

LORD HOWE ISLAND TOUR

10th to 15th NOVEMBER 2023

Commentary courtesy Keith Wilshier, Photos courtesy Ray Binks, Keith Wilshier & Colin Hood (guide).



View looking south towards Mt Lidgbird and Mt Gower across the lagoon from near Kim's Lookout.

Day 1

18 intrepid members – luggage in tow, assembled at the Village Green Hotel at 5.30am to catch a prebooked bus to Melbourne Airport. Everyone was on time, and when we arrived at the Airport, Colin Hood our tour guide representing Trade Travel was there to meet us. The flight to Sydney was uneventful, but we had to change planes for the 2½ hour flight to Lord Howe Island. On arriving at the island, we caught our first glimpse of the beautiful turquoise waters of the lagoon, only to be jolted back to reality as we landed in a strong cross wind which buffeted the plane making the landing a little frightening - we were all happy to be safely on the ground. A bus took us to Somerset Apartments, our accommodation for the next 5 nights. The rest of the day was spent at leisure, wandering about the small shopping area, to Ned's beach and along the close foreshore of the lagoon. Dinner including welcome drinks was at the Anchorage Restaurant, and then back to the apartment for an early night for most.



Sydney view, our connection point to Lord Howe.



First view of Lord Howe Island.



All the intrepid travellers on arrival at Lord Howe airport.



Somerset Apartments.



Somerset Apartments.



One of the three small supermarkets.



Ned's Beach and fish feeding.



View of the Anchorage restaurant at night.





Our first night Dinner at the Anchorage restaurant.



Dinner at the Anchorage restaurant.

Day 2

Up early for a delightful breakfast at the Anchorage. Our group was split in half, with the first half boarding a bus for a 3-hour morning tour of the island from one end to the other as far as the roads would allow. The second half did the same tour in the afternoon. Peter Phillips and Janine drove our buses and gave a fascinating description of the history of the island and showed us many fascinating nooks and crannies including the solar farm and the rubbish tip including the massive effort they put into recycling. Peter is the island's postmaster, and he has written a book on the island's history. There is a huge emphasis by all islanders on cleaning up the environment and removing introduced animals and plants, and their efforts are clear to see. There is no rubbish along the roads, almost all bird species that we saw had no fear of us - as there were no predators; and there is a well organised program to eliminate weeds. After the morning bus tour, we all had lunch. Those not on the morning bus tour had a free morning. Some tackled a challenging walk along the ridge to Malabar Hill and Kim's Lookout, while others hired bikes to ride all over the island. A most enjoyable dinner was had at the Bowling Club.



Transport for our tour of the island.



What a golf course!!!





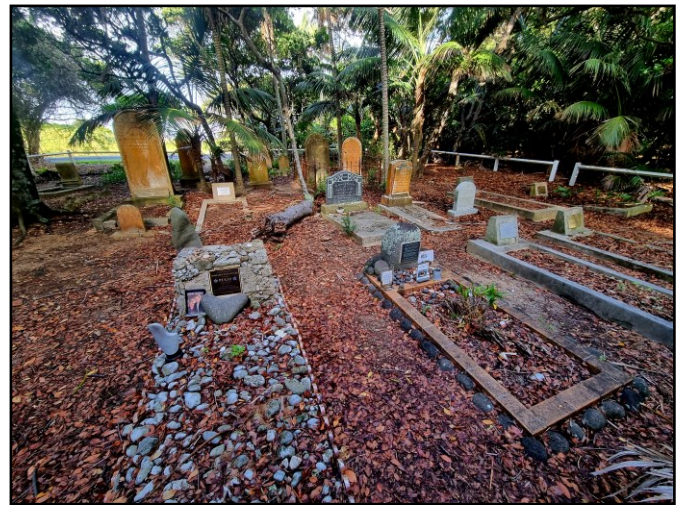
John- wishing he had his clubs.



Lovers beach & channel lead marker trees.



Solar farm, a major part of the island power supply.



The old Cemetery.



War Memorial.



Security?? at Government House.





Central School.



Signal Point.



Hospital entrance.



