

ROCK 'N' ROLL WALK OF FAME 'N' SHAME
SURRY HILLS TO KINGS CROSS



REVISIT THE VENUES NEAR CENTRAL STATION AND SURRY HILLS THAT ADDED SO MUCH COLOUR (OR SHADES OF BLACK AT LEAST) AND NEW MUSIC IN THE '70S, '80S AND BEYOND; THEN DRIFT DOWN REMAINING-MEMORY LANE TO KINGS CROSS AND TRACK THE HISTORY AND LOCALE OF THE CLUBS ONCE RENOWNED FOR THEIR LATE NIGHT REVELRY, ROCK 'N' ROLL NOTORIETY AND EVEN OCCASIONAL INTERNATIONAL GLAMOUR.

“REMEMBER THE FAME 'CAUSE THE SHAME LASTS FOREVER!”

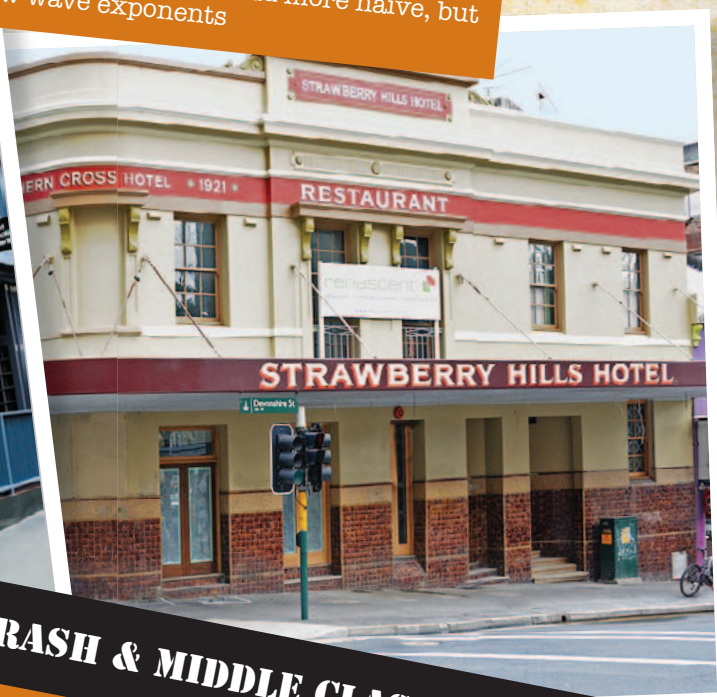
SURRY HILLS TO KINGS CROSS

1 WELCOME TO CENTRAL AFTER DARK

In the street opposite the Devonshire St exit from Central Station in Surry Hills are the Gaelic Club and the Strawberry Hills Hotel (formerly the Southern Cross).

In the daytime, Devonshire St is a pleasant tree-lined boulevard for local workers. At night, it's near empty, almost abandoned some nights, and a darkly suitable gateway to the night-time theatrics of Surry Hills.

The Gaelic Club is a major venue for local and international bands. Up the road on Chalmers St for many years was the Musician's Club, sometimes a mix, often a clash of cultures between established musos and more naïve, but artful, new wave exponents



2 GARAGE, THRASH & MIDDLE CLASS PUNK

On the corner of Elizabeth St is the Strawberry Hills Hotel. Sitting directly on top of the historic Sydney Tank Stream — wandering drinkers can see it downstairs and smell it at any level — the hotel has seen as much musical change as any venue in the area. Often a house for trad jazz, more experimental music forms and piano-playing Dick Hughes (also often pounding the keys at the nearby Shakespeare Hotel), the Strawberry was previously known as the Southern Cross.

In a gloriously minimalist period of low production values and high energy, the Southern Cross was a home during the late '70s and early '80s to a barrage of garage bands, thrash fiends and some middle class punk bands who had hardly ever played a note in suburban anger before. The venue capacity was about 80 comfortably. But on a night when there was 150 jumping fans, no gig in Sydney was as noisy or sweaty, as great or as lousy, as the Southern Cross. All types of Sunnyboys, Gurus and Celibate Rifles helped train themselves there.



