

# Kiama Coast Walk

## Sculpture by the sea

The sea is an amazing force. It dissolves rock and carves out dramatic shapes along the coast.

If you look across to the cliffs you can see a sea cave in the cliff base under the remnant rainforest.

It is an example of the way the sea has weathered seams of volcanic lava which flowed along the cracks and fissures in the sandstone.

background: Aerial view of the sea caves at Kiama.  
Photo by Colin Douch  
inset: Detail of sea caves. Photo by Michael van Ewijk



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## Cave formation

This area is made up of an ancient layer of sandstone



During a volcanic period lava pushed its way through a fissure in the sandstone



The lava eroded faster than the sandstone forming a deep cave.



The roof of the cave collapsed onto the rock platform



# Kiama Coast Walk

## A marsh meadow

In 1821, William Smith received a 600 acre grant, right here at Werri Beach. He was probably a little disappointed to find that a large section of his holding was a large, salty swamp!

Much of the lowlands of his property would have been covered in dense stands of swamp oak. The higher elevations would have been part of a massive cedar-rich rainforest known as the Long Brush.

*Casuarina glauca* or swamp oak once surrounded Werri Lagoon. There are remnant trees on the southern shores of the lagoon.



The property was bought by a Scot, Robert Miller, in 1835 after he migrated from Renfrewshire, near Glasgow. The homestead of the 'Renfrew Park Estate' was built in 1862. Now shrouded in its 1930s closed-in verandah, the homestead remains a dominant feature of the district.





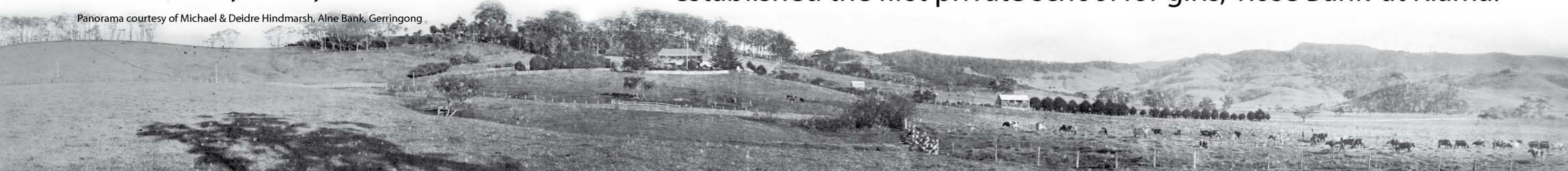
# Hindmarsh Park



Michael Hindmarsh (above left) arrived in NSW in 1822. He married Cecelia Sophia Rutter (above right) in 1826. In 1827 he was granted a square mile estate which he named 'Alne Bank'. Cecelia had 14 children; their fourth child, Michael Nesbit Hindmarsh, became mayor of Kiama eight times!

BELOW: In 1848, Michael Hindmarsh built Alne Bank — a late Georgian house with cedar fittings and furniture. It has been the home of the Hindmarsh family for six generations. It features a stone barn, a family cemetery and a rainforest.

Panorama courtesy of Michael & Deidre Hindmarsh, Alne Bank, Gerringong.

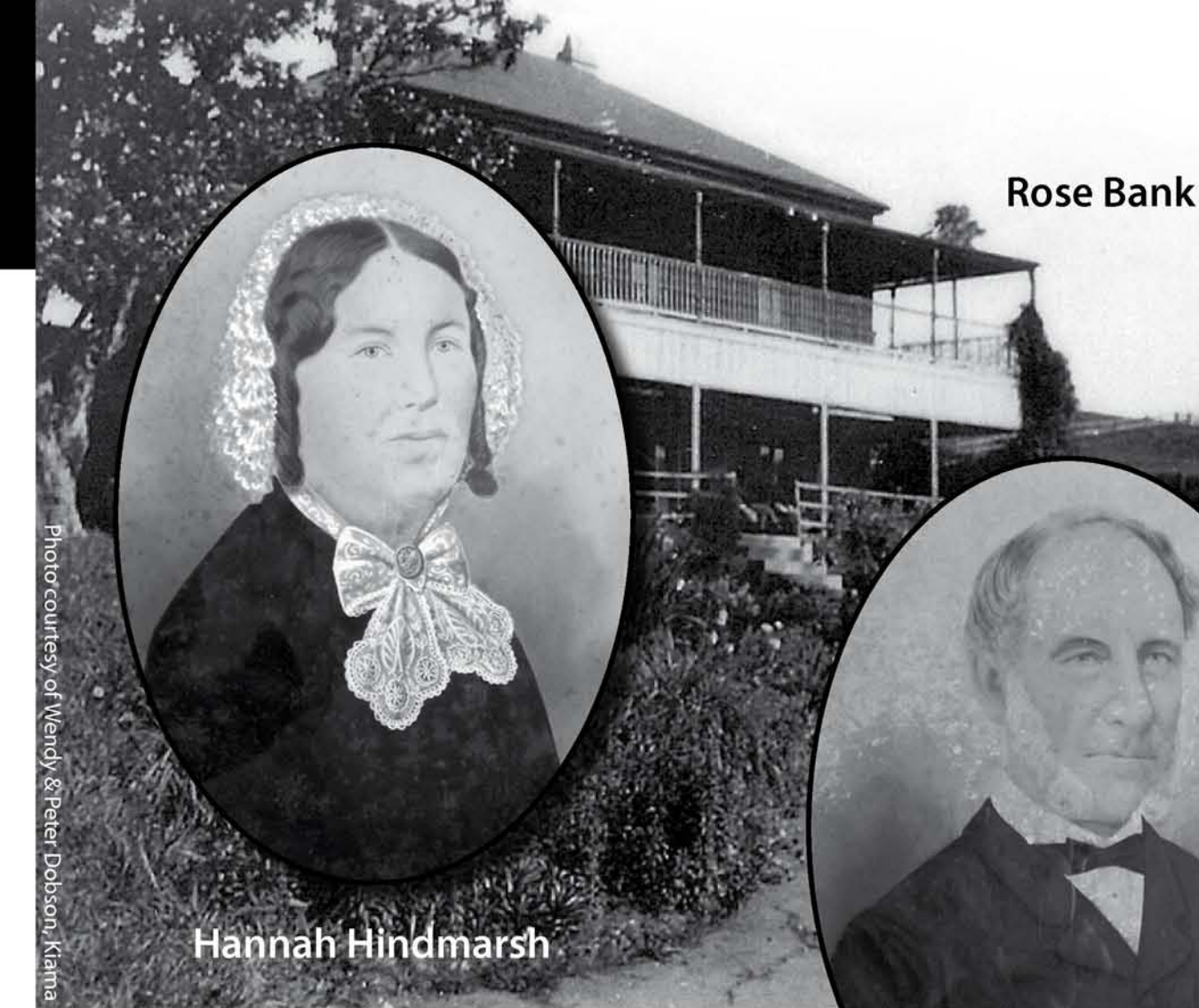


## Founding orphans of Kiama

The original Hindmarsh family of the Kiama area were instrumental in its early development. Their ties to England diminished after the death of their parents and they took the bold step of establishing a new life in the colony of NSW.

Michael Hindmarsh helped establish the Illawarra Agricultural Society and the Kiama Show Society as well as availing himself as a travelling magistrate, using his influence to have roads commissioned, and pioneering agricultural and forestry industries.

Michael's brother, George, arrived in 1839 and became the first postmaster of Kiama. Their sister, Hannah, arrived in 1845 and established the first private school for girls, 'Rose Bank' at Kiama.



Rose Bank

Hannah Hindmarsh



### George Hindmarsh

All portraits courtesy of Wesley & Vicky Hindmarsh, Ivy Mount, Gerringong

Generations of Hindmarshes established business in the Kiama area including Neil and Douglas Hindmarsh who owned the Kiama Motor Works in Terralong Street.





