

From the new parliament building we walked down the “mall” to the old building. This older and much smaller building (built in 1927 as a provisional building with an expected occupancy of 50 years) had run out of space in the 1970s and, on completion of the new building, was to be demolished but a plan was put in place to save it and create a museum. Today the old chambers can be toured and a section that was occupied by the prime minister and the cabinet has been left as it was when vacated in the 1980s – complete with jackets over chairs and cups of tea or glasses on the desks.



The Old Parliament Building



We got back on the bus after touring the Old Parliament and completed the tour, passing many embassies, the Art Museum, the city lake and into the center of the city itself. It was an interesting ride and the commentary and information given by the driver was excellent – and, at times, very amusing. A few of the sights from the bus are shown below. The lake is right in the middle of the city and bisects the mall between the War Memorial and the Parliament Buildings (although not easily viewed from either).



The weather today started out quite bright and became warm and sunny before clouding over in the middle of the afternoon. There is a threat of rain for tonight and tomorrow.

Tonight we drove to a restaurant on the lake called Water's Edge where we had spent Molly's birthday ten years ago, so this was a celebration of sorts. The meal was very good with a selection for each of four courses. The view over the lake towards the parliament buildings added to the ambiance of a very nice evening.

Saturday April 22

We were up late again and walked to a local café for breakfast. It had been raining in the night and there was still a threat of more on a dull morning.

We decided to take a drive to visit the Canberra Deep Space Tracking Station, about 45 minutes out of town. On the way we saw and took a turnoff for Mt Stromlo which had been the site of observatories since early in the 20th century. An astronomer had convinced the new government that this would be a perfect site for studies of the galaxies and one which could concentrate on sightings from the southern hemisphere. He was so successful that the observatory site was integrated into the plans for the Australian Capital Territory.

A devastating bush fire in 2003 destroyed most of the site and necessitated a re-think of the mission for this area. Today it concentrates on collaboration with similar sites and universities around the world and specializes in the fabrication of parts necessary for celestial observation. It seems that nowadays, observation time can be bought on virtually all telescopes around the world and computer technology allows the collection and analysis of data at any site. Canberra has a world-wide reputation and scientists here received the Nobel Physics Prize for its work on assessing the rate at which our galaxy was expanding.

The observatory was established in 1924 as The Commonwealth Solar Observatory. The Mount Stromlo site had already been used for observations in the previous decade, a small observatory being established there by Pietro Baracchi using the Oddie telescope in 1911. The dome built to house the Oddie telescope was the first Commonwealth building constructed in the newly established Australian Capital Territory. In 1911 a delegation for an Australian Solar Observatory went to London seeking Commonwealth assistance. The League of the Empire sought subscriptions to assist raising funds. Survey work to determine the site's suitability had begun as soon as the idea of a new Capital was established. By 1909 the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science was assisted in this effort by Hugh Mahon (Minister for Home Affairs). Until World War II, the observatory specialized in solar and atmospheric observations. During the war the workshops contributed to the war effort by producing gun sights, and other optical equipment. After the war, the observatory shifted direction to stellar and galactic astronomy and was renamed The Commonwealth Observatory. Dr R. Wooley Director of the Observatory, worked to gain support for a larger reflector, arguing that the southern hemisphere should attempt to compete with the effectiveness of American telescopes. The ANU was established in 1946 in nearby Canberra and joint staff appointments and graduate studies were almost immediately undertaken. A formal amalgamation took place in 1957, with Mount Stromlo Observatory becoming part of the Department of Astronomy^[5] in the Research School of Physical Sciences at Australian National University, leading eventually to the formation of the Research School of Astronomy and Astrophysics in 1986.

On 18 January 2003, the devastating Canberra firestorm hit Mount Stromlo (which was surrounded by a plantation pine forest), destroying five telescopes, workshops, seven homes, and the heritage-listed administration building. Relics from the fire are preserved in the collection of the National Museum of Australia. They include a melted telescope mirror and a piece of melted optical glass (flint). The latter has pieces of charcoal and wire fused into it from the fierce heat of the fire.

Redevelopment is completed and the Observatory is now a major partner in the construction of the Giant Magellan Telescope.



