

2/15-16/07 Days 31 and 32 – Sydney – Thursday and Friday: **Rescue at Sea Update:** While in Sydney we learned that the person who underwent the medical evacuation by helicopter on February 14 was a passenger named Joy. We had met her and her husband, Larry, earlier at the Hotel Managers dinner on Day 17. Larry left the ship in Sydney to join Joy. Our prayers for a speedy recovery go out to Joy and Larry.

We began our entrance into Sydney harbor about 6am when there was just enough daylight to see the outer rocky cliffs. Reza (Superboy) and Anton were serving "Sydney Rolls" coffee and juice on the aft Lido Deck of the ship.



By the time we came to the inner harbor the Sydney Opera House and Harbour Bridge were in full sunlight. We took the first of many photos of these signature sights in Sydney.



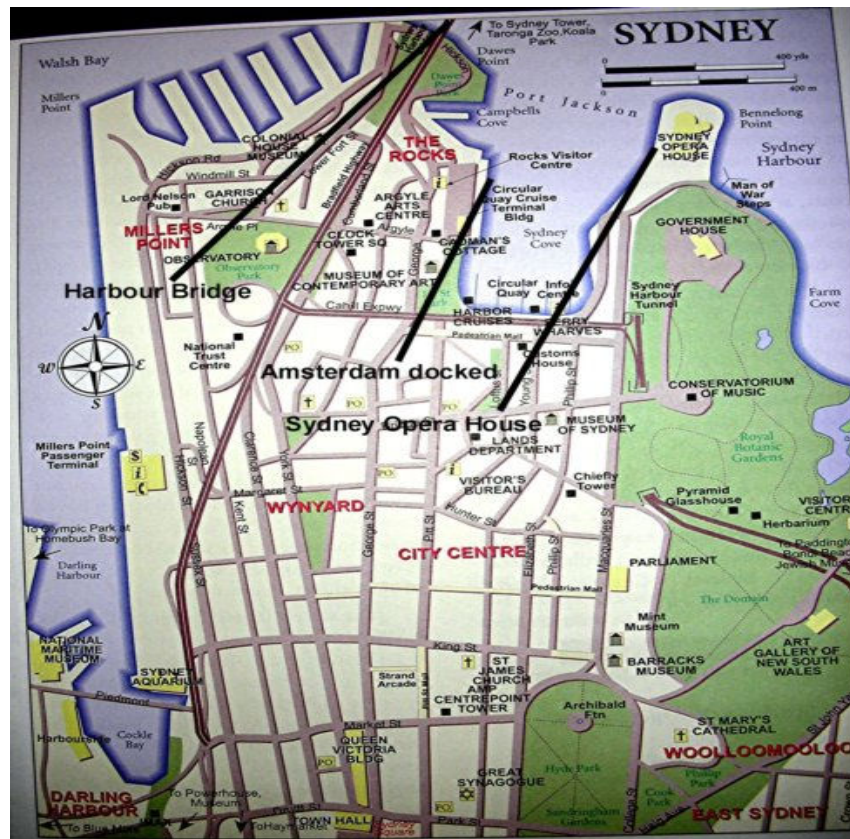


We are located in the southeast corner of the Australian continent in the city of Sydney.



The ship was docked at Circular Quay (pronounced Key) in Sydney Harbour.

The cruise ship terminal, where we docked was a spacious, clean building. The location of the ship could not be better for viewing the frantic commuter ferry traffic in



and out of the ferry wharves. Best of all, we had a full, uncluttered view of the Harbour Bridge and the Sydney Opera House.

The ship's staff worked with the Australian immigration and customs people but there was a bit of delay requiring the calming a few flustered passengers. We were finally cleared to leave the ship about 9am.



We had signed up for a 4 hour tour that covered a few of the major highlights of Sydney. We started with the Opera House. Like most people, we were overwhelmed by the soaring beauty of both the exterior and interior architecture of the building. A professional Guide named Stephen told us about the building.

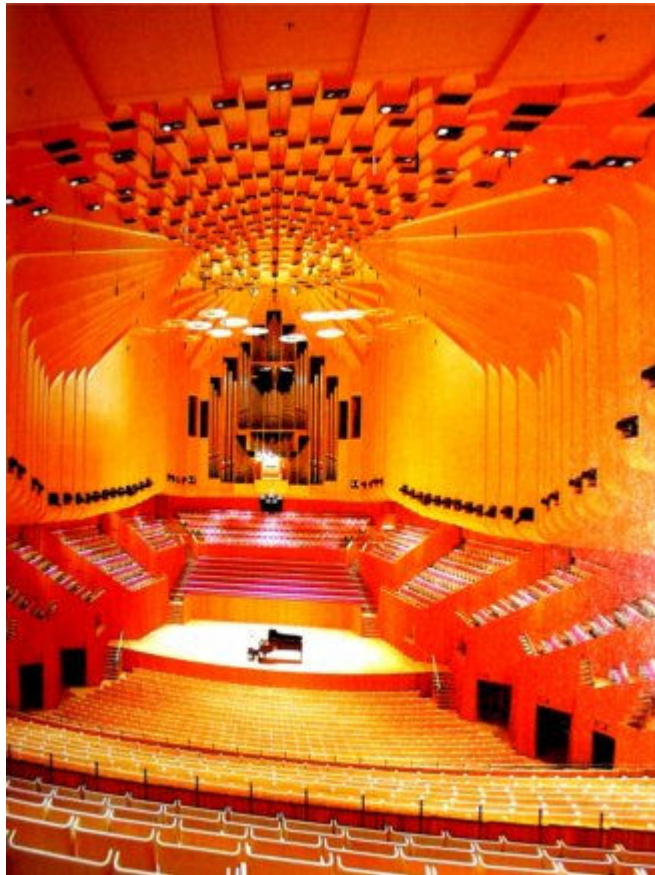


Here are a few of our favorite photos of the Opera House taken during the tour and later.

