

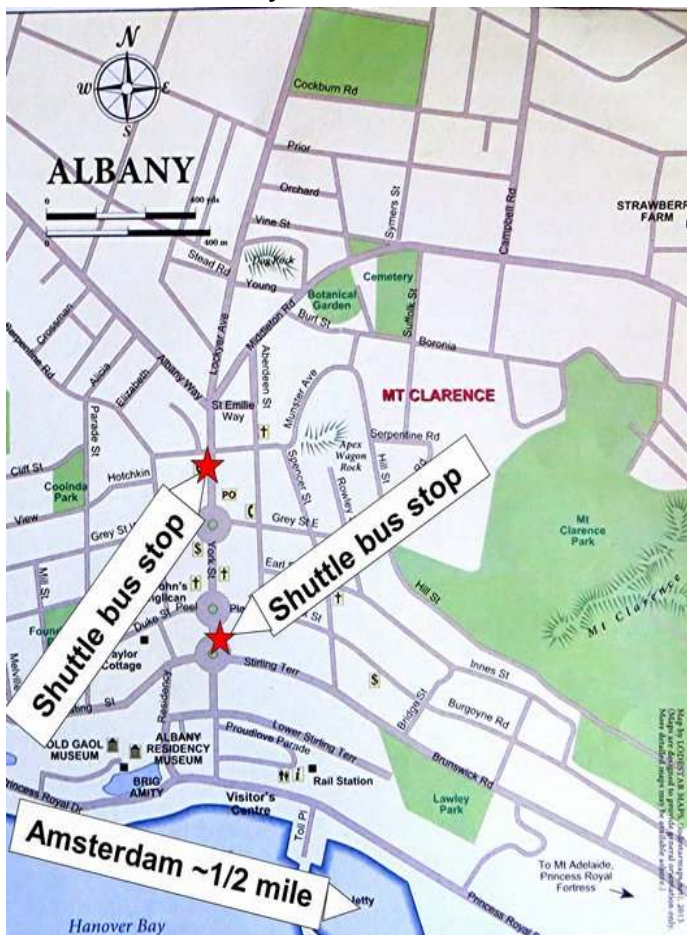
2/24/13 - Day 49 – Albany, Australia: This morning the Amsterdam left the part of the ocean known as the Great Australian Bight on the southern coast of Australia and entered Hanover Bay. After sailing for several miles into the broad bay we arrived at Albany, Australia about 8am. The location of Albany on the southwest corner of the Australian continent is shown in the map on the right.

Just as a geography factoid, the Great Australian Bight gets its name from the shape of the South Australian Coast. It resembles the loop of a rope suspended between two supports and that is called a “bight” by sailors and others who work with rope.

One of the first things we learned about Albany is that the Australians pronounce the name with the “Al” part of Albany sounding like the man’s nickname of “Al”. We and most Americans pronounce Albany with “Al” sounding like the word “all”. We practiced the Australian pronunciation and got it right most of the time while in Albany.



Albany was founded in 1827 and is the oldest town settled by Europeans in the state of Western Australia (WA). The Architecture we were to see today was mostly from the 1800s and early 1900s with a few modern buildings thrown in. A map of downtown Albany is shown on the left. York Street contains the main business district of Albany. The Albany Port District furnished free shuttle buses that hauled us Amsterdam passengers from the ship to the points marked on the map York Street so that we could get a good start in exploring the relatively small town. The town was an easy one half mile walk from the ship but since rain drizzled down a few times during the day most people took the shuttle bus both ways.



As usual we took some pictures of the surrounding area from the ship just to document our first view of the place. Today, the grain elevators dominated the nearby scene as shown below. Local people we talked to said Albany exports more grain products than any other Australian city.



About half of the business district where the shuttle buses dropped us off is shown in the picture below. As you can see it was a small town with a mix of old and new buildings.



On a far ridge was a collection of wind turbines for electricity generation. Although today there was no wind, they get a fare share of it year around.



All through the day we all had the feeling that the citizens of Albany really were glad that we were visiting in their town. They provided services and attractions that were much appreciated. As an example, this fellow in Scottish garb and playing the bagpipes greeted us at the dock even before we were cleared to leave the ship. We listened to his welcoming music while waiting to be cleared.

The Amsterdam was cleared by the local officials by about 8:30am and passengers started streaming off the gangway on their way to scheduled tours on buses or just walking around the town. There was a nice vantage point on Deck 3 to photograph people coming and going at the foot of the gangway. Today there appeared to be a classic demonstration of cruise ship gangway activity at the start of the day in a new port.

The people we usually see at the foot of the gangway are shown in the picture below.



