

Penshurst RSL Travel Club

## **MYSTERY END-OF-YEAR PICNIC THURSDAY 1 DECEMBER 2022**



Departure from Penshurst was 8.30 am, with an almost full coach after two people called in sick. It was great to see that Malcolm our regular driver/owner was able to join us for our end of year celebration. Weather was very cloudy, but rain held off fortunately.

By 9.30, we were in Carlingford and a short time later in Dural, our first destination. We pulled up at the historic home, The Pines – aka Roughley House on Old Northern Road, sending the guide and other volunteers into a spin because we'd arrived too early. However, we were content to wander the pretty garden dominated by a selection of magnificent old pine trees whilst they finished setting up the outdoor seating and brought out the most amazing spread for morning tea – free of charge, courtesy of The Hills Shire Council. There was so much food that we needed to keep a strict check on our intake, knowing that there was a sumptuous picnic lunch to follow.

Whilst we enjoyed the cuppa, Max Roughley, a descendant of the Roughley family that arrived in Australia in 1818 as convicts on the ship "Tottenham", spoke about the property. There's quite a story attached to this lovely old home built in 1856 on the hill overlooking the land that the family had farmed since 1830. Five generations of the family grew up in this quaint house, and the final resident was Clive Roughley who, as he had no direct heirs, sold the estate to Hills Shire Council in 1984. These days, it's open for tours and regular Jazz in the Pines Concerts. In groups of 12, Max escorted us through the home while the rest wandered, took photos or looked through the Visitor Interpretation Centre in the adjacent building.

Two hours later, we were off to the mystery picnic site, only a few minutes away. Much earlier, there had been a competition on board to see who could work out the lunch location and two clever people, Beryl and Rebecca, guessed correctly. It turned out to be the 55 ha Fagan Park in Galston. The history here began with William Fagan, a free settler, who emigrated from Ireland in 1848 and initially purchased 28 ha of land in Arcadia for a citrus orchard. There's quite a story in between, but, by 1980, direct descendant Bruce Fagan and his sister, Ida, donated the land to the New South Wales State Government, and Hornsby Shire Council was appointed sole trustee. The park was officially opened by the Premier of New South Wales, Nick Greiner, MP on 5 November 1988.



Whilst Elizabeth, with Jenny's valuable assistance, laid out buffet-style the contents of several eskies (we still don't know how they fitted in her car), the rest meandered around the park, discovering that they had the place almost to themselves. Others just relaxed in the pre-booked 40-seat picnic shelter. Raffle tickets were sold with several prizes on offer and would be drawn later, raising around \$160 for the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Liz's lunch was fantastic: Wine and nibbles to start, baked ham, turkey slices, several exotic salads (including Jenny's potato salad), bread rolls, followed by pavlova with fruit, coulis and lