

The Kaleidoscope Walk

ART & HISTORY

Terry Fogarty – Willoughby District Historical Society & Museum

Cassandra Hard-Lawrie – Willoughby Council



Art and History Tour - Discover the hidden secrets of Chatswood CBD whilst learning about the artworks on the Kaleidoscope Walk

Down Scotts Creek

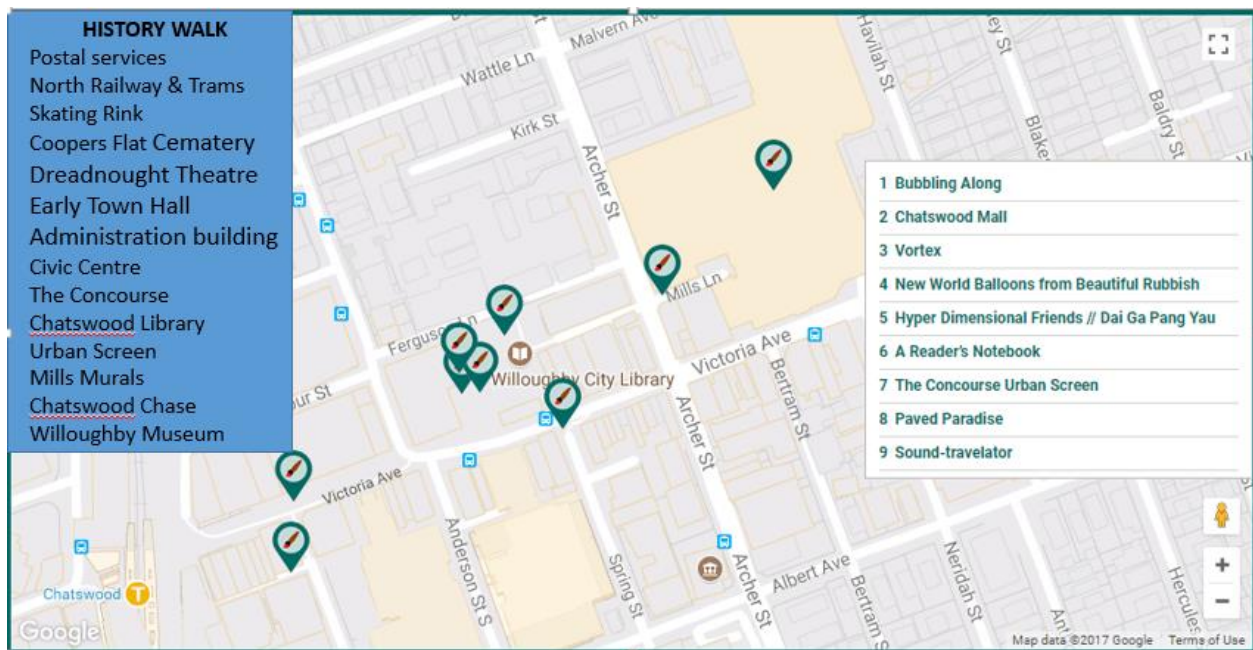
The Kaleidoscope walk follows the path of Scott's Creek which flows from the ridge beyond Chatswood Station to Middle Harbour below the suburb of Castlecrag.

The creek flows under Chatswood Chase then does a loop around the East Chatswood Industrial area (near Bunnings) before flowing into Fig Tree Bay..

It is highly probable that the path would have been an ancient Aboriginal track leading down to Middle Harbour.

Art & History Map

East Central Chatswood



Post Office Lane

Bubbling up Installation by Denise Keele-Bedford

The history of postal services in Chatswood dates back to the earliest times of NSW's public service history. NSW's first Postmaster was Sir Isaac Nichols appointed by Lt. Governor Paterson in 1809.

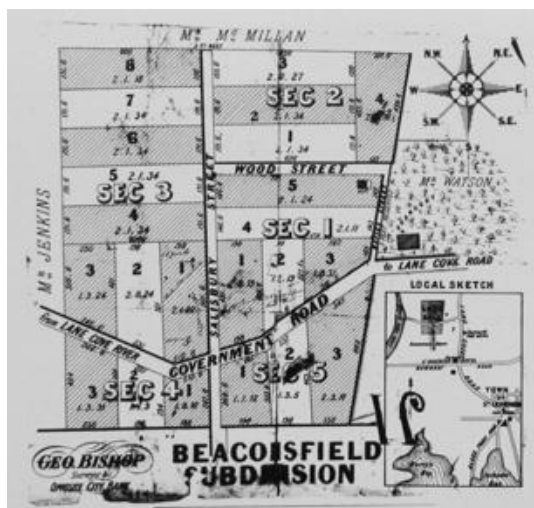
Nichols had received two major land grants covering much of the Chatswood area:

- 1805 230 acres King's Plains centred on the current Chatswood Railway Station
- 1810 380 acres in the general vicinity of the original Chatswood around the intersection of the Pacific Highway and Mowbray Rd.