# Historic terraces

## Timber terraces for stone workers

Dating from 1886, the terrace houses in Collins Street were built for quarry workers and their families. The burgeoning demand for blue metal for roads, railways and trams saw a rapid influx of quarry workers to the area.

The work done by quarrymen was arduous and dangerous. Accidents were common and their living conditions did not help their recovery. *Oh yeah people got sick from the dust. I swallowed a fair bit of it. I used to wash it down with a few beers after work! The blokes got paid by the bag in the old days. They used knapping hammers to break up the [blue] metal. They'd knap all day.* Wal Carson, Kiama 2007

By the 1960s the terraces were in such a state of disrepair they were almost demolished. Since then they have been classified by the National Trust and placed under a permanent conservation order.

right: Quarry workers' cottages in Devonshire St, Kiama, courtesy of Wollongong City Library

below: Workers at Bombo blue metal quarry, courtesy of Weston Print





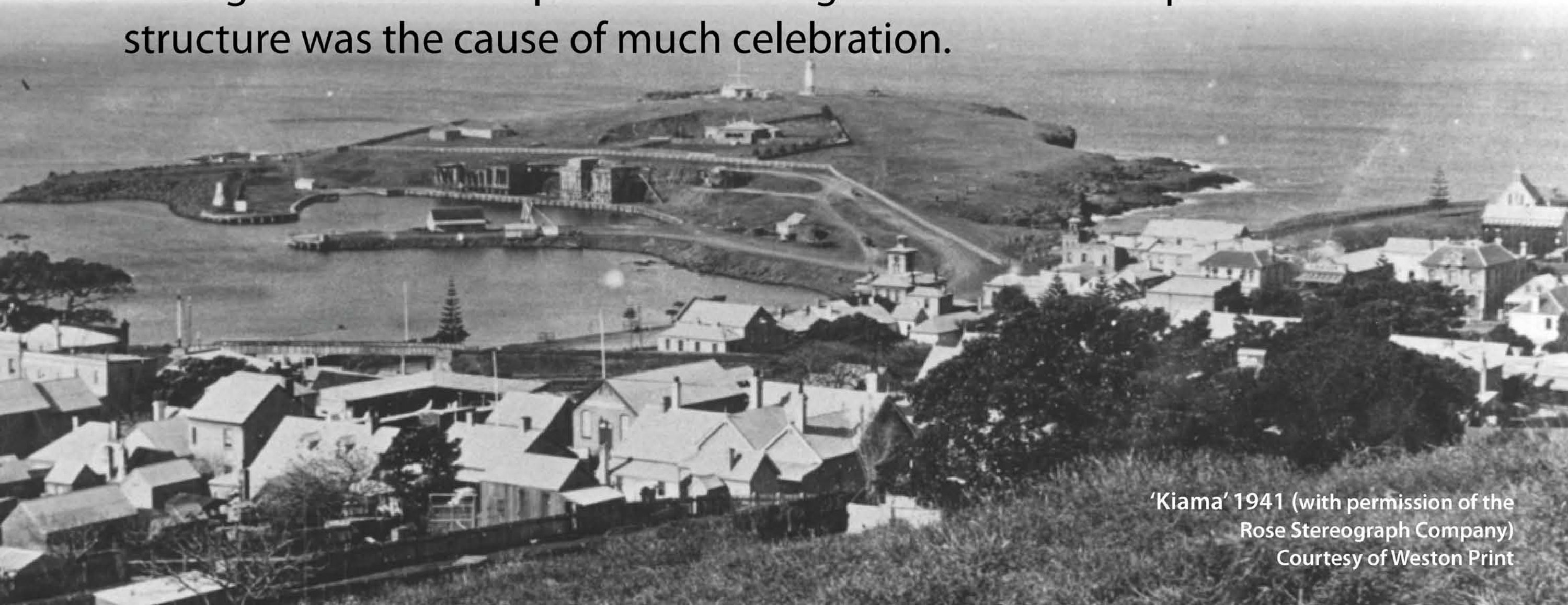
# Kiama Lighthouse

## Avoiding the rocks

The Kiama Lighthouse was completed in 1887, 11 years after the creation of the Robertson Basin. It was designed in the Colonial Architects' Office by Edward Moriarty. The light had to be imported from England and the completion of the structure was the cause of much celebration.



above: 'Storm Bay Kiama' Samuel Cocks Collection  
Courtesy of Weston Print



'Kiama' 1941 (with permission of the  
Rose Stereograph Company)  
Courtesy of Weston Print



The light improved maritime safety along the rocky coastline that had claimed numerous vessels in the preceding years. It was automated in 1920.



'Lighthouse Kiama' Samuel Cocks Collection  
Courtesy of Weston Print

The lighthouse is part of a network of aids to navigation around the Australian coastline maintained by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority.



# Minnamurra Wetland

## A place of plenty

The local Aboriginal meaning for Minnamurra is 'plenty of fish'. Many birds, reptiles, mammals and aquatic species depend on this natural area for food and shelter.

Minnamurra Wetland has State environmental significance and is surrounded by a great diversity of habitat types including:

- Endangered ecological communities such as Illawarra Subtropical/Littoral Rainforest, Swamp Oak Floodplain Forest and Coastal Saltmarsh; and
- Mangroves and a tidal estuary.

A major threat to these habitats is weeds which compete for space, light, soil nutrients and water.



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The Minnamurra River, running along this private property boundary, holds a rich history for Aboriginal groups who once camped along the river's edge.

The forests along the river were valuable sources of food including swamp wallabies and possums.

A number of middens and burial sites still exist in this area.

Gainsborough Chase Minnamurra River Wetland Landcare are caring for this land. Much work is being done to regenerate this area by removing weeds and replanting with locally native species.

To get involved please contact the Landcare Community Support Officer on 4229 7526 for details of working days.

This section of Minnamurra Wetland is privately owned and entry is only permitted under supervision.

This project is supported by Landcare Illawarra, through funding from the Australian Government's Caring for our Country.

ILLUSTRATION: Sea eagle by local Aboriginal artist Markeeta Freeman from Boolarng Nangamal Aboriginal Art & Culture Studio.

# Bombo Headland

## A transformation

Bombo Headland or the 'Boneyard' was once a plentiful place where the Dharawal and other Aboriginal groups gathered to catch and collect marine life.

With the onset of colonisation, the headland was stripped of vegetation and became a loading dock for the blue metal industry. While middens remain here, sadly decades of quarrying destroyed most of the remnants of Aboriginal culture and history.

After a substantial fight by a local activist group to save the headland from further quarrying, it was declared a State Park in 1974.



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In 1988 Bombo Headland Landcare took up the challenge of rehabilitating this degraded site. This small and committed group of local residents began planting local native coastal species to replace the many weeds.

Since the transformation of the headland many animal species have returned. The area is now visited by blue wrens, black-cockatoos, sea eagles, echidnas, red-bellied black snakes and even swamp wallabies.

Bombo Headland Landcare meet regularly for volunteer work days. To get involved please contact the Landcare Community Support Officer on 4229 7526 for more details.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY LOCAL ABORIGINAL ARTISTS  
FROM BOOLARNG NANGAMAI ABORIGINAL ART  
AND CULTURE STUDIO:

Sea eagle by Markeeta Freeman.

Red-bellied black snake by Debbie Callaghan.

Swamp wallaby by Richard Campbell.

PHOTO: The Boneyard, courtesy of  
Kiama Municipal Council.

This project is supported by Landcare Illawarra,  
through funding from the Australian  
Government's Caring for our Country.