At the Deep Space Tracking Station about 30 minutes further along the road there are several huge parabolic telescopes (several have been de-commissioned) that have been and continue to be vital to the tracking of (mostly NASA) deep space probes and are currently monitoring the path of Juno as it orbits Jupiter after a five year flight from earth.



***Canberra Deep
Space Tracking
Station***



Both facilities had excellent movies and interactive stations and the observatory had a self-guided walking tour of the mostly burned out facilities that have been maintained as a “museum” to the work carried out here over the past 100 years.

The weather had improved considerably after breakfast time and we had a warm sunny day for our 70 mile drive. The obser-



vatory and tracking station are both set in magnificent countryside (with its fall colors) which added to the beauty and interest of a great day out.



Tonight we walked about 20 minutes to eat at Courgette. It turns out that this is a sister restaurant to the Water's Edge and a couple of the staff remembered us from last night. This, too, was an excellent four course meal in a lovely, peaceful ambience.

Sunday April 23

We checked out of the hotel in Canberra about 9 and drove an hour before stopping for breakfast. Then it was non-stop to Sydney where we checked in the Marriott about 1pm.

Shortly afterwards we met Catherine and her two boys Harvey and Jake and her new partner, Ben. We spent the afternoon with them, having lunch together and taking a stroll past the Opera House. They joined us for a drink in the hotel bar before leaving about 5:30 for their 90 minute drive home. It was lovely to see them and enjoy the warm (75F) sunshine. We also just

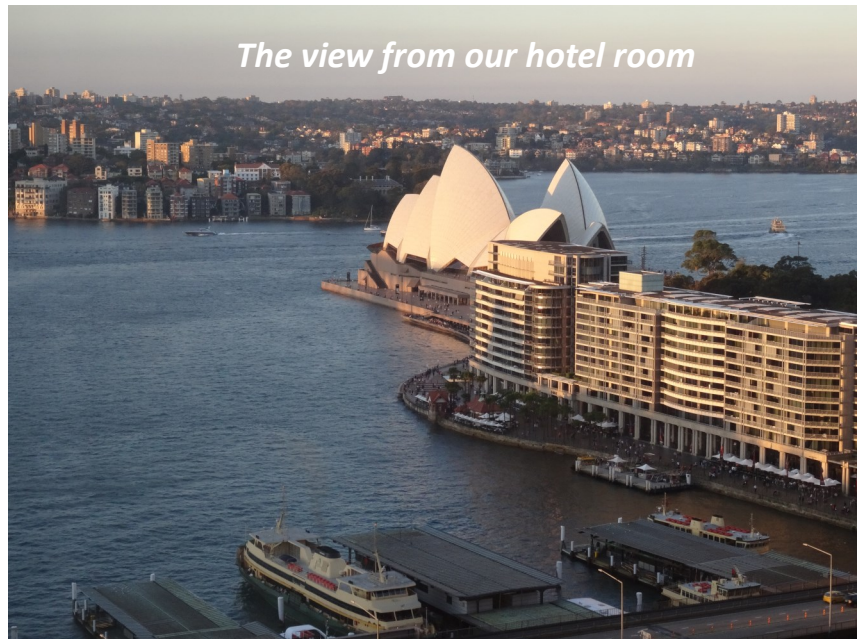


happened to be outside the Opera House as US Vice President Pence was visiting, so we got to see his motorcade.

This evening we walked to the Rocks area and found a restaurant where we were able to sit outside and enjoy a relatively economical meal.

Monday April 24

I returned the car first thing this morning and then we had breakfast in the Concierge Lounge at the hotel. We then walked to Circular Quay and took the Hop on/Hop off bus after buying a two day pass. We took the bus for one complete circuit of the city loop (a second loop goes to Bondi Beach) and got a good overview of the city – seeing many places that we recognized from our visit ten years ago and seeing many more that we didn't! It was very warm sitting on top of the bus and we were grateful for any little breeze.



Views of Sydney



After a light lunch we took a ferry to Manly which is a 30 minute ride across the harbor and round a headland near the entrance to the Pacific. In Manly we had a cold drink and strolled along the promenade overlooking the beach before returning to town via the ferry. There were lots of people out and on the beach and the water so we are assuming that many locals are making another four day weekend as it is ANZAC Day tomorrow.



