

**2/16/13 - Day 41 – Sydney Australia:** We left the Amsterdam about 10am and caught the shuttle bus that took us to the Circular Quay (pronounced “key”). The bus dropped us off at the Marriot Hotel near the ferry boat landing and we walked towards the section of town called The Rocks.

The Rocks was the site of the original English settlement at Sydney in 1788 when 11 ships brought prisoners and guards to Australia as part of the legal justice system in England. The date coming soon after the American victory in the Revolutionary War is not an accident. Before the Revolutionary War, England sent many of their criminals to America to work on the plantations in Virginia. After the American colonies won the Revolutionary War they refused accept any more prisoners from England. The solution by the British was to start sending their prisoners to Australia. As mentioned above, in 1788 the first load of prisoners arrived in a squadron of 11 ships called the First Fleet. The area consisting of several city blocks got its name, The Rocks, from the fact that shelters were carved into prominent sandstone rock cliffs that the settlers found there. Now The Rocks is a thriving Sydney community with significant support from the tourist industry. Much of that support comes by way of cruise ships that dock in Circular Quay just a few minutes walk away from The Rocks.

We walked along Circular Quay in front of the Museum of Contemporary Art. There was a huge silver disk in front of the museum that immediately got our attention. It turned out to be a large piece of artwork in the form of a polished stainless steel concave mirror. The mirror produced an image of the sky over Circular Quay, as shown in the picture on the right. As we walked across in front of it the image constantly changed to show the sky that was directly behind us. For Orlin, who loves watching cloud patterns this was a masterpiece worth watching all day; but we had to move on.



We soon came to Argyle Street and the Craft Market that was in full operation this Saturday morning. The booths were filled with all kinds of items to satisfy the exploring and shopping urge of tourists and Sydney residents.



The booths extended up Argyle Street and then turned the corner into Playfair Street.



We came upon one booth with a display of clothing well beyond the ordinary. A young lady named Libby Pool ([www.libbypool.com](http://www.libbypool.com)) had created a lady's camisole out of hundreds of paua shells that are normally used to make jewelry. She had drilled small holes at the edge of each shell and then tied them together with a strong black cord. The resulting garment is shown with Libby in the photo on the right.



Our photo can't do justice to the eye catching beauty of the piece but here on the left is another view. She had made one other like this on commission for \$8000 AU (\$8400 USD).

Barbara's shopping and jewelry loving genes had been kicked into high gear as she talked to Libby about how she made the paua shell clothing. After a while, with a sideways glance, Libby said she had something else to show us. This turned out to be a woman's bikini made from paua shells. We had been looking for the something unique and beautiful today and really hit a home run with Libby Pool.

We browsed through hundreds of booths that were lined up along the streets. At the edge of the flea market was a familiar row of permanent stores on George Street. We dropped in to one of our favorite stores, Natural Selection, for a look-around. We like the high quality of their souvenirs and tee shirts but today we didn't find anything we couldn't live without.

Many folks from the Amsterdam were also at the flea market today so we saw a lot of familiar faces. We bumped into our friend Karen at one point. After comparing notes on the day's happenings and plans we got a quick picture of her.

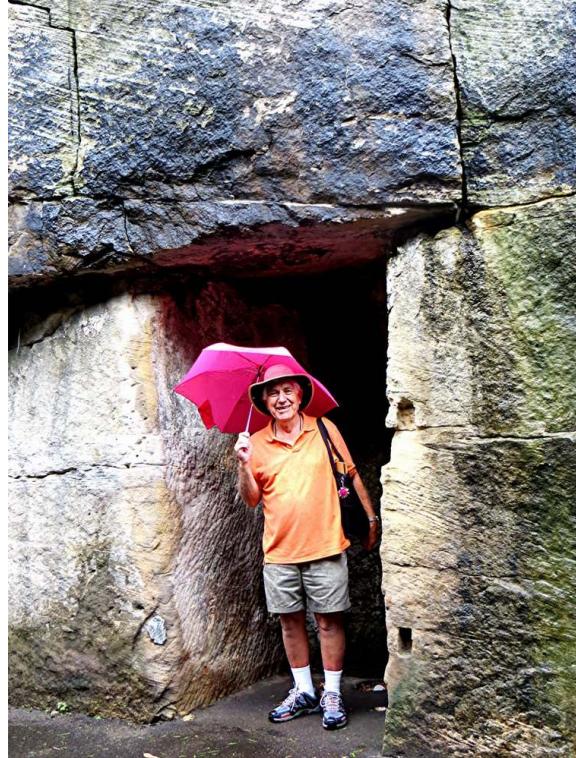
We were coming to the end of our craft market tour when it suddenly began to rain. The gentle



rain then turned into a downpour. This was a real test of the tent system over the booths. The tent design got high marks for keeping most of the goods on display dry and directing the collected water into the street gutters and drains. However, we were pretty much trapped under the tents for about a half an hour while the rains came down.

There has been a restoration program for the part of The Rocks where the original settlers carved shelters out of the sandstone cliffs. However, the entrance to the area is not well marked. Playfair Street is about a block long and near the middle of the block is a narrow doorway to a passage through the row house that we took into the court yard in front of the cliff. On an upper level of the cliff is an example of how living quarters might have been arranged but today we just grabbed a quick photo of Orlin seeking shelter in a little cove that had been carved in the sandstone.

We finished our visit to The Rocks and returned to the Amsterdam. After lunch we set out to walk about one half mile down to Darling Harbor. We wanted to walk along the pier and share the excitement of people mingling around the Aquarium, Australian Wild Animal Exhibit, ferry boat landings and many restaurants that line the harbor.



We were not disappointed because crowds of people were out on the boardwalk as we made our way through Darling Harbor.



Of course the ferry boats that take people to all sorts of places around Sydney Harbor seemed to be there in record numbers, as shown in the photo below. Excited people were leaving the ferry boats while others were hurrying to get on board.



Walking further we came upon an old fashioned Merry-Go-Round in Tumbalong Park at the far south end of Darling Harbor.

Having finished our exploration of Darling Harbor for today we returned to the Amsterdam.

We were at dinner when the Amsterdam got underway for our next port of call. From our location at the back of the dining room we got our departing picture of the Harbor Bridge through the window.



In a fortunate bit of timing we noticed that some bridge climbing tourists were up on the bridge and we could see them, as shown in these photographs.





We took this Bridge Climb tour in 2010 and were impressed with the technology that goes in to keeping everyone safe and comfortable during the climb to the top. It was a pricey adventure in 2010 at about \$150 USD per person but now the price is about \$250 USD per person. With the nice coveralls that everyone wears on the climb and other special equipment provided, the overhead is probably pretty high.

Before we knew it we were sliding by the beautiful Sydney Opera House and, of course, we can't go by without taking a picture, as shown on the right.

Soon we were clear of Sydney Harbor and had completed another enjoyable visit to this wonderful city. The good ship Amsterdam turned south and headed for Hobart, located on the Australian island state of Tasmania. We will arrive there on Monday morning after one day at sea.

