



Scouts BIG Day Out, 19/Nov/2011

Middle Head Forts, Balmoral Beach, Rocks Markets, Pancakes-On-The-Rocks

Pictures and story by Egil

Our BIG day out combined multiple activities that the Scouts had asked for, all rolled together in one huge day.

The 12 hour adventure began at 09:30 when we left Bangor by bus to Sutherland where we met more Scouts, bringing the team to ten Scouts and three adults. We caught the train to Circular Quay and then ferry to the Taronga Zoo wharf. The harbour and city looked magnificent on this glorious sunny summer day.



From the Zoo wharf we caught the bus to Balmoral Beach and walked along the esplanade under the shade of huge old trees. We could see Middle Head shrouded by sea fog.



The expedition team on the esplanade at Balmoral Beach.



Middle Head in sea fog behind Balmoral Beach



Climbing away from Balmoral Beach

A short 2km walk climbed some steps to the ridge top and along to Middle Head where we entered the fog and walked under a grey sky. It was amazing to see the sea fog racing up the hill side in the strong breeze.



National park entrance.

We explored the rabbit warren of tunnels and fortifications dating from 1801 when the first military installation was built in Australia. First we explored some circular gun pits and storage tunnels built around 1871 and hand cut into the rock escarpment from where they could fire down on enemy ships entering the harbor. Next we explored large circular emplacements at the front of the site where two 6 inch guns had been in use up until 1945.

Here we met an interesting bunch in X-Men costumes. They looked like they were on a movie shoot – but there were no movie cameras around. We had to ask what was happening and learned they were just having fun dressing up and taking photos.



Circular gun emplacements from 1871



Hand cut into the rock



storage tunnel



Six inch gun site



Wonder Woman and friends from X-Men

We found a shady spot for lunch with occasional views over the harbour through breaks in the fog. The manly ferries were blasting their fog horns and the harbor was full of sailing boats enjoying the strong breeze. None of us had ever seen the harbor from this vantage point on Middle Head.



Views from lunch spot

After lunch we did the 2km walk back to Balmoral Beach and enjoyed a swim on a glorious summer afternoon.



Enjoying Balmoral Beach



Harbour full of sails from Balmoral beach

From Balmoral Beach we caught a bus back to the Zoo wharf and then another ferry ride to Circular Quay. The harbor and city looked magnificent in the afternoon sun.



Harbour cruise back to Circular Quay

Back at Circular Quay we had afternoon tea by the harbour and then a short walk to the Rocks markets where we split into smaller Patrols for independent exploration.



Rocks Markets

After exploring the markets we regrouped and compared treasure finds. Then it was a short walk to Pancakes-on-the-Rocks where we got four tables beside each other and the Scouts got experience managing the money for each table and paying the table bill themselves. The food was great and a stack of pancakes proved to be a big challenge, even for hungry Scouts.



Pancakes-on-the-Rocks



Delicious pancakes!

After a filling dinner we walked to the foot of the Harbour Bridge pylon and saw the pin that held the entire weight of the bridge. Then we followed the shore walking back around Circular Quay enjoying the magnificent harbour and city views. In front of the AMP building in Scout Place we saw the recently opened monument to Scouting.

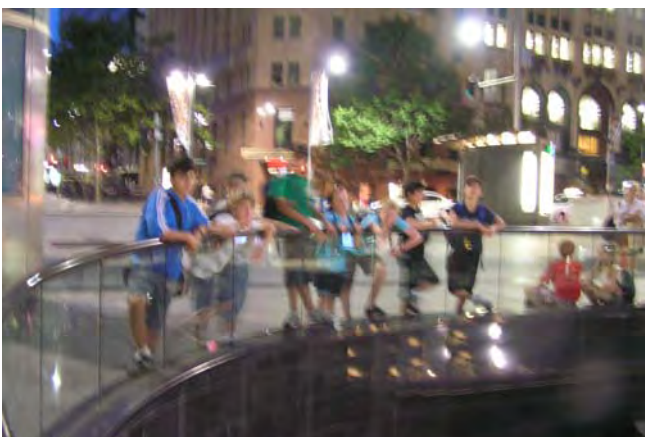


Holding up the Harbour Bridge

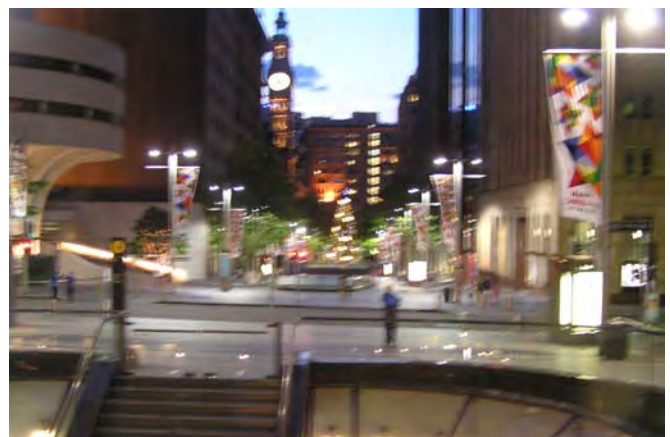


Monument to Scouting in Scout Place

From the Quay we walked up to Martin Place enjoying the colourful Christmas decorations and caught the train back to Sutherland and finally bus to Bangor, arriving back 12 hours after departure. I knew the Scouts had a great adventure when one asked if we could do it again. It was a great day out and thanks to all the participants.



Martin Place



Christmas colour in Martin Place