

Probus Strathfield - Walk on 30th April – Balmain East Wharf to Pyrmont Bridge – (5 to 6 Km.)

A small group of hardy walkers met at Strathfield Station for the City Circle train. The rest of the group started from Cabarita Wharf and caught the ferry to Circular Quay. Unfortunately our train was delayed and our leader, George, made contact with the ferry staff to advise them to 'hold the Balmain East ferry'. Well, that was an excuse for coffee and off the group went. We arrived at the Quay on time to find the wharf deserted. Anyhow, the group returned and we caught the next ferry to Balmain East.

Our walk took us along the foreshore of Balmain to Peacock Point and then the mountaineering began. Up and down stone steps, iron steps and steep narrow lanes, with frequent reminders from George that this was a 'gentle' walk. There is a fascinating range of architecture in Balmain from early stone cottages to modern, ugly apartments. At least the Council has managed to preserve some foreshore.

Passing through Birrung Park we noticed several chalk arrows on the ground. It was revealed that Ralph had been out early that morning marking the trail. Anyhow, George kept a firm hand on the group and steered us past the new White Bay Passenger Terminal to the Bald Rock Pub which dates back to 1876. Rumours that it was previously owned by Ralph's grandfather were quickly scotched. We partook of some liquid refreshment although John and Ralph had difficulty in communicating with the Irish barmaid. Someone's drink was not paid for?

Sadly moving out, we continued past the Water Police Headquarters, up and down 34 more stairways and up to Victoria Road and the Anzac Bridge. We passed the White Bay Power Station and learned that WhiteBay was named after the Surgeon General of the first fleet, John White. The Power Station was shut down in 1983 and hopefully will be turned to some good use soon. Walking across the Anzac Bridge was interesting, if not very noisy and hazardous with cyclists. Unfortunately the magnificent view of the Harbour was hidden by new fence work in progress. The bridge rises 27m above the water. Its height was designed to accommodate two colliers in Blackwattle Bay, both of whom were removed from service before the bridge was opened.

A few more stairways and we descended to ground level and saw some of the many new apartment blocks in Pyrmont and a beautiful native garden which is maintained by volunteers. A short walk over the road to the Fish Markets and lunch was enjoyed by all. Afterwards, we went our separate ways with some enjoying a trip on the Light Rail to Central, courtesy of the Senior's \$2.50 ticket.

Many thanks to George (and Ralph) for a great day out.

David Liell – 1st May 2013