

Feline Fragments 20 (2014)

(page checked March 2026)

The Cats of Sydney Harbour Bridge Australia



Strange as it may seem, at one time there were cats living on Australia's famous landmark, the Sydney Harbour Bridge! Opened in 1932, the bridge has pylons at each end that were actually added as an afterthought, for aesthetic reasons and to reassure the public about the bridge's safety; they have no structural purpose.

In 1934 the south-east pylon was opened as a museum, with various tourist attractions; it was closed during WW2, but afterwards was reopened with further features. From about 1950 until 1971 the Pylon Lookout was managed by one Yvonne Rentoul; it included a tearoom, a post office, a souvenir shop, an 'All Australian Exhibition' of Australia's achievements — and a family of white cats!

They guarded a wishing well at the Lookout Point, and had their own merry-go-round — see the vintage brochure (*foot of article*). They were accommodated in a rooftop cattery and became famous as one of the pylon's attractions. Photos are quite scarce, but there is one on display at the museum (still open, but sadly without cats).

In 1953, when the bridge 'came of age' on its 21st birthday, the *Portland Guardian* carried quite a lengthy article about it, and at that time it seems from this brief mention that there were only two cats: 'On the roof of the pylon is Australia's highest roof-garden ... Two white cats, **Sydney** and **Bridget**, also live on the roof. They have never been to the ground.' Two years earlier the *Sunday Herald* had named them as **Pylon** and Bridget (see the Trove link below for article with photo). I don't know when the cats stopped living there.



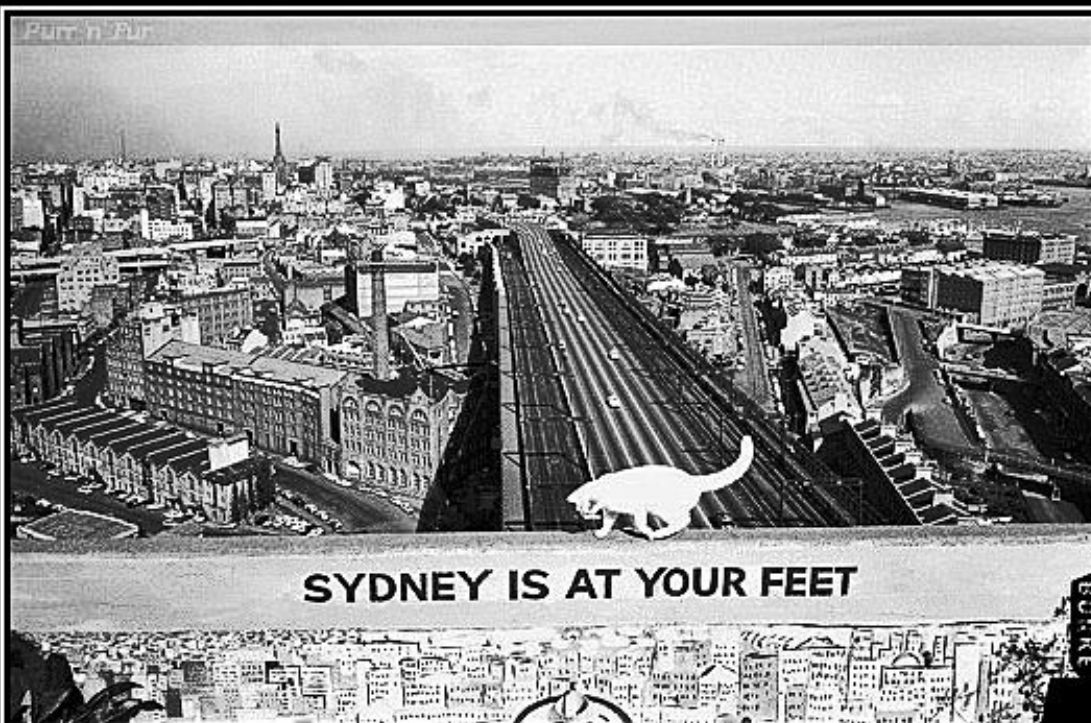
One of the white cats
in a photo on display at the Pylon Lookout museum



Links

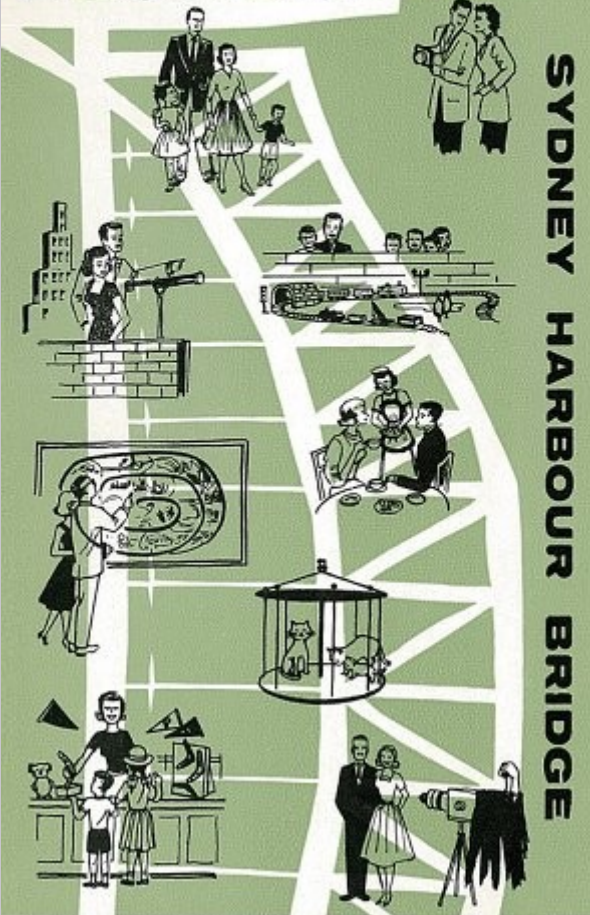
- ❖ Pylon Lookout website: [South East Pylon History - 1948](#) (*archived copy*) and [details of exhibits](#) (*archived copy*).
- ❖ Trove digitised newspapers: *Sunday Herald*, 29 Jul 1951: [Cats Live On The Bridge](#) - with photo of Bridget and Pylon (*very grainy*).
- ❖ The State Library of New South Wales evidently has quite a number of photographs of the cats (and kittens) from Yvonne Rentoul's collection, as included in this [list of holdings](#).

We acknowledge and thank the following: [Paul Clifton](#) at Flickr for the Pylon Lookout brochure, [As The Bird Flies](#) blog for the image from the museum, and the [Bound for Australia](#) blog for the lady photographed in 1957 with a cat – take the links to see them full-sized.



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PYLON LOOKOUT



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