

# CAROLINE CHISHOLM'S SYDNEY

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## SELF-GUIDED WALK

This self-guided walk takes you to locations in colonial Sydney associated with Caroline Chisholm's work or known to her in the 1840s.

Mrs Chisholm arrived in Sydney at the end of 1838 and began assisting homeless and unemployed migrants. She and her husband Archibald regularly had homeless girls staying in their Windsor house.

New migrants kept arriving, and unemployment worsened over 1841. Recognizing that more organised help was necessary, Mrs Chisholm started the Female Immigrants' Home and an employment service, among other initiatives.

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*Thomas Fairland (1804-1852)*  
*Portrait of Caroline Chisholm, nla.pic an9193363.*

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*Background Image – Joseph Lycett (ca.1775-1828), North view of Sydney, New South Wales, nla.pic-an7690819.*  
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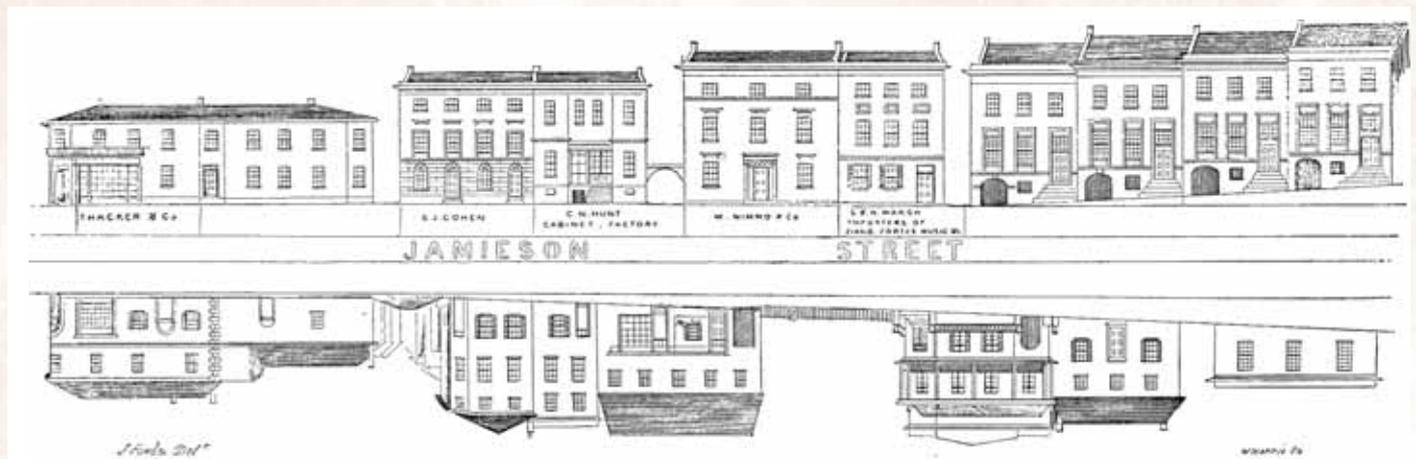
Meet on the ABN AMRO property:

**1** The Female Immigrants' Home in 1841-42 was at the corner of Phillip and Bent Streets, where the ABN Amro building is now. It has the Royal Australian Historical Society's commemorative plaque. The Home was a single-level wooden structure, infested by rats and roughly constructed.



Go down Bent Street to Pitt Street, cross to Bond Street, diagonally opposite, and then go up the hill to George Street and Jamison Street:

**2** Jamison Street is where Caroline Chisholm stayed when on advocacy work in the city during 1841. On York Street is Scot's Church, but not the original one. In fact, all the colonial buildings have gone. It's not known in which of them (see sketch below) Mrs Chisholm stayed.



Go up the hill and then walk through the park. Gather on the footpath opposite St Patrick's Church:

**3** This 1848 sketch shows the Davis cottage on the corner of Harrington and Grosvenor Streets. Father O'Flynn, an unofficial Catholic chaplain, was arrested and deported from the colony in 1818, leaving the Blessed Sacrament (consecrated bread) in the home of William Davis. It stayed there (and perhaps in another home nearby) for about 18 months, until consumed by a priest from a visiting French ship. William Davis donated the land for St Patrick's, which has operated continuously since 1844. Mrs Chisholm would have gone to this Church and also known the Davis cottage.



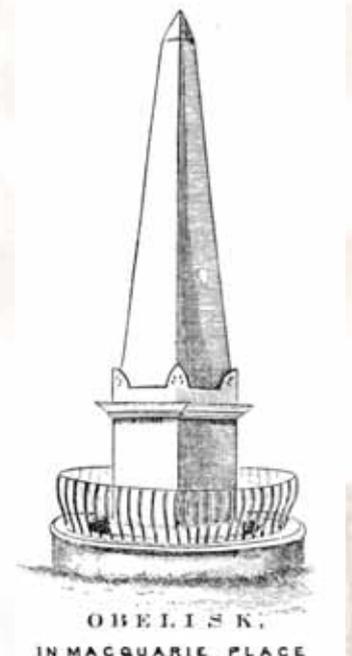
Go down the hill to George Street and cross into Bridge Street:

**4** This 1853 image probably shows Bridge Street as it was in the early 1840s. On the right is Pitt Street, running alongside the Tank Stream, Sydney's major source of fresh water until 1826. By then, it was undrinkable. The fenced land surrounds the original Government House. Can you spot a street lamp? It's on the awning of the building on the left.



