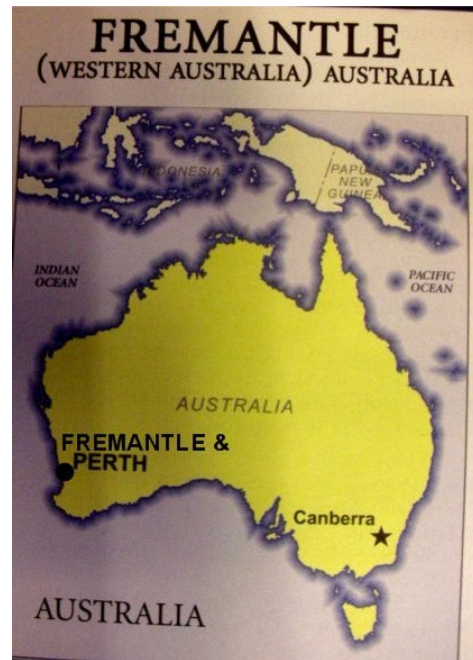


## Day 40 (Wednesday, 10/29/08) Perth-Fremantle, Australia

During the night the ride on the Amsterdam went from fairly violent pitching to more gentle action as we approached the entrance to the harbor at Fremantle, Australia. At daybreak the temperature was a cool 63 F, a little mist was falling and we had broken clouds across the sky. The ship eased into its berth in Fremantle at the Passenger Terminal on Victoria Quay. The map on the right shows where we were located on the globe.

Fremantle is a small town of about 30,000 persons and it serves as the port for the much larger inland city of Perth. Perth is the capital city of the state of Western Australia (WA) and has a population of about 1.5 million when surrounding suburbs are included. The population of Western Australia is only 2 million so outside of the Perth area the population density is low.

Fremantle is located at the mouth of the Swan River which forms part of the Fremantle port facility. This morning the Amsterdam pulled in to the passenger



terminal located on Victoria Quay. A map of Fremantle showing where the Amsterdam was located is shown on the left. Here is a picture of Victoria Quay with the skyline of Perth visible in the distance.



The passenger facilities in Fremantle were very nice and they had a large crane waiting to swing the covered gangway into place as soon as the Amsterdam was docked.



We had signed up for a tour called "Highlights of Fremantle and Perth". About 9am we boarded bus number 7 and were on our way with, Jane, our tour guide. The first order of business was to get a little background on the Fremantle and Perth area. Jane said the first British settlers arrived in 1829 just in time to stop the French from claiming this western side of the Australia continent. The first

settlers were ordinary British citizens ready to forge a life on the frontier. Later, convicts were sent from Britain to provide a much needed labor force in building an infrastructure for the new city of Fremantle. The convicts were treated rather badly but Jane said now it is a badge of honor for Australians to claim a convict as one of their ancestors. In the mid 1800s gold was discovered in the back country and this led to thousands of gold seekers entering the area and the founding of Perth, which was nearer the gold fields. Later, other minerals, such as silver, lead, and iron were discovered and the mining of these minerals still forms a significant part of the economy of Western Australia.

The traffic in Australia follows the left hand protocol and we noticed that the price of gasoline ranged from 138.5 to 159.9 Australian cents per liter. With gas priced at a fraction of cent level they must use some round-off protocol to come up with the final cost in whole cents. At the current exchange rate (\$1 US = \$1.47 Australian) the price of gasoline works out to about \$4 US per gallon.



Our first stop on the tour was at the memorial for the Australian soldiers who died at the World War I Battle of Gallipoli in Turkey in 1915. By good fortune our bus included several friends we have met through the Cruise Critic



connection. Nick (foxpaw) joined us in Singapore and here he is with Barbara on the left. Some Cruise critic friends on the cruise had asked Nick to bring absentee ballots for the US General Election on November 4. He delivered those ballots and they were mailed from Singapore. The subject of voting came up on today's tour and Jane said

that in Australia everyone is required to vote. You can be fined on the order of \$15 US if you are registered and fail to vote. Nick had spent several months in Fremantle as part of his US Navy service so he knew something about what we would be seeing today. Nick sends special greetings and good wishes to his mother, Dolores, who is following our blog.



Other Fremantle sites we saw were the ancient prison and some residential areas.

Throughout the tour we saw many comparisons with the plant life and buildings that reminded us of San Diego, California.

Then we saw this road sign which confirmed our comparison by showing Highway 5 going through Perth and Fremantle just like it goes through San Diego.



We made our way over the 10 or 15 miles that separate Fremantle and Perth. We passed through some very nice neighborhoods. Jane said the Fremantle homes with on the order of 1000 square feet would sell for the equivalent of \$400,000 US. As we approached Perth the homes looked



more like those in La Jolla in San Diego and Jane estimated the price at \$3 to \$5 million US. Here, on the left, is an example of one nice home we saw in Perth.

The main stop for the tour in Perth was King's Park which included the War Memorial. The day had started out kind of rainy but now the sun was out and it was marvelous. We walked around and

snapped some photos. The main feature of the park is the Memorial to soldiers who have died in the wars. Here is a photo of that large site. Behind Barbara is a pool with an eternal flame in the center. Further on is a large obelisk dedicated to the fallen soldiers.