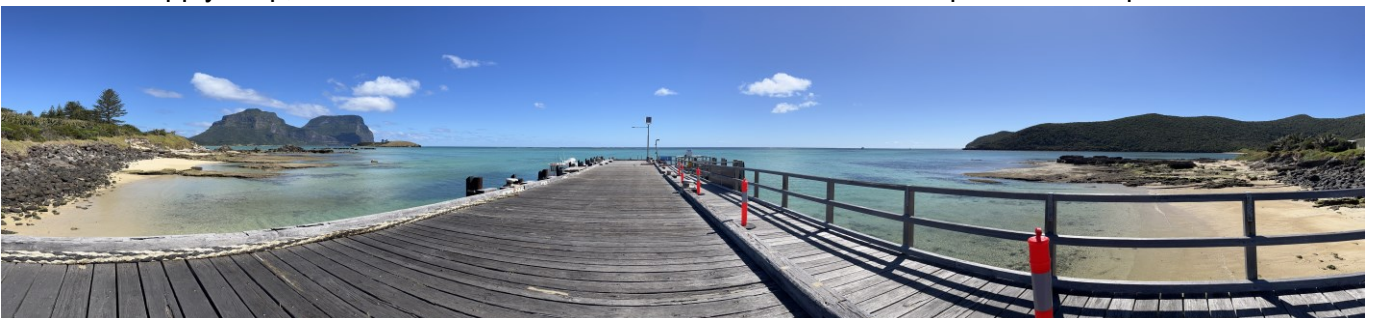
Signal Point - compass with direction pointer.



Supply Ship, The Island Trader.



Sheep near the Airport.





The Coster's and the Lourie's cycling.



Start of the Malabar Hill climb.



View to Old Settlement Bay from Malabar track.



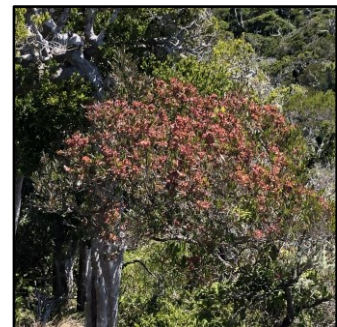
Monument to the crash site of the Catalina.



View of the Admiralty Islands from Malabar Hill.



View from Kim's Lookout.





Ray on Kim's Lookout.



Propellor Monument to the Catalina crash.



Catalina wreckage.



Catalina wreckage.



Bowling Club.



Unusual leaning shed at the Bowling Club.





Dinner at the Bowling Club.



Dinner at the Bowling Club.

Day 3

Up early for a delightful breakfast at the Coral Café before boarding the glass bottomed boat for a 3-hour Turtle and nature tour with Marine Adventures to North Bay. As we crossed the north passage into the lagoon, we saw several large turtles and a huge variety of fish amongst the coral. Some of our group were keen to snorkel an old ship wreck and the better coral patches in the area, while the others went ashore for nature walks, swimming and leisure. The snorkellers were greatly rewarded with views of large Painted Sweetlip fish within the wreck and under the flat coral overhangs, as well as many schools of colourful school fish. After snorkelling we all walked the entire length of the North Bay beach and observed the sooty tern rookeries and chicks, walked to the Old Gulch or just relaxed. Dinner tonight was at the beautifully manicured 9-hole golf course on the southern end of the island.



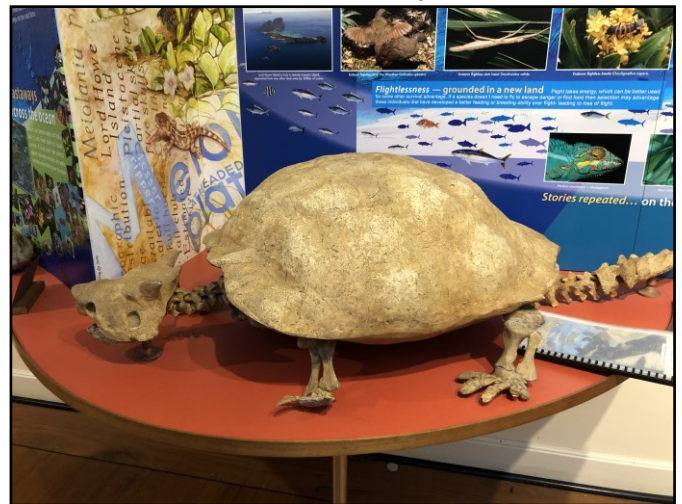
Breakfast at Coral café.



Museum entry.



Fantastic exhibits inside the museum.



Sea Turtle skeleton.



The ladies waiting for the glass bottom boat.



Our adventurous snorkelling group ready to go.



Heading out on the lagoon...