SURRY HILLS TO KINGS CROSS



4 EVENING STAR HOTEL

If you choose to stroll down Elizabeth St, then you'll pass (the remaining facade) of the Evening Star Hotel – or Evil Star – where musos and journos drank, talked some and drank more, while Kurt Cobain and Nirvana played pool with the jukebox in the background. Sadly it closed down because someone told journalists not to drink so much.

5 MULTI LEVEL CLUBS OF PLEASURE AND PAIN

Trekking up Foveaux St past the perennial all-styles-welcome Excelsior Hotel, one can take in the memories of the Trade Union Club. Along with the also no-longer-remaining Graphic Arts Club near Central in Chippendale, the Trade Union Club featured mostly the cream, occasionally just the froth, of the Australian independent music scene: The Laughing Clowns, The Go Betweens, Nick Cave, Died Pretty et al. From overseas

there were dozen of legendary performances throughout the '80s by peaking artists such as The Dead Kennedys, the Violent Femmes and John Cale.

Both the Graphic Arts Club and the Trade Union Club were part of this music-led social trend that helped revive ailing trade union and artisan clubs and introduce new cash flows and some odd looking new clientele into their vast club rooms.

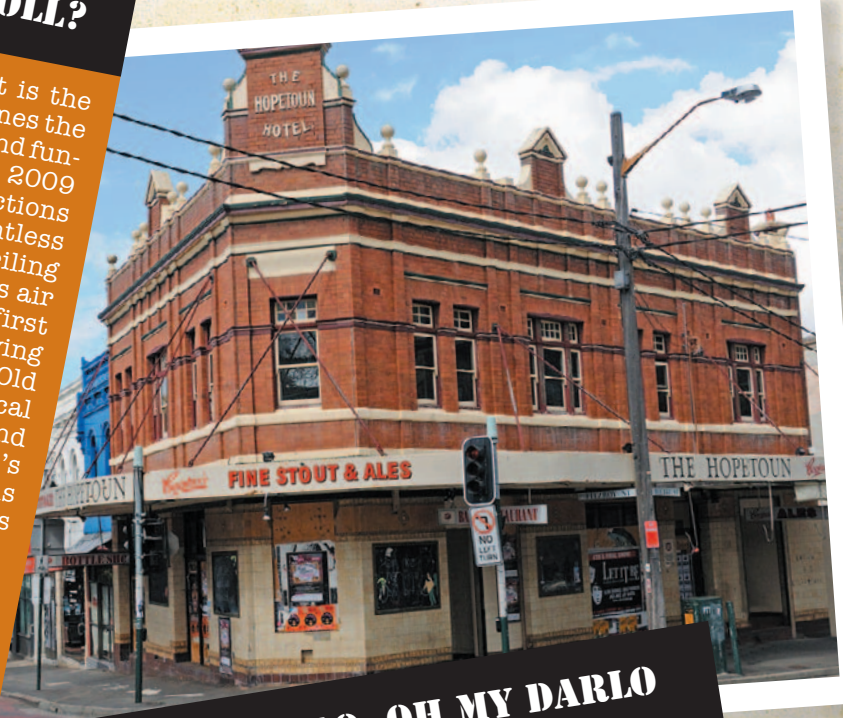




4 BUT IS IT ROCK 'N' ROLL?

On the corner of Fitzroy and Bourke St is the boarded-up Hopetoun Hotel. In its best times the Hoey was one of the most vibrant, casual and fun-filled music gigs in the city. Its closure in 2009 prompted some clear (enough) recollections by rock journalist Kathy McCabe: "Countless rockers almost losing their head to the ceiling as they attempted to score some serious air with their star jumps. One of Wolfmother's first gigs. Kram's solo album launch. Iota playing his heart-soaring songs all by himself. Old Man River weaving a kaleidoscope of musical colours. Crow and Jet and Decoder Ring and Dappled Cities. EMI boss John O'Donnell's farewell featuring Daniel Johns and Bob Evans and Paul Kelly and Tim Rogers. So many bands I can't remember now."

