

## 2. Callicoma Walk

### Cherrybrook circuit

This is a circular walk from the Lakes Reserve in Cherrybrook, occasionally touching the street system.

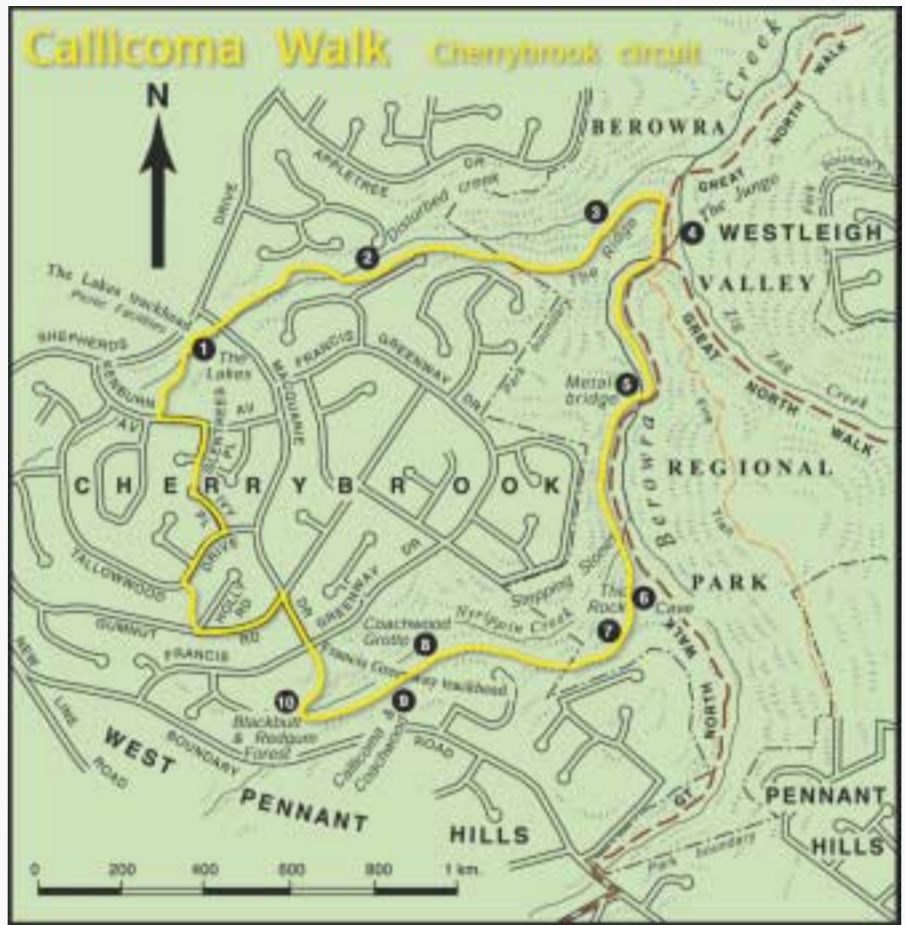
*Distance:* 5 km

*Grade:* Easy

*Time:* 3 hours

*Transport:* Single car or bus

*Track status:* Clearly defined. Official track, fire trail, public roads



### Synopsis

The Callicoma Walk, opened by the then mayor of Hornsby Shire, Councillor Mick Gallagher, on 9 April 1995, is one of the best-marked walks in the Park. Most of it is in the bush, with a final stretch through the streets of Cherrybrook. It is well signposted, and includes ten points of interest marked along the way by short green posts. These have been used as the subheadings of this description.

## CALLICOMA WALK GUIDE

### The Lakes to the Jungo

Marker 1. The Lakes

The walk starts at the Lakes Reserve at the corner of Shepherds and Macquarie Drives in the Greenway Estate, Cherrybrook.

The chain of ponds was created by damming the creek for the benefit of farmers. Today it is an attractive picnic and recreation area. As well as being a home to feral and native ducks, the water attracts such birds as Little Pied Cormorants, Swampheens and Kingfishers. Small birds (e.g. Eastern Yellow Robins, Superb Fairy-wrens) are common. It is also the home to a variety of exotic fishes.

The largest trees near the pond are Sydney Blue Gums *Eucalyptus saligna* thriving on deep soil derived from Wianamatta Shale.