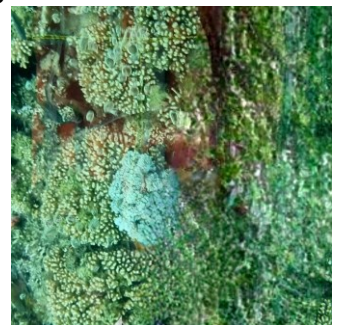
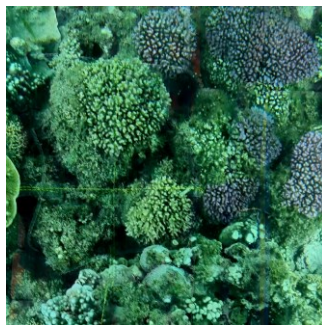
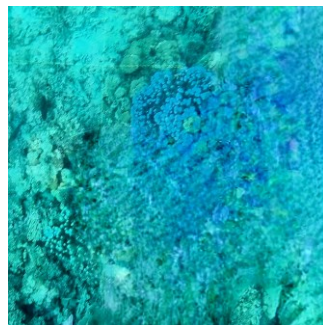
... Looking forward to the view through the glass bottom boat.



Sea turtle.

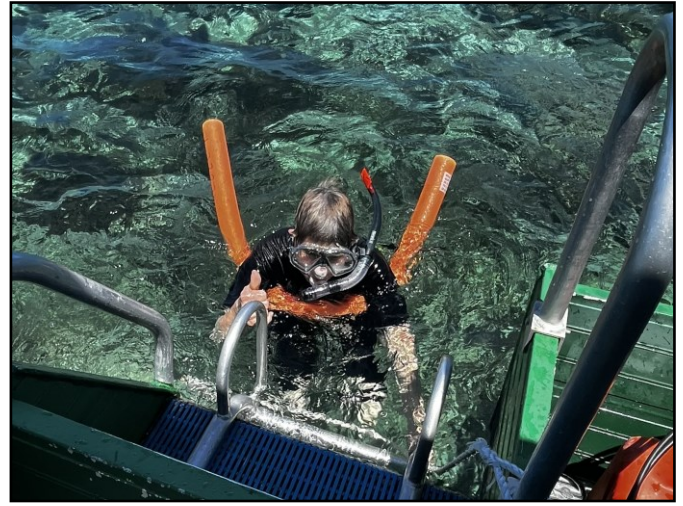


Judith looking at the coral.





John Hall.



Val Dale.



Our Guide describing North Bay.



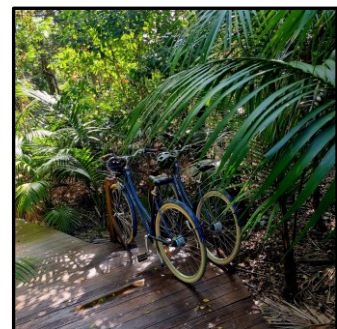
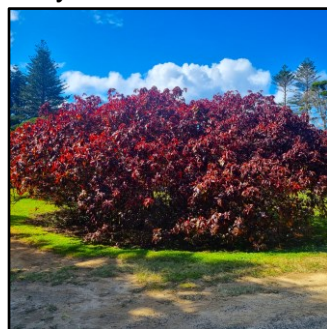
North Bay Sanctuary.



Lunch at North Bay shelter



Keith at Old Gulch





Sooty Tern rookery North Bay area.



Chicks



Golf clubhouse.



Sunset at the Golf club.



Diner at the Golf Club.



Diner at the Golf Club.

Day 4

Up early for breakfast at the Anchorage Restaurant then the morning was free to do as we wished. Some hired bikes while others just strolled around the shopping area, went walking or relaxed in the sunshine. After lunch we boarded two glass bottomed boats – one for the snorkelers, for coral viewing and optional snorkelling with Environmental Tours. The day was more overcast than previously, but the glass in the boats was crystal clear and gave an exceptional view of the coral and fish. We went to an area of the lagoon south of Blackburn Island and nearer to the fringing reef. We saw many fish, beautiful coral and some fish that are generally common to the island such as the endemic Double Headed Wrasse and the Unicorn fish. For the snorkelers, the highlight was snorkelling at Erscott's Hole. Here the coral was magnificent with a huge number of colourful and unusual fish. That evening before dinner, we attended a presentation on Lord Howe Is. given by Ian Hutton who is a naturalist, photographer, and author. Ian has written many books and scientific papers about his adopted home. The talk held in the museum lecture theatre was excellent, and easily one of the highlights of the tour. After the talk we had dinner next door at the Coral Café.



Transit Hill boardwalk.



