

Monday 17th February 2025

Sydney City Sculpture Walk Session 2

Party: Brian Everingham, Helen Fletcher, Valerie Atkinson, Sue Bosdyk, Elaine Yeoh, Suzanne Wicks, Dave Noble

Guest: Lisa Yeoh

Apologies: Gary Schoer, Hean Lay Gan, Judy Evans

And with trepidation in our hearts regarding the state of trains, we descended on Sydney. I left very early and sinned!



And, of course, confessed!

By 9.00 the party that had opted out had gathered in the Town Hall Square and even those who attend the St Andrews services had to admit that the sculpture we found in that Square had never been spotted before!

Yes, a special sculpture to recognise the founding of Sydney. Behind this is the story of Thomas Townshend, 1st Viscount Sydney. The cities of Sydney in Nova Scotia, Canada, and Sydney in New South Wales, Australia were named in his honour, in 1785 and 1788, respectively. He was Home Secretary in the Pitt Government and was given responsibility for devising a plan to settle convicts at Botany Bay.





Who can ignore Queen Victoria outside the QVB!

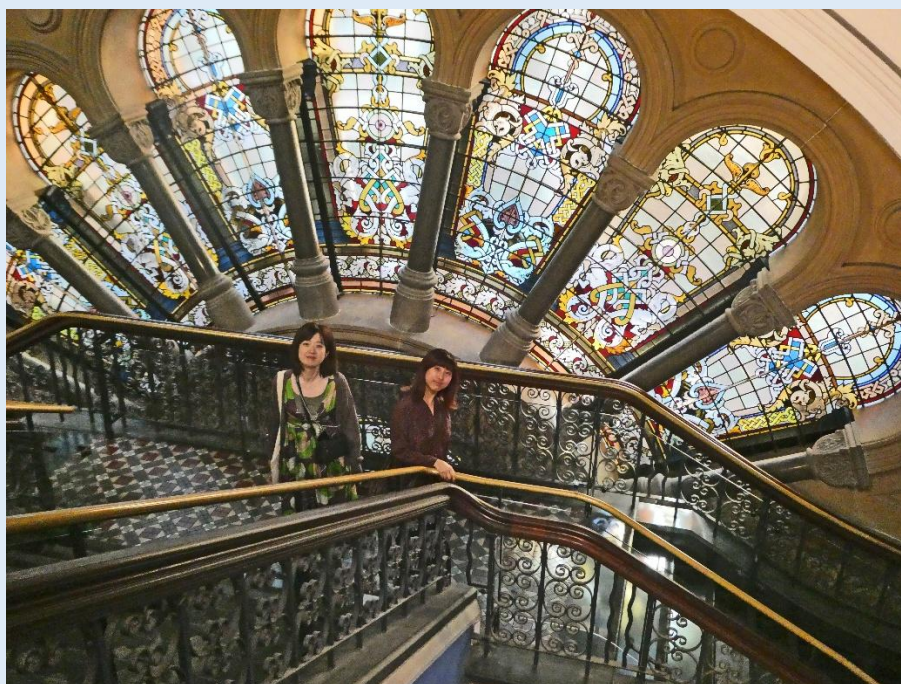


Or the talking dog!

But let's celebrate the elegance of the revitalised QVB. It's worth remembering that Harry Seidler wished to have it demolished! In the mid to late 1960s, the movement to restore and retain buildings with historic significance gained strength and with the help of Jack Mundy and Union Green Bans, community attitudes were changing. In the end the Heritage Act of 1977 saved the QVB but there was no money to do much about it so it continued to deteriorate. Indeed, in February of 1978, the blast from the Hilton Hotel bombing shattered the stained glass in the central George Street window. Fortunately, the cladding prevented any injuries. But let's look at that remembrance monument later on our walk!

Oh, Valerie, it was Mei Quong Tart who owned the original tea rooms! He was a most prominent resident of Sydney in those days!

In the end the Queen Victoria Building was restored between 1984 and 1986 by the Malaysian Company, Ipoh Ltd (now owned by the Government Investment Corporation of Singapore), at a cost of \$86 million, under the terms of a 99-year lease from the City Council. Ipoh, by the way, is close to one of the magical birding spots in peninsular Malaysia, Maxwell Hill!





OK, over to the monument to those who died in that Hilton bombing!





Vine – Bronwyn Oliver (2005)

With thanks to Valerie for finding it for us!





Street art – grunge? – or foyer art?