Starting in the upper right hand corner from the top is Barbara Haenni (Travel Guide), a passenger in conversation, Bruce Scudder in blue shirt (Cruise Director), Adele Scholtz (Hostess), Kevin Stephens (Assistant Cruise Director). Barbara is always on the dock to help people with questions of the possible things to do during the day in the new port. Usually one or two of the folks on the Cruise Director staff are there. We appreciate the fact that they are there to engage in conversation and hear our comments if we have anything to say to them. Two people with bicycles are in the picture. They would be crew members who have some time off in Albany and have checked out bicycles that are provided for the crew. This will give them affordable transportation to wherever they want to go and since they are young and hearty they can probably get there. Near the bicycle at the middle are two people from the photography department. One is dressed in a shark costume today and the other is ready to take a picture of any passenger wanting to have their picture taken with or without a shark to commemorate our visit to Albany. The photos are made available later at a charge of about \$20 if the person wants to buy it. Finally, and maybe most important is our assistant dining room steward, Asep, in the lower left corner. He is offering a helping hand to a lady going down the steep ramp at the bottom of the gangway. The Amsterdam stewards do multiple jobs and this morning Asep drew the gangway assistance assignment. We'll see him again this evening at dinner.

With regards to what our dining room steward, Asep, is doing we are always amazed and highly appreciative of all the work that the stewards do on the Amsterdam. This is probably not a feature unique to Holland America but the friendly, helpful attitude that is instilled in every steward makes us very comfortable during a cruise and keeps us coming back. For example, this morning while we watched, Asep and his fellow steward at the gangway helped a lady in an electric scooter get herself and her vehicle safely down the gangway and onto the dock so she could enjoy a day in town. The pictures below tell the story.



About 9am we joined the other folks, like those on the right, taking a shuttle bus into Albany. After about a 10 minute ride we were dropped off in the center of town.

The shuttle bus drop-off was near the town hall that is shown below. It was built in 1887 at about the same time as many other buildings still in use in the city.



In a nearby park a collection of tents had been set up selling crafts, artwork and clothing, as shown below. A band was providing entertainment for the crowd as they browsed through the tents.



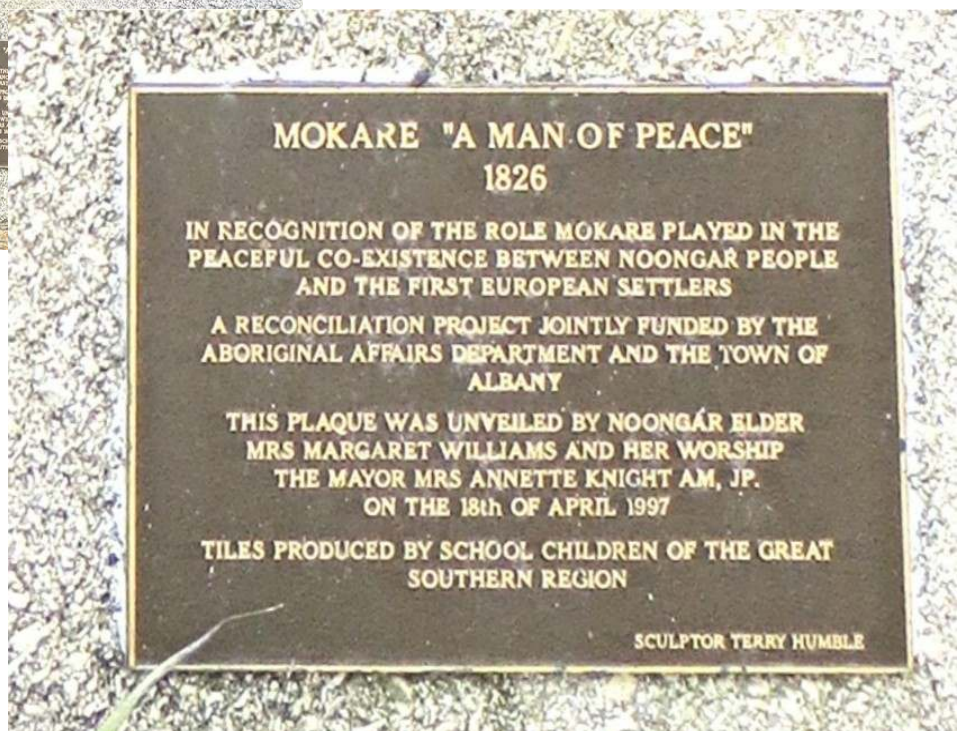
These festivities appeared to be a regular event for local citizens but there were some special tourist information booths for us cruise people. In addition, volunteers wearing shirts with a big “i” on the front and back were around so we could ask them questions. These were just a couple of the nice things they did for us while we were in Albany.



We came across our friends, Jack and Evelyn, and talked them into taking their picture along with Roy, Gayle and Barbara. We like to have these pictures in our journal to remind us later of the good times we've had and friends we have met on cruises.



In the park was a beautiful bronze statue of an aboriginal man named Mokare. There was a 1997 plaque, shown below, that described Mokare as a peace maker between the aboriginals and the early settlers. The terrible treatment of aboriginal people by European settlers was much like the experience of the American Indians as American settlers moved west. We have seen many examples of attempts by current Australians to heal those old wounds.





We left the park and walked further up York Street. There was a gas station along the way and we quickly snapped a picture of the posted gasoline prices, as shown on the left.

Unleaded gasoline was selling for \$1.539 AU per liter. At current exchange rates that would be \$1.62 USD per liter and assuming 4 liters per gallon about \$6.48 a gallon. The autogas which can be used in vehicles modified for use of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) was selling for 97.9 AU cents per liter which was only 36% cheaper than the gasoline. In view of the lower energy content of autogas per liter it looks like gasoline and autogas would be about equal in terms of miles per dollar.