Go along Bridge Street and turn left at Loftus Street:

**5** Governor Macquarie had this obelisk built by convict stonemasons in 1818. Caroline Chisholm would certainly have known the obelisk, as distances by public road from Sydney were measured from it. Macquarie was the colony's great builder of roads and public buildings (some will be seen on this self-guided walk).



*Proceed to Circular Quay and then to point 6:*

**6** The 1842 image shows Sydney Cove as Caroline Chisholm knew it. The ship in the centre is chocked and undergoing maintenance and/or repairs. The jetty, built over muddy sand and just reaching the water at low tide, was where ship passengers and crew could alight easily from rowing boats and skiffs. The jetty is thought to be the one from which Mrs Chisholm left to rescue a vulnerable new emigrant girl (see point 12). In the background, still under construction, is Government House.

John Skinner Prout (1805-1876), Sydney Cove 1842, nla.pic-an6940079.  
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*Proceed to point 7— in front of Moore's Steps:*

**7** This image shows Sydney Cove from Fort Macquarie, completed in 1819. Passenger or cargo ships are at anchor, outnumbered by small craft, including a steam boat. In the early 1840s, Caroline Chisholm went on board emigrant ships to ensure newly arrived teenage girls were not recruited by brothel owners or unscrupulous wealthy men. After her advocacy, the government forbade such shipboard arrangements.

*Go up Moore's steps, cross Macquarie Street, walk 120 metres and enter the Botanic Gardens:*

**8** This Government House was not the one Caroline Chisholm visited in 1841 when trying to persuade Governor George Gipps to provide a building to accommodate homeless and needy young female emigrants. That was on the site of the present Museum of Sydney in Phillip Street. Because of her determination, strength of argument and obvious competence, the Governor allowed her to use the Bent Street building. He helped other projects and implemented reforms she proposed.



*Make your way to the back of the kiosk in the centre of the Botanic Gardens:*

**9** Behind the kiosk is the 1816 bridge built by convicts using handmade bricks. The bridge is below the asphalt path where the hand rails are. To see it, you will need to stand in the garden area, or on the higher pathway. The bridge is on the scenic route through the Botanic Gardens. Mrs Chisholm, a keen walker, would have used it.

*Adjacent to the bridge is part of Macquarie's Wall – walk to the gateway in the wall:*

**10** The path on the bridge side of the wall follows the scenic colonial road to Mrs Macquarie's Point. Just past the gateway in the middle of the Wall are some Swamp Mahogany trees planted before 1820. They were, of course, much younger and stronger when seen by Caroline Chisholm.



*Go through the gateway and walk ahead 90 metres, turn right again and walk 30 metres:*

**11** On the site of the colony's first farm is a replica Aboriginal humpy. When taking her bush-parties to work and a new life in the country, Caroline Chisholm recognized – and went on to write against – the adverse effects that Europeans were having on the indigenous people by removing their livelihood, supplying alcohol and abusing indigenous females.



*Return to the scenic route and leave the Botanic Gardens by the first or second gate – and head North:*

**12** Mrs Macquarie's Point is better known as Mrs Macquarie's Chair, an uncomfortable seat cut into sandstone. Point 12 looks North beyond Kirribilli Point. That is where Mrs Chisholm rescued a teenage girl from a predatory North Shore man. After sunset, she engaged an oarsman at the jetty (*see point 6 of this walk*). He rowed until they found where the man had taken the girl. Mrs Chisholm's motherly courage withstood his bullying; she gave the girl a choice; and the girl left with her and went to the Home.

*Take the path below Mrs Macquarie's Chair and walk 200 metres:*

**13** The sandstone overhang and ledge 15 metres off the path are typical of "the rocks" that gave shelter to homeless emigrants without money or work. Before she opened the Female Immigrants' Home in 1841, Mrs Chisholm reported that many of Sydney's 600 homeless young females huddled in "the rocks" at night.



*Continue along the path, heading South back to the city, and cross the Domain:*

**14** The Domain's boundaries and appearance have changed since Caroline Chisholm's time. The government tents for new emigrants in the early 1840s were pitched close to Boundary Road, near the Expressway. This is where Mrs Chisholm first saw Flora, the Highland beauty, who was later seduced and abandoned by a wealthy older man.

*Cross Boundary Road, walk through Sydney Hospital to Macquarie Street and turn left:*

**15** Convicts built Hyde Park Barracks (pictured at right), the Mint building next door (formerly a wing of the Rum Hospital) and St James' Church. Caroline Chisholm assisted ex-convicts to find work. She also helped some to be reunited with their wives and children left behind in England or Ireland. The ex-convicts and their families made a new life in Australia.



