



View from the crow's nest

Climbing the mast of a tall ship in Sydney harbour



The ship ploughed through the water of Sydney harbour. Her old timbers creaking and groaning as the trusty vessel played host to her guests. She was a replica of one of the first ships to make the heroic voyage from England to Australia over 200 years ago and she had been part of the bi centenary celebrations. 'Your gourmet meal, champagne and the trip are free' said the Captain "If you agree to climb the 15 foot

mast. It sounded easy but now that I stood on the deck of the tall ship with the crow's nest high above I was not so sure. The rigging seemed to link earth with heaven and it filled me with horror.

I took a deep breath and began my ascent. The rope stretched with each step and the higher I ascended the more it seemed to sway. It didn't help that I also had my camera in tow as I want-

The tall ship awaits our arrival

Climbing the rigging



The tall ship heads out into the overcast skies and slightly choppy water

ed to capture the opera house as the sun set. Surely it would have been easier to decline the offer and pay for my trip like everybody else!

Surprisingly I was aloft in less time than I thought it would take. Below those on deck looked like figures in Lilliput. They leant over the side of the boat to get a view of Australia's famous landmark and their happy chatter wafted aloft. I on the other hand, steadied myself and the wind blew through my hair. A feeling of freedom and solitude replaced fear and I began to enjoy the experience. The sun was still above the horizon and I decided that I did not want to descend yet. I wanted to get that picture.

I stayed until I saw from my perch that dinner was being served. The worst part about my return was getting my first foot into the rigging but with each step down my

confidence mounted. I took my glass of champagne and filled my plate with the tasty offerings. My chest swelled as glasses were lifted and a toast was proposed in my honour.

Later the engines which had propelled us were silenced and the order was given for the sails to be unfurled so that we could experience the journey our ancestors had experienced. The crew scampered aloft. Climbing the rigging like monkeys. They worked their way along the sails and released them.

It made my effort seem very insignificant and I had the up most respect for those brave sailors who on the long journey over the oceans worked the sails in all weather conditions. No doubt like me they would have felt free and happy on calm days but the awfulness in a storm would have been unthinkable.



View of those on board from the crow's nest

Sydney Opera house from the rigging