Occasional Red Mahoganies *Eucalyptus resinifera* and Turpentines *Syncarpia glomulifera* occur. There are also *Casuarina*, as well as such undesirable exotics as willows and the papyrus water plant, both of which present serious management problems.

Take the pedestrian underpass under Macquarie Drive and enter the narrow strip of bush between the Cherrybrook Girl Guides hall and the creek, leading to the expanses of the Berowra Valley Regional Park. Follow the track signposts. After about 100 m join a fire trail on the edge of housing.

The tree species alter as the soil type changes. Sydney Blue Gum is replaced by Blackbutt *Eucalyptus pilularis*, many magnificent specimens being intermingled with Sydney Red Gum *Angophora costata*, Red Bloodwood *Corymbia gummifera* (formerly known as *Eucalyptus gummifera*) and Red Mahogany *Eucalyptus resinifera*.

In the understory of the forest are a purple pea flower False Sarsaparilla *Hardenbergia violacea*, a large red pea flower Red Kennedy Pea *Kennedia rubicunda* and Spiny-headed Mat-rush *Lomandra longifolia* clumps with long, strap-shaped leaves that can cut hands badly.

Vegetation near the creek is forest, opening to woodland on the valley sides. The trees are tall and straight with almost completely interlacing canopies. On the slopes the trees are shorter, with contorted branches and the canopy less complete.

Turn right off the fire trail after about 200 m more and cross the creek on ten concrete stepping cylinders. This creek was still, at time of publication, not officially named.

### Marker 2. Disturbed creek

A sewer vent and a raised inspection chamber mark a former water authority construction site for the sewer line, since converted to a flat grassed area. The dead trunk of a lightning-struck Blackbutt shows the danger of sheltering under tall trees during electrical storms.

Leave the grassed area at the far end and walk down hill. The concreted track on the left crosses the exposed sandstone creek bed and up the hill opposite through the housing up to Refuge Rock (See Walk 3: *Refuge Rock*). The walk leaves the fire trail, forking to the right, passing a single Broad-leaved Scribbly Gum *Eucalyptus haemastoma* then some dry, cave-like sandstone overhangs. Ferns are abundant in shady places down by the creek.

The track climbs out of the valley to a partly-sealed fire trail and characteristic cliff faces just below the 132 kV Dural to Carlingford transmission line. Skeleton Fork Ferns *Psilotum nudum*, one of the most primitive of land plants, have been seen to grow in one of the cracks of a rock in the cliff face to the right of the fire trail.

Continuing down the other side of the ridge, fork left after about 50 m and so downhill towards the Jungo. The fire trail on the right leads to a transmission line tower. By this stage the housing has at last receded from view.



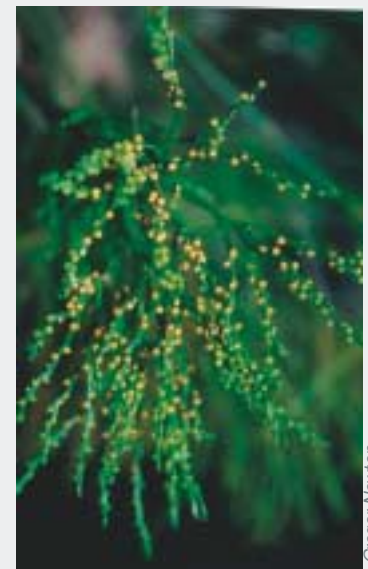
Paul Fredrickson

Lakes of Cherrybrook were landscaped in the 1980s by Jim Mitchell, then a Trustee of the Houera Natural Bushland Park, as part of an adjoining commercial medium density residential development.



Paul Fredrickson

Tall Blue Gums *Eucalyptus saligna* with the typical dark "stocking" and pale smooth trunks line the picnic area at the lakes.



Gregor Newton

The primitive Skeleton Fork Fern *Psilotum nudum* has been reported on this walk.

Gregor Newton



The Lesser Flannel Flower *Actinotus minor* carpets many areas of the Park like a profuse ground cover, but the flower is so small that many passers-by would not realise those tiny white "daisies" are actually a flannel flower.

