

A vibrant, impressionistic painting of a busy beach scene. In the foreground, several people are sunbathing on towels or blankets. A woman in a red swimsuit stands with her back to the viewer, looking out at the water. To her left, a man in a white tank top and dark shorts is also looking out. In the middle ground, a group of people are swimming and playing in the water. A woman in a blue swimsuit is in the water, and another woman in a black swimsuit is also visible. In the background, a large, multi-story building with a prominent tower is situated on a rocky outcrop overlooking the water. The overall scene is bright and lively, capturing a typical day at a beach.

Sydney Harbour Seldom Scene

Walking tour

This two-and-a-half hour scenic walking tour around a small portion of the Sydney Harbour foreshore and northern CBD includes views depicted in *Sydney Harbour: Seldom Scene*.

The walk is intended for persons of average fitness. There are no stairs (other than an optional short detour) but there are steep inclines, uneven surfaces and some low kerbs that people in wheelchairs will require assistance to negotiate.

Walkers are advised to equip themselves with adequate drinking water, sun protection and suitable clothing and footwear.

Please note that some areas included in the walk have limited hours of access, as detailed in the directions.



State Library
of New South Wales



Start

Map location **A**

Duration: 0 hours 0 minutes



Map location **B**

Duration: 0 hours 15 minutes



This walking tour commences at the foot of the State Library's Mitchell Wing front steps, facing north across Shakespeare Place to the Royal Botanic Gardens.

- Turn right and follow the path to the pedestrian crossing on your left.
- Cross Hospital Road to the Domain and continue along the path heading east.
- Keep to the left and ascend past the restaurant on your right to Art Gallery Road.
- Turn left along Art Gallery Road, crossing the bridge to the Royal Botanic Gardens gates.
- Turn right in front of the gates, over the pedestrian crossing.
- Turn left and follow the path beside the right-hand fork of Mrs Macquaries Road.
- Continue along the path beside the road until reaching the top of the stair to the Andrew 'Boy' Charlton Pool.

Corporation Baths, 1881

EfB, DG 388

A tranquil scene showing the baths at Woolloomooloo Bay, including Potts Point, at middle right, and the distant North Head. During the mid-nineteenth century Sydney's harbourside baths were principally used for bathing or washing, as opposed to swimming. Swimming, particularly competitive swimming, did not really become popular until the twentieth century. Shown here are the Corporation Baths (also known as the Fig Tree or Farmer's Baths) built by the city council in 1858. They were replaced by the Domain Municipal Baths in 1908 and the Andrew 'Boy' Charlton Pool in 1966.

- Continue north along the path to Mrs Macquaries Chair, carved into a sandstone outcrop on your left. Please note that the path leaves the roadside and has an uneven surface in some places.



Map location C

Duration: 0 hours 25 minutes



Map location D

Duration: 0 hours 30 minutes

Garden Island, 1924

Douglas Roberts Dundas, ML 737

Visible across Woolloomooloo Bay is Garden Island. The island has supported naval activities since the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788. Until 1810, naval crew used the original island of less than five hectares as a vegetable garden, despite the scarcity of fresh water. During WWII the shape of the island changed dramatically with the construction of the Captain Cook Graving (cleaning) Dock. Twelve hectares of seabed were reclaimed, effectively linking the island to the shore at Potts Point. On completion in 1945, the dock was 345 metres long, 45 metres wide and 14 metres deep, with a capacity of almost 260 million litres.

- Continue along the path to Mrs Macquaries Point, taking the right fork down to the sandstone seawall facing Farm Cove, for a spectacular view of Sydney Harbour Bridge.

Fort Macquarie from Pinchgut, c. 1850

Frederick Garling, DGV1A/27

To your right on the harbour is Fort Denison, the viewpoint for this painting looking toward Fort Macquarie, its site now occupied by the Sydney Opera House.

When Governor Phillip arrived with the First Fleet, the natural rocky outcrop near the entrance to Sydney Cove became known as Rock Island. After prisoners were confined there on bread and water rations, it acquired the name Pinchgut. In the early 1840s its natural defensive capabilities were enhanced by levelling the island to form a gun platform. In 1855, in response to a perceived threat from Russian warships due to the Crimean War, construction of the Martello Tower commenced. When complete it was named Fort Denison, for the Governor at that time, Sir William Denison.

