

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 *guring* (sun) would rise *burwa* (above) the people. The family awakes, and the *guring* (child) is *yuru* (hungry). The *wiyanga* (mother) goes *mana gagan* (to collect Sydney cockles) and *ganugan* (edible vegetables). The *biyanga* (father) goes out *djura wuldba* (to spear a rock wallaby). The *nggununy* (food) is cooked on a *guriyang* (fire). The *guring* is happy and goes out *bugi* (to swim) and play with other children. The *biyanga* spends his time sharpening his *mugu* (stone hatchet) by the river. As the *guring* starts to go down the *wiyanga* calls to her *guring* 'guwi!' ('come here!').

That *nguring* (night) the *wiyanga* sits with *gamarada* (friends) by the *guriyang* (fire) – there is lots of *djanaba* (laughter) and *yabun* (music) made by singing and beating time). The *biyanga* goes to a special men's site to a *yulang yiradbadjan* (tooth extraction initiation ceremony for young men). Later, when the *guring* is *yandbat* (tired) and *daba* (yawns) the family goes *nanga* (to sleep) in the *ganing* (cave). The *yanada* (moon) and *burring* (stars) stay *burwa* the family until once again the *guring* returns for *barrabangu* (tomorrow).

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.



Where the father sat by the river that afternoon sharpening his stone hatchet, you will still see today the long deep impressions in the sandstone rock which he left behind. They are called **axe grinding grooves**. To sharpen the axe the father had put water onto the sandstone and then rubbed the stone on the wet rock backwards and forward until the stone was sharp. The water is used to clean and cool the stone as the friction from the rubbing generates heat. The aftermath of the sharpening leaves these grooves.

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 large vertical rocks. The engravings are made by drilling a series of holes, which are then connected to form a line.

In the **rock shelter** where the family slept, you may find evidence of their occupation. You may discover midden materials, fireplaces, stone artefacts and tools. Rock shelters with evidence of occupation are most commonly found facing away from the south, due to the wet and windy weather patterns which come from that direction. North and west facing shelters are usually the best.

If you are fortunate you may find **art work** located on the walls of the shelter. Stencilling objects is a common form of Aboriginal art work found throughout this area. The stencils are created by mixing ochre in the mouth with water and spit, then spraying it over the hand or any object that was to be stencilled. You may also find ochre or charcoal drawings.





Above and Below: Photographs from the walk entrance at Flat Rock Gully.



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.



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



Galuwa Inyun Bulga

'Climb Down Hill'

Flat Rock Gully



Galuwa Inyun Bulga and retrace the footsteps of the Gamaraygal through Flat Rock Gully.