

# SEGMENT 2

## WAVERTON to WOLLSTONECRAFT



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world class walking  
it's exhilarating & healthy

A 45km network of walks in six segments circling North Sydney via parks, Aboriginal sites, waterfront, bushland and urban streetscapes, encompassing features of both natural and architectural heritage.



Berrys Bay from BP site lookout

	main route	return route
distance	6.5km	2km
time (approx)	2hrs 30mins	30mins
features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>A</b> Waverton Station</li> <li><b>B</b> Former BP site</li> <li><b>C</b> Former Coal Loading Site</li> <li><b>D</b> Old Quarantine Depot</li> <li><b>E</b> Rock Engraving</li> <li><b>F</b> HMAS Waterhen</li> <li><b>G</b> Wollstonecraft Bay</li> <li><b>H</b> Rock Engraving</li> <li><b>I</b> The Gore Cove Track</li> <li><b>J</b> Coal Mine</li> </ul>	

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#### Start Main Route

Begin outside **Waverton Station** **A**, turning left to follow Bay Road towards Ball's Head. The area was once part of the 524 acre estate granted to Edward Wollstonecraft in 1825, and later inherited by his partner and brother-in-law, Alexander Berry. This road once led to their wharf and warehouse near Ball's Head. Turn left at Woolcott Street and right at Larkin Street. Just past Wood Street enter the park on the **former BP site** **B**. Until 1997 this dramatic headland with its steel walkways, viewing platforms and old tank stand sites was the BP oil terminal, established originally by the Anglo-Persian Oil Company in 1920. In the nineteenth century, it had been the site of Berry and Wollstonecraft's storehouse and was later used as a NSW military mine and torpedo base. It offers an overview of the marina area and the former Quarantine Depot, last of the maritime industries that have crowded this little peninsula. After exploring the park, walk out to Balls Head Road, turn uphill and then sharp left towards Balls Head.

The buildings, and the large wharf area nearby, are a former **coal loader** **C** established by the Sydney Bunkering Company during WWI to fuel electricity supply. The coal, brought from Newcastle on 'Sixty Milers', was hauled up on a cable railway, and later, by conveyor belts. The Loader shut down in 1993 and has been imaginatively redeveloped as public space. Continue on to Balls Head, which was named after Lieutenant Henry Lidgbird Ball, commander of HMS *Supply* in the First Fleet. It retains much of its bushland character despite extensive and exotic landscaping in the 1930s. Crumbling rustic fences and shelter sheds, built in that period by dole labourers, now mingle with native landscapes and modern walking paths and facilities. Together with Berry Island, the headland came into government hands from the Berry estate and was declared a reserve in 1926.

Where the road splits, follow the way left and about 150 metres along, take the road down past the colonial **Quarantine Depot** **D** with old wooden wharf. The depot was established in 1912 and is now used by the Maritime Museum. A track from the road (marked 'The Midden Track') follows above the water's edge as part of an extensive track system clambering up, down and around the headland. There are many tracks to explore. At the lookout near the carpark, with its fine views of Goat Island and the Harbour, Aboriginal axe grinding grooves can be seen near a little rock pool on an overhang. There are several important Aboriginal sites in the area.

At the western end of the car park, take the track to the highest point where an old semaphore mast once stood. Beyond the flagpole site, the track turns down steps towards the Harbour, passing overhangs once developed for picnic shelters. Turn inland again following below the road, before steps lead left down to a track and boardwalks to the lower level of the Coal Loader. The path enters one of four tunnels under the great platform of the Coal Loader. Beyond the tunnel, there are many options to explore but the main route leads out below the buildings, past greens, lookouts and a wetland pond.

At its end, the roadway meets the road to HMAS Waterhen near the base entrance. The base, which houses Sydney's minehunters and diving units, was named after a WWII RAN destroyer lost at Tobruk in 1941. The current base was commissioned in 1962 and completely rebuilt in the mid-1990s. Turning right, uphill, this is an opportunity to explore the upper part of the Coal Loader site, with its buildings and facilities and an important Cammeraygal **engraving site** **E** showing a whale and other figures. Return to Balls Head Drive and follow it uphill to Horace Street, with its expansive Harbour view above **HMAS Waterhen** **F**.

At Horace St's end, steps drop alongside the navy base. About half-way down, take the path to the right below the units and across a 'bridge' over an old drain and down steps into **Oyster Bay Reserve** **G** and *Wandakiah*. This huge apartment development replaced the Oyster Bay Gas Works on an industrial site with a long history variously as sugar, gunpowder and kerosene works. Gas was produced here from coal from 1917 onwards. An immense, stone coal bunker several storeys high, dominated the waterfront until the housing development began. Gas production ceased in 1976 when natural gas was introduced, the works finally closing in 1983. Follow around the waterfront to the pedestrian bridge crossing to bush tracks and steps on the Wollstonecraft side. Once the main track is reached, turn left and then right to parallel Tryon Avenue above Ball's Head Bay to Shirley Road and down to Berry Island.

Tear-shaped Berry Island is another isthmus rather than an island, its present grassy "front yard" dating from the 1960s. The "island" itself is well-endowed with native trees and wildflowers. The 800 metre Gadyan Track circles the island, offering water access, plimsoll-line views of any tanker unloading at the Shell Oil Terminal across Gore Cove, and

a tour of the area's significance to and evidence of the Cammeraygal Aboriginal people. Interpretative signs provide information on native flora; the people and their activities and culture; and protect and interpret the major **rock engraving site** **H**. This site has a ten metre long creature – perhaps a spirit figure or a whale – and near it a small waterhole with axe-grinding grooves. Later, be sure to pause at the Harbour viewing platform on the island's eastern tip, in an area of shell middens.

From Berry Island, return to Shirley Road only as far as the **Gore Cove Track** **I** which starts on the left just beyond the District Fisheries Office. Passing through bushland behind the backyards of Milray Avenue, the track drops to a reclaimed area at the head of Berry Creek and Gore Cove. The stone embankments on the creek and cove may relate to a **small coal mine** **J** which once operated here. Sydney Harbour sits above substantial coal deposits and from 1897 to 1945 a large mine with its entrance in Birchgrove, operated under the Harbour. There is a bridge connection to Greenwich, but continue on the path towards Wollstonecraft station. The path follows the creek up through rainforest, at one point crossing into Lane Cove municipality before crossing again below the tall footbridge. At the top of the steps, turn left if continuing to Segment 3, or right if heading to Wollstonecraft or Waverton Stations.

#### Start Return Route

To return to Waverton Station take the underpass under the railway just before Wollstonecraft Station, and then turn left up the lane to Milner Crescent. Turn right and then left again at Shirley Road. Three hundred metres along, turn right down the steps of Belmont Lane, cross the end of leafy Newlands Lane and then climb left up steps to the junction of Rocklands Road and Ivy Street. Short Ivy Street leads into Brennan Park. Cross it to Carr Street and, at the next intersection angle right, down Crow's Nest Road to Waverton Station **A**.

Written and researched by the Walking Volunteers. For further North Sydney and regional walking materials go to the Customer Service Centre, Stanton Library, or [www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au](http://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au) - click 'recreation', and [www.walkingsydney.net](http://www.walkingsydney.net). Funded by Sharing Sydney Harbour Access Program (SSHAP).

Photographs: Graham Spindler.