- Continue along the path to your left, following the seawall around Farm Cove.
- Proceed through the Yurong Gate into the Royal Botanic Gardens (open 7 am to 8 pm).
- Continue along the path to the opposite, western side of Farm Cove and the path on your left signposted 'Government House'.
- Turn left, cross the footbridge over the ponds, then go ahead up the incline.
- At the gazebo, take the second path on your right to the Government House driveway.
- Turn right and proceed along the path beside the driveway to the Gate House.
- Proceed through the gateway (grounds open 10 am to 4 pm most days).
- Continue, passing under the Government House porte-cochere, to the eastern garden.



Map location E

Duration: 0 hours 50 minutes

Sydney Harbour, 1900

William Lister Lister, ML 296

The eastern terrace and fountain constructed by the Colonial Architect James Barnet during the governorship of Sir John Young (1861–67) are viewed from the grounds of Government House. 1868 saw the first Royal visit to NSW, that of Prince Alfred, second son of Queen Victoria. Following an attempted assassination at Clontarf, surgeons removed a bullet from the Prince's abdomen in the Government House drawing room, which was transformed into an operating theatre. By 1900, when this work was painted, extensive changes, including new electric lighting, were being made in preparation for Australia's Federation and occupancy by the Governor-General. While extensive plant growth over more than 100 years has obscured much of this vista, the terraces and fountain remain.

- Return to the gate where you entered the Government House grounds.
- Continue ahead to the first access road on your right.
- Turn right and follow the road (watch for service vehicles as there is no path).
- Proceed to the North Depot Gate on your left, signposted 'Exit to Macquarie Street'.
- Turn left and proceed through the gateway (open 7 am to 8 pm).
- Turn immediately, sharp left, passing the sculpted sandstone installation on your right.
- Continue along the path, joining the Cahill Expressway, until just past the glass elevator.



Map location F

Duration: 1 hour 5 minutes

Circular Quay, 1966

Robert Emerson Curtis, DG 395

This elevated position provides an extraordinary vista over Sydney Cove toward the Sydney Harbour Bridge, the opposite of that shown in this work.

Curtis captures the energy of the 1960s building boom in his modernist pastel. The ornate stone and brick Australian Steamship Navigation Company's office and warehouse building (opened July 1885), with its elegant tower and Dutch gables, stands alone amongst the eruption of concrete, steel and glass towers. The curved facade of the AMP office building was the first in Sydney to breach the earlier 150 feet (45 metre) height limit. Between these two, the Sydney Cove (or Overseas) Passenger Terminal was completed in time to welcome the *Oriana* on her maiden voyage, in December 1960. However, within just a few years, more people arrived in Australia by air than by ship.

- Take the glass elevator to the 'Ground', exit on the Circular Quay promenade.
- Turn left and proceed along the promenade, stopping between ferry wharves 3 & 4.

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Map location G

Duration: 1 hour 15 minutes

A Memory of Sydney, 1936

VFP Allen, SSV1/Har/1930-1939/1

Depending upon ferry movements, the view to your right echoes this work, 70 years after it was first printed. Surprisingly, there is sufficient information within this meticulously crafted polychrome print to accurately identify the ferry at right as the *Curl Curl*, the second of two almost identical ferries built in Scotland in 1928 for the Port Jackson & Manly Steamship Company. At 67 metres in length and 11 metres beam, she had a capacity of 1587 passengers and was the fastest ferry on the harbour, consistently equalling the 1912 record of 22 minutes to complete the run to Manly. *Curl Curl* and her sister ship *Dee Why* steamed to Australia from Scotland under their own power, a voyage lasting over 20 weeks. *Curl Curl* was scuttled in September 1969.

- Continue ahead past wharf 6 to the tall orange Circular Quay information column.
- Turn right and follow the promenade beside the cove.
- Continue past the Museum of Contemporary Art on your left.
- Stop at the sign 'The Rocks' at the foot of Argyle Street.
- Turn left, crossing Argyle and then George streets at the pedestrian crossings.
- Turn left again to cross, then turn right and continue up Argyle Street (this path is steep and uneven in places).
- Cross Harrington Street and continue to the first overhead bridge.
- Turn left into Cambridge Street and proceed to the rear of Susannah Place Museum.



