

possums, lizards, wallabies and bandicoots would have formed part of their diet, especially in winter. Plants were used not only as food but also for medicines and healing.

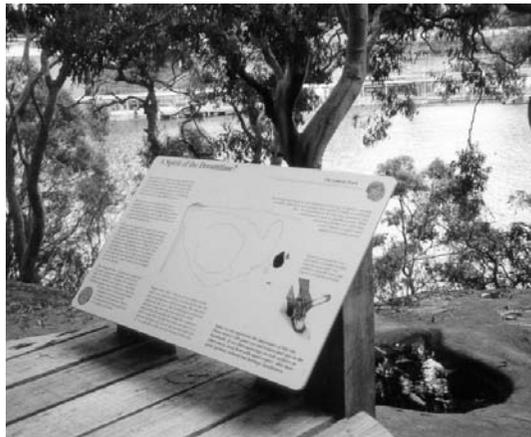


A story of destruction and survival

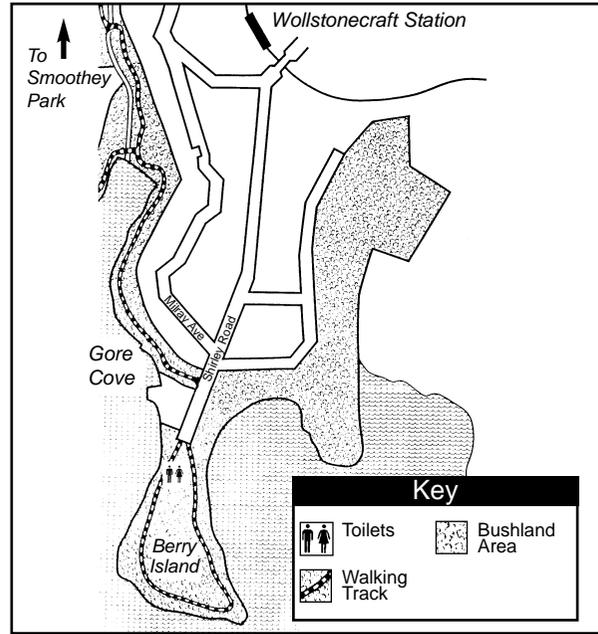
Only a short while after the Europeans arrived, smallpox ravaged the Aboriginal population who had no immunity to such a deadly disease. The devastation shattered a way of life, displacing local Bands and Tribes throughout the Sydney region. It is not known how many Cammeraygals survived this disaster but the push by Europeans to take over their land resulted in more losses and further displacement.

In spite of more than 200 years of destruction and demolition of their unique lifestyle, Aboriginal culture has survived today. Sites such as Berry Island are part of Australia's heritage and help to demonstrate the rich Aboriginal culture that once existed in the Sydney region prior to European occupation. They also document a past which underwent rapid change and provide insights into the former occupation by indigenous Australians.

It is our responsibility to ensure that sites, such as Berry Island, continue to survive into the future and are protected as part of our heritage.



Location Map



Access by Public Transport

The nearest train station is Wollstonecraft Station, then a short walk along Shirley Road to the entrance to Berry Island Reserve.

Access by Private Transport

Parking is limited but available in Shirley Road and adjacent streets.

For further information contact Council's Bushcare Officer on 9936 8252.

The Gadyan Track was created with extensive input from the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council and is part of North Sydney Council's ongoing commitment to Reconciliation.

Illustration
Acknowledgement:
Mo Orkiszewski



The Gadyan Track

Berry Island Reserve

A self-guided walking track featuring Aboriginal culture and heritage on the lower north shore.

