

SUTHERLAND SHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

KURNELL WALKING TOUR

1 Meeting Place Monument

The meeting place monument commemorates the Kurnell area as significant to both Aboriginal communities and the wider Australian community. Take a moment to read the plaques as they detail general information about the area and recount voices of Aboriginal people who may be deceased.

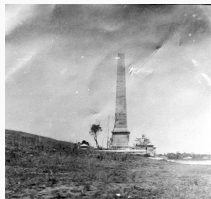
2 Landing Place

The landing place is located to the left of the Cook Obelisk and is the second stop on our tour. Take a second to read the plaque that contains an extract of Joseph Banks' original journal detailing the Endeavour's arrival. Directly opposite the plaque is a small rock island which marks the place where – it is said – Isaac Smith, a young midshipman and cousin of Cook's wife Elizabeth, became the first of the Endeavour's crew to step foot on the Australian continent. This story is probably a later invention, as no primary sources mention it.



Landing Plaque

3



Cook Obelisk

This obelisk commemorates Cook's landing at Kurnell on 29 April 1770. It was erected in 1871 at the cost of £100 by local landowner, wool merchant and politician, Thomas Holt.

4

Ferry Hut and Wharf

The ferry service from La Perouse began in the early 1900s and ceased operating in 1957. Despite a short-lived resumption of the service in 1965, a tourist service or commuter service has not been successfully re-established, although the wharf, destroyed by storms in 1974, has been rebuilt. Excursion steamers and later regular ferry services would take people from La Perouse across the bay, to this wharf. Interest in Cook and his perceived roles as a founding hero of the newly federated nation made Kurnell a popular recreational spot and brought day trippers and campers to the park. However, for local Aboriginal people who had been dispersed and 'resettled' in the reserves and settlements on the bay's northern shore, the ferry offered important access to traditional lands. When car ownership surged in the 1950s, the ferry became less frequented and ceased operation in 1965. This only further alienated the La Perouse Aboriginal community from these lands.



5

La Perouse

The piece of land jutting out towards Kurnell on the left is La Perouse. The area was named after a French navigator of the same name who landed there on the 26 January 1788. The area has always had a strong Aboriginal presence. In 1885 an Aboriginal reserve was established and in a 2016 census there were 399 Aboriginal people in La Perouse.

6 Banks Memorial

The Banks memorial was created in 1947 to commemorate the work of Joseph Banks, the botanist aboard the *Endeavour*. He was a strong advocate for British settlement and colonisation of Australia and the establishment of Botany Bay as a reception place for convicts.

7 Creek

This Creek played an instrumental role in both the lives of the local Aboriginals and the experience of the *Endeavour* crew. This area was an important site, providing fish, possum, berries, ochre, timber, freshwater and medicine to the Aboriginal people, sustaining both their physical and spiritual life. This was a place of shelter and of meeting, where saltwater people from the coast and freshwater people from inland would meet. This richness also attracted the crew of the *Endeavour* as they sort out freshwater and supplies for their ship.

8 Alpha House

In 1815 the land in this area was granted to James Birnie, a trader, merchant and master of a whaling and sealing ship. It was to be named Alpha farm, meaning the beginning. This land held a farm house, market garden, dairy and homestead and was named Curnell by Birnie, the Aboriginal name for the area as he heard it. Over the years Alpha house was owned by many prominent figure including John Connell and Thomas Holt. Alpha house was often used to house caretakers and in 1887 visitors were able to stay at the residence. When it was vacated in the late 1880s locals plundered it for materials. The only treasure ever found was a tin pot filled with half crowns, found by a fisherman's son who was playing in the ruins. Two years after the reserve was created the current cottage was built over the foundations of the previous Alpha House, still retaining its original name. This was originally designed for holiday accommodation but for many years has not served this purpose.



9 Forby Sutherland Flag Pole

This flag pole marks the burial of Forby Sutherland, the first member of the *Endeavour* crew to die on Australian shores. You can hear more about Forby Sutherland in the Sutherland Podcast. Also buried near this place but not addressed in the physical landscape is the last elder of the tribe whose headquarters were at Kurnell, Cundlemong, who died in 1846. There are many other Aboriginals buried in this area whom died due to a smallpox epidemic that decimated the local population following British settlement.

10 Solander Memorial

This monument was donated in 1914 to honour Daniel Solander, a Swedish naturalist who accompanied Joseph Banks on the *Endeavour* exhibition. It was donated by a group of Swedish residents in Australia.

11 Visitor Centre

The visitor centre is the last stop on this tour and is a great resource for further information on Cook's landing. There is a museum located in the centre that has many displays and original artefacts that would be great to check out.

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