We ran into Trudy, Diana and Hennie who were in the final stages of checking out King's Park. Hennie had bought a packet of seeds so she could start growing some of the Grass Trees we saw in the park.

The landscaping of the park, with an emphasis on native plants, was wonderful. We particularly liked the display of Kangaroo Paw flowers shown on the right. Hennie's latest acquisition called a Grass Tree is shown below.



The Magpie birds in the park provided a humorous scene near a fast food restaurant where they were harassing a fellow trying to eat his French fries and do some reading.



The view of the Perth skyline was quite dramatic from King's Park. It's a beautiful city and we thought this scene with the eucalyptus trees in the foreground was particularly attractive.



The bus got underway and took us around the heart of downtown Perth. At one point we saw the black, red, and yellow official Aborigine Flag (on the right) flying along with the flag of Australia (center) and city of Perth (left).



We cruised through the high rise buildings of Perth and a park called the Esplanade. We got this picture, on the left, of one of the double decker Hop-On-Hop-Off (HOHO) buses making the sight-seeing rounds.

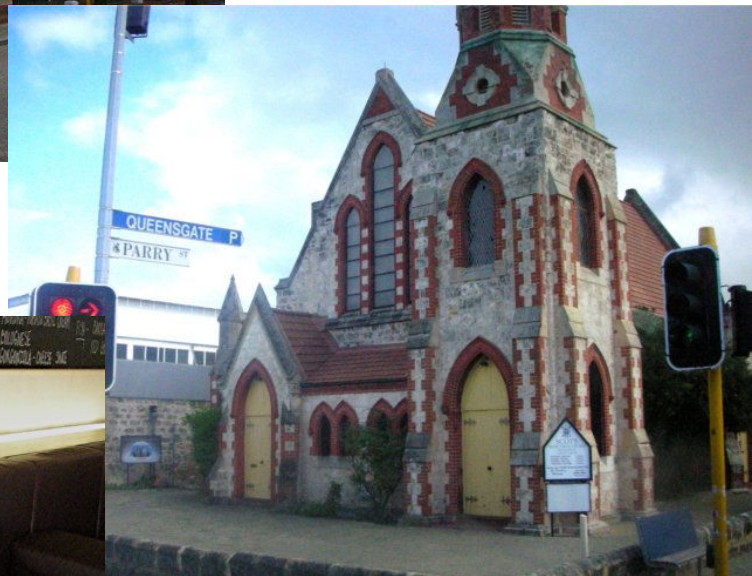
Our tour made the short trip back to Fremantle where we visited a swimming beach before going to the ship. At the beach we got Nick, Diana and MaryLou to join Barbara for a photo with Fremantle in the background.



After the formal tour we still had several hours before we had to be back on the Amsterdam so we walked around Fremantle. We found Fremantle to be absolutely charming with a small town atmosphere. The streets were lined with cafes and tourist shops but it all seemed rather low key and relaxing. Here are a few photos we took of the downtown streets.



By sheer good luck we happened to walk by an open air café where our table mate, Joan, was having a snack



with an Australian friend. Joan called us over and we had a chance to meet Mary whom Joan knew from a prior trip she had taken. Mary lives in the Fremantle area so they had been able to meet up during this brief visit of the Amsterdam. Before we continued on we took a quick picture.

We decided to buy some wine in Fremantle to keep in our stateroom. We stopped in at a big store called Coles. This store was much like a super Wal-Mart or Target. We went in to a part of the store called LiquorLand and bought a couple boxes of wine made by the De Bortoli winery. The 2 liter boxes each cost \$13.99 Australian (\$9.33 US) which seemed like a bargain if they taste okay. We noticed that the Australian wine with a brand name of Yellowtail wasn't stocked on the shelves. Barbara asked the friendly check-out clerk why they didn't stock Yellowtail. The clerk paused, cleared his throat and then pretended to spit on the floor before telling us that Yellowtail was just for export and it was an embarrassment to the Australian wine industry. Since Yellowtail is much to our liking we are really looking forward to this De Bortoli wine.

We walked the short distance from downtown Fremantle back to the passenger terminal. On the way we had an opportunity to show "Where in the World" Barbara's Oak Ridge Library Card could be found today.





It was about 3:30 and we had to be back on board at 4:30pm. The passenger terminal was busy with people streaming through with packages going through the security checks. The mood was festive with a lively Australian Band called The Windjammers playing instruments and singing traditional Australian songs.



Some people were just relaxing in a little coffee shop area and as we passed someone called us. It turned out to be Jean and Doug (aussieoz), our Cruise Critic friends from the Knoxville area.

Doug and Jean had spent some time in Australia on business several years ago and today had gotten together with Fred and Dot who are friends from that prior visit. They were gathered around a table saying their goodbyes and they invited us to join them. We enjoyed meeting Fred and Dot and took this picture to keep the memory. It is remarkable how many people we know who have good friends in Australia. Many met their friends in Fremantle or plan to meet in the next two ports.



We didn't have friends to meet but in the spirit of the occasion Orlin got a pin celebrating the bond between the US and our Australian cousins. The crossed flags of the two countries joined the Cruise Critic pin on his hat.



The Amsterdam got underway from Fremantle about 5pm. The friendly Australian spirit continued to warm our hearts as well wishers on the stone breakwater waved and whistled to us as the Amsterdam plowed its way past them on the way to open ocean and our next stop at Melbourne.

