

Beachwalk: Otford to Stanney

An edited extract from Geoff Whale's new guide, *Northern Illawarra Beachwalks*

The climb from Otford Station is fairly steep. Walk straight up Beaumont Rd to Lady Wakehurst Drive, cross the road and join the track heading south ❶. Continue past the Bulgo Beach junction and follow the track downhill away from the road at a bend.

❷ After 2km the wind-sock used by hang-gliders looms into view. Skirt the take-off area to the right, then visit the accessible Yulunga lookout. Toilets and the Flying High cafe are below the lookout. ❸

Best views are from the grassy areas further on. Gliders usually land on Stanwell Park beach after a languid 270 degree loop.

Bald Hill lookout is about 170m above sea level.

The bluff across the valley is unofficially known as Mt Mitchell. The 14km Forest Walk (when reopened) climbs up from the road via the Wodi Wodi Track, then follows the cliff line to Sublime Point. It's part of the multi-day Great Southern Walk, opening soon.

From Bald Hill there's a steep 130m descent along the track recently reconstructed by NPWS through escarpment forest dotted with cabbage palms. It has over 400 sandstone steps, and is easy to negotiate. At the 4-way junction ❹ you can visit the old Otford railway tunnel portal. The graffiti can't hide the craftsmanship in its construction. Return the 200m to the junction and turn left.

The Bald Hill track ends at The Drive, 3.7km. Although there's no footpath, Maxwell Crescent opposite the trackhead is the quickest and safest way down to the beach.

Walk along the beach to the lagoon, then cut across the sand to Beach St. Take the rough track uphill from the end of the street, just behind the surf club, 4.8km. ❺ Follow Stanwell Ave north over the crest, then around the corner to the right. On the left, look for a small sign at the entrance to a bush track. Banksia Bush Care maintains the whimsical Art in the Park walk leading to the Beach Reserve. ❻ After a rest, head up Station St. ❼ Cross the overpass, turn left and keep to the footpath up Railway Crescent to the station.

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DISTANCE 6.5km, climb 150m | ALLOW 2.5 hours, plus 1hr lunch | DIFFICULTY Moderate