Will the Hoey make a rock'n'roll comeback as it has several times before? Perhaps the inexorable gentrification (yuppification) of Surry Hills makes it difficult for music venues to boom like they used to in decades past. Noise, fire and licensing laws are all patrolled properly these days, which is no bad thing. New venues are beginning to open up again, they're just different: the carpet doesn't stick, the bathrooms don't stink, the staff are polite and it's all smoke free. But is it rock'n'roll?

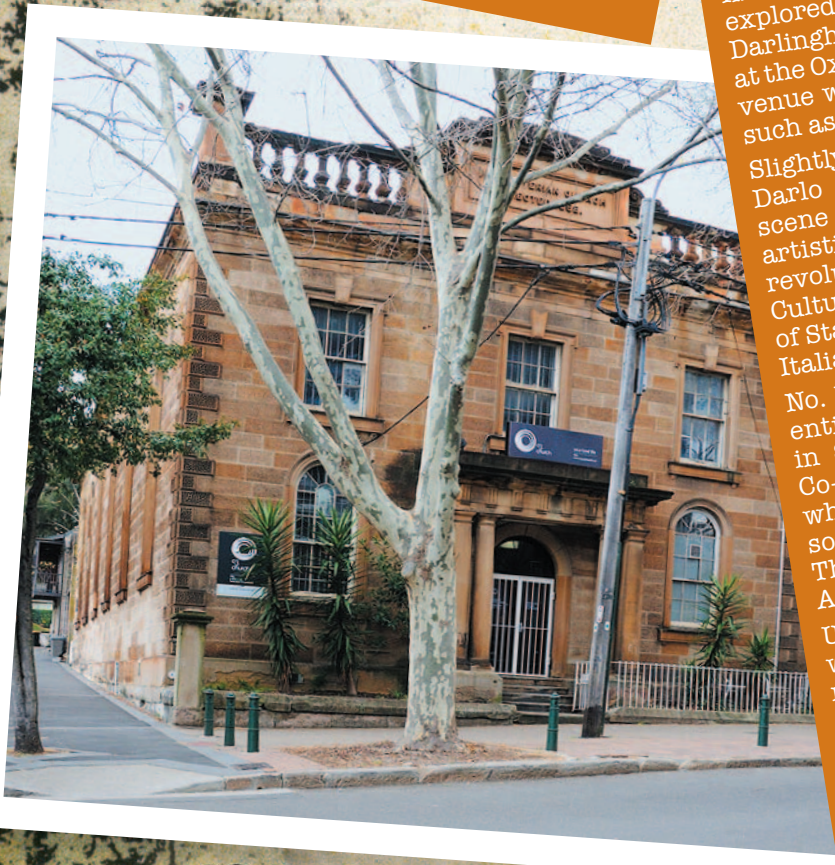


5 OH MY DARLO, OH MY DARLO

In a previous Rock'n'roll Walk of Fame and Shame, we explored the darkest depths and musical highlights of Darlinghurst and Oxford St including Radio Birdman at the Oxford Tavern, The Missing Links at the greatest venue with the worst name, Beatle Village, wine bars such as Whitty's for the folkies and so many more. Slightly off-route, but very much worth visiting in Darlo is The Stanley Palmer Culture Centre, the scene of many political, cultural and sometimes even artistic happenings over the past decades of quiet revolution and youthful dissent. The Stanley Palmer Culture Palace remains as a curio, yes, on the corner of Stanley and Palmer Sts, off lower Crown St near the Italian café area.

No. 171 William St was the studios of 2JJ, worthy of an entire social history profile in itself, and just above in St Peters Lane was the Sydney Filmmakers' Co-op: a veritable hotbed of revolutionary hotheads who saw film as their (government funded) outlet on social issues. Members included Phillip Adams, Albie Thoms, Phil Noyce and later Peter Weir and Gillian Armstrong.

Up the road in Forbes St is the St Peters Church Hall where Johnny O' Keefe and his production team rehearsed performers and auditioned hopeful audience members for the live-to-air Six O'Clock Rock TV show. In the southern end of Darlinghurst Rd where the Jewish War Memorial now stands was the Maccabean Hall, where the psychedelic delights of Ellis D Fogg's lightshows could be experienced with the ethereal music of Tamam Shud or Galadriel. And it's all downhill from here: to Kings Cross ...