Map location H

Duration: 1 hour 30 minutes

Old Sydney, Clyde Street, before 1901

Sydney Long, ML 318

Reproduced with the kind permission of the Ophthalmic Research Institute of Australia

The buildings illustrated in Long's painting, built during the 1830s in the adjacent suburb of Millers Point, were demolished in 1901 in response to an outbreak of bubonic plague. They were part of a densely populated neighbourhood where even dilapidated houses were in great demand due to their proximity to work at the Darling Harbour wharves and goods yards. If you wish, ascend the stair on the right to the Cumberland Street Archaeological Site, essentially a vacant lot as its buildings were similarly demolished in 1901. Susannah Place Museum is comprised of a terrace of four houses. Built in 1844, they have a continuous history of occupancy by working class families.

- Return along Cambridge Street to Argyle Street.
- Turn left along Argyle Street, passing through the Argyle Cut beneath both bridges.
- Proceed along Argyle Street past the stair and continue to Watson Road on your left.
- Turn left to carefully cross and then ascend Watson Road on the opposite footpath.
- Continue up the incline until reaching the park and the end of the fence to your right.
- Turn right onto the path through the park, then turn right again toward the rotunda.

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Map location I

Duration: 1 hour 45 minutes

Picnic at The Rocks, 1952

Roland Shakespeare Wakelin, ML 1169

Reproduced with the kind permission of Vision Australia

This view from in front of the Observatory Hill Park rotunda along Lower Fort Street, The Rocks, remains relatively unchanged, due largely to the efforts of the Rocks Residents Group. The group was formed in 1971 to oppose plans by the Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority to demolish and redevelop the area with high-density residential dwellings. They requested the support of the Builders Labourers Federation, which imposed a Green Ban on development in the area that was ultimately successful in preserving much of the streetscape. Possibly even the tree to your left is the same as that depicted in this work. The Sydney Harbour Bridge, just twenty years old when Wakelin painted it, celebrates its 75th anniversary on 19 March 2007.

- Return to the path and continue west alongside the Sydney Observatory boundary fence on your left, to the bust of Hans Christian Andersen.



Map location J

Duration: 1 hour 50 minutes

Millers Point from the Flagstaff, 1840s

Joseph Fowles, SV1/1840s/1

The vista to the northwest, between the fig trees, is that captured here by Joseph Fowles toward the Balmain peninsula and Goat Island, including a glimpse of the Lord Nelson Hotel to your right. An 1807 map shows the large hill jutting into the harbour at the entrance to Cockle Bay (Darling Harbour) as Cockle Bay Point. At that time devoid of construction, by the 1820s a few cottages and windmills had been built. Three of the windmills were operated by John (Jack) Leighton and the area came to be known as 'Jack the Miller's Point', eventually shortened to Millers Point. The extraordinary building at the centre of the painting is Albion House, built for T Horton Jones but sadly no longer standing.

- Continue along the path, circling the Observatory in an anti-clockwise direction.
- Stop at the western side with a view on your right to Peacock Point over Darling Harbour.



Map location **K**

Duration: 1 hour 55 minutes

View of Millers Point and Darling Harbour, c. 1870

unknown artist, DG 392

Directly opposite you, across the waters of Darling Harbour, is Peacock Point, Balmain, the viewpoint for this painting.

A paddlewheel steamer ferries passengers between Balmain and this busy industrial and shipping hub on the city's western edge. The signalling mast, Sydney Observatory (behind you) and Fort Street School (now the National Trust Centre) can be seen on the ridge. The cliff line below the ridge at left was constantly changing due to the quarrying activities that had commenced in the 1820s. At the water's edge to the right are the coal wharves, chimney and buildings of the Australian Gas Light Company works, operational by 1843.

- Continue along the path past the Observatory entrance and toward the Harbour Bridge approaches.
- Turn right (south) onto Upper Fort Street, signposted 'Fort Street Public School'.
- Cross to the opposite side of the road, then proceed up and over the footbridge (take care on steep ramps).
- Continue south along the path, past the National Trust Centre (as mentioned above).
- Continue south and turn right onto Kent Street, then immediately right again to enter the pedestrian underpass beneath the path you have just walked.
- Proceed through the first tunnel, then turn left and continue. Keep to the left-hand wall at all times until reaching the northern end of York Street.
- Carefully cross the turning road, veering left onto York Street and the pedestrian crossing.
- Cross York Street and continue ahead down the southern side of Grosvenor Street.
- Cross Lang Street and continue ahead, then turn right onto George Street.
- Cross George Street at the first set of lights, to the southern side of Bridge Street.
- Proceed along Bridge Street to Tank Stream Way on your right.



