

Hawkesbury Riverboat Postman Cruise on May 17th 2010

A morning on the **Hawkesbury Postman Ferry** was another enjoyable and interesting outing – thanks Noelene – we all give it a big tick!

Thirteen of us braved the early morning train to Brooklyn and then joined up with 3 others who had driven down together. While the weather was overcast it was a very calm morning with lovely river reflections and fortunately the rain held off long enough for us to arrive home “dry”.



After a quick coffee we boarded the **MV Hawkesbury** for a 9.30am sharp departure - the cruise was for four hours. The Riverboat Postman has been providing this essential service to river communities since 1910, delivering mail, milk, groceries and newspapers.

Many of us had heard of the islands in the river by name but it was great to actually cruise past them and see the variety of homes in the small communities – some very old – others quite grand.



We enjoyed morning tea as we cruised along – but were not the only ones to enjoy the biscuits provided – at most stops along the way we were greeted by tail wagging and visibly **grinning dogs** who knew there was a treat in store for them too!

We cruised almost to Spencer before returning on a slightly different course but still calling in to deliver essentials of milk, bread, mail at various settlements.



It was also interesting to cruise past the remains of *HMAS Parramatta* which had been commissioned in 1908 and was the first war ship built in Australia. The missing bow is now a memorial which can be seen as you approach Parramatta on the Rivercat and the stern is a memorial on the foreshore of Sydney Harbour. HMAS Parramatta carried out patrol duties at Gallipoli.



Bar Island

On our return journey the Captain also pointed out Bar Island at the entrance of Berowra Creek. Apparently used by aborigines for thousands of years, the island became the focus of river communities in the latter part of the 19th century. A church, school and burial ground were located there but the arrival of the railway in 1889 resulted in the population moving to Brooklyn. The church and school disappeared over time but the historic cemetery still remains with around 60 graves.

We arrived back in Brooklyn with plenty of time to enjoy a late lunch of fish and chips, a speciality of the area, before boarding our train for the return journey.