# Little Blowhole Landcare Site

## Welcome to Dharawal Country

*Bereewagal, - naa nlya. - Yura ngura dyl ngurang gurugal*  
People who come from afar, I see all of you.  
Aboriginal people camped here at this place long ago.

*Ngoon dyalgala nlya, ngoon bamaradbanga nl.*  
We embrace all of you, we open the door to all of you.

*Ngoon - mari ngurang - nlya mudang yura ngurra*  
We lend this place to all of you to live while we sleep.

*Dyl nga nl nura*  
Here, I see my country

Steven Russell of the Dharawal Nation

Bush regeneration began here in 2005. It has been carried out by Little Blowhole Community Landcare in collaboration with local Aboriginal people.

Work here expresses respect for the Aboriginal Dreaming, and beliefs about the connection between plants, animals, people, and their relationship to land.

The contemporary philosophy of Deep Ecology reflects the Dreaming understandings of unity and balance, and also inspires the work here. The earth, mountains and rivers, sky and clouds, sun and moon are all seen as part of the sacred healing space where all living things are nurtured.

For thousands of years the 'Saltwater People' made seasonal pilgrimages to fish, hunt, and gather food and bush medicine along this coast.



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Boolarng Nangamai



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**Bush tucker (such as pigface and native spinach) and other native plants such as wattle, lomandra and banksia are being restored to this place.**

**This project is supported by Landcare Illawarra, through funding from the Australian Government's Caring for our Country.**

**ILLUSTRATION: Sea eagle by local Aboriginal artist Markeeta Freeman, from Boolarng Nangamai Aboriginal Art & Culture Studio.**



# Werri Beach Dunes

## Repairing the dunes

**During urban development most of the original vegetation, including rainforest, was cleared from the dunes.**

Bitou Bush was first planted to protect the dunes against erosion during major storms. With an increase in knowledge of the importance of coastal environments, work started in 1992 to stabilise and revegetate the dunes with local native species.

The Werri Beach dunes have been revegetated with coastal banksias, tea trees and wattles. These plants provide a protective buffer zone between the beach and residential area.



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The Werri Beach dunes and Werri Lagoon were important gathering places for the Dharawal and several other Aboriginal groups and middens have been found in this area.

This native vegetation provides important habitat for local fauna including echidnas, yellow-breasted robins, blue-tongued lizards and red-bellied black snakes.

At the northern end of the dunes Werri Lagoon provides vital habitat for birds and aquatic life. The lagoon is an extensive lowland swamp and an estuarine wetland of State significance.

Werri Beach Dunecare and other volunteer groups have contributed many hours rehabilitating this important site by removing weeds, maintaining native vegetation and hosting community planting days.

To get involved please contact the Landcare Community Support Officer on 4229 7526 for details of working days.

This project is supported by Landcare Illawarra, through funding from the Australian Government's Caring for our Country.

ILLUSTRATION: Red-bellied black snake by local Aboriginal artist Debbie Callaghan, from Boolarnng Nangamal Aboriginal Art & Culture Studio.



# Little Blowhole

## *Gurrungutch* the Great Giant Eel

*Gurrungutch*, the Great Giant Eel, is known by different names to many Aboriginal people.

*Gurrungutch* dwelled in nearby caves and is associated with the blowholes in Kiama, as well as with the Shoalhaven River, Minnamurra River, Lake Illawarra, Windang and other areas.

*Bonara* and *Jenora* were sisters. They were told not to swim too far north of Bombo Headland in a place now known as The Gap, as this was where *Gurrungutch* used to clean and remove his old skin.

The sisters ignored the advice and went into the *gadthu* (water) at The Gap. When they were caught by *Gurrungutch*, they screamed for their *babamurra* (father) who was *maranji* (fishing) nearby.

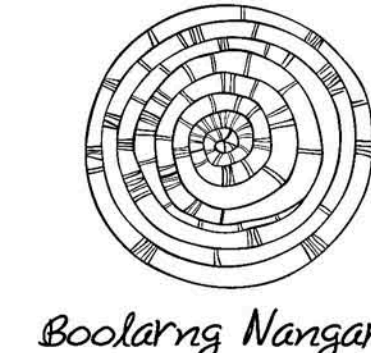
Their *babamurra* went towards the screaming and saw *Gurrungutch* with his daughters. He spoke to *Gurrungutch*, pleading for the girls' to be forgiven.

Ignoring his pleas, *Gurrungutch* spun around and around, and turned the sisters into stone with his breath. Today *Bonara* and *Jenora* are known as Cathedral Rocks and are located just north of Bombo Headland.

Aboriginal people named nearby Bonara and Jenora falls in memory of the two girls. The waterfalls represent tears of sorrow. It is said that when the waterfalls are in full flow, *Gurrungutch* is about.



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Little Blowhole Landcare in partnership with Boolarng Nangamai Aboriginal Art & Culture Studio proudly welcome you to this peaceful place.

*This Dreaming story has been passed down to me by generations of my Aboriginal elders. Tharawal Illawarra man, Aaron Broad*

MURAL DESIGN: **Jodie Stewart and Aaron Broad**

SCULPTURAL CHAIR: **Noel Lonesborough, Debbie Callaghan and Kelli Ryan**

**Thank you to all volunteers and partners who are involved in making our environment a healthy place.**

**This project is supported by Landcare Illawarra, through funding from the Australian Government's Caring for our Country.**





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too precious to lose

# the Minnamurra mangroves



Doyle Green



Mangroves on the Minnamurra River Estuary

Doyle Green

## THE RIVER

*Once upon the Minnamurra  
As the tide was coming in  
There beneath the shining water  
Pretty little fishes swim  
Boats are rocking on the river  
Roughly sometimes, gently too,  
No one yet has spoilt this river  
None have yet and nor can you*

By Judy Nelson (now Mrs Judy Dau of Tumut), 1943. Judy (then only eight years old) was inspired to write the poem when she was visiting family friends at Minnamurra.



Doyle Green

Mangrove seedling

The Minnamurra River estuary supports the largest area of mangrove forest between the Georges River and the Shoalhaven River. This mangrove forest, made up of grey and river mangroves, is a valuable resource and provides a number of ecosystem benefits.

The shallows around mangroves provide habitat for a number of aquatic animals. They act as protective nurseries for many species of fish such as bream and mullet where they can find shelter and food. Mangroves provide homes for animals such as crabs and molluscs that eat the decaying mangrove litter. Numerous waterbirds also feed amongst the mangroves.

Mangrove forests act as buffers between the land and the estuary. They trap and filter sediments and other pollutants from runoff, thus helping to maintain water quality. They help protect the banks from erosion by slowing tidal flows and dissipating wave energy, and their roots bind the soil together.

The strange fingers sticking up out of the mudflats are the aerial roots of mangroves. Because they live in waterlogged ground, these roots help the trees to 'breathe'. So, take care if you walk amongst the mangroves, you don't want to tread on their lungs!



Doyle Green

Crabs feed on the rotting debris around mangroves at low tide



Doyle Green

White-faced heron patiently waits for an opportunity to catch a fish





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# helping to conserve our shrinking saltmarsh



Depth Green



Saltmarsh on the Minnamurra River Estuary

The Minnamurra River estuary contains extensive areas of saltmarsh, an endangered ecological community in NSW. Saltmarshes consist of a variety of salt tolerant small plants that receive occasional tidal inundation. They usually occur between mangroves and the dry land boundary. Like mangroves, saltmarshes are a vital part of the estuarine food chain and need protection.

Saltmarshes are home to a variety of invertebrates including crabs, molluscs and insects. These animals provide tasty meals for fish such as yellowfin bream when the saltmarsh is inundated by high tides, as well as food for birds, bats and other animals. Some water birds that utilise saltmarsh for food and habitat migrate from as far away as China!