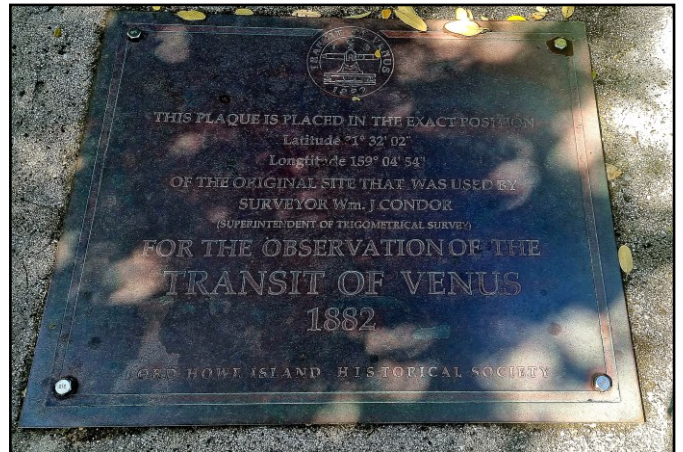
View from Transit hill walk.



View from Transit hill viewing platform.



Viewing platform.



Plaque commemorating observation point for Venus.



Blinky beach from Transit hill walk.



View of Airport from Transit hill track.



Coral viewing.



On the way to Erskott's hole, for coral viewing.



View from glass bottom boat.



Blackburn (Rabbit) island.



The snorkelers at Erskott's Hole.



Heading home.





Photo Taken by Naturalist, Photographer & Writer Ian Hutton and shown at our presentation on Lord Howe Island.

Day 5



Map of Lord Howe Island showing the reef and channels

Breakfast at the Anchorage, then we prepared for our around the Island launch cruise. We arrived on time at the jetty to board the 37ft launch “Lulawai”. Timing was important as we needed to exit

and re-enter the lagoon at high tide. Unfortunately, the day was windy with a reasonable swell running outside the reef. We exited through the southern passage (Man of War Passage) heading for South Head. The seas were rough and uncomfortable, so the skipper decided to shorten the cruise to one side of the island from top to bottom. Even so, some of us were feeling seasick, and I'm sure would have been happy to cut it much shorter. We went close to the bottom of the Island and managed to get a first view of Ball's Pyramid in the mist and some great shots of Mt Gower. We headed north to the top of the island, around North Head to Old Gulch, then returned to north Passage and back to the jetty. Lunch at the Anchorage, followed by an easy 3km environmental walk to Clear Place with commentary on the lush semi-tropical flora and fauna by Peter Phillips and his wife Janine. Clear Place offered beautiful ocean views including another look at Ball's Pyramid from the eastern side of the island, and boobies and other migratory birds soaring on the rising wind. Dinner at the anchorage then home to bed after a very full day



Around Island cruise. (calm part)



Around Island cruise. (calm part)



Around Island cruise. (calm part)



Around Island cruise. (calm part)



Around Island cruise. (calm part)



Heading out through the Southern channel in the reef.



The rough water begins.



View of Ball's Pyramid in the distance.



After heading North outside the reef, a view of Old Gulch from the sea.



Returning from the north and about to head through the Northern channel of the reef.





Stevens Reserve walk



Tall Norfolk Island pines in Stevens Reserve.



Typical rainforest on the walk.



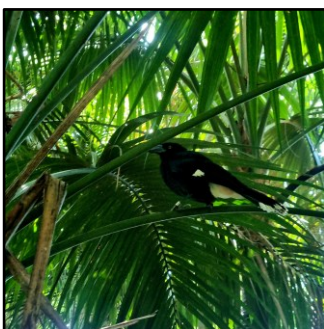
Portable sawmill on the edge of Stevens Reserve.



Beach view from "The Clear Place" walking track.



All the gang at "The Clear Place".





“The Clear Place” walking track.



Tarzan Ray.



Guide Colin adding to his hair do.



On “The Clear Place” environmental walk.



View of Ball's Pyramid from “The Clear Place”.



Coastal view from “The Clear Place”.





Julie presenting Keith with Ian Hutton's book as our gift for organising the tour.



Tour guide Colin with Keith.

Day 6

This is our last day on this magnificent island. We were provided with a packed breakfast the night before so that we could get an early start. We departed Somerset Apartments at 8.15am and headed for the airport only to encounter a slight delay as they checked a small cover near the starboard motor. All ok. Uneventful flight to Sydney and then on to Melbourne. Arrived about an hour later than expected and were met by our transfer bus that managed to get us to the Village Green Hotel during peak hour in record time. Everyone arrived home safely, although we did pick up a few cases of covid we think from our stay on LHI. All recovered well.



Heading home



It's all over.



Beautiful lasting memories.



Farewell to a peaceful tranquil place.

Expand photos using your browser ZOOM feature or with your fingers in the normal way on your phone or tablet.