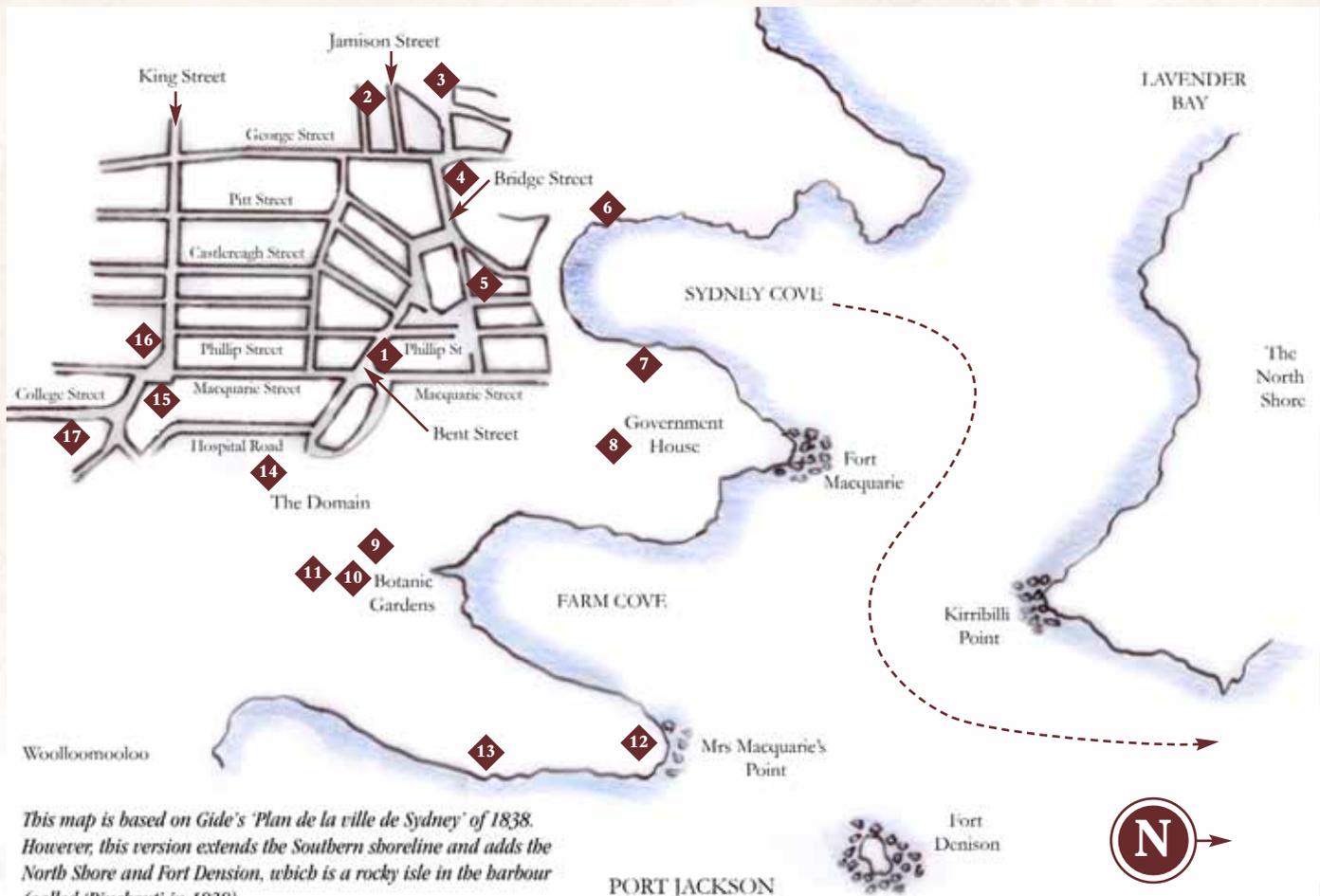
*Cross Macquarie Street or stay in front of Hyde Park Barracks:*

**16** Rev Allwood of St James' Church supported Caroline Chisholm and the Female Immigrants' Home, where he taught Scripture to Anglican children. Her honest, forthright manner convinced him (and others) that she would indeed work for the good of all.



*Walk 100 metres to the Cathedral or 250 metres to its front steps:*

**17** The St Mary's Cathedral shown here was ruined by fire in 1865. Caroline Chisholm made her Easter vow in 1841 before its High Altar. She promised "to know neither county nor creed, but to try and serve all justly and impartially" in her emigration work. Beginning with the Female Immigrants' Home, she lived her vow fully and at considerable cost to herself.



*This map is based on Gide's 'Plan de la ville de Sydney' of 1838. However, this version extends the Southern shoreline and adds the North Shore and Fort Denison, which is a rocky isle in the barbour (called 'Pinchgut' in 1838). The map was specially drawn for Caroline Chisholm's Sydney: Self-guided Walk.*

*For more information about Caroline Chisholm, including the incidents and developments referred to in the notes: [www.mrschisholm.com](http://www.mrschisholm.com) and Rodney Stinson's "Unfeigned Love: Historical Accounts of Caroline Chisholm and Her Work", Sydney, 2008.*