One recent discovery is that crabs living in saltmarshes release large quantities of larvae when inundated by the tides. The larvae can make up to 90% of the diet of some species of fish in the estuary. This makes the saltmarsh zone a valuable source of food for many small and juvenile fish species, which in turn are food for other larger fish species including those valued by fishers.

A lack of awareness of the importance of saltmarshes has led to their decline in NSW estuaries. Saltmarsh plants are vulnerable to a range of disturbances including trampling, dumping of garden wastes, changes to tidal inundation, and grazing.



Semaphore crab  
(*Heloecius cordiformis*)



Samphire  
(*Sarcocornia quinqueflora*)



Saltcouch  
(*Sporobolus virginicus*)

What can you do to keep the

## Minnamurra River estuary magnificent

- Avoid trampling on the mangrove regrowth and tread carefully in saltmarsh areas.
- Put your garden clippings and weeds into your green bin. Don't dump it in the bush — exotic plants can take root and smother native plants.
- Put rubbish in the bins, or take it away with you. Fishers please dispose of bait bags and tangled line in the bins provided.
- Help reduce the spread of the noxious marine algae *Caulerpa taxifolia* by avoiding outbreak areas. Inspect and clean your boat and gear thoroughly with freshwater and dispose of any *Caulerpa taxifolia* fragments in a sealed bag in the bin.



*Caulerpa taxifolia*: Please report any new sightings of *Caulerpa* to NSW DPI's hotline (02) 4916 3877 or email [aquatic-pests@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:aquatic-pests@dpi.nsw.gov.au).



an Egyptian legacy



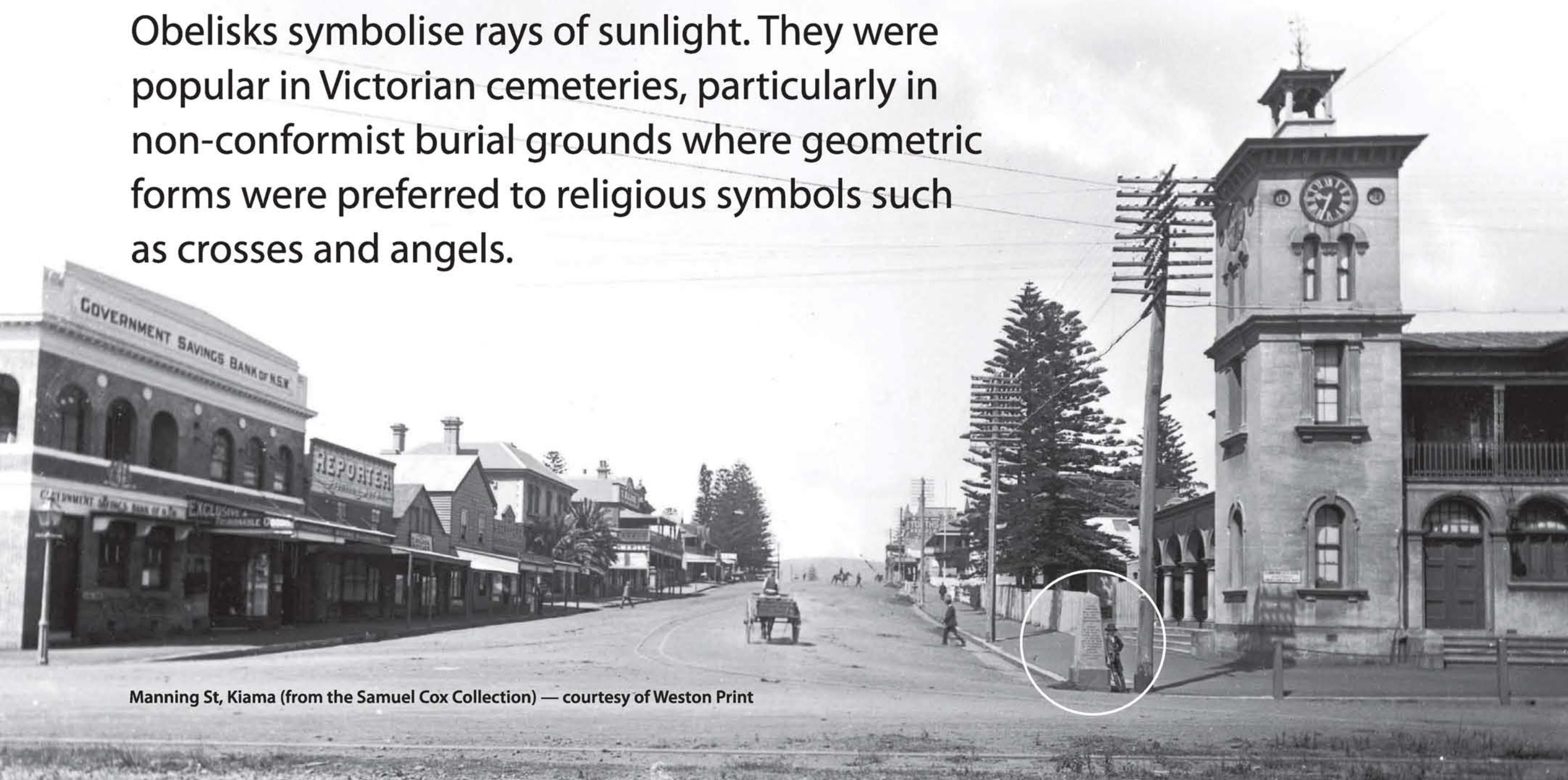
## Kiama's Obelisk

**This sandstone survey obelisk was originally installed in 1861. It was the reference point from which all distances in the district were to be measured.**

In 1959 the obelisk was hit by a runaway truck prompting the council to relocate it to a safer position in Terralong Street.

Obelisks symbolise rays of sunlight. They were popular in Victorian cemeteries, particularly in non-conformist burial grounds where geometric forms were preferred to religious symbols such as crosses and angels.

OBELISKS were first seen in Egypt during the time of the Old Kingdom (circa 2650–2134 BC). The earliest excavated obelisk is at Abu Gharob and was built around 2500 BC. It is a massive, fairly squat pyramid set upon a high plinth and was the focal point of the sun temple.



Manning St, Kiama (from the Samuel Cox Collection) — courtesy of Weston Print



clearing the coast

# heritage lost and found



**The Kiama area was once dominated by a vast rainforest known as the Long Brush. Around Werri Lagoon the rainforest gave way to large stands of swamp oak. It must have been an extraordinary place, with its impressive trees and abundant wildlife.**

*I found myself as it were ... in the midst of a scene of nature which surpassed all I had seen before in luxuriant beauty and wildness and the almost tropical novelty of the forms of the plants.*

WILLIAM STANLEY JEVONS CIRCA 1854-59

By the time the cedar-getters arrived in the Kiama area in 1815, the local Aboriginal people would have been aware of the impending changes to their way of life. They had excellent communication networks with Aboriginal groups in Sydney and they had already encountered explorers and escaped convicts in the area. Strange and deadly diseases would have already arrived and the spread of the destruction of the bushland was certainly feared.

As land grants were taken up, the traditional owners were forced from their lands. Before long the magnificent forests were cleared to provide timber for the new colony, expose the volcanic soils for crops such as potatoes and wheat, and clear the way for dairy farms.

Along the walk you may be reminded of days past, or you may just enjoy the rolling hills, boulder beaches, sea caves, rock platforms and exposed cliffs that create the dramatic scenery. From May to June and September to November, the walk provides great vantage points for whale watching.



above: Cedar-getters in the Kiama area (date unknown)

*... It was covered both along the mountainside and on the lowlands of the coast with the most dense woods met with in this country. The cedar-brushes are the most distinguishing feature. In one of them there are at this time about two-hundred pairs of whip-sawyers planking down the trees into great junks of from one hundred to a thousand feet. These fellows are just as wild a set as is anywhere to be met with among white men. Almost every pair has one or two bushrangers (i.e. runaway convict) working for them ...*

from 'Religio Christi' by Alexander Harris, 1830

background: Aerial view of part of the Kiama Coast Walk

Please take care on the walk and never leave children unattended.