Commemorative art? – and gargoyles





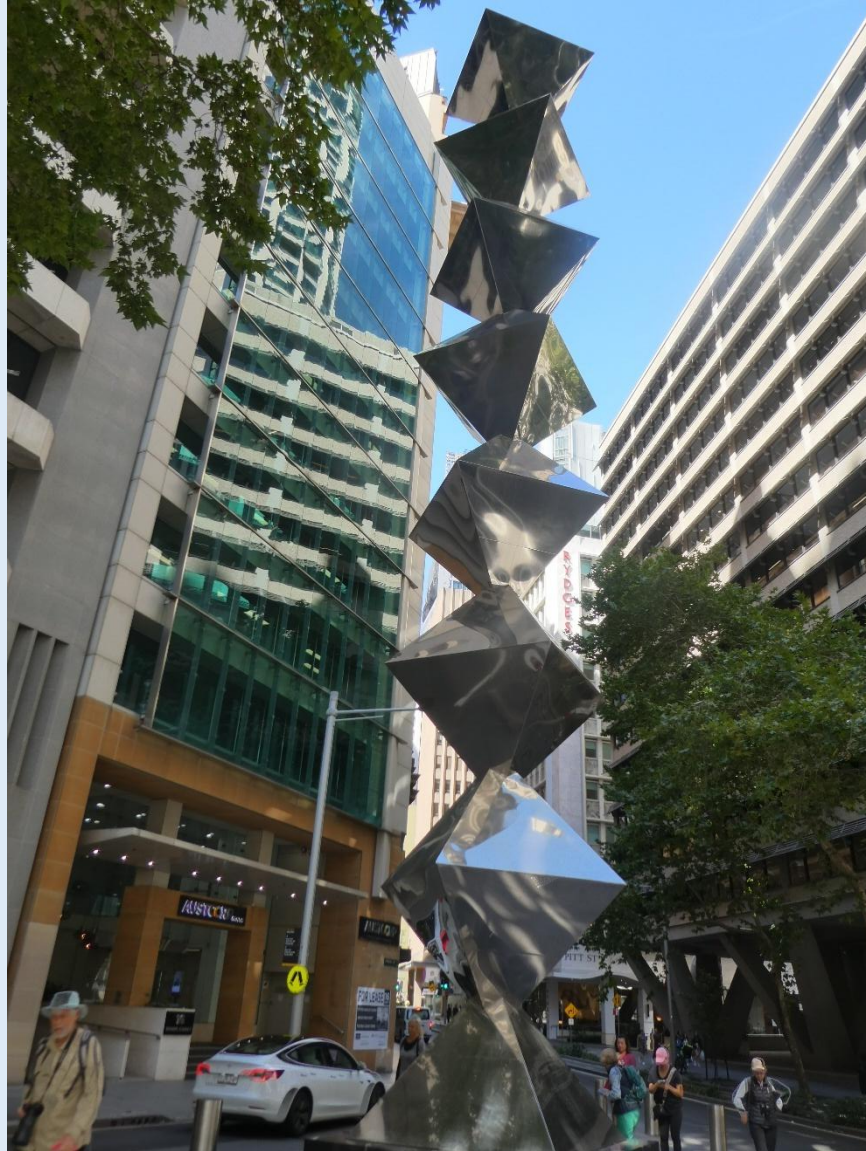
Sound art ... of the birds we have lost



Elaine and Rabbitwoman



Lisa checks out the latest stories in the newspaper



The Dobell Memorial Sculpture by Bert Flugelman¹

Now there was much besides that I have skipped over but I cannot go without noting the statue to T S Mort, after whom so much is named in and around NSW. Snd at one stage I lived in Mortdale! His work was also prominent in my post-graduate research on the origins of the dairying industry.

¹ Herbert 'Bert' Flugelman was born in 1923 in Vienna, Austria and arrived in Australia in 1938. From 1948 to 1951 he studied at the National Art School in Sydney and later taught at the South Australian School of Art and the University of Wollongong.

Flugelman is best known for his geometric and monumental stainless steel sculptural work. It was concerned with 'Platonic Solids' and featured cones, spheres and pyramids arranged in coherent lines. Flugelman died on 26 February 2013

The Thomas Sutcliffe Mort statue was erected in 1883, in memory of the man who was regarded as a pioneer of Australian resources and industries. Roger Lembit proudly claims him as an ancestor!