Nichols operated the first Post Office in George St, Sydney. Mail was advertised as being available and then had to be picked up.

The earliest postal deliveries in Willoughby date from 1871 and came from the North Willoughby Post Office or as roadside mail delivered on horseback, twice weekly by C.C Fagan who held the contract for mail between Sydney and Gosford.

In 1875, Mayor James Best petitioned for a post office between Brysons (Mowbray Rd) and Mrs Fullers (Fullers Rd). In 1879 it was announced that a Post Office would be established at Chatswood (between St. Leonards and Gordon). The name Chatswood was chosen as it was the name of the largest property in the area. The postmaster was James Montgomery, storekeeper and builder.

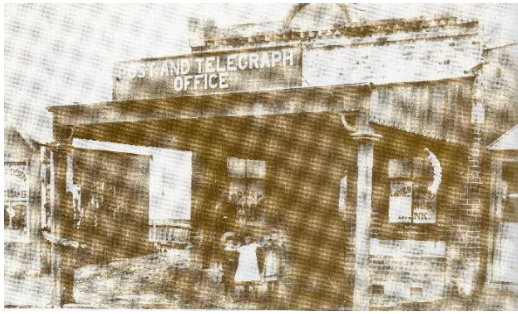


Chatswood's first post office was located on the Pacific Highway on the south-eastern corner of Victoria Ave (opposite Chatswood Public School). Due to an administrative bungle, the Post Office was called Chatsworth. However, there is no record of any such postmark. This later led to the West Ward of Willoughby being called the Chatsworth West Ward of Willoughby.

It was not until around 1885 is there evidence of the Post Office being called Chatswood.

This post office was closed in 1886 due to lack of patronage.

However, with the coming of the building of the Hornsby to St Leonards Railway, a new post office was opened on the southern side of Victoria Avenue on what is now the Telstra Exchange site.



The first post office on this site was a small weatherboard building.

Later, this was replaced with a larger brick building.



Subsequently the post office moved to premises in Victor St.

A satellite post office was established in West Chatswood in Greville St, just north of Fullers Road shops in 1965. It closed a few years later and postal services were provided in the neighbouring newsagency.

Another post office was later established on the corner of Railway St and Help Street.

After the new Interchange was established at Chatswood Station the Victor Street Post Office moved to its present location under the railway line.



An act of 1848 reformed the postal system and authorized the use of stamps; the first stamps appeared on 1 January 1850. They were locally produced, and depicted a scene of Sydney and its harbour, thus becoming known as the "Sydney Views".

Chatswood Mall



North Shore Railway

Sydney's first true suburban railway, the line from Hornsby to St. Leonards was formally opened in 1890

The line was built to come via Chatswood after lobbying by Richard Hayes Harnett who owned the land around the current Chatswood Station

Before the line was built there was other strong lobbying to have the line proceed via the intersection of the Pacific Highway and Mowbray Rd and through Lane Cove

The original timetable provided for just four trains a day - two passenger and two mixed trains; and none on Sunday.

The section of the line from St Leonards to Milson's Point opened in 1893.

The timetable then provided for ten passengers trains daily, with four on Sundays.