# Kiama Coast Walk

## Layer cake

Underneath your feet is an amazing rock layer cake! The top layer is known as 'Blow Hole Latite'. This rock is volcanic and is the result of lava flows during the Permian period, about 225–270 million years ago.

The layer beneath is known as 'Westley Park Sandstone Member'. It was formed in a shallow marine environment from sand-sized sediment derived from the erosion of volcanoes off-shore. The sandstone contains rich fossil records of marine life from the Permian period.

Aerial photo showing distinct geological layers of this area. Photo by Colin Douch



The rock platforms are dissected by dykes. Dykes are lava flows that force their way through fissures in existing rocks. As sandstone tends to crack in straight lines, there are interesting formations where the dykes have weathered faster than the sandstone, leaving straight crevices in the rock platforms. Photos by Michael van Ewijk





welcome to the

# Kiama Coast Walk

Blowhole Point to Kiama Heights



This section of the Kiama Coast Walk winds south along the coast to Kiama Heights. Except for one small section, the walk is contained within the series of reserves that hug the coast.

Highlights of the walk include spectacular coastal views from numerous vantage points, great beach walks along Surf, Kendalls and Easts beaches and the thrill of the Little Blowhole. Look out for whales in winter and spring as they make their annual migrations.

You may continue further south to Werri Lagoon, Gerringong (7.3 km) via Loves Bay.

In some sections there are no formed tracks and visitors need to exercise extreme caution near steep slopes, cliff edges and rock platforms. Children should be supervised at all times.

## Blowhole Point to Kiama Heights

Distance: 11 km return

Time: 5 hr return

Grade: Moderate (Class 4)

Please wear sturdy shoes and a sun hat. Take plenty of water and food. Toilet facilities are only available here at Kiama Visitor Centre. Please note that parts of this area are very exposed and subject to strong winds. Please keep dogs on leashes.



The walk was initiated by the Walking Tracks and Cycleways Committee of Kiama Council. The walk is managed by Kiama Council.

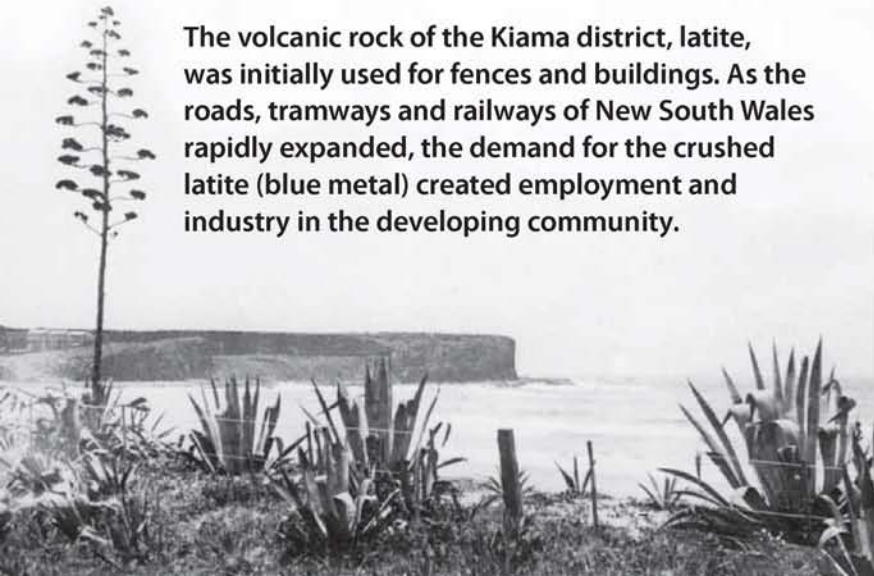
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# Kiama Coast Walk

## Bombo Headland Quarry

The volcanic rock of the Kiama district, latite, was initially used for fences and buildings. As the roads, tramways and railways of New South Wales rapidly expanded, the demand for the crushed latite (blue metal) created employment and industry in the developing community.



With the booming trade in blue metal, quarries opened up at sites outside Kiama such as Bombo. A jetty was completed at Bombo in 1882 and steam-powered crushing machines installed at the quarry.

In the early days, many of the quarry workers at Bombo lived in tents. Clouds of dust regularly shrouded the camp in a gritty haze. A number of fatal accidents in the first few years and the reputation of the sole drinking establishment gave the place a bad name.

The blue metal industry remained the major employer in the district until the 1960s.

left: Bombo Headland before quarrying dramatically changed its shape. The latite at Kiama overlies a layer of sandstone. The contact between the volcanic rock flow over the sandstone can still be clearly seen near the base of the headland. Photo courtesy of Wollongong City Library

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above: Before the jetty was built, horse teams had to cart blue metal to Kiama Harbour. A number of carts pulled their horses into the harbour where they drowned. Photo courtesy of Weston Print





# Kiama Coast Walk

## Casting stones

Beaches are landforms that are shaped by waves. They vary greatly depending on which way they face, and what kind of loose sediments are available for dumping!



The little beaches between Werri Beach and Loves Bay are all boulder beaches made up of eroded rocks from rock platforms and headlands.

The size of the rocks on the beaches reflect the power of the surf. The higher the energy the larger the particles hurled up on the shore. Boulders or rocks are deposited when the energy conditions are very high.

Loves Beach. Photos by Michael van Ewijk



Bivalve fossils

Sediment derived from eroding volcanoes covered this area, trapping the marine life that lived here millions of years ago. If you look closely, you may be able to see marine fossils in the cliffs and rock platforms, and washed up on the beaches. Please respect our natural heritage by not removing fossils.





# Kiama Coast Walk

## Cathedral Rocks

This distinctive latite rock formation has lured sightseers since the 1820s.

The rocks are remnants of the edge of a lava flow that has been eroded by the sea. The latite, commonly known as columnar basalt, owes its name to the characteristic vertical columns that are formed during the unique cooling process of this type of lava.

This picture of Cathedral Rocks was painted by Augustus Earle in 1827. Earle was an intrepid traveller who painted portraits, landscapes, and genre scenes of colonial and shipboard life.

He arrived in Hobart Town on 18 January, 1825 after being rescued from Tristan da Cunha in the South Atlantic by the *Admiral Cockburn*. By 31 October, Earle was in Sydney. He travelled widely to sketch landscapes and Aboriginal life and in 1827 he visited the Illawarra district.

Watercolour by Augustus Earle 1793-1838,  
'View of the coast of New South Wales, Illawarra'.  
Rex Nan Collection, National Library of Australia



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Charmian Clift  
Photo courtesy of the Herald and Weekly Times Limited.

## Kiama's own Charmian Clift

**By the 1960s Charmian Clift and her husband George Johnston were Australia's most celebrated literary couple: Johnston had been a popular war correspondent and was author of the novel *My Brother Jack*, and Clift had written a series of books based on their 10 years in the Greek Islands. Her newspaper column was thought provoking and she was considered one of the finest essayists of her time.**

Charmian Clift was born in Kiama in 1923 and grew up in this street. Although she attended Kiama Public and Wollongong High schools, Charmian attributed her education to her parents' love for books, and to the wild beach and little valley that bounded her home. She had a passion for writing from an early age and at eight years old she wrote and illustrated a book of poetry.