Gregor Newton



The delicately detailed Slender Fice Flower *Pimelea linifolia*

Jeremy Steele



Sydney Red Gum *Angophora costata* shedding bark in company with Christmas Bush *Ceratopetalum gummiferum*

### Marker 3. Sandstone ridge

Dominant trees along this dry sandstone ridge section are Narrow-leaved Apple *Angophora bakeri*, small trees with fine drooping leaves and somewhat contorted branches. There are occasional Broad-leaved Scribbly Gums *Eucalyptus haemastoma*, and a plant understorey of *Banksia*, pine-leaved Geebung *Persoonia pinifolia*, Slender Fice Flowers *Pimelea linifolia*, egg and bacon pea flowers of *Dillwynia retorta*. The Lesser Flannel Flowers *Actinotus minor* grow profusely in the understorey, but the flowers are so small that they may not immediately be recognised as perfectly formed flannel flowers. A few minutes after the No 3 marker and perhaps half an hour after starting, the main Benowie Track, part of the Great North Walk joins the route from the left. There are many side tracks. Proceed straight on, down the concrete fire trail to the creek. Grass trees *Xanthorrhoea* species are common, under the Sydney Red Gums *Angophora costata*.

Immediately after crossing Berowra Creek you reach the Jungo picnic area.

### The Jungo to the stepping stones

#### Marker 4. The Jungo

#### WALK 1: JUNGLO AND WALK 2: CALLICOMA OVERLAP STARTS

Take the fire trail to the right and follow the Boundary Road branch of the Great North Walk up the slope westwards. Continue up the hill, leaving the fire trail when it sweeps away to the left.

The walking track goes straight on, dropping down to Berowra Creek beside a rock overhang. In the dimness of a narrow gully, almost rainforest, are Coachwood *Ceratopetalum apetalum*, Black Wattle *Callicoma serratifolia*, and Water Gum *Tristaniopsis laurina*, which block out much of the sky. The Umbrella Fern *Sticherus flabellatus* lines the track and mossy boulders lie in the creek. The track follows the creek, twisting and turning among the rocks.

Follow along beside Berowra Creek, diminishing now in its upper reaches. The track rises steadily then descends by a flight of 25 log steps back to the creek bank. A few hundred metres of shady walking in near-rainforest conditions mostly beside the stream leads to marker 5 of the Callicoma Walk, then to a fallen tree forming a log bridge and about 10 m later a narrow single-person metal bridge, which you cross.

### Metal bridge

#### Callicoma Walk Marker 5

The most common tree here is Coachwood with its distinctive grey blotches or lichen spots on the trunks. Coachwood's close relative, Christmas Bush *Ceratopetalum gummiferum*, is also present. Turpentine *Syncarpia glomulifera* can be seen from the bridge.

Long-term effects of weathering on the Hawkesbury sandstone of the Park have resulted in waterfalls and gullies. In the water under the bridge you can see evidence of this process in the grains of sand that are gradually transported away to cause siltation, as at the Jungo downstream.

About 150 m further along the track, on the right, is a natural rock shelter large enough for a dozen adults standing.

Continue along until, just after another natural log crossing, Berowra Creek joins Nyripping Creek, which the path then follows. Almost immediately afterwards, cross Nyripping Creek by means of log steps and five vertical concrete cylindrical stepping stones.

Twining Guinea Flower *Hibbertia dentata*, a climber with large yellow flowers, grows near the creek.

**WALK 1: JUNGO AND WALK 2: CALLICOMA OVERLAP ENDS**

**Stepping stones to Francis Greenway trackhead**

After crossing the stepping stones take the right-hand fork (leaving Walk 1: *Jungo*, which goes straight ahead, following the Great North Walk sign). The track climbs the ridge with Nyripping Creek on the right, and generally follows the valley practically to the creek's source.

Almost at once, veer left away from the creek. There is a complete change in the plant types and in the surrounding environment. The lush damp forest is left behind and the climb rises by steps to dry terrain. A modest rock overhang serves as a marker for the impressive sandstone country that follows.

**Marker 6. Cave**

In minutes a much larger rock cave is reached, perhaps 6 m high. This massive unsupported overhang with its golden sculpted and layered interior could be imagined as a backdrop to a stage from which to praise nature —to a mute audience of grass trees, geebung and *Banksia*.

The occasional contorted Blackbutt, perched worn and twisted on the rock above the path, testifies to endurance in the face of adversity.

Next, a third rock overhang, about 15 m long, shelters the path. All around are boulders, many virtually rectangular prisms like playthings of trolls.

