

Aboriginal people from the Gayamayagal and Garigal clan groups lived on the Northern Beaches for millennia before the arrival of Europeans. While there are few stories of early European contact with Aboriginal people, their presence is represented by the exceptional number of rock engravings found in its sandstone.

This walking tour focuses on the European settlement of Brookvale. As the first village outside Manly, Brookvale has a diverse and rich history. Founding father Frederick Parker purchased land on the outskirts of Manly near a brook in 1836 and gave his land the name Brookvale Farm. It would be some years before a village began to develop and not until the first school was established in 1887 that the name Brookvale was attached to the area. It was for a few years prior to this known as Greendale. The pioneer farmers and tradespeople of the late 1800s were joined by Chinese market gardeners, then European migrant market gardeners and poultry farmers following World War II. From the 1950s, much of Brookvale transitioned into an expanding industrial hub where anything you needed could be bought, sold or made.

#### 1 William Frederick Parker and William Francis Parker

William Frederick Parker purchased 100 acres (40 hectares) just outside Manly on 29 March 1836. He was provided with an assigned convict to help clear the land. Parker eventually owned 158 acres (64 hectares) straddling the track that became Pittwater Road and Old Pittwater Road. He built a residence near the corner of present-day William Street which he called Meadowbank and a second cottage at the end of Robert Street which he called Eucalyptus Cottage. Parker farmed and lived on his land until his death in 1892.

In 1879 Parker's son, William Francis Parker built a stone cottage on part of his father's land which he called Brooklands. This cottage was located at the end of present-day Cross Street. William Francis Parker lived here until his death on 2 July 1927.

#### 2 St Luke's Hall

The first church in Brookvale, St Luke's, had its beginnings in 1887 in Brookvale Hall which doubled as a church and public school for 15 years. It was located opposite present-day Robert Street on land donated by William Francis Parker, which is now part of the Warringah Golf Course. The building remained in use as an Anglican Sunday School until 1936, when it was demolished for the widening of Pittwater Road.



#### 10 Brookvale Cinema

Constructed on the Northern corner of Pittwater Road and Chard Avenue in 1925 by Hugo Rose, it had unsewered toilets in the rear and was capable of seating 534 people. In 1930 the building began to be used as a dance hall called Redonda with old time and jazz dances held there every Saturday night. In 1933 the cinema was converted for talkies but in 1935 it was offered for sale by auction. When Alfred John Massarat purchased the property in 1940 he resurrected the cinema but by 1960 the building was again being used for dances and then in 1961 the hall was used for a short time for roller skating. By February 1962 the building had been demolished and shops were constructed on the site.

#### 11 Surfboard Manufacturing

By the late 1950s, the foam surfboard revolution was about to begin in Australia and Brookvale was to become the centre of this burgeoning industry. Gordon Woods along with Barry Bennett and others established surfboard factories in Brookvale at this time and were soon widely referred to as the "Brookvale Mafia". Woods and Bennett had their factories in Harbord Road while others were located in Winbourne and Mitchell Roads. Bennett's Surfboards still remains in their original shop in Harbord Road.

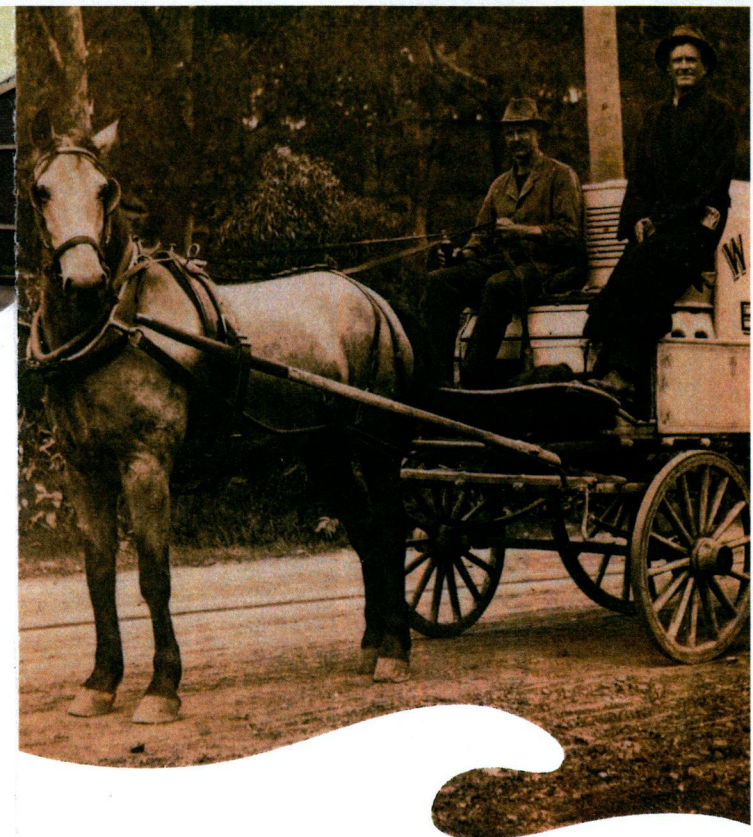
#### 12 The Ugh Boot

Shane Steadman was a later arrival to the Brookvale surfboard industry establishing his factory on the corner of Sydenham and Mitchell Road in 1967. After a friend provided him with some sheepskin boots to keep his feet warm after surfing he decided to manufacture these as a winter line. He registered the trade mark 'Ugh' boot with the Paton's Board in Australia, New Zealand, Japan and America in 1971. The Ugh boot sold hugely with Shane and his manufacturers continually improving the design. In the 1990s Steadman sold the Paton to an American Company who had registered the name 'Ugg'.

#### Post War Industry

Other industries thrived in Brookvale which soon gained a reputation as a place of innovation where anything you needed could be acquired or made. Its quirky charm remains today as does its reputation.

Front Cover Image: Courtesy of Wendy Machon



## Brookvale Historic Walking Tour