Moving to London after ten years in Greece, Charmian celebrated the Kiama landscape in her first solo novel, *Walk to the Paradise Gardens* (London, 1960). In 1965, thirty-six essays from her weekly column on topical issues were anthologised in *Images in Aspic* (Sydney). The acclaimed ten-part television series of *My Brother Jack*, which Charmian had scripted, went to air in August-October that year.

Over the next few years George's ill health resulted in little time for Charmian to write books. Work and family pressures, combined with depression, became unbearable and on 8 July 1969 she took her own life. She was survived by George and their three children.



# Kiama Coast Walk



Train entering a tunnel at Kiama  
Photo courtesy of Trevor Somerville.

## Connecting the country

The section of railway, that links Kiama with Bomaderry, was opened in 1893. It passes through cuttings and tunnels (such as this one) as it slices through the spurs of Saddleback Mountain.

The completion of the railway from Bomaderry to Sydney solved many of the problems that plagued the dairy industry of Kiama. Butter had proved to be the only viable dairy product in the district, as Bega dominated the cheese market and milk and cream were too perishable to be transported by ship.

In 1889 a 'milk train' service was established from Kiama and local milk factories began to consign milk to Sydney. The introduction of refrigeration and rail transport shifted production from butter to milk for the entire district.



above: Kiama Co-operative Butter Factory was the first co-operative dairy factory in Australia.  
Photo courtesy of Weston Print

left: Arrival of the first train at Kiama Railway Station (1893).  
Photo courtesy of State Records





tents in cow paddocks

# Kiama takes in tourists



**The natural beauty of the Kiama area was both revered and reviled from the time the cedar-getters and farmers settled here. Some people were enchanted by its massive rainforest, while others found it threatening.**

As the rainforest was cleared for agriculture, the landscape became less alien to the Europeans and the appeal of the area increased. The stone walls enclosing properties, mainly built by Thomas Newing from 1857, were reminiscent of parts of the British Isles.

From the 1950s residential developments spread south of the old Kiama township to Kiama Heights. This followed the increase in popularity of holiday houses in Kiama. The Kiama Coast Walk from Kiama Heights to Gerringong enables walkers to experience a rural landscape that has been virtually unchanged for 150 years.



Holiday makers at Kiama, circa 1926, by J. Crawford.



As camping became popular, car trailers and caravans were developed to enable more of the comforts of home whilst on holidays. This photo was taken in Hurstville in 1926.



Surf Beach 1958, W. A. Bailey Collection.

Please take care on the walk and never leave children unattended.



historic hub

# Kiama township



**Kiama's proximity to the Sydney markets ensured its early settlement. At least one resident arrived in the First Fleet in 1788. Kiama's maritime history, historic buildings and impressive natural landscape including blowholes, make it a unique town on the east coast.**

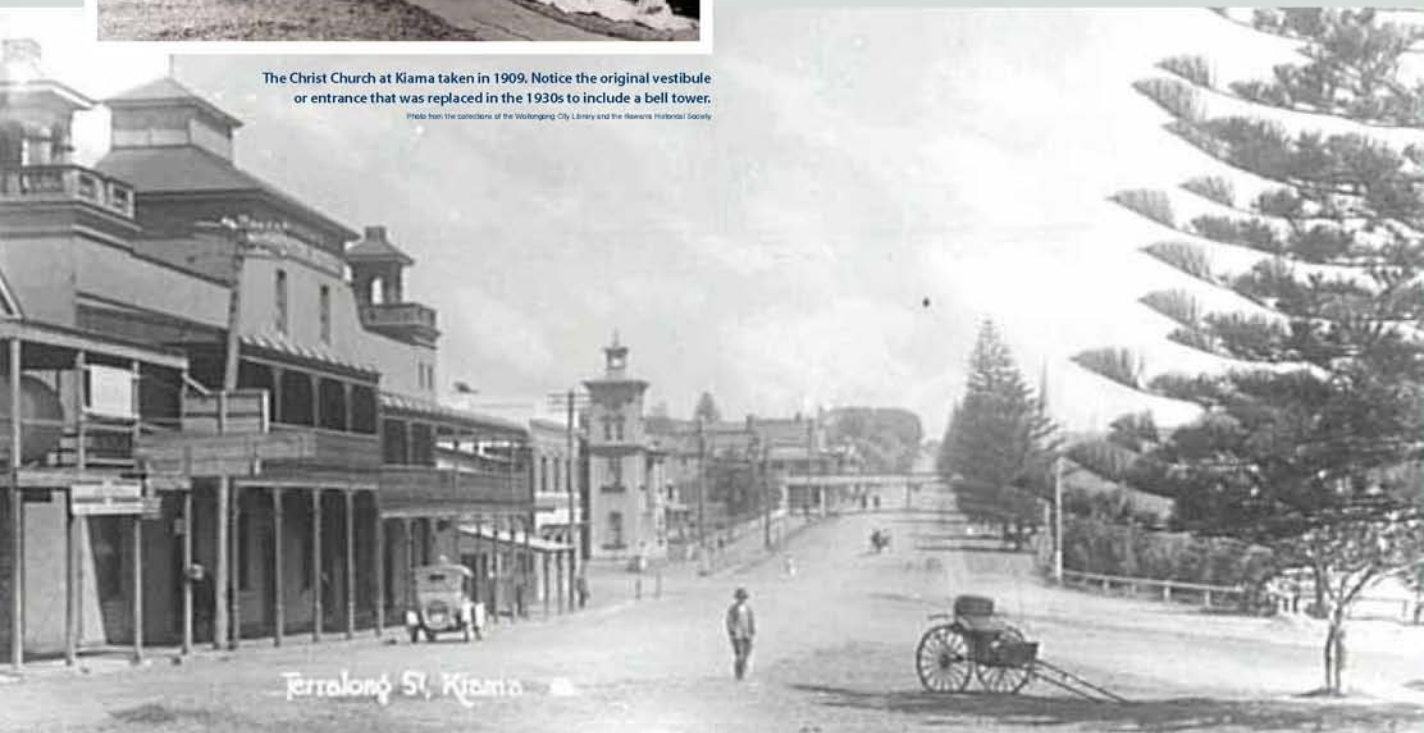
In 1831, David Smith, originally a cedar-getter, built the first house in Kiama. By 1836 the residents petitioned the police magistrate at Wollongong requesting that the town be laid out. In 1839 NSW Governor, Sir George Gipps, approved the design for the village of Kiama and proposed that the price of land to be two pounds per acre.

The deepened harbour (Robertson Basin) was completed in 1876. It was designed to better accommodate the coastal steamers and other ships that transported people, goods and produce along the coast. The distinctive Norfolk Island pines along Terralong Street and in Hindmarsh Park were planted by the council in 1897.

On your walk you may wish to stop by at the Christ Church near the showground and visit the grave of John Gowen who arrived in the First Fleet. The church was built in 1859 and its red cedar ceiling resembles the hull of a ship.



The Christ Church at Kiama taken in 1909. Notice the original vestibule or entrance that was replaced in the 1930s to include a bell tower.  
Photo from the collections of the Wollongong City Library and the Illawarra Historical Society



Please take care on the walk and never leave children unattended.



welcome to the

# Kiama Coast Walk

Loves Bay to Werri Lagoon



This section of the Kiama Coast Walk takes a dramatic, coast-hugging route between Kiama Heights and Werri Lagoon. It is part of a walk that extends north to Minnamurra and south to Gerringong's Boat Harbour. The surroundings are rich in history and geological interest; other signs along the way unravel some of the area's mysteries.

Route markers are located at approximately 1km intervals. However there is no formed track and visitors need to exercise extreme caution near steep slopes and cliff edges. Children should be supervised at all times. Please note that Werri Lagoon is sometimes open to the sea. At such times walkers will have to return to Loves Bay.