**Marker 7. Rock**

At this sandstone-dominated stage of the track the plants become typical xerophytes, dry plants with sclerophyllous or hard leaves including large grass trees, *Banksia*, Needle Bushes *Hakea sericea* and *Grevillea*. Beside the track on the right a boulder has slumped over, the result of seepage down the slope over the ages.

The path soon descends from the sandstone uplands. It crosses a tributary watercourse to the main Nyripping Creek. A tall vent and pipe mark sewerage operations that will feature along the path for the next kilometre.

Just after veering round the top of a watercourse there is an 8 m high black waterfall rock face on the left beside the track, behind a constructed sandstone torrent calming wall. On the right the creek valley is severely eroded. Housing reappears on the rise on the left as the track enters the return tongue of bushland between suburban



Gregor Newton

Twining Guinea Flower *Hibbertia dentata*



Jamie Wright

Black Wattle *Callicoma serratifolia*



John Noble

False Sarsparilla *Hardenbergia violacea*



Gregor Newton

The aptly named Needle Bush *Hakea sericea* is an attractive shrub with very sharp hardened points on its leaves to discourage would-be foliage feeders.



Typical coachwood country, dappled sunlight, mosses and ferns - calm, quiet and peaceful.

### Francis Greenway trackhead back to the Lakes

The rest of the walk is mainly through suburban streets, as far as possible traffic-free, back to the starting point.

1. Proceed straight across Francis Greenway Drive at the roundabout, into Macquarie Drive.
2. Turn first left into Gumnut Road.
3. Avoid taking the Holly Road cul-de-sac after passing a large estate on the right; enter the park with play equipment on the other side of Holly Road.
4. At the end of the park turn right into Tallowood Avenue.
5. Take the second left into Ivy Place cul-de-sac.
6. Take the concrete path in the turning circle, between the houses on the right, to Russian Place.
7. Cross Russian Place into Glentrees Place and turn left at the T-junction with Kenburn Avenue.
8. After 75 m turn right into the top end of the Lakes Reserve.
9. Cross the creek by a timber bridge at the top of the upper pond. This lake is linked to the larger lower pond by a cascade.
10. Cross the lake by a second timber bridge to return to the start of the walk.

developments. One hundred metres later follow the Callicoma walk to the right, plunging back into the forest, to Marker 8.

### Marker 8. Coachwood grotto

A short side track to the right leads down into a shady glade free of undergrowth, featuring an almost pure stand of Coachwood *Ceratopetalum apetalum*, readily identified by grey blotches of lichens on the trunks. On a bench you can rest for a moment to contemplate the curved rock face and mossy boulders through the slim trees, on the other side of Nyripping Creek below.

Soon after, a substantial stormwater mollifier—consisting of a rock wall below a stormwater drain, itself below a road embankment—reveals local government work to preserve the bushland in the face of urban effects. (In 2001 this structure was clogged with sand eroded from the areas above.)

### Marker 9. Callicoma and Coachwood

This section of the Callicoma Walk along the upper reaches of Nyripping Creek features remnant temperate rainforest plants. Black Wattle, Coachwood, Christmas Bush, Lilly Pilly (*Acmena* and *Syzygium*) and Turpentine grow in the surrounding bush.

Continue alongside the creek, which is below to the right. Yellow sewer inspection covers dot the way, each identified with a painted number for inspection by helicopter. Fork right when a house looms up on the left, to return to the serenity of the dense tree canopy.

A large smooth-barked Sydney Red Gum *Angophora costata* lies across the creek at the sewer cover. Although the track is dense the sound of traffic is close, a trickling waterfall competing with the rush of invisible vehicles in this otherwise idyllic setting.

At sewer lid 22 the track doubles back on itself, where an unofficial path on the left leads to Boundary Road. The main track crosses the broad exposed sandstone creek bed on stepping cylinders, just below which is a pool and the waterfall cascade heard earlier.

### Marker 10. Blackbutt and Red Gum forest

In the final bush stretch, pass a great Blackbutt *Eucalyptus pilularis* on the left on leaving the creek bed, and proceed uphill. At the top of the rise, join the fire trail and continue, turning left away from it 50 m later for the final climb through the Sydney Red Gums *Angophora costata*, and Blackbutts. Houses now make their presence felt all around as you reach a small park and Francis Greenway Drive.