

First Report of the
ROTARY GROUP STUDY EXCHANGE TEAM
District 589

Received: 8-30-71

Our first week in Australia has been one really to write home about. I think you will see we are having a grand, busy time.

MORE AMERICANS SPLASH DOWN

Saturday, 8-14-71

The Pacific Ocean wasn't the only splash down scene this month. Sydney, Australia made a gracious, warm welcome to seven members of the Group Study Exchange Team from District 589, Houston, Texas, this afternoon.

To the flash of photographer's and bright smiles, the Team was met at the airport by Rotarians from District 275, who quickly whisked them off to their respective host's homes, then to welcome night drinks and dinner atop the Squire's Inn Motel in Bondi Junction. A grand view of a sprawling city by night, delicious food and drink, delightful Australian personalities -- all contributed to a truly warm welcome for the Texas Team.

It was the only warm thing in Sydney that night. The temperature must have dropped to 45 degrees, and most of the Texans felt every degree of it!

Sunday, 8-15-71

It was 62 degrees this morning in the home where this writer stayed. Most host homes were about the same. Texans, fortunately, are notorious for their thick skins and tough dispositions and we are pleased to report there were no casualties or cases of frost bite. It was cold though. Only another Texan would understand the shock of 45-60 degree weather in mid-August.

Team members spent the day with their hosts -- generally indoors, though several die-hard golfers did get out and try to hit the "ice-covered" smaller British golf ball. Best score reported for 9 holes was 50. Brrr.

Monday, 8-16-71

Toured Sydney University, its 1,000,000 volume library, and the beautiful Great Hall, built in 1854. Native limestone bricks, stained glass windows donated by well-wishers in England, intricate wood carvings, a 1773 French tapestry depicting Joseph's reunion -- all blend to create a Great Hall worthy of its name.

While on the campus, the team enjoyed morning tea in the International House, a dormitory/student center for foreign students. Over half the funds for the multi-story complex were provided by Rotary Districts 268 and 275 -- a living credit to Rotarians everywhere.

South Sydney Rotary Club hosted the Team at its luncheon meeting, then, with full stomachs we walked across the Sydney University campus to Royal Prince Alfred Hospital for a tour. Our hosts picked us up and took us our separate ways. Several of the guys spent some time in the night spot area of downtown Sydney known as Kings Cross.

Tuesday, 8-17-71

The Team was taken on tours of Standard Telephone and Cables Pty. Ltd. and enjoyed both morning tea and lunch in the company canteen.

Team members ordered pairs of woolen slacks from a local Rotarian and looked forward to having the warmer slacks to wear. We then went our separate ways for shopping and sightseeing.

Wednesday, 8-18-71

A bus tour of Sydney and environs was on tap this morning. Our driver "poured out" interesting data as we drove most of the morning. We stopped to see the inspiring Royal Australian Navy Chapel on the cliff overlooking the Pacific, then more driving to return for lunch with the Kings Cross Rotary Club.

After lunch the Team was taken to see Sydney's pride and joy -- the Opera House. Unfortunately, no tours were being conducted inside the structure still under construction -- glass walls being installed and great danger. The entertainment facility is already wondrous to behold and a viewer can readily imagine what a splendid showcase the city of Sydney is going to enjoy.

Team members separated for ferry boat and hydrafoil rides across Sydney harbor, more sight-seeing and picture taking until a wine/cheese tasting party and smorgasbord dinner hosted by South Sydney Rotary Club at the Weinkeller. A delightful evening of friendship with the Aussies.

Thursday, 8-19-71

Cotton spinning mills at Kotara, 104 miles from Sydney, were visited this day. Bradmill Industries, Ltd. provided an interesting and informative introduction to this business.

Delicious seafood lunch and scenic drives along the beautiful coastline soon to be inundated with summer vacationers rounded out the day. Some of the team again visited Sydney's nighttime showplace -- Kings Cross.

Friday, 8-20-71

The team watched automobiles being assembled and completed at the General Motors - Holden plant at Pagewood (Sydney). The modern plant appears to be quite efficient, completing approximately 300 cars each day.

Lunch at the Australian Golf Club (delicious steaks) preceded the Team's visit to the District Court, where a plumbing contract was being disputed. Solicitors (Attorneys) for the defence and prosecution, each bedecked with George Washington-looking gray, curly wigs, presented their cases and questioned witnesses. We thought the prosecutor should have done a better job.

Team members were able to get some traveler's checks cashed at the Bank of New South Wales -- received \$A 17.31 for \$US 20.00. Wow! That exchange rate and devaluation hurts!

A tour through Sydney's lovely Town Hall, afternoon tea (drinks) and subway train ride completed the afternoon, ending at the Royal Auto Club for more drinks and dinner -- and a little slot machine lever pulling. Especially good food did not detain the hosts and Team -- for trotting horse races were also on the schedule, and it does appear that Rotarian group leaders can select better horses than most Team members...

Saturday, 8-21-71

Trains, planes, buses, automobiles -- the only thing left for the Team to ride was boats. Heavy rains and hail subsided so the 48-foot yacht the "Cheri Amie" (Dear Friend) was able to do her duty as planned. A very pleasant day was spent on Cowan Creek and Broken Bay (and a little of the Pacific Ocean) after the beautiful drive through the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park to Bobbin Head Marina. Picnic lunch was enjoyed while docked in Refuge Harbor where kookaburras, bell birds and shags chimed in to a memorable atmosphere.

Dinner at a host's home, and the Team left for such places as Kings Cross.

Sunday, 8-22-71

Team members spent the day in various activities with their respective hosts. In spite of persistent drizzle and rain, 107 was the best 18-hole score turned in, and that at Kee Nagle's home course, Pymble Golf Club.

Hope this is the kind of report you would like. If it's too long, please feel free to abridge.

Sincerely,

Rich Corder