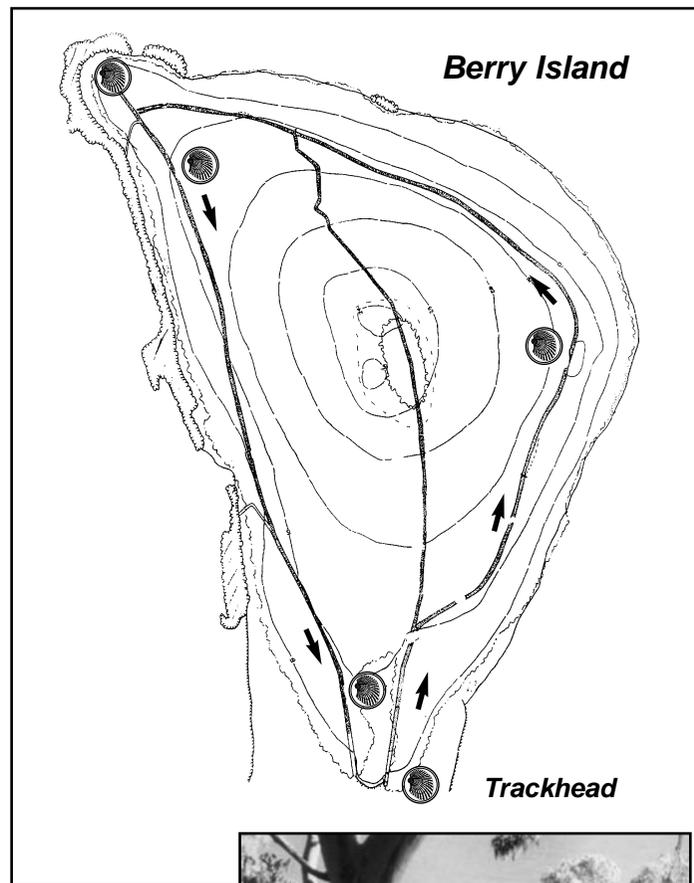
The Gadyan Track

North Sydney is rich in Aboriginal culture and history. The original occupants of this region, the Cammeraygal (or also known as the Gammaraigal Clan or Band of the Kuringgai Tribe) lived along the foreshores and in the bushland, cliffs and rock overhangs prior to the arrival of the Europeans.

The history of Aborigines in Australia did not end with the arrival of Captain Cook in 1770. It is a long and continuous history which sees the colonisation of Australia by the Europeans as a recent event relative to the Aborigines' span of thousands of years on this continent.

The landscape of Balls Head, Berry Island, Kirribilli, Cammeray and Cremorne is dotted with the cultural remains of the Cammeraygals and tells their story even though the people themselves have been displaced. It is these foreshore areas which have some of the finest examples of Aboriginal cultural sites on the lower north shore. Large caves and shelters along waterways and trade routes were another popular location for local Tribes, and remnants of their occupation can still be found throughout the region today.

North Sydney's sites, such as the Gadyan Track on Berry Island, are part of their stories and legends. Gadyan is the Aboriginal name for the Sydney Cockle, a shellfish common in middens on the island. The Gadyan Track is a 750 metre, easy grade, signposted (five signs) bushland walking track which loops around Berry Island. While portraying specific information regarding these sites, the walk places Aboriginal cultural heritage in both a traditional and contemporary context. As an area containing some of the remaining evidence of thousands of years of Aboriginal occupation on the lower north shore of Sydney Harbour, it leaves visitors with a strong impression of the traditional life of the Cammeraygals. We hope that the track will encourage new impressions and attitudes towards Aboriginal heritage.



*Allen Madden
(Metropolitan
Local Aboriginal
Land Council)
demonstrating
Spirit of the
Dreamtime site.*



Trackhead and Information Signs



The Gadyan Track

Why is this place special to Aborigines?

Begin your walk here at the Trackhead sign and learn about the specialness of this place to the Aboriginal people who once inhabited the landscapes surrounding the Harbour foreshores. Places such as Berry Island hold great significance to Aboriginal people today since they are direct physical evidence of thousands of years of history and occupation. They provide visible links to that past and evidence of a living culture.



A Spirit of the Dreamtime?

Sydney's Aboriginal art sites number in their thousands and they 'represent the largest unified body of art so far established... found in a large cosmopolitan city anywhere in the world...' (Jenny Munro, Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council). The engraving here is the outline of a large creature enclosing an open circle and a boomerang shape near the tail and represents a part of the Cammeraygal's Dreamtime.

Art sites such as these are sacred and special which must be respected and cared for by all of us today.



Imagine this scene in 1787

The Cammeraygal catching fish from the rocks or from bark canoes... For the Cammeraygal woman, great skills were required to keep a fire going in a canoe, tend children and catch fish... all in a simple bark canoe. The men used multi-pronged spears and they fished from the dangerous rocks and cliffs.

Shellfish and other local seafoods would also form part of the local diet and all of these foods would be gathered together for a family meal with a fire at one of the nearby rock shelters.



What else did the Cammeraygal eat?

Specialist knowledge about other food sources such as plants and animals would have been passed on from generation to generation. Seafood was not the only food supply available to the Cammeraygals. Animals such as