Across Sydney Harbour to Manly

Left: The Ferry Building on Circular Quay

Tonight we ate at Fish at the Rocks, about a 15 minute walk from the hotel. We had eaten here ten years ago and the place is still going and looks the same; a very good meal with excellent service.

Tuesday April 25 (ANZAC Day)

We had breakfast in the lounge at the hotel again and then walked to Circular Quay where we got the 10am Hop on/Hop off bus. This time we went about half way round the city loop and then changed to the Bondi bus and saw several more city sights along the way, including the magnificent St Mary's Cathedral.



The Cathedral Church and Minor Basilica of the Immaculate Mother of God, Help of Christians (colloquially, St Mary's Cathedral) is the cathedral church of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney and the seat of the Archbishop of Sydney and holds the title and dignity of a minor basilica, bestowed upon it by Pope Pius XI.

St Mary's has the greatest length of any church in Australia (although it is neither the tallest nor largest overall).



We changed buses at the very imposing main railway station (left) and traveled along some beautiful suburban streets, including the street of churches (below) - most of them, however, are now home to businesses and shops.



These rather fine structures gave way to somewhat tacky buildings as we approached the town of Bondi, which is very reminiscent of, for example, Sausalito in northern California as it was in the Sixties. Gaily painted frontages, "art" shops and a poorly maintained appearance seemed to complete the "Hippie" look. We spent about 2 hours at Bondi Beach and had lunch sitting at one of the many sidewalk cafes.



Bondi is, of course, the world-famous city beach of Sydney and, although relatively small, draws lots of surfers, swimmers and sun bathers. Today the beach seemed quite busy despite a threat of rain later.

We watched the action for a little while but we felt that the area had lost some of its luster since our previous visit and we certainly wouldn't want to be staying here as opposed to the city. Almost as soon as we got back on the bus it started to rain so there was a mad dash to get seats in the covered downstairs area for the journey back to the transfer point and then on the city bus back to our starting point. Fortunately it had stopped raining for our short walk back to the hotel, where we arrived about 4pm.



The ANZAC Day services and parades did not significantly affect our tour today; just a few streets were closed and the bus made appropriate detours. We did catch glimpses of parade formations and memorial service sites with huge crowds but perhaps the most striking aspect of the day was the dress of the locals. There were, of course, many military personnel in uniform either as parade participants or observers. But there were also many civilians wearing suits, many of whom were sporting medals, either their own or those of family members. It wasn't just the older generation; we saw many young men smartly dressed – some with medals, others not – but clearly proud to be a part of this day.

ANZAC (Australia and New Zealand Army Corps) Day was initiated to commemorate those of both countries who lost their lives in World War I but has been extended to honor those of all subsequent wars. In Australia, at least, it is also more than a day to honor veterans and seems to be a symbol of the birth and growth of the country itself. It is a little like a composite of

Memorial Day and Independence Day in the US and, like those days at home, it is a National Holiday. Unlike the US, however, we got the impression that it is more than a day off work and a time to enjoy a picnic with family and friends, and has a far bigger participation in the events defining the meaning of the day.

Anzac Day, 25 April, is one of Australia's most important national occasions. It marks the anniversary of the first major military action fought by Australian and New Zealand forces during the First World War.

When war broke out in 1914, Australia had been a federated nation for only 13 years, and its government was eager to establish a reputation among the nations of the world. When Britain declared war in August 1914 Australia was automatically placed on the side of the Commonwealth. In 1915 Australian and New Zealand soldiers formed part of the expedition that set out to capture the Gallipoli peninsula in order to open the Dardanelles to the allied navies.

The Australian and New Zealand forces landed on Gallipoli on 25 April, meeting fierce resistance from the Ottoman Turkish defenders. What had been planned as a bold stroke to knock Turkey out of the war quickly became a stalemate, and the campaign dragged on for eight months. At the end of 1915 the allied forces were evacuated from the peninsula, with both sides having suffered heavy casualties and endured great hardships. More than 8,000 Australian soldiers had died in the campaign. Gallipoli had a profound impact on Australians at home, and 25 April soon became the day on which Australians remembered the sacrifice of those who died in the war.

Although the Gallipoli campaign failed in its military objectives, the actions of Australian and New Zealand forces during the campaign left a powerful legacy. What became known as the "Anzac legend" became an important part of the identity of both nations, shaping the ways in which they viewed both their past and their future.