Timetable 1890

HORNSBY AND ST. LEONARDS SERVICE.									
Height in feet.	Miles from Sydney.		Down.	WEEK-DAYS.				SAT. ONLY.	
				Pass.	Mixed.	Mixed.	Mixed.	Pass.	Mixed.
100	11	Newcastle	Dep.	8.55	9.10	9.10	9.10	9.10	9.10
100	11	Sydney	Arr.	8.55	9.10	9.10	9.10	9.10	9.10
100	11	Hornsby	Dep.	7.25	7.30	7.30	7.30	7.30	7.30
100	11	Wahroonga	Dep.	7.45	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
100	11	Turramurra	Dep.	7.45	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
100	11	Pymble	Dep.	7.55	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00
100	11	Gladesville	Dep.	7.55	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00
100	11	Landfield	Dep.	8.1	8.15	8.15	8.15	8.15	8.15
100	11	Roseville	Dep.	8.1	8.15	8.15	8.15	8.15	8.15
100	11	Chatswood	Dep.	8.10	8.15	8.15	8.15	8.15	8.15
100	11	St. Leonards	Arr.	8.15	8.20	8.20	8.20	8.20	8.20
Up.									
Height in feet.	Miles from Sydney.		Up.	WEEK-DAYS.				SAT. ONLY.	
				Pass.	Pass.	Mixed.	Mixed.	Mixed.	Mixed.
100	11	St. Leonards	Dep.	8.55	9.10	9.10	9.10	9.10	9.10
100	11	Chatswood	Dep.	8.55	9.10	9.10	9.10	9.10	9.10
100	11	Roseville	Dep.	8.55	9.10	9.10	9.10	9.10	9.10
100	11	Landfield	Dep.	8.55	9.10	9.10	9.10	9.10	9.10
100	11	Gladesville	Dep.	8.55	9.10	9.10	9.10	9.10	9.10
100	11	Pymble	Dep.	8.55	9.10	9.10	9.10	9.10	9.10
100	11	Turramurra	Dep.	8.55	9.10	9.10	9.10	9.10	9.10
100	11	Wahroonga	Dep.	8.55	9.10	9.10	9.10	9.10	9.10
100	11	Hornsby	Dep.	8.55	9.10	9.10	9.10	9.10	9.10
100	11	Sydney	Arr.	8.55	9.10	9.10	9.10	9.10	9.10
100	11	Newcastle	Arr.	8.55	9.10	9.10	9.10	9.10	9.10

Trams in the Mall



The tram line to Chatswood was initially an electric line from Crows Nest

Originally the line terminated at Victoria Avenue, [Willoughby](#) in April 1898

This line was extended to [Chatswood station](#) in July 1908.

Through electric services from Milsons Point began when the original cable tramway was electrified in February 1900.

BOTTOM OF THE MALL – Anderson St

Chatswood Skating Rink, 6-12 Anderson St, Chatswood

On the site of the current Hoyts Theatres.

The roller skating rink was built for Northern Suburbs Amusements Ltd in 1911.

The land was sold by H.J. Russell for 50 shares in the business.

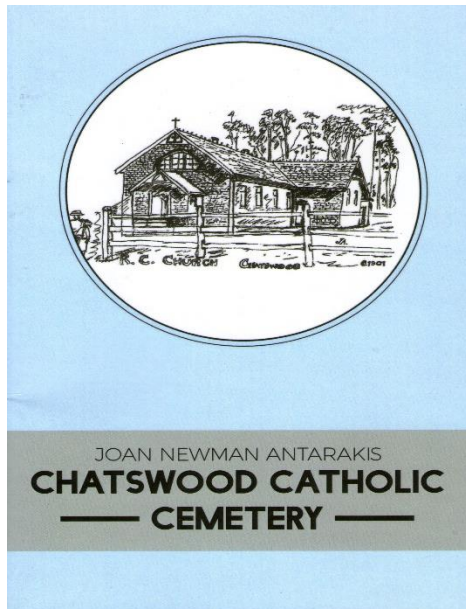
It was built of brick and iron on a concrete floor with an iron roof and included a bandstand, gallery and a special fast “Xylite” composition floor.

Beside social roller skating, overseas champions were matched against local speed racers.

The rink was also used for the opening of the N.S.W. Liberal Party campaign of 1913.

Skating activities ended in 1914 with the building being sold in 1922 and later demolished.

Coopers Flat Cemetery, Anderson Street, Chatswood



In 1862 William Lithgow, a former Auditor General gave 3 acres, 1 rood and 34 perches of land as a Deed of Gift for a Catholic burial ground.

He also gave a similar portion to the Anglican and Presbyterian churches occupying sites in Anderson Street, but they subsequently sold their land.

The cemetery was also known as the Lane Cove Burial Ground and North Willoughby Catholic Cemetery and Catholic Burial Ground, North Shore

The cemetery was in use until about 1907-17.

A number of bodies were reinterred there from the Devonshire Street Cemetery after it closed in 1901.

The land has since been reused as St Pius X College, the first building of which opened in 1937.

It is reported that headstones were later found under school buildings.

