was once the Mother House to the Order of Sisters of St. Joseph throughout Australia from 1884. Of equal importance is the Mary Mackillop Memorial Chapel and her tomb. Mary Mackillop and Fr. Julian Woods established the Sisters of St. Joseph in Adelaide in 1866. Mary came to Sydney in 1883 and established a novitiate in Alma Cottage and Terrace, Mount Street, North Sydney in 1884. The principal buildings on the site comprise the school building (now part of the Mackillop Campus, Australian Catholic University) and chapel erected in 1913, and the Mother House built in 1903. The group of buildings were restored in 1994 and the museum opened in 1995.

Cross over Mount St continue along to Victoria Cross intersection

The first **North Sydney Post Office** was established in May 1854. The first postmaster appointed was G. H. Stevens, who received an annual allowance of £12. The service expanded with the development of the district, but George Stevens resigned in 1870 due to ill health. The St. Leonards Post Office became an official post office, incorporating telegraph facilities, in 1874. In 1884 a site was chosen for a new Post Office fronting the then Lane Cove Road and opposite the School of Arts. Colonial Architect James Barnet designed the complex of buildings which opened in January 1889. The tower was added in 1895 and the clock installed in 1900.

Cross Miller St at traffic lights and walk a short distance along Pacific Highway. Take the stairs into the building and follow the path beside the restaurants until you see the Greenwood Hotel

The **St. Leonards Superior Public School** opened in 1878. G. A. Mansfield designed this elegant gothic building. The central and eastern wings (designed by Schools Architect W. E. Kemp) were added between 1892 and 1893. The school was known as "Greenwood" after its headmaster from 1884-1910, Mr Nimrod Greenwood. Renamed North Sydney Superior School in 1910, it was later reorganised as the North Sydney and Chatswood Intermediate High School. Between 1914 and 1934 pupils were transferred to other schools in the area, North Sydney Girls High School North Sydney Boys High School and North Sydney Demonstration School. The school was renamed North Sydney and Chatswood Junior School in 1932, then North Sydney Technical High School from 1942 until 1969, when it closed. Between then and 1987 the site served as a Teachers' Training Centre. The site was redeveloped as the Greenwood Shopping Centre and Optus Tower in 1992, with the original school building being

retained and redeveloped as the **Greenwood Hotel**.

Walk down to Blue St, turn left and walk down to the Pacific Highway, cross over street, stop on small pedestrian island in front of Centra Hotel

This was the site of the **first Methodist Church** erected on the North Shore. The foundation stone of the church was laid on 17 August 1864 and the first service in the church conducted on 18 May 1865. However, the church property was resumed in 1931 for construction of the Pacific Highway approaches to the Sydney Harbour Bridge. The memorial marking the site of the first Methodist church was unveiled on 12 March 1939.

Cross Pacific Highway, cross Walker St and walk up the Highway to Victoria Cross intersection

This building was erected in 1931, replacing the earlier premises of the **Bank of NSW** from 1877, the first bank office on the North Shore. The bank was resumed during construction of the Pacific Highway approaches to the Sydney Harbour Bridge. McDonalds Restaurant purchased this building in 1974 and operated here to 2004.

Turn right into Mount St mall pedestrian plaza and follow to end

This is one of six columns taken from the former **Sydney GPO** when it was demolished in 1862. It was relocated to the grounds of Crows Nest House and used to measure the nautical mile from Fort Denison. In 1932 North Sydney Council relocated it to Bradfield Park where it remained until 1987 when construction of the Sydney Harbour Tunnel commenced. It was moved to the bottom of the Mount Street Plaza in 1988 and an additional plaque records the

former transport interchange in the heart of the CBD.

Continue along Mount St, turn left and walk north to No. 102 Walker St

From 4 July 1931 until 26 April 1970 this was the site of the **second Methodist Church** in North Sydney. They moved here after the first church was resumed for construction of the approaches to the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Falling parishioner numbers and increasing commercial development of the North Sydney CBD, led to the closure and redevelopment of the site.

