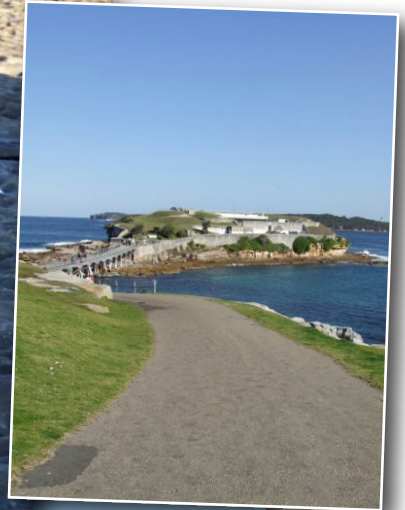


Little Congwong Beach

Story by Sarah Scriven
Photos Adam West

**Bare
Essentials!**



Little Congwong beach is an unofficial nude beach in South East Sydney. Reasonably close to where I live I decided it would be a perfect spot to visit for our first Bare Essentials story.

I parked near Bare Island which is a small island at La Pouse. Bare Island houses a fort built in 1885 designed to protect Botany Bay. It is also where part of the very popular movie, Mission Impossible II starring Tom Cruise was filmed.

I decided to visit Bare Island first and wandered across the old wooden bridge to the island so I could have a look at the coast and see what Little Congwong and the surrounding beaches looked like from a distance. It was very windy and cold and I couldn't imagine wanting to lay naked on a beach at this time of year.

Once you reach Bare Island (only a 2 minute walk across the bridge) you can descend some steps to walk around and explore the rocks and rock pools. It's a popular spot for fishing and the fisherman must be fairly successful as the pelicans stalked them quite closely.

Looking across a small bay you get a nice view of both Congwong and Little Congwong beach. I could make out a couple of people on Little Congwong beach but they were really only small shapes in the distance and I couldn't see if they were naked or not.

I then walked back along the bridge and down to Congwong Beach. It was only a five minute walk down some steps and could easily be managed by most people. Congwong is a nice beach with lovely sand

and there were a few families playing there.

Once you reach the end of Congwong beach which is again only a few minutes walk across the sand, there is a cement pathway to Little Congwong beach. At the beginning of the track there is a recently erected sign which says that both Congwong and Little Congwong beach are not designated for nude bathing.

When planning to visit Little Congwong Beach in the middle of winter I expected it to be cold and windy and not a place where naturists would want to relax in the sun. When I got there I was pleasantly surprised. It was beautiful and sunny, nicely secluded and cut off from the wind.

It was a weekday so there were only a couple of people on the beach. One was naked, one not. But neither seemed the least bit bothered by us and were just enjoying the sun. I'd been told that there is a good mix of people including families on

Nude or not?

PUBLIC NOTICE
Congwong Beach and Little Congwong Beach are not designated nude bathing beaches.
Illegal or offensive behaviour should be reported to Crime Stoppers 1800 333 000

Little Congwong beach has been an unofficial nude beach for far longer than I can remember. Unfortunately late in 2005 after Randwick council again voted against making Little Congwong officially clothing-optional, these signs were erected on the approach to the beach. A lot of nudists still use the beach and I haven't heard of any problems. I believe the fine is \$110. Feel free to complain to Randwick council:
General.Manager@randwick.nsw.gov.au

Botany Bay National Park
Congwong Beach Walk
Congwong Beach 100m Little Congwong Beach 700m
Keep to track
Bikes and Horses prohibited

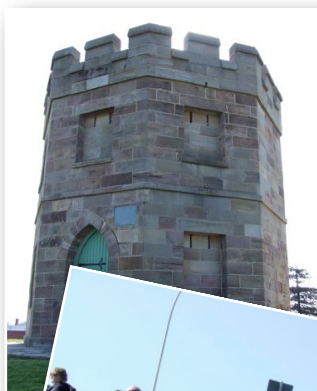


summer weekends so I was interested to visit again to see if this was true. I couldn't wait until summer to go back as I would have missed the publishing deadline so I went back a couple of weeks later on a weekend. It was still winter but there were over twenty people on the beach including both couples and singles.

It was also interesting to see what a hive of activity La Perouse becomes on a weekend. Following a quick visit to the beach we picked up some awesome hamburgers at one of the local takeaways and sat on the grass overlooking the ocean. After lunch we wandered through the museum which recounts the journey and mystery of French explorer La Perouse who arrived unexpectedly in Botany Bay just five days after the First Fleet then sailed from these shores never to be seen again.

With a bit more sun left we decided to return to the beach, it was late in the afternoon but warm enough that I felt quite comfortable taking off my clothes to relax and lay in the sun for a while.

Beautiful....who would have thought in the middle of winter....



Getting there...

Little Congwong beach is located in the south-eastern Sydney suburb of La Perouse, on the northern side of Botany Bay. If you're not driving then for a fare of \$4.50 a bus from the city centre is the easiest way to get there.

Catch the **L94, 394** or **X94** from Circular Quay or the **393** from Railway Square and the bus will terminate at La Perouse.

The track to Little Congwong beach is just across the road beside the "snake pit". Little Congwong is the second beach in the bay, you'll often see boats anchored off shore.

La Perouse is a great little spot with lots of history. Besides nude bathing, the area has quite a bit to keep you occupied.

There's a museum, an art gallery, Australia's first cable station (circa

1882) and Australia's first customs house (circa 1820). You can tour Bare Island historic fort (circa 1885) or check out the snake and reptile show that's run most Sunday since the turn of last century. There's boomerang throwing demonstrations, boat and windsurfer hire, beautiful coastal walks, good swimming, great fishing and it's a popular spot with both snorkelers and scuba divers. It makes a perfect spot for a weekend picnic and has great restaurants and excellent takeaway.

For more information contact:

La Perouse Visitors Center
Phone - (02) 93113379