Barbara got this photo just as the sun was coming up on our second day in Sydney.

The interior of the Opera House was much larger than we imagined while viewing from the outside. Here is the main hall.

The opera house was designed by the Danish architect Jorn Utzon. The design and construction was much more expensive than originally expected because significant engineering innovation was needed to create the architect's vision. Part of the resistance to the Opera House was fueled by the fact that the city of Sydney was made up mostly of old brick structures and the citizens had a hard time justifying a project that differed so much from the appearance of their city. After much technical and political controversy the structure was completed and the first performance was presented in 1973. The Opera House may have been slightly out of place at first but now most of the old brick buildings making up city center have been replaced by beautiful modern sky scrapers. The Opera House appears as the shining pearl in this oyster.



Our Opera House guide, Stephen, pointed out an interesting detail involving the covering of the roof. From a distance it appears monolithic and ivory in color. Up close it can be seen as covered with two different colored tiles, white squares and tan triangles. The architect did not want a glossy appearance so the tiles have a matte finish.



After touring the Opera House we got back on our bus and proceeded to several other scenic areas of Sydney. Our guide said that the price of houses and apartments in Sydney was very high relative to other parts of Australia. A typical



apartment with view of the water might sell for \$500,000 to \$1,000,000 USD. Apartments costing several million dollars in the most expensive areas are not uncommon. In spite of the homes being expensive, apparently cable TV has not wiped out TV antennae in Sydney. We saw TV antennae on most apartment buildings as well as private houses.

The Bondi (pronounced bond –eye) Beach is a famous beach in Sydney. We stopped there for a short walk.

We finished the tour of Sydney and in the afternoon did some expensive souvenir shopping.



We were fascinated by the Aboriginal art, particularly in the designs painted on boomerangs. The images were created by placing hundreds of paint dots of different colors to form sweeping curves and small shapes. Here is a couple of the boomerangs and Barbara's tee shirt with the Aboriginal art.

On the second day in Sydney we took a tour about 30 miles out into the countryside north of Sydney where we visited Koala Park, a wild animal petting zoo. Along the freeway we saw an advertising billboard for a real estate marketing service. The ad pitch was based on the simplicity of using the service. Alarmingly, the ad agency chose to use the image of President Bush to imply that anyone could use their service.



The Koala Park specialized in koala bears, wombats and kangaroos but they also had emus,

sheep, flying foxes (fruit bats) and other animals.



Koala bears are not bears but are marsupials and a member of the wombat family. Koalas live in trees while wombats burrow in the ground. We started our visit of the zoo with one of the attendants holding a large wombat so the tourists could pet it.

Wombats look a lot like koalas but are less cuddly. We went on to the koala exhibit.

Gayle gingerly pets a koala.



Barbara gets her chance to stroke the gentle koala.



Later, in a visit to the kangaroo area Gloria feeds one of the "roos".

We also had a demonstration of sheep shearing and there was a cage containing fruit bats that are also known as flying foxes. The flying





foxes are common along the East coast of Australia.



The fruit bats in the photo on the left were hanging upside down with their wings folded and their furry heads pointed down.

Our guide, Janet, on the tour bus was quick witted and made several humorous comments. A favorite among the ladies was reference to shopping as "retail therapy". Barbara immediately incorporated the phrase "retail therapy" into her vocabulary. Janet also pointed out a historical factoid about

how Australia got colonized by the British. It turns out that when the thirteen original colonies won the Revolutionary War in America they notified England that they would no longer accept the convicts that were previously sent to America so that England would not have to deal with them. England then decided to send convicts to Australia. Although it was more expensive to send the prisoners to Australia, it accomplished the additional goal of inserting Englishmen into the sparsely populated colony that England was eager to establish. In this way the American Revolutionary War helped in the early days of settling Australia.

After the Koala Park visit the bus took us to a ferry boat landing on Parramatta River where we were supposed to catch a boat and ride back to Sydney Harbour and the Amsterdam along a

scenic waterway. We waited about an hour until, Janet; the tour guide determined that the scheduled ferry had been canceled. Janet made emergency arrangements for a regular tour bus to come out to the ferry boat landing and pick us up. We rode by bus back into Sydney.



had visited the day before.

We found Paddy's without any problem and it was indeed a great low cost source of almost any thing you could want as a tourist.

The night before, Merdy and Bayu, our stewards on the Amsterdam had told us of the marvelous low cost tourist type items that were available at Paddy's in China Town. With this new found intelligence we arranged with Janet to have the bus drop us and several other passengers in Sydney near in the China Town area. It turns out that the China Town was in the Darling Harbour area near the Queen Victoria Building where we





Here is a photograph from inside Paddy's.

On the walk back to the Amsterdam along George and Pitt streets we took in the sights and sounds of Sydney. Here is a front view of the Queen Victoria Building (QVB) shopping mall where we had picked up some pricey souvenirs the day before.



We also liked these double decker tour buses that plied the streets.



Finally, we couldn't leave without getting some photographic proof that Barbara's Oak Ridge Library card had seen the sights of Sidney, Australia.