## Loves Bay to Werri Lagoon

Distance: 12 km return

Time: 5 hr return

Grade: Moderate (Class 4)

Please wear sturdy shoes and a sun hat. Take plenty of water and food as the creek water is not suitable for drinking. There are no toilet facilities en route. Please note that this area is very exposed and subject to strong winds. Dogs must be kept on leash.

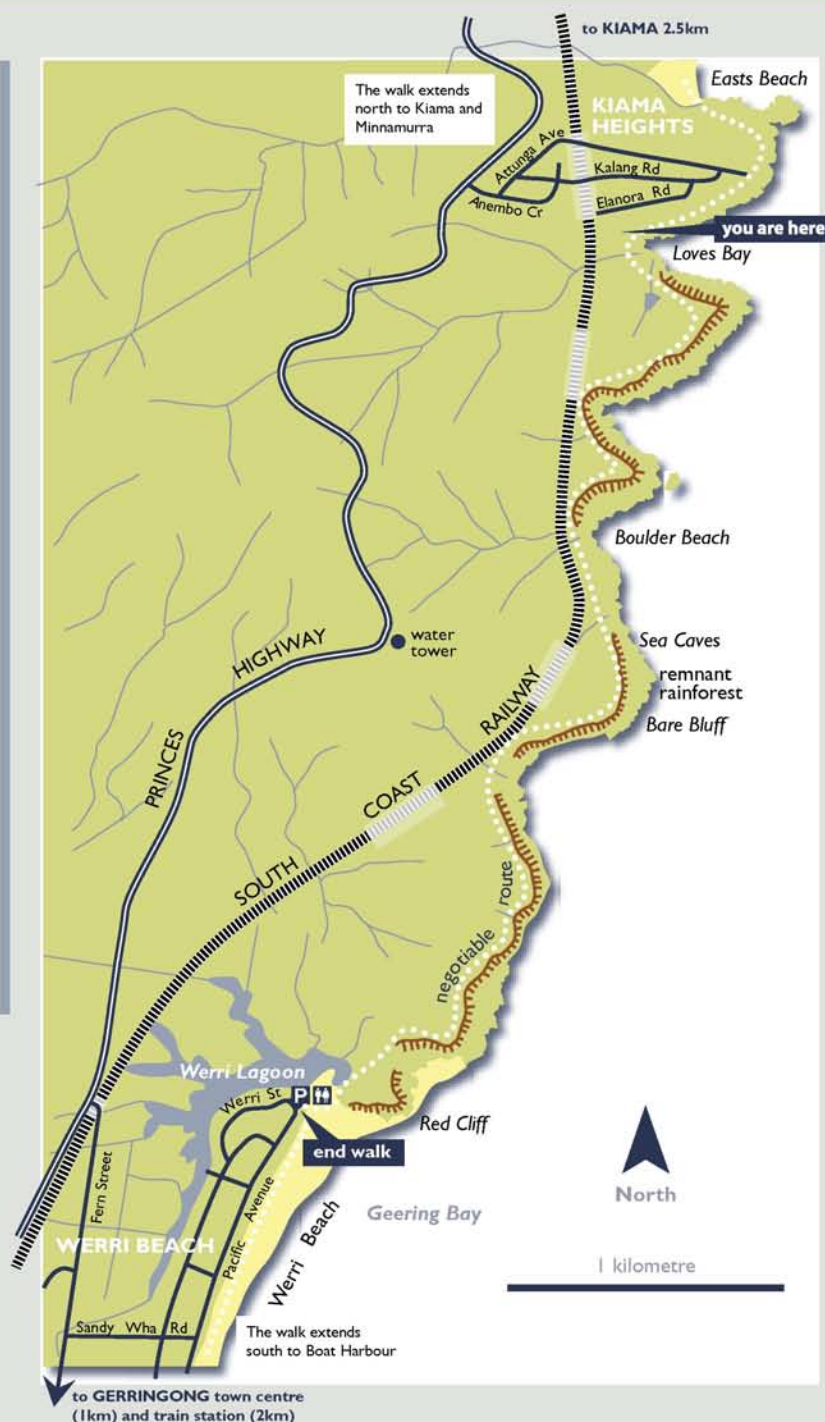
The land for this section of the Kiama Coast Track was acquired under the Coastal Lands Protection Scheme by the NSW Department of Planning.

The walk was initiated by the Walking Tracks and Cycleways Committee of Kiama Council. The walk is managed by Kiama Council.

These signs are proudly sponsored by Kiama Municipal Council and Southern Rivers CMA.



New South Wales Government



Please take care on the walk and never leave children unattended.



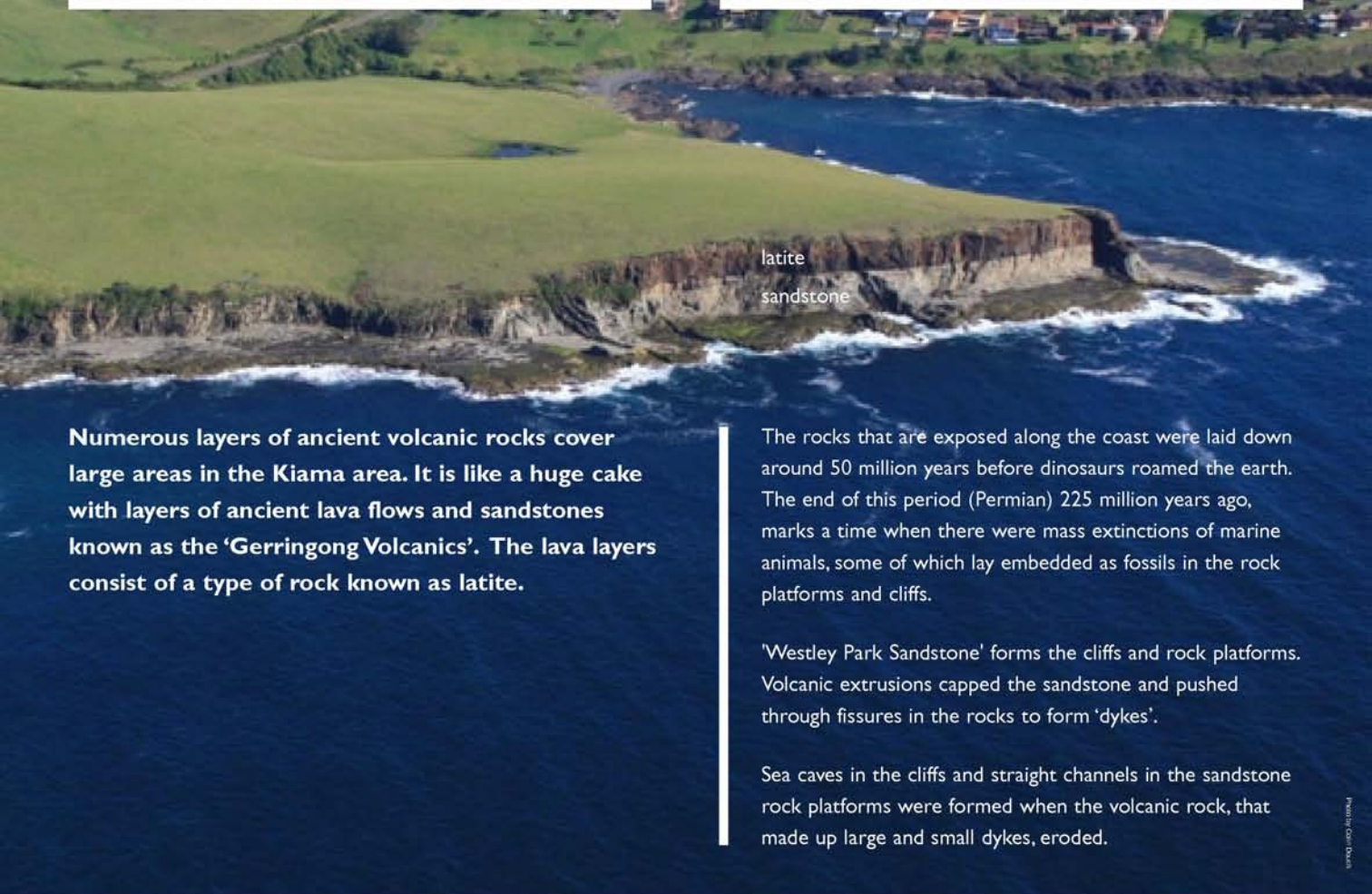
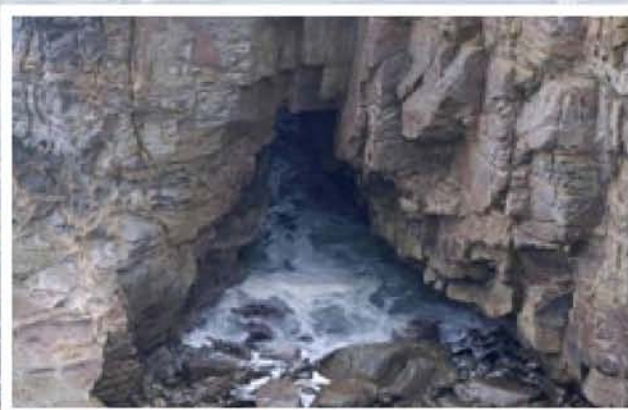
# exposing the past layers of time