In 1916 the first Anzac Day commemorations were held on 25 April. For the remaining years of the war, Anzac Day was used as an occasion for patriotic rallies and recruiting campaigns, and parades of serving members were held in most cities. During the 1920s Anzac Day became established as a national day of commemoration for the more than 60,000 Australians who had died during the war. In 1927, for the first time, every state observed some form of public holiday on Anzac Day. By the mid-1930s all the rituals now associated with the day – dawn vigils, marches, memorial services, reunions – were firmly established as part of Anzac Day culture.

Later, Anzac Day also served to commemorate the lives of Australians who died in the Second World War, and in subsequent years the meaning of the day has been further broadened to include those who lost their lives in all the military and peace-keeping operations in which Australia has been involved

Tonight we had reservations at a high end restaurant called Aria overlooking the Opera House. We had eaten there ten years ago after a show and had thoroughly enjoyed it. The food and service were as good as we remembered.

Sydney, with a population of 5 millions is the state capital of New South Wales and the most populous city in Australia and Oceania. Located on Australia's east coast, the metropolis surrounds the world's largest natural harbor, and sprawls towards the Blue Mountains to the west. Sydney is the secondary official seat and secondary official residence of the Governor-General of Australia and the Prime Minister of Australia. Sydney's importance to Australia means that the federal government as a whole maintains a substantial presence in the city.

The Sydney area has been inhabited by indigenous Australians for at least 30,000 years. The first British settlers, led by Captain Arthur Phillip, arrived in 1788 to found Sydney as a penal colony, the first European settlement in Australia.

Britain had for a long time been sending their convicts across the Atlantic to the American colonies. That trade was ended with the Declaration of Independence by the United States in 1776. Overrun with prisoners, Britain decided in 1786 to found a new penal outpost in the territory discovered by Cook some 16 years earlier.

Captain Philip led the First Fleet of 11 ships and about 850 convicts into Botany Bay on 18 January 1788, though deemed the location unsuitable due to poor soil and a lack of fresh water. He travelled a short way further north and arrived at Port Jackson on 26 January 1788. This was to be the location for the new colony. Phillip described Sydney Cove as being "without exception the finest harbor in the world". The official proclamation and naming of the colony happened on 7 February 1788.

Between 1788 and 1792 about 4,300 convicts were landed at Sydney. Officers and convicts alike faced starvation as supplies ran low and little could be cultivated from the land. The region's indigenous population was also suffering. It is estimated that half of the native people in Sydney died during the smallpox epidemic of 1789. Conditions in the colony were not conducive to the development of a thriving new metropolis, but the more regular arrival of ships and the beginnings of maritime trade (such as wool) helped to lessen the burden of isolation.

Under Macquarie, the first Governor, roads, bridges, wharves, and public buildings were constructed using convict labor and by 1822 the town had banks, markets, and well-established thoroughfares. Part of Macquarie's effort to transform the colony was his authorization for convicts to re-enter society as free citizens.

Wednesday April 26

After breakfast we set out on a walking tour of the area within about ½ mile of the hotel. We had picked up the brochure almost incidentally when we visited the Information Center and it looked to be an interesting way to spend a couple of hours. In fact, we were walking for almost four hours and saw a side of Sydney that we certainly had not seen previously and, we suspect, is not seen by many visitors or locals. Actually, it is seen by thousands every day but it is the story behind the streets and alleys that is largely unknown.

The walk is called "Hidden Sydney's Little Laneways" and tours the area back from the quay where the first commercial buildings and enterprises were established in



the very late 1700s and throughout the 1800s and into the 20th century. In many places all that is left is the odd building – in some cases, not even that – but the walk takes in many alleys and narrow lanes that were once the heart of the city. The brochure described a lot of what used to be but there were sufficient landmarks remaining to give a good sense of the city as it was until the modern skyscrapers (almost) took over.



*Macquarie Square with its
Roads Marker
Victorian drinking fountain
and Victoria herself*



Everyone of these alleys had a story—a wool warehouse, a bank building, or other form of business from the very early days of the city—but it would have been so easy to simply walk by and never contemplate its history. Modern buildings have re-



placed many, others have simply been built next door and most businesses have changed completely in 200 years but, with the aid of our guide, the character of the day could still be seen. Not all the buildings have been lost and many (particularly those of the Victorian and early 20th century era) are magnificent today and stand proudly of great squares that compare with those of many European cities.