Let us skip over the various sculptures between Mort and Circular Quay, leaving the WW2 female member of the Armed Services behind and ignoring the pioneer lady with children in tow because by then the party was restive, desiring of a drink and cake!

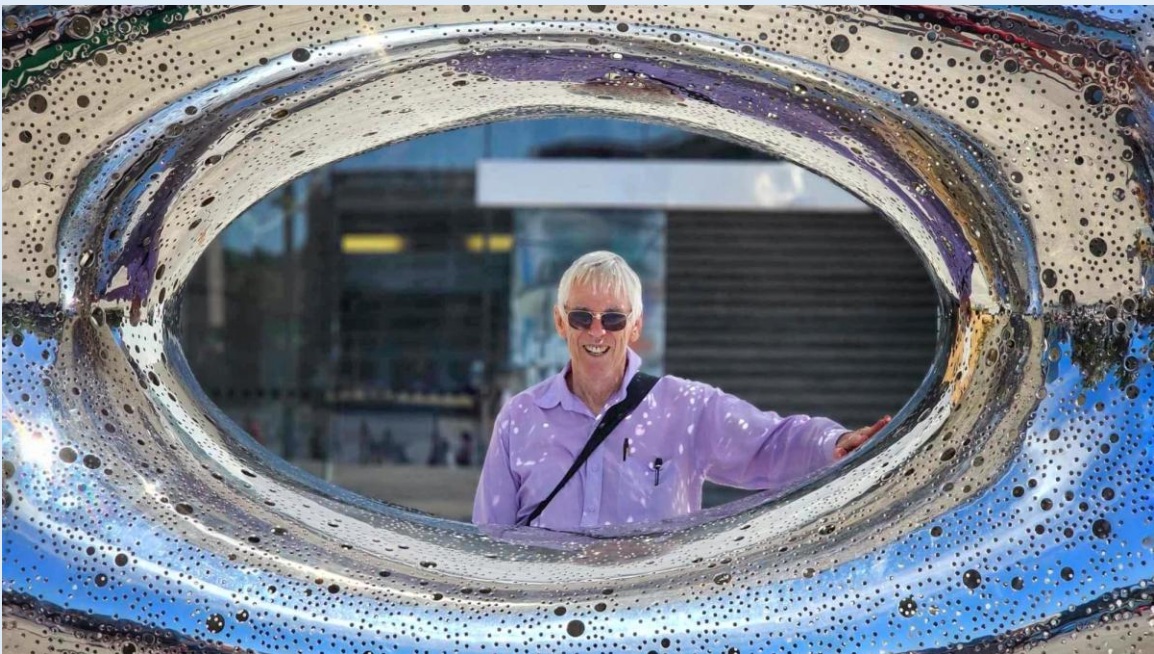
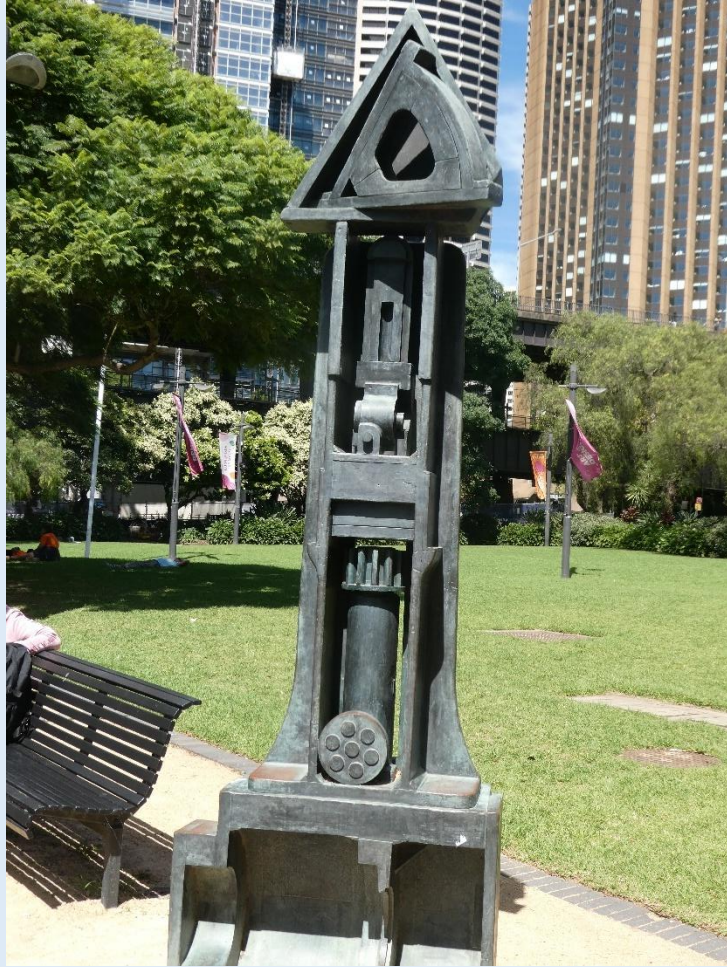
And go straight to the Tank Stream Fountain, a rather garish, busy work that sprawls over quite a space down near Circular Quay!