Map location **L**

Duration: 2 hours 10 minutes

Old Tank Stream, Sydney, c. 1852

John Black Henderson, SSV1/1852?/2

At the time of the First Fleet's arrival in 1788, the area just west of today's Hyde Park was a marshy wetland. Fed by this, a small freshwater stream ran almost due north (between present-day George and Pitt streets) to Sydney Cove. This stream was key to Governor Phillip's choice of the site for the Colony's first settlement. However, it soon proved an unreliable source of water, leading to storage 'tanks' being cut into its sandstone banks during a drought in 1789–90. These were near the current location of Australia Square Plaza. The small bridge at the centre mid-ground of this painting (which gave Bridge Street its name) once stood where you stand now. Set into the pavement nearby is a commemorative marker showing the alignment of the Tank Stream, now concealed in pipes and culverts beneath you.

- Continue ahead, east along Bridge Street.
- Cross Pitt, Gresham, Loftus and Young streets, stopping at Phillip Street.

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Map location **M**

Duration: 2 hours 15 minutes



Map location **N**

Duration: 2 hours 25 minutes

Sydney — Capital New South Wales (detail), c. 1800

unknown artist, DG 56

To your right is the Museum of Sydney, on the site of First Government House, the white two-storied building with verandah (circled) in this view.

On viewing this peaceful painted scene — the dawn of a modern metropolis — it is easy to think it depicts a forgotten colonial backwater. The reality was somewhat different. Despite the apparently casual array of thatched, whitewashed, wattle and daub cottages and a singular ship in the cove, Sydney was observed by members of the Nicolas Baudin expedition in 1802 as a thriving settlement and an impressively active port. Whalers bound for New Zealand, coal carriers en route to India, fur traders preparing to sail for the north-west coast of America, and Matthew Flinders midway through his circumnavigation of Australia — all were passing through this vital provisioning outpost.

- Cross Phillip Street and continue along Bridge Street to Macquarie Street.
- Cross Macquarie Street and veer right to enter the Royal Botanic Gardens via the Conservatorium Gate (open 7 am – 8 pm).
- Turn onto the first path on your right and then the first major path left (not the small path into the Rose Garden), to pass behind the Rose Garden pavilion.
- Continue to the top of the stair above the Pioneers Memorial Garden.

The Burning of the Garden Palace, seen from the North Shore, 1882

John Barr Clarke Hoyte, V1/Har/1880-1889/7

The circular pond and bronze statue of Cupid mark the central point of the Garden Palace. Ever since the 1851 Great Exhibition held in London, other cities had used international exhibitions to showcase their achievements in the fields of art, the sciences, industry and manufacturing. Inspired by London's Crystal Palace, Sydney's Garden Palace dominated the city's north-eastern skyline from this site overlooking Farm Cove. Designed by Colonial Architect James Barnet, it was built in eight months, using electric lights imported from England to allow work to be done at night. Cruciform in plan and surmounted by a lofty dome, which rose to almost 65 metres above your location, it offered three hectares of covered space until destroyed by this fire in September 1882.

- Turn about face and then follow the left fork of the path toward the Palace Garden Gate.
- Proceed past this gate (on your right) and continue to the Morshead Fountain Gate (open 7 am – 8 pm).

END

Map location 0

Duration: 2 hours 30 minutes



- You now stand directly opposite the Mitchell Library, the starting point for this walk.
- You can reach the Library via the pedestrian crossings to your right.

Refreshments are available at Cafe Trim, next to the State Library's Macquarie Street entrance.

Sydney Harbour: Seldom Scene

A free exhibition in the State Library's Picture Gallery
Open 5 March to 27 May 2007

Opening hours:

Galleries & The Library Shop

9 am to 5 pm weekdays
11 am to 5 pm weekends

Cafe Trim

8 am to 4.30 pm weekdays
10.30 am to 4.30 pm weekends

Selected images from this exhibition can be ordered from the Library Shop, telephone 9273 1611, email <libshop@sl.nsw.gov.au>, or <www.atmitchell.com.au/shop>.

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Cover image: *The Swimming Enclosure* (detail), Herbert Edward Badham, 1941, oil, bequest of Dr RJ Pope, ML 573