below: Eroded volcanic dyke on the sandstone rock platform



below: Sea cave underneath the remnant rainforest



**Numerous layers of ancient volcanic rocks cover large areas in the Kiama area. It is like a huge cake with layers of ancient lava flows and sandstones known as the 'Gerringong Volcanics'. The lava layers consist of a type of rock known as latite.**

latite  
sandstone

The rocks that are exposed along the coast were laid down around 50 million years before dinosaurs roamed the earth. The end of this period (Permian) 225 million years ago, marks a time when there were mass extinctions of marine animals, some of which lay embedded as fossils in the rock platforms and cliffs.

'Westley Park Sandstone' forms the cliffs and rock platforms. Volcanic extrusions capped the sandstone and pushed through fissures in the rocks to form 'dykes'.

Sea caves in the cliffs and straight channels in the sandstone rock platforms were formed when the volcanic rock, that made up large and small dykes, eroded.



from source to sea

# the Minnamurra River



**The catchment for the Minnamurra River covers almost half of the Kiama Municipality. A maze of little creeks and bogs feed into the river from Knights Hill (near Robertson). The river travels through Minnamurra Rainforest and Jamberoo Valley to Minnamurra village.**

Just upstream, the Minnamurra River is surrounded by mudflats. They were formed from the silt carried down from the escarpment over thousands of years and, more recently, from the exposed soils of the Jamberoo Valley following the extensive clearing of rainforest in the 19th century.

The mudflats support the largest area of mangrove forest between the Georges River and the Shoalhaven River. There is also one of the largest stands of Swamp Oak in the Illawarra region. Extensive areas of coastal saltmarsh, an endangered ecological community in NSW, occur on the Minnamurra River estuary.

Here at the boat ramp the estuary spills out to the sea with its dynamic river mouth determined by the volume of water travelling down the river. The eucalypt and banksia forest on the spit holds the sand in place and protects the river and the houses from the force of the ocean.

The source of the Minnamurra River at Knights Hill



Please take care on the walk and never leave children unattended.



# Kiama Coast Walk

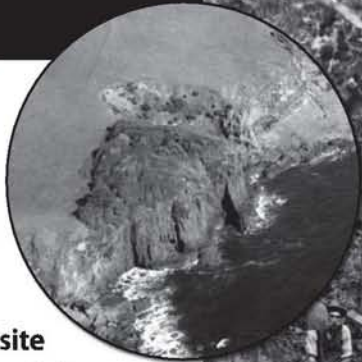


## Pocket of the past

An abundance of cedar drew the first Europeans to the Kiama area. The settlers of Sydney and clients abroad had insatiable appetites for the exquisite softwood. By the 1820s Kiama was supplying nine-tenths of the Sydney cedar market.

This tiny isolated remnant rainforest patch gives us a glimpse of an ancient rainforest known as the Long Brush that dominated the landscape from Gerroa to Shellharbour and west to the escarpment. The densest rainforest was right here, between Saddleback Mountain and the sea.

left: Detail of 'Kiama, Illawarra N.S.W.' Henry Gritten, 1860, oil on canvas. Photo courtesy of National Library of Australia



above: Dunmore Road, Dunmore (date unknown) showing a section of the Long Brush. Photo courtesy of Weston Print

left: Cedar-getters in the Kiama area (date unknown). Photo courtesy of Weston Print

left inset: All that remains of a once magnificent rainforest. Photo by Colin Douch





rock around Kiama

# monuments to quarrying



The Kiama area is covered by layers of volcanic and sedimentary rock. The volcanic rock in this area is known as 'Bombo Latite'. The Kiama sandstone is the reddish rock that can be seen on the cliff faces below the black latite. These rocks were laid down in the Permian Period about 250 million years ago. In some places, such as Cathedral Rocks, the latite has formed spectacular natural formations. The quarrying at Bombo Headland resulted in a massive part of the headland being removed creating an impressive, if not eerie, unnatural landscape.

When the Robertson Basin was constructed in the 1860s to create a deeper harbour, the blasted and excavated stone was used to construct protective works around the harbour and to fill the isthmus between Blowhole Point and Terralong Street. The completed harbour enabled the commercial development of Kiama's blue metal industry.

The rapid development of Sydney's railways, tramways and roads from the late 1870s boosted the trade in Kiama's blue metal. From the 1870s hundreds of workers came to the area. Quarries employed people to blast and crush the rock and load the drays for transport to the wharves.

The activities of the quarry men have left some extraordinary legacies in the landscape. South of Cathedral Rocks, the walk winds close to one of the most dramatically located quarries in Australia. Bombo Headland Quarry, with its vertical columns of latite, has been the backdrop to numerous commercials and feature films. The quarry is well worth the diversion, but please proceed with caution.



Bombo Headland Quarry 2010





William Montagu Manning was a prominent figure in Kiama's early development. In 1839 he purchased Bonaira (see map) from Captain Farmer with intention of dividing it into a number of dairy farms. Photo courtesy of the State Library of NSW.

# Kiama Coast Walk

## Reclaiming the coast

When the original land grants were made here in the 1800s, a strip of public land was set aside for access between the private properties and the high water mark.

Unfortunately there were two properties where public land was not established. This omission blocked legal public access to this section of shoreline for about 170 years!

In 2008, after Kiama Council successfully lobbied the State Government, the connecting lands were acquired into the NSW Coastal Lands Protection Scheme. This has enabled legal and safe public access to this dramatic stretch of coast.

Cedar getters and labourers were the earliest workers in the Kiama area. As land was granted and sold in the 1820s and 1830s, more affluent members of colonial society set up estates.

Convicts initially made up the bulk of the workforce. As the convicts obtained tickets-of-leave, landowners lost their cheap labour. Consequently, the large grants were divided into smaller farms with tenants, while the rougher brushlands were given over to 'clearing leases'.

Clearing leases began in the early 1840s. Tenants received approximately 30 acres of uncleared land free of rent for 5-7 years. During this time they had to clear it and place it under cultivation. It was a system that provided land for immigrants, while cheaply converting land use to agriculture for the land owners.

Dixon map of 1837, showing grants along the Kiama-Gerringong coast.