Continue along Walker St, turn left into Berry St and walk along to the Pacific Highway, turn right and walk along the Highway until the Bay Rd intersection, cross over to North Sydney Demonstration School entrance gates

Alexander Berry built **Crows Nest House** and moved here in 1850, remaining here until his death in 1873. The estate passed to his brother David and was rented out to various tenants. After David's death in 1889, the property was transferred to the ownership of John Hay who made considerable extensions to the House, and it is thought that it was at this time that the iron fence and gateway were built. Sir John Hay died in 1909 and Lady Hay continued to live at Crows Nest House until her death in 1931. The estate was subsequently subdivided and Crows Nest House was demolished to make way for the present North Sydney Demonstration School.

Cross the Pacific Highway at the traffic lights at McLaren St, walk along street and stop at Stormanston House

Montrose, formerly known as Church Hill Cottage, was built on this site in the 1850s by Robert Burton. Robert Napier bought the house in 1861 and renamed it Montrose Cottage. John Whitton, Engineer-in-Chief of NSW Railways bought the house in 1875 and lived here until his death in 1898, after which the house was tenanted out, as his widow returned to England. The property was sold in 1907, subdivided and subsequently demolished. A plaque affixed to the fence records the life of artist Adelaide Ironside who lived in this area and was a parishioner of the St. Thomas' Church. A plaque commemorating John Whitton also once adorned the fence.

Cross over to Church St and stop at entrance to St. Thomas' Church

The first **St. Thomas' Church** was begun in 1843, completed in 1845 and opened in 1846. The first rector of the church was Rev. William Branwhite Clarke, well known for his geological discoveries. The present church was built in two stages, adjacent to and over the old church, in which services continued during building. The foundation stone for the transept and chancel was laid in 1877 and this section opened in 1880. In 1881 the foundation stone for the nave and tower was laid. The completed church, designed by Edmund Blacket and completed after his death by his son Cyril Blacket, was dedicated in 1884. The Church contains many memorials and commemorative plaques.

The Harriott Memorial Gates were originally located at the Cunningham Street entrance and were erected in his memory in 1901. They were relocated here in 1977 as part of the Church's Centenary Celebrations.

The Royal Corner Stone was laid by Their Royal Highnesses Prince Edward and Prince George of Wales on 6 August 1881.

Walk along path and past the rear of the Memorial Hall then via Council Chambers to Civic Centre, stopping at fountain

The **Queen Victoria Jubilee Memorial Fountain** was originally erected in St. Leonards Park to mark Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee (sixty years as Queen). The foundation stone was laid by the Mayoress Mrs Purves at a large gathering of locals and children on 22 June 1897. For many years from the 1930s the fountain stood neglected at the northern boundary of the Bowling Club, until finally, in 1982, Mayor Ted Mack had it relocated to the newly landscaped Civic Centre Park.

Cross over Miller St to Independent Theatre

On the footpath outside the **Independent Theatre** is a plaque commemorating the lifetime contribution of Dame Doris Fitton to Australian Theatre. The plaque was unveiled on 17 December 1986. Doris Fitton started the Independent Theatre in this building, the former Coliseum Theatre, in 1939 and it ran under her directorship until financial woes closed the theatre in 1977. She died in 1985.

Continue to walk along Miller St and cross over at the traffic lights. Follow the path along Ridge St until you reach the North Sydney War Memorial in St. Leonards Park

Originally known as "The Reserve", **St. Leonards Park** was gazetted in two parts, the earliest dedicated in 1867 for public recreation and cricket, the second portion in 1969, for public recreation. The Park has a rich heritage and is home to a number of significant local monuments which are valuable to the cultural identity and history of North Sydney— the Music Shell (now home to Planet X Youth Centre), the

North Sydney War Memorial, the World War I artillery gun, the Tunks Memorial Fountain, the Avenue of Fig Trees, Depression Relief Works, North Sydney Oval and its stands and grounds and the Bon Andrews Oval. There is also a multitude of small plaques and memorials scattered throughout the Park including the Rotary Wheel Rose Garden, North Sydney Bowling Club Memorial Entrance Gates, J. D. Fletcher Tree, North Sydney Diamond Jubilee foundation stone, Judge Boulter Tree and McCartney Stand foundation stone.

