



Quarantine Station 25/05/08

Who

We originally had 11 participants registered for this trip, but on the day only 8 made it, some did the right thing and let us know whilst others forgot to and we were left waiting for them at the meeting place until a few phone calls cleared up that they would not be there.

Those that were there included:

Vic & Julie Widman
Steve & Denise Borg
Avril & Liam Hodge
Bob Colvin
Kevin, Ally & Damon Baker
Lee & Lyn Albright
Ged & Caroline Dew
Chris Bevan



What

Last year when we were planning this year's Events Calendar, Merv Dunlop suggested a visit to the Quarantine Station on North Head, I thought he was joking and wondered whether he felt we all needed locking up because we

obviously had Mad MINI disease. Merv sorted me out when he advised that the Q station is now an historic site and said they did tours and all that sort of stuff. So being keen on stuff we scheduled the day drive to the Q Station. Then as the date approached Merv informed me that he couldn't make, so I quickly became an expert in the Q Station drive and instead of working this Sunday, I was leading a MINI Drive (a much better idea)

Where

OK, so you know where, we were going to the Q Station at North Head. Having been handed this one by Merv, (thanks mate) I thought, well there must be more to this than just a drive up to North Head. As I live on the Northern Beaches, I thought it would be a great opportunity to show off some of our beautiful coastline and waterways. On the day before the Drive I took a little tour around the harbour and up the coast and quickly put together what I thought would be a reasonable drive.

Let's get started

We all met at the McCafe at Cremorne., almost directly opposite Avril's home, it was noted that she was last to arrive, even Kevin & Ally from Newcastle beat her. Lee & Lyn turned up in a BMW 530i, or was it a highly disguised MINI?

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1

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Ged brought Serena and we had to explain to his wife Caroline who Serena was and why Ged had spent a week with Serena on the Great Ocean Road drive (In case you don't know who Serena is, that is the name we have given to Ged's Renault Megane because of its shapely hips)

Any drive through the metropolitan area on a Sunday is bound to be tricky, throw in a bit of traffic and an opening bridge and Avril's bright idea to take a short cut to head off the MINI's at the pass and you end up with a lost Avril and Liam who thinks his MUM has lost IT too!

Anyway, we all eventually made it to the first lookout at the Grotto on Sydney Harbour National Park.

With a great view up the harbour and across Bradley's Head, a **DEAL** was seen to be underway at the back of Serena. Ged, had some **HOT** cars for sale and Steve can't resist a bargain. Ged nearly blew the deal when a demo run saw the **HOT MINI** roll, but Steve was later seen passing over a few green ones to acquire the **HOT** cars. The deal was even captured on film for evidence in the court case later.



The HOT car deal taking place.



This crash nearly ruined the deal



The exchange of money was caught for evidence later.

After more driving around homes that would set us back about 100 years of income and questions of "how can they afford that" we hit North Head. Well, not as hard as the Army truck that had knocked down the historic stone archway on the way to the Q Station.

The forecast was for a sunny day, so with umbrellas up and coats on we headed off on the walk around North Head observing the old gun emplacements that protected our fine city during the war years and enjoying the great views out to sea, across to South Head and all the way back up to the city which was shrouded in the light rain that fell on a clear day?

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2

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Thanks to the Weather Bureau we experienced fine sunny weather at North Head

Ged was obviously overcome with his recent sale and was seen trying to catch the up draft from the 80 metre high cliff, some of us were hoping he would be whisked away as his pink shorts were truly embarrassing.



Ged could not take the ribbing about his pink shorts any longer and was going to throw himself off North Head. Sadly he changed his mind.

The Q Station

The next port of call was the Q Station. With all the MINI's safely in the car park, the next problem was getting all of us on the Bus, suffice to say, the Baker family had to wait for the next bus, which I insisted from the Q Station staff should be asap and not in half an hour. Funny how some people just don't understand groups. Anyway, I learnt something new on the bus trip (which took 5 minutes) you weren't allowed to

walk down to the Q Station because you might wake up the sleeping Echidnas. I must tell all those Echidnas I see on my 4WD travels that they should be asleep through the day! We were also told that the area needed protecting and they couldn't allow people to walk down the path, oh yes, except the guests at the Ritz new hotel, it was OK for them to walk and drive. Alright, I'll get off my soap box now.

The Q Station was really fascinating, with lots of stories of the people who had to spend a lot of time there in quarantine to get over the terrible diseases they had brought with them. The local sandstone walls were covered in historic graffiti with etchings from the later 1800's being quite evident.



Today we call it graffiti in the old days they used a chisel and sandstone. Some of the engravings were very intricate and well preserved given their age, unlike me.



The view across the harbour from the Q Station

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3

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What really astounded me was how clear the water was in the harbour and I spent quite a bit of time pointing out a rare and dangerous sea rope snake to Damon. His parents quickly pulled him away from the weird old man?



Damon had nothing to fear, the strange old man could not retrieve the rope.

Are we ever going to eat?

Time was marching on and after we negotiated a ride back up the hill in the bus to avoid waking the sleeping Echidnas it was well after normal feeding times (for humans). Although Ged and Caroline were quite content as they had enjoyed a big bowl of soup at the new restaurant at the Q Station, who knows what terrible disease they have now caught!



An old CD player from 1890

Anyway, we continued on our scenic Northern Beaches drive along the beach front at Manly, where the tourists stood

and stared at the sight of so many MINI's, we even had to pose for a couple of photos, We followed the ocean road past Curl Curl and the place that is spelt with two letters, DY, then over the head land at Warriewood and eventually we arrived at our lunch spot at the beautiful Newport Arms overlooking Bayview.



Someone suggested we all throw our keys on the table etc etc, The nurse from the hospital had the biggest set ... of keys.

It was now 3pm and everyone enjoyed their meals, no wonder, we were all starving. Bob had kept it pretty quiet, but it was his birthday, we had secretly arranged a birthday cake for him, but you can imagine our disappointment when the staff delivered it to another table. Just as well they did though as it appears they too had someone at their table celebrating a Birthday. Don't worry Bob at least you know that poor person didn't miss out like you did.

Its was Bob's Birthday.



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Time had got away and we broke up at 4pm and all headed off into a quickly setting sunset. This may have been the slowest Club drive ever undertaken, but we had all seen places we had never been to before and enjoyed the company of our fellow MINI drivers

Next club Drive

If you want to join the club on its next drive on 21-22 June make sure you registered asap with events@nsw.clubmini.com.au

We are off to Jenolan Caves for an underground tour and then staying overnight in cold but lovely Oberon. We have a great touring route in store for you on both days. We have 10 rooms reserved so get in quick to avoid disappointment.



The Quarantine Station at North Head is now open to the public, it houses some fascinating aspects of our cities history and now a new restaurant. You can even enjoy a night ghost tour if you are game.



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5

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