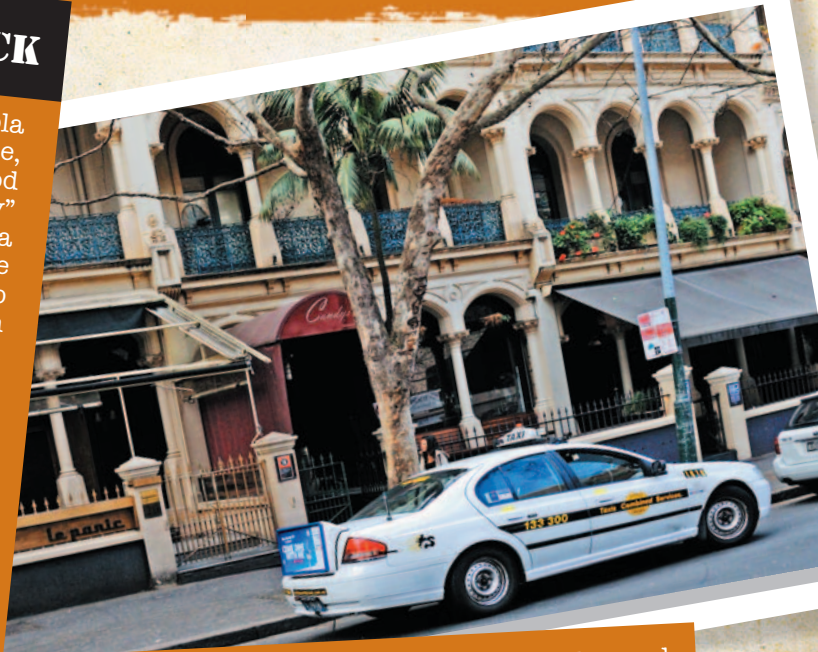
SURRY HILLS TO KINGS CROSS



6 SWEET TEENS & DIRTY ROCK

At the top of the Cross underneath the Coca-Cola sign (one of the few symbols of visual permanence, however less grand it now appears) is always a good place to start a stroll down "remaining memory" lane. On the corner of Darlinghurst Rd and Victoria was the converted Kings Cross Cinema which in the early '60s was a surf, stomp, beat and rock'n'pop venue called Surf City run by promoter John Harrigan. Pop life at Surf City is fondly detailed in the book *Sex and Thugs and Rock'n'Roll* by Billy Thorpe who joined the Surf City house band The Aztecs, and with other acts such as The Sunsets, The Atlantics, The Easybeats and Little Pattie made the venue an alcohol-free, teen favourite.

Down William St, with its entrance tucked around in Brougham St is legendary jazz venue El Rocco, so-called as its basement location is carved out of rock. In its '60s heyday, it helped launch the early careers of local jazz legends Errol Buddle, Col Nolan, John Sangster and Bernie McGann alongside some



early Kiwis we now call our own, Judy Bailey and Mike Nock. Visiting jazz greats included Dizzy Gillespie. Further down William St was Whiskey Au Go Go, more glamorous than Surf City and with the magic piece of paper that helped make rock'n'roll so attractive to business persons: a liquor licence. Rock Garden was a later incarnation on this site.

Walking around the corner into Bayswater Rd we first pass the freshly renovated Hampton Court Hotel where resident band AC/DC wrote and most probably got "The Jack," a groupie homage that still figures in the band's shows, though presumably not in their lives. Across the street is New World Bar which has regularly undergone style transformations throughout the years and many identities too: remember The Kardomah Cafe (Hey Hey Hey); Sgt Peppers, Candy's? They're all names of this cellar venue, where Mick Jagger once performed while promoting his solo career.

7 FOLKIES, FIGHTS AND FINE DESIGN

Walking northeast down Darlinghurst Rd, in the daytime we suggest, you pass McDonald's which was once breakfast venue Sweethearts to Cold Chisel and songwriter Don Walker. On the right near the Bourbon and Beefsteak at 26-28 Darlinghurst Rd was The Folk Attick, later the Folk Terrace, innocent in its early '60s pipedreams of peace and politics and Peter Paul and Mary lookalikes, but billing very good local folk performers nonetheless: Trevor Lucas (Fairport Convention), Jan de Zwaan and Bob Hudson for instance.