Spring Street Hub

Vortex

Installation by Laine Hogarty

Dreadnought Theatre

387 Victoria Ave, Chatswood



The Dreadnought Theatre was built in 1912 at 387 Victoria Ave.

It was the first real picture theatre in the district.

It was originally open-ai^{re}d with wooden benches, dirt floor and with galvanised iron walls.

In 1926 the building was replaced on the same site by the “new” Dreadnought designed by theatre architects Kaberry and Chard. This theatre was later named the Esquire and finally became known as Hoyts Esquire in 1961.

The theatre was closed in 1977 and remodelled as a small complex of shops.

The roof line of the “new” Dreadnought Theatre can still be seen in 2014.

The Concourse Courtyard Steps,

New World Balloons from Beautiful Rubbish Installation by Sophi Odling



In 1903 this site contained the Willoughby Town Hall, Council Depot and Pound, School of Arts and the Ku-ring-gai Masonic Lodge.

Council's administration was built in 1907 and extended in 1980.

In 1972 a new Civic Centre replaced the Town Hall.

In 1977 Council's administration was removed to a new building in Victor Street.

In 2008 all Council's buildings on the site was demolished for The Concourse, performing art, cultural and library complex, which opened on 17 September 2011.

Council Administration Building



Whilst architecturally insignificant, the façade of the building contained an interesting piece of public art. That was in the form of a tile mural by highly regarded artist Byram Mansell

In 1954 Mansell became a foundation member of the National (Art) Gallery Society of New South Wales; four years later he was elected a fellow of the Royal Society of British Artists, London, and the Royal Art Society of New South Wales.

Drawing on Aboriginal motifs, he executed numerous murals (some in ceramic tiles) for business firms and local councils in the early 1960s, as well as panels for the New South Wales Government Railways, the tanker, *Amanda Miller*, and the ferry, *Empress of Australia*.

In later years, Mansell's work inspired by Aboriginal motifs was criticised as not being rendered by someone of Aboriginal descent.

When the Council administration building was demolished to make way for The Concourse, only two small portions of the mural were salvaged. Part is housed in Chatswood Library with another part at the Willoughby Museum.

The Concourse Lower Podium

Hyper Dimensional Friends // Dai Ga Pang Yao

Potted history of The Concourse

The genesis for The Concourse was the need to provide a new library in Chatswood. The current library was old and not big enough.

In 1995, Willoughby Council established a Committee to solve the problem. The directive it was given was that any solution must not be at any cost to Council

After a couple of years of investigation, it became apparent that the objectives could not be met.

Council then established a Committee of the Whole to try and solve the problem.

At the time, Council owned a library site and carpark off Archer St next to the school; a Civic Centre (concert hall) and Bailey Centre (theatre) with an Administrative Centre next door, all fronting Victoria Avenue,

So the block was in the shape of an L



The initial community requests were that the Civic Hall and Bailey Centre be retained (as they were less than 50 years old). However, extensive investigation revealed that the cost to bring the buildings up to modern standards of air conditioning, ventilation and acoustics would likely be more than rebuilding

It was decided to investigate replacing all the buildings on the site

Early on, a decision had been made to relocate Council's administrative functions to commercial space in Victor St that Council owned. However, there were rumblings that these should be returned to the site (or at least the Council Chambers).

The dream list for the site was for a large library, larger and better Concert Hall and Theatre plus a flat-floored, much more open space and on-site parking.

Council appointed the architectural firm of Francis-Jones, Moreham and Thorpe (FJMT) to work up a design. Thorpe had been the Project Officer for the new Parliament House in Canberra. FJMT also brought on board Pamille Berg to consult on the public art aspects of the project.

FJMT soon came to the conclusion that placing everything wanted on the site may not be possible and toyed with the idea of a satellite site along Spring St.

However, a block of land on the corner of Anderson St and Victoria Avenue was put up on sale. This led to Council acquiring the site with the intention of selling off the old library/carpark site with development approval for a hotel (for concert visitors).

FJMT then took to work working on what was now a rectangular site.

With genius creativity, and a lot of shoehorning, FJMT were able to deliver:

- 1,000 seat concert hall
- 500 seat theatre
- Rehearsal centre and art space
- Large civic pavilion (multi-purpose space)
- 10,000 sq.m library
- 10,000sq.m of open space
- 250 car parking spots
- restaurants, cafés and retail stores
- Adjacent accommodation in the Silkart Suites
- The Urban Screen



The Concourse, a \$180 million project (one of the biggest local government projects of its time) was delivered 'on-time' and under budget without the need to increase residential rates. Its ongoing costs and maintenance is self-funded.

