

Day 22 – Grace, you are not alone [Saturday 12-Feb-2011]

We had set our alarms early so I could prepare for a con-call with the GSN team back in Waltham, MA. We had no problem getting up early since we are traveling west. At first I tried to get setup with Skype, but the network here is very unreliable. I can only surmise that it is grossly under provisioned for the load it is being subjected to by all the back packers. Too bad they have to charge as much as they do for access. In the end I opted for using Skype, but the call was really mixed quality at best.

The weather did not look that great outside. I think we did the right thing to take some pictures yesterday. It's been looking overcast ever since we got up this morning. We also started talking about altering our flight plans to reduce the stay in the Maldives. That place is looking less and less attractive to us. It is very expensive and all you get for it is resort style living on secluded islands. I would not mind that, but at \$400-\$500/night it blows past what I think is a reasonable price for the value we get.

We have made several attempts to look at joining a dive charter instead of staying at a hotel or resort, but we have not been able to find anyone able to take us. Also, after reviewing costs, they are not that cheap either (around \$485/night for the two of us, including dives).

We decided to start the day by taking the free 555 bus down to the Circular Quay area. We then walked over to the outdoor market by the Rocks. We could see a giant cruise ship docked in port. It was no surprise to find a preponderance of cruise ship passengers wandering the market.



Australian aboriginal instruments were for sale at the Rocks Market in Sydney



Cool looking lights as well



Little glass animals are a sure hit with older cruise ship passengers 😊



I am wondering if there is a “return policy” for when you purchase a boomerang.



Hey look at that “forn” license plate from NH. Its tax sticker is good until, wait, 1984!

After we had walked the market for a while we followed the port around towards the opera house and continued into the large botanical garden. Even though the weather was very cloudy, we still saw many interesting things.



Some really cool looking plants at the Sydney Botanical Garden

And then, all of a sudden, we saw a bunch of white large birds on the ground that looked very familiar. There must have been about 50 where we stopped. For those of you who do not know, we have a Triton Cockatoo at home that looks just like these birds with the slight exception that she has a blue tinge around her eyes. Otherwise she looks exactly the same.



I think I can see Grace out there, hic, but, wait, hic, there are many Graces out there



This one is snacking on a fresh fig in a fig tree

Later on, we discovered that there must have been a couple of hundred wild cockatoos in the botanical garden. They sounded just like Grace and their moves were just like hers.



Wandering around the weeds, looking for plants



I think I saw something scary

The birds were quite comfortable to be around humans. They even walked up to people in that funky cockatoo walking style.



Back off, that thing on the ground is mine!



Walking along the shore by the Botanical Garden of Sydney

As soon as we left the garden it started to rain. We hurried up to bus 555 and actually managed to catch a bus relatively quickly. But, unfortunately, the bus took us back down to the Quay after which the driver said his shift was over! We had to walk all the way down to the Quay and wait for another bus with a different driver. Well, I guess that sums up “free”. We eventually got a ride back home. It was still raining. We grabbed our rain gear and headed out for something to eat.



Enjoying a brew, fish and chips, street view, mayo and a side of “Irish” curry sauce

After a while of searching we found a cool looking pub where we enjoyed a few drinks and then some fish and chips. We had a great view of the street and the intersection. Everyone was out there in the rain while we sat in the window opening, completely dry.

I continue to be amazed how young people are in Sydney. We are hard pressed to find people older than us. After we had eaten we went to the grocery store and picked up a few items for breakfast tomorrow. I could see that they had the same guy as last night acting as a store lookout. He just wore different clothes. We headed back to the hostel. Back at the hostel I worked on the diary while Lilli watched some TV.

We are hoping that the weather will improve tomorrow.