Beyond the El Alamein fountain, as Macleay St starts, was the Rex Hotel. If you dared to enter and still come out with lungs, liver or face unbruised, then you may also have heard the truly great Max Merritt and the Meteors.

A walk westwards down Orwell St off Macleay to the deco majesty of the Metro Theatre is essential. Next

door is its architectural buddy building with a semi-circular roof adornment which was most famously the Roosevelt Club from WW11 and for many years after. A "classy joint" based on a sophisticated imitation of Hollywood glamour nightclubs, the Roosevelt, started as an officers' club. It featured Sydney society at its finest, mixed with sly grog, stylish dance floors and music ensembles featuring budding band leaders and impeccable instrumentalists such as the great Les Welch, one of Australia's true recording and performance legends.

The Metro Theatre itself, once the Minerva, sometimes a movie house for MGM, sometimes a live theatre (Olivier and Vivien Leigh onstage), became most famous for its 1969 season of "Hair", the musical that proved to the adult world that the youth of the day could sing and dance as well as just take their clothes off.



SURRY HILLS TO KINGS CROSS



8 LET'S GO TO... NO LET'S NOT!

Along Springfield Ave was The Manzil Room – later creatively called Springfield's. The Manzil was popular for very few reasons: the atmosphere was dank, the carpet stuck, the air stank, the compulsory food was undeniably the hardest in town to keep down, and the bands were often as wacked as the audience. Gee it was fun though ... one of the few really late night clubs that gave the average punter at least a chance to gain entry to its low light, low budget delights. The Manzil gave many bands the opportunity to learn to perform long and late, and gave the audience equal experience in staying upright, all night with only a little help from their friends.



9 SYDNEY FANS MEET THE BEATLES - AT THE SHERATON

The Chevron (Hilton) and its Silver Spade Room was ostensibly the finest upmarket night club for grown-up Sydney in the '60s and '70s (the Chevron opened in 1960, and was demolished in 1985 after a brief new life as a mod rock venue). Audiences could wine, dine and be entertained by the finest the wider world of entertainment could provide. Ella Fitzgerald, Shirley Bassey and Sammy Davis would do the honours while Sydney socialites lapped up the fine fare and true international celebrity status of the Chevron. The Beatles, however, were deemed unsuitable as Chevron guests for their 1964 tour – crowd control and annoyance being cited as the major reasons. So the Fab Four were booked in to the Sheraton, directly opposite, and the crowds gathered in their thousands at the very best place with a view of the Sheraton balconies, right outside the Chevron. The Sheraton thrusts narrowly upwards, plain and unadorned, not unlike it was when the Beatles waved from the balconies (George in a towel only), delighting many Australian female fans. The Sheraton is now called Azure Apartments. Hopefully future developers will let it be.





10 GONE AND ALMOST FORGOTTEN

Other venues around the Cross worthy of a look include the artist hangout The Yellow House at 59 Macleay St (it's the yellow building) and the guest house and bar to the stars - the Sebel in Ward Ave. There's also the greatest ever modern era nightclub, Arthur's in Victoria St; just along from the Piccadilly Hotel, itself the home to many nightclubs of exclusivity and always evolving character. Long gone is Benny's the music industry spiv hangout; Paradise Jazz Cellar in Darlinghurst Rd; and the great Lee Gordon's Sound Lounge.