The **North Sydney War Memorial** Committee was formed at a meeting of interested residents at the Coliseum Theatre in December 1921. By 1922 "... a little more than £5000 was raised...[and] with this money it was decided to erect a Monument in recognition of the bravery displayed by the slain whose names will be inscribed on the sacred shrine". This site in St. Leonards Park was chosen, and the design of the memorial, by architect Frank Thorp, won the competition. The Governor General laid the foundation stone on 24 January 1924 and the official unveiling ceremony of the cenotaph was held in front of a large crowd of residents in October 1926. The cenotaph was officially handed over to North Sydney Council during the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations in 1928. Additional name plaques were added in 1955 recording the names of those North Sydney citizens who lost their lives in action during World War II.

Continue a short distance through St. Leonards Park along the Tunks Ave pathway

The **Tunks Fountain** is dedicated to the memory of William Tunks, Mayor of East St. Leonards from 1867 to 1882. He was born in the Nepean River District in 1816 and moved to the North Shore in 1864. William was the principal

promoter of the "Penny Bank", the North Sydney School of Arts, and was responsible for the preservation of St. Leonards Park as a public reserve. He apparently walked here every day to supervise the positioning of paths and planting of trees and shrubs, and on one occasion fell down a hole during the public works suffering injuries from which he never recovered and dying in 1883. At a meeting held in 1883 they felt that "...*the eminent services rendered to this district during a period of more than 20 years by the late Wm. Tunks Esq, deserve a lasting and appropriate recognition from the residents, and that steps for that purpose be taken at once*". The Tunks Memorial Fountain was erected in the Park in 1885 by public subscription. It was restored and rededicated in 1988.

Continue along Tunks Ave pathway past North Sydney Bowling Club

Note the Memorial entrance gates erected in memory of former club member J. T. Warren in 1949.

Follow the driveway and the fence alongside Bowling Club until you reach the palm tree

This plaque was erected underneath two Eucalyptus Nicoli trees in 1933 by North Sydney Council outdoor staff in memory of their former Overseer **J. D. Fletcher**.

Return to Tunks Ave, continue along the path until the intersection whereupon you turn left. Walk along this path until you pass the entrance to the Mollie Dive Stand. Stop near the entrance to the players' quarters

In 1928 the celebration of the sixtieth year of Municipal Government in North Sydney was held during March. The main event of the week was the laying of the **North Sydney Diamond Memorial Stone** at the new pavilion by the

Mayor H. L. Primrose. On this occasion, Alderman E.M. Clarke, who had served 42 years as an Alderman, also planted a tree. Later that month the North Sydney War Memorial was also officially handed over to North Sydney Council.

To end the tour continue along the path following Miller St and walk towards Falcon St, stopping near the garden beds and bus stop

North Sydney Council was allotted this **War Trophy** gun by the State War Trophy Committee in 1921. This is a field gun captured from the Germans by the 4th Battalion of A.I.F., on 23 August 1918, in the advance east of Proyart in France. The gun was mounted on a pedestal in St. Leonards Park, and was unveiled by Major-General Sir Granville Ryrle in the presence of the Mayor, Aldermen and a large number of citizens.

If you wish to continue the walk beyond St. Leonards Park, cross the Falcon Street intersection and walk along Miller Street to Ernest St. Cross over at the traffic lights, turn right and walk along to Anzac Ave. Here you can view the North Sydney Tramway Staff War Memorial Monument. Across the road is the North Sydney Anzac Memorial Club. Inside the club are a number of memorials, notably the foundation stones, donors of memorial bricks boards and photographic murals by Frank Hurley.

The North Sydney Council has also been actively fostering and promoting the heritage of the area with a historic plaque program since the 1970s. Other parts of the North Sydney community can be explored with the set of four historic plaques walking leaflets

available from the Library or online at www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au.