

Setting the scene

Getting off the train at Circular Quay on the day of the cruise was shaping up to be perfect sailing weather. From the Hornsby line I had one connection to get on the City Circle. Leaving a bit early gave me time to do a leisurely work around the old waterfront buildings. I'd texted to see where my sister was to meet for a quick coffee before assembling with our fellow passengers at Campbell Cove.

Not having been to the Quay for 10 or so years it seemed very busy and many new eateries had popped up. From the very clear map provided by Tom, one of the main organisers, you could see Rossini's. Thinking this would be a good place to have a first coffee, I strolled through the shopping complex to get a bit of exercise.

At Wharf 4 the Queenscliff ferry was moored and looked drawable. Opposite was City Extra, almost identical to Rossini's with lots of empty tables so I ordered a coffee at a table there. A summer cruise liner was preparing to leave today and loomed as large as many of the buildings. Plenty to see.

The Campbell Cove wharf was hemmed in by the tall ship and massive liner. The sun was beating down already and Mary and I found the only shade under a palm tree, apart from the upmarket restaurants.

Greeted on board

As 1.15 pm approached, the cruiser moored and the tiny plankway was fairly loosely connected. I was first on luckily, with my sister close behind. The waves made stepping onto the boat very unstable and I literally fell onto the lounge where Libby and Kim were seated, knocking Libby's drink over. I wasn't too worried as it was only water but a crew member quickly cleaned up and asked us to move to get the mooring equipment out. The boarding became progressively rougher and a bit touch and go for some. I found holding the rail was the most secure footing or the edge of the table.

Intergenerational

While standing at the only table, we met Glen, who got his first job with Kim at Molong. He'd also worked at Gidgenbung exploring extensions to the old mine. He was very enthusiastic about the prospectivity of the Lachlan Fold Belt. Obviously following in the footsteps of his parents, founders of a mine in Thisland

At the Helm

Libby was more sure-footed and found seats upstairs for M and I and brought out soda waters all round. Feeling welcomed from the get go, although I only knew a handful of people. Tom came up to give us name tags and introduced himself. Did well organising this cruise and got me in touch with others on the committee.

Showing the way

My first SMEDG cruise was while working with Getty in 1982. Somehow all the Adelong field crew managed to get time off to go on the cruise. I invited a surveyor from White's Industries. Turns out Tom was also working for them back then. Small world. He was interested in the biannual fly-in airshows at Temora, especially for his daughter.

Mary and Pam, from the Getty office were on the 1980's cruise. Both inspiring geologists, with differing experiences. I thought they were good role models. Pam had taught three of my UTS colleagues geology at school and all had longevity in their geology careers.

A few stayers from the halcyon Getty days were on board, continuing the tradition. Three enterprising Getty geologists started Gnostic in Townsville. Being the first gnomette and the second employee I was there in its early days. Libby's insight sums up that time: we were all young, away from home and had to get along with everyone. Just what was needed to survive the outback camps. But that's another story!

Picking up the threads of our lives, following the many social gatherings. Not to mention The Malaya. The social connections take on a different focus now. Mentoring, keeping connected and involved in the ever changing roles geologists play at different life stages interests me now. It's more family than some of the sciences probably because we spend so much time away from home.

I was enjoying the social interaction of long-term friends and colleagues. A very relaxing day on the harbour and not all shop talk. The food plates kept coming at a steady pace with plenty of variety of savoury snacks. The plates were quickly cleaned up. The crew were all very obliging and kept the cool drinks and coffees flowing. I held out for desserts and the three varieties of cakes didn't disappoint.

Looking forward to the next cruise but I won't leave it for 40 years this time.

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