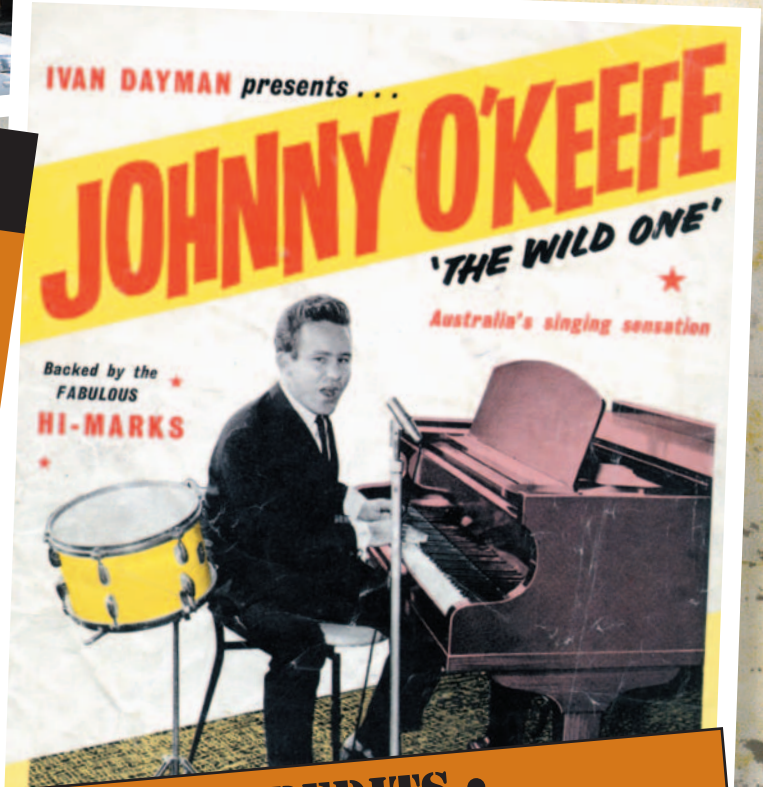


11 ROUND AND ROUND: DIZZYING HIGHS AND LOWS

And it is literally downhill from here if walkers choose to visit the site of perhaps the strangest and greatest venue that Sydney ever (pre) fabricated, the Old Tin Shed itself. The Sydney Stadium, in all its revolving and revolting glory played host to the Lee Gordon Era of the '50s and '60s and welcomed the first true mass stars of popular music: Frank Sinatra, Johnnie Ray, Bill Haley, Buddy Holly and The Beatles plus the new Aussie thrusters like Johnny O'Keefe - all going round'n'round and round'n'round - like a record on the ever-revolving stage at the Stadium.

If you do walk down the bottom of Bayswater Rd or Craigend St, avoid eight lanes of traffic and hop a fence, there's several concrete railway stanchions and a plaque that seems to remember a former NSW government minister called Ken Booth, but not a word about the famous or even infamous from the world of rock'n'roll.

NSW politicians might well remember our own slogan for this series of rock'n'roll podcasts and urban strolls: "Remember the fame, 'cause the shame lasts forever."



• CREDITS •

Produced by Hugh Liney and Ashley Russell for GTI Media.
Written and presented by Hugh Liney.
Research and Walking Tours by Frank Cotterell and Ian Hartley with special thanks to Peter Cox of the Powerhouse Museum.
Design by Brian Crouch, Millmaine Entertainment.
Original Poster Artwork excerpted from Plastered: The Poster Art of Australian Popular Music by Murray Walding with Nick Vukovic.
Podcast and audio by Michael Thompson
Thanks to Dr Rock, Mojo Records, Peter Simpson, Brad Shepherd, Terry Darmody, Bruce Griffiths, Chris Ruhle and Peter Bowden.



ROCK 'N' ROLL WALK OF FAME 'N' SHAME

SURRY HILLS TO KINGS CROSS



- ## KINGS CROSS
- 1 Stanley Palmer Culture Centre
 - 2 St. Peters Church Hall
 - 3 Kings Cross Hotel/Surf City
 - 4 El Rocco
 - 5 Hampton Court Hotel
 - 6 New World Bar
 - 7 Metro Theatre
 - 8 The Roosevelt Club
 - 9 Manzil Room
 - 10 Sheraton
 - 11 Yellow House
 - 12 Sydney Stadium Plaque



- ## SURRY HILLS
- 1 Stanley Palmer Culture Centre
 - 2 Strawberry Hills Hotel (formerly Southern Cross)
 - 3 Aurora Hotel
 - 4 Trade Union Club
 - 5 Hopetoun Hotel