At one filling station there was a large storage tank labeled KleenheatAutoGas, as shown below. We presume that the AutoGas which is primarily propane is also used for heating purposes here in Australia.





One of the best finds as we walked along the main street in Albany was the city library. It had a wonderful bold sign clearly labeling it as the Albany Public Library. We don't often find the name of the city in the library signs so we homed in on this one and got a picture of Barbara's library card visiting the Australian city of Albany.

Gayle wanted to do a little shopping for some items so we browsed through a Cole's store and then a large K Mart store. She found what she wanted at K Mart and we proceeded on. It's a little strange that we travel to have new and different experiences but there is still an enjoyable feeling of comfort when we can find a store with a familiar name and layout.

Australia is currently in the throes of a housing price boom. We passed by a real estate office that had some listings with prices indicated. Some typical homes are shown below with prices in the \$350,000 to \$1,300,000 USD range. We asked our bus driver and one of the security guards at the port how people afford to buy homes. They were in agreement that home prices were too high. One man said that wages had doubled or tripled in the last 15 years but house prices had gone up by a factor of 10. What used to cost \$40,000 in Albany now costs \$400,000. Parents typically have to help their children buy their first home. A lot of people have two jobs and some people commute 1000 miles to the north where good paying jobs in the mining and mineral industry are available.



\$1,252,631 USD

\$1,190,000



In the heart of town!

Originally built in the late 1800's, this property was well known to travellers as "Selby Guesthouse", close to town, the port & with harbour views. It's been completely renovated inside & out, still retaining its charm from yesteryear, but with the appeal & convenience of modern living. Providing 4x2 plus office, large open living upstairs & spacious family area downstairs. With high ceilings, Baltic Pine flooring & large windows that give harbour, town & wind-farm views from most points in this home. 3 outdoor entertaining areas, double garage plus large cellar for storage, this home sits on 506m2 block that's very low maintenance.

Jackie Cowley

0408 427 554

9841 0213

jackie.c@albanypropertybrokers.com.au

albanypropertybrokers.com.au **Albany Property Brokers** **APB**



\$521,000 USD

\$495,000



4



2



3

In the heart of town!

Sitting on a 1017m² block just an easy walk to town, this modern 2000-built home was designed to blend with the character & charm of the early neighbouring properties. Being double brick, this home is quiet, peaceful & inviting; the floor plan is unique & designed to achieve not only space for everyone but also areas that can provide a retreat when needed. The hub is the kitchen/dining/family area that overlooks the yard & beyond to the ever-changing views of the harbour. The huge 3-berth garage/workshop is easily accessed from the back of the block.

Jackie Cowley

0408 427 554

9841 0213

jackie.c@albanypropertybrokers.com.au

Albany



\$357,000 USD

\$339,000



3



1



1

Convenient location!

Neat brick and tile home built in 1980's on 742m2 block. Offering 3 bedrooms, 1 bathroom, lounge, kitchen/family/dining area, protected patio and single garage with drive thru access to the back yard. The property is fully fenced, has extensive paving, small rainwater tank, garden sheds and vegetable garden. Handy to schools, shopping centre and hospital.

Max Bassett

0428 411 855

9892 6003

max.b@albanvpropert



\$557,000 USD

\$529,000



4



2



2

Simply stunning!

Those words describe this exceptional home exactly! On an elevated block, the broken roof line creates a striking look from the road and it just gets better as you step inside. Solid Tasmanian Oak flooring greets you & flows beautifully thru-out the open plan living, dining & fabulous kitchen! The interior has been finished with skilfully chosen fixtures & fittings all in soothing muted natural colours. Built to impress in 2009 this home has been impeccably maintained. Inspect!

Joe Trichilo

0409 370 676

9841 0227

joe.t@albanypropertybrokers.com.au

Albany Property Brokers



We walked down the main street in town (York St.) which is shown in this picture below. It was a Sunday so traffic may have been lighter than for a weekday. The bay can be seen in the background at the foot of the street, as shown in the street map of Albany above.



The local newspaper office got our attention with the simple but explanatory name of Newspaper House. That may be a little window into an admirable feature of the Australian attitude -- straight forward and not too fancy.



A couple more of the beautiful old buildings on the main street are shown below.



We had intended to go along the water front and visit the Old Gaol (Jail) Museum and the model of the brig Amity that brought the first settlers to the Albany area. However, it was getting late so we just returned to the Amsterdam. We had a great time in Albany and really enjoyed the small town atmosphere. In particular we want to thank the Albany Volunteer Ambassadors (bright blue tops and yellow *i*) and other volunteer and government organizations that made our visit in Albany so enjoyable.

Although we had intermittent rain during the morning, the afternoon was dry and as the Amsterdam got underway at 6pm there was bright sunlight all around us. We left Hanover Bay and were on our way to our next port of call in Fremantle which is the gateway to Perth, Australia. We will arrive about 4pm tomorrow (2/25/13).