As you climb down into Flat Rock Gully allow your mind to travel back through the ages past. Let’s go back thousands of years and take a peek at what daily life in this country was once like. Everyday, as it does today, the sun would rise above the people. The family would awaken, and the child was hungry. The mother would go to collect Sydney cockles and edible vegetables. The father would go out to spear a rock wallaby. The food would be cooked on a fire. The child was happy and went out to swim and play with other children. The father spent his time sharpening his stone hatchet by the river. As the sun started to go down the mother would call to her child’s ‘guwi!’ (‘come here!’). That night the mother would sit with friends by the fire – there is lots of laughter and music made by singing and beating time. The music is lost to modern (European) and modern (music) ears. The night is peaceful and goes on.

If you take a look around you may be lucky enough to find evidence of this day. Many Sydney Cockle shells were left behind from the meal eaten by the family that day. Not only did this family leave shells that day, but every day for many generations. Today we can find evidence of this if we find a large mound of shells, which is called a midden. Besides shellfish you may also find in a midden pieces of clay, bird, fish, animal teeth and bones, human remains, stone tools and campfire charcoal.

If you are fortunate you may find rock art located on the walls of the shelter. Engraving objects is a common form of Aboriginal art work found throughout this area. The stones are created by charring drawings. You may also find other objects that were made by engraving series of holes which are then connected to form a line or series of points which are then connected to form a circle. These are rock engravings which are found on upright cultural rocks. These engravings are usually located on highly elevated, smooth flat surfaces, but in some instances can be found on benches. These are usually located on benches or cliffs. The engravings can be found by looking for grooves in the rock.

At a special men’s site where the father travelled to for the initiation ceremony you will often find rock engravings. Some sites were women’s sites. The engravings are usually located on highly elevated, smooth flat surfaces, but in some instances can be found on benches. These are usually located on benches or cliffs. The engravings can be found by looking for grooves in the rock.

If you take a look around you may be lucky enough to find evidence of this. The family would often travel to a special men’s site to perform the Yarrabulja (tooth extraction initiation ceremony for young men). The aftermath of the sharpening leaves these grooves.

If you take a look around you may be lucky enough to find evidence of this day. Many Sydney Cockle shells were left behind from the meal eaten by the family that day. Not only did this family leave shells that day, but every day for many generations. Today we can find evidence of this if we find a large mound of shells, which is called a midden. Besides shellfish you may also find in a midden pieces of clay, bird, fish, animal teeth and bones, human remains, stone tools and campfire charcoal.
Galuwa Inyun Bulga and retrace the footsteps of the Gamaraygal through Flat Rock Gully.

Walk Details

**Walking Time:** 1 to 1.5hrs casual stroll around the loop track

**Grade:** Medium

**Surface:** Some steep steps, sturdy shoes required.

**Getting There**

The walk entrance point is located at the end of Small Street, Willoughby (next to the Willoughby Leisure Centre). Car park and amenities are located at this entrance point.

**More Information**

Aboriginal Heritage Office
Phone: (02) 9976 1685
www.aboriginalheritage.org

Willoughby City Council is an area abundant with local Aboriginal history with over 100 sites located within the council area. Other areas you may wish to explore include the North Arm Walking Track and Mowbray Park.