It is interesting that although the Urban Screen was envisaged as the location for digital art and culture in Chatswood, the façade of The Concourse has been successfully used for a number of years as part of Sydney's VIVID Festival.

Chatswood Library Foyer

Reflections Installation by Selina Springett



George William Brain was an Australian politician and member of the [New South Wales Legislative Assembly](#). He was the longest-serving member for [Willoughby](#), serving from 1943 until his retirement in 1968.

Brain was recognised as one of the primary forces in establishing the Free Library Movement in [New South Wales](#).

He moved to [Willoughby](#) in 1920 .

From 1918, he took an active interest in the Progress Association, P&C association and political parties and thus began his political career.

In the 1930s, Brain together with George Morris of Eastern Valley Way, Willoughby promoted the "free milk movement for school children", a scheme which relieved parents financially during the depression and ensured the health of generations of children.

Timeline of libraries in Willoughby

1910 Willoughby School of Arts Library established

1935 First meeting of the Free Library Movement in Willoughby School of Arts. Convened by Mr George Brain. Attendees were from 'nineteen public and quasi-public bodies' from within the Willoughby municipality.

1939 Free Library Act passed by NSW Parliament. This landmark legislation led to the provision of free public library services for the people of NSW.

1944 – 1972 A variety of Boys & Girls, Youth, Community and Children's libraries established across the Municipality

1972 Willoughby implements provisions of the Free Library Act and John Flint appointed as Willoughby's first Chief Librarian

1976 Building of new central library commences

1984 Shorelink Library network established

2011 Chatswood Library at The Concourse opens

2017 Council votes to leave Shorelink



Concourse Urban Screen



The original architectural drawing for the Concourse included a centerpiece structure that could be viewed from Spring Street as well as Victoria Avenue.

It was envisaged a round tower over a basement room.

Inside the tower was to be a spiral staircase descending to the reflective space below.

With the various iterations of the designs for the site, the tower was discarded for various reasons.

In place of the tower, a lift well to service the library and Civic Pavilion emerged above the landscape, leaving a rectangular shaped box (housing the lift mechanism) for all to see.

The race was then on to find an architectural treatment of the lift well.

Various ideas were floated including a bell tower, spotlight tower and the like.

Finally, the concept of an urban screen was proposed.

The concept resonated with the site. Whereas most of the site was given over to traditional live performance, the urban screen provides the opportunity to counter that with digital manifestations of art, culture and appropriate information.

Mills Lane

Paved Paradise

Video installation by EGO



Originally Mills Lane was known as Ferguson Lane.

Over the years there were a number of murals painted on walls in the lane,

Chatswood Chase

Originally opened in 1983 and was the first large scale shopping centre after the opening of Wallace Way and Lemon Grove in the 1980s.

The Chase originally opened in 1983 and was the first large scale shopping centre in Chatswood after the opening of Wallace Way and Lemon Grove in the 1980s. It was the home to the only [Myer](#) store in NSW until the early 1990s then briefly became [Grace Bros](#) before closing altogether. [David Jones](#) opened in the space vacated by Grace Bros. In 2003, Chatswood Chase was purchased by Centro (now [Vicinity Centres](#)).



The Chase was built on what once was a very large spring-fed swamp along Scotts Creek known as Aitkins Waterhole.

The water from the swamp flowed via Scotts Creek past what is now the East Chatswood Industrial Estate (near Bunnings),

This water helped sustain Willoughby's Tannery industry that flourished between 1869 and 1985 when there were 20 tannery sites in the area.

Willoughby Museum



The Willoughby District Historical Society (WDHS) was established in 1974

By 1981 the society commenced a search for a suitable location to establish a local history museum. The search for premises ended when a letter arrived from a solicitor in October 1988 advising that a Federation-style cottage, *Boronia*, at 58 Johnson Street, Chatswood, had been left to the Society by a member, the late Sonya N Kirkham.

The house had been built in 1913 for rental. It is of Federation style and largely intact

Following the massive task of cleaning up the premises and installing displays, the Willoughby Museum was formally opened in 1993.

As part of the Willoughby Visual Arts Biennial 2017, local photographer and Historical Society member, Rob Wilson has mounted an artistic exhibition titled: *City Surfaces*.