The Tank Stream Fountain was presented to the City of Sydney by John Fairfax & Sons Limited in 1981 to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the first publication of the Sydney Herald in 1831.



The sculptor's brief "was to create an association of water and bronze". In doing so, Stephen Walker connected the fountain to the Tank Stream, the European settlement's first water supply.

It was then time to attempt to inspire the crew with the work of Klippel. This work is called The Beacon Sculpture, an industrial piece that resembles a grandfather clock, and is made up of sharp, clean angled steel pieces. The sculpture is topped by a sextant shaped feature. It evokes the sense of history and time. It was given to the people of Sydney by James Fairfax, in 1992, as a 150-year anniversary gift. That's the man who is buried with his dogs in Retford Park in Bowral.



Thank you for this Elaine: you know my love affair with Lindy



Governor Bligh looking stern



Valerie's favourite dog, Biggles

After time out in The Rocks, we then crossed over through Circular Quay to the Botanic Gardens, via one of the more recent additions to Sydney's art scene: the giant, marble, 6m high fish hook! Known as bara, meaning shell hook, by Waanyi artist Judy Watson, it honours the Gadigal of the Eora Nation. And here we rested and contemplated its story and the women who used to fish in the waters of this bay in times gone by!

"The crescent shape is a beautiful expression of Aboriginal technology, with the shells fashioned into fish hooks by women who dangled them from their nawi canoes. The bara is like a reflection of the moon in the sky, the bays in the harbour, the sails of the Sydney Opera House and the Sydney Harbour Bridge," Judy Watson said.²

It is indeed a wonderful work of art!

² <https://news.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/articles/monument-to-first-nations-people-unveiled-on-gadigal-country>





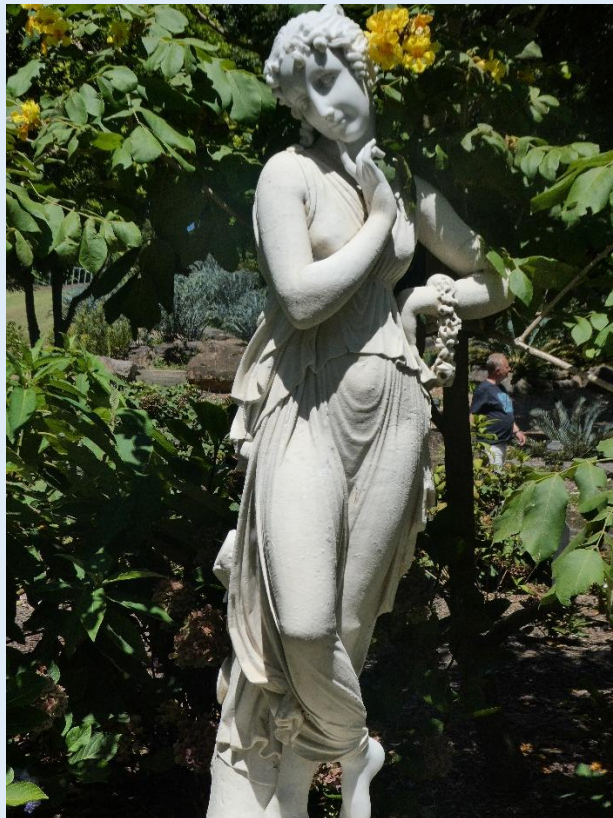
A piece that Valerie loves, the comforting arms of Earth Mother (by Helen Lette, 1983)



A Folly for Mrs Macquarie by Fiona Hall



And for Sue: Mare and Foal by Arthur Jacques LeDuc



La Ballerina (1883)

There was more: including a coffee in the Art Gallery of NSW, but it was a full day.