***ANZAC Day floral tributes
from around the world***



It was a fascinating tour and one that could surely exist in many cities around the world and Sydney is to be congratulated not only for preserving what it has but also for “reconstructing” the past in this walk.



We had lunch at a local café and then sat outside the Opera House for a while before the skies blackened and rain threatened. The rain had ended before we left for dinner. Not that that was much of an issue as we walked literally 100 feet from the hotel to an Italian restaurant in a side street. It was a very good meal complete with grappa and limoncello.

Thursday April 27

Today was our day at the Taronga Zoo. To get there we went by ferry across to the north shore and then took a cable car to the top entrance. From there it was a long, slow walk down to the water passing dozens of enclosures and open areas filled with wild life. We saw koala, emu, kangaroo (just the ears!) and lots of other species more familiar to us. It was another bright and sunny day although the temperature had dropped significantly since yesterday and was now only about 60F.





We had lunch in the café in the middle of the zoo (with some great views across the harbor towards the city) and when it was time to get back on the ferry, we went via Circular Quay to Darling Harbor. This is a still-growing area of shops, cafes, apartments and commercial buildings just around the Rocks to the west of downtown Sydney. We strolled along the harbor, had a coffee and then got the boat back to Circular Quay – via the Zoo once more! As we approached Circular Quay, the Dawn Princess

cruise ship was just leaving its berth at the Overseas Terminal so we had a good view of this huge vessel making its way out of the harbor.

Tonight we walked along the quay and found a restaurant (Oyster Cove) near the Opera House and right on the water side.



We had a good meal in perfect surroundings and were also treated to a fireworks display from the rooftop of a nearby building; most unusual!



Friday April 28

It was another bright and sunny morning and a little warmer than yesterday as we started our walk through The Rocks area of Sydney. This is where the city started with the first penal colonies and the original structures from the late 1700s.





*Excavated foundations of the house
where the Bubonic Plague started*



The Rocks





Unfortunately, much of the area was demolished in the early 1900s at the outbreak of Bubonic Plague; homes were destroyed and infected inhabitants were quarantined in an attempt to halt the spread of the disease. It has only been in recent years that excavations have revealed parts of many of these old homes and factories, and the tiny alleys and narrow streets of The Rocks have been defined once again.

Much like the area which we visited two days ago, The Rocks walk requires a little imagination which is helped by historical records and a few old photographs as well as some buildings and a few foundations now being visible. We walked past the observatory several old pubs and hotels, as well as the beautiful Holy Trinity Church (the “Garrison Church”), originally built for the military.



Once again we found that the history of a city barely 200 years old can be as fascinating and interesting as one 2000 years old and we spent a very enjoyable five hours meandering the whole area. In addition, in this city, any walk is enhanced by the sightings of the Harbour Bridge and the Opera House at almost every turn as well as great views of the magnificent harbor.

We ended our walk by stopping at a souvenir shop to buy just a few reminders of our week in Sydney and our month in Australia. Tomorrow we head home!

Tonight we walked once again to the Opera House precinct and found a restaurant where we could sit outside on a very pleasant evening. We had another good meal and enjoyed the view of the bridge, the city skyline and the constant in and out of the ferry services to the Circular Quay. What a perfect way to end our visit to Australia.

Saturday April 29

We were up at six, packed and checked out of the hotel by around 6:30. We got a taxi to the airport and were quickly through check-in and Security and had about 90 minutes in the Delta lounge before our flight to Los Angeles. This flight was about 45 minutes late leaving Sydney but as we had a very long layover in LAX we weren't at all concerned about missing our connection. We had a great view of Sydney as we flew over the city right after take-off. The flight was long (13 hours) but with meals, rest and occasional work on the computer, the time passed relatively quickly. It was rough at times but was a generally smooth flight over the Pacific Ocean. We arrived in Los Angeles at 7:10 local time Saturday morning; yes, it was still Saturday!

Getting through Immigration and Customs was quite straightforward and we eventually found the Sky Club where we would spend the next several hours before leaving for a final leg to Cincinnati. This flight left at 2pm PDST and arrived in Cincinnati on time, getting us home almost exactly 30 hours after leaving the hotel in Sydney.

