

Historical Walk Around Yamba

Full Length: 6km - Time: 1½ to 2 hours

S.S. "The Clarence"



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"Yamba Yesterday" is a book by Keith Howland and Stuart Lee containing comprehensive information and photos of the Yamba area and may be purchased from the Museum or selected outlets. A copy of this book will give a deeper appreciation of the features discovered in our walk. "Riverboats of the Clarence" by Stuart Lee is also available at the museum and selected outlets.

It is not proposed to take a long or arduous walk (6km, approx 1½ - 2 hours). This is for gentle exercise and pleasure in discovery of historical areas and introduction, at the conclusion of the walk, to the Yamba Historical Museum.

1. *Start at the Rotary Track sign in Fred Phillips Park.* Fred Phillips was a storekeeper, oyster farmer, shire councillor and local civic leader. The extensive reclaimed parkland below was dedicated and named **Ford Park** in 1966 after the local Ford family who for about 30 years from 1930 served on the Yamba Urban Committee, responsible for town maintenance and improvements.

2. *Cross Ford Park and turn right towards the Ferry Wharf.* Ford Park was formed by filling in two bays to the side of a training wall called the **Gantry Wall** (see photograph, mid-background). These bays were known as: **Pegus's Bay** (upriver) after Arthur and Emma Pegus, Customs Officer and Postmistress from about 1870-94 who lived where Pegasus Motel now stands; and **Barclay's Bay** (downriver) after George Barclay, a pioneer fisherman and oyster farmer whose home was in Bent Street, up from the Police Station.

The **Gantry Wall** was so called because at the PWD wharf, near the Boatharbour (upriver), a huge gantry lifted rocks and concrete blocks from barges on to a train for the construction of the **South Breakwater**.

3. *Walk past the Ferry Wharf to the Calypso Caravan Park.* The Park is on land reclaimed by filling in the large bay. It was called **Billy Black's Bay**. His father, Walter, built the town's first hotel called the **Woolli Hotel** (1862 - 1910). At no.7 Harbour Street, opposite the park, a portion of the hotel remains as a private house.

4. *Walk along the track and divert back along Harbour Street.* The stone monument was erected by the Historical Society on the site of a filled-in spring known to locals as **Flinders Well**, because it was believed that Mathew Flinders took on water here when he landed at Yamba on 12 July 1799. (The cottage at No.7 is just along from here).

5. *Walk back to the crossroads at the reserve.* **Whiting Beach** on **Hickey Island** faces **Shoal Bay** which was discovered and named by Mathew Flinders in 1799. Before early harbour works (1862-1903) caused it to silt up, the main channel for shipping was where Gorman's Restaurant now stands. Hickey Island was named after a family who had the first post office, store and boat service at Illuka.

6. *Walk along the wall past the reserve to just beyond the "T-piece", jutting out into Shoal Bay on your left.* The rock fill as far as the T-piece was from the nearby quarry. Beyond that the stone and concrete blocks were carried by punt from a large quarry at Illawill, near Maclean.

7. *Return, and follow the road towards the car park and quarry.* On your left is **Turner's Beach** (7a), named after the works paymaster was drowned there in 1901. On your right is the quarry used for construction of the Gantry Wall to the Boatharbour and Southern Breakwater to the T-piece. (7b) The car park now covers the old swimming pool where the famous "Tim the Bream" fishing competition was held in 1958.

8. *Take the path and steps up to the lighthouse on Pilot Hill (South Head).* The present lighthouse was built in 1955. Nearby is the **Mathew Flinders Memorial** plaque unveiled by the Governor of NSW on 12 July 1999. An incomplete replica of the first lighthouse (built 1879) near the reservoir now houses community radio station 2TLC FM.

9. *Continue along Pilot Street towards Coldstream Street.* Numbers 8, 10, 12 Pilot Street are the probable site of Graham's Boarding House. Till the 1930s Main Beach below was known as Graham's Beach. The **Pacific Hotel** (9a), built in 1934, is a good example of the then popular *art déco* style of architecture.

10. *Opposite the Pacific Hotel, the Star of the Sea Convent is presently used as a conference centre and retreat.* In 1910 the Sisters of Mercy purchased wooden cottages here for a convent and primary school.

11. *Proceed along Clarence Street towards Queen Street.* The park on your left, once used for camping, was named **Flinders Park** in 1930. **Main Beach** (aka Graham's) is home to **Yamba Surf Life Saving Club** (11a). This is the oldest country surf club in Australia, dating from 1908. The **tennis court** (11b) dates back to 1931.

12. *Turn left into Queen Street.* The **Cenotaph** was erected in 1930 on the flat off Woolli and Yamba Streets and moved to its present site in 1949. Craigmore Units opposite the Cenotaph and Yamba Beach Motel nearby are the sites of two famous guest houses of the 30s and 40s era known as **Craigmore** and **The Ritz**. (The Ritz was burnt down in October 1950.) Splendid photographs and crockery are on view at the Museum. An amazing number of visitors tell museum staff that they had their honeymoon there.

13. *Back to Clarence Street, left to Ritz Street and right into Ocean Street.* **Convent Beach** below was originally **McKittrick's Beach**. The Sisters of Mercy purchased J.T. McKittrick's cottage for a convent in 1900. In 1910 encoaching sands (see 14) forced its abandonment.

14. *Turn right into Laycock Street.* **Ager Park** was donated by William Ager, the man who saved Yamba from being engulfed by destabilized sandhills in the 1920's. His story with dramatic photos is on view at the museum. John Connell Laycock was the town's first white settler-farmer and represented the Clarence River Electorate in the NSW Parliament.

15. *Proceed down the hill by Pacific Parade and thence along the reserve fronting Pippi Beach to Dolphin Park.* **Pippi Beach** provides good surfing, wind-sailing and fishing. Sand mining for rutile and titanium left its sands white and further destabilized the area. The rocky outcrop at the south (Point Barri), commonly known as **Flat Rock**, was once used as a fish trap by the Aborigines. To the west and south between Beachside Estate and the Ngaru Aboriginal Village lies the **Old Yamba Cemetery** (15a), now completely buried by sand. The names of the people buried there and maps are available at the museum.

16. *Retrace your steps and turn left into Yamba Street.* Opposite the Anglican Church on the corner of Church Street is **Norfolk Park**, so named in 1999 after Mathew Flinders' sloop. Turn left into Queen Street, downhill past **Story Park** to the **Port of Yamba Historical Society Museum** next to the Golf Club in River Street.



The Port of Yamba Historical Society Inc.



Welcome visitors to their Historical Museum

Open Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 10am to 4.30pm

Saturday & Sunday 2pm to 4.30pm

Over 1,000 photographs on display
telling the story of Yamba.

Phone: 6646 1399 (Museum)

Web: www.pyhsmuseum.org.au

Admission Prices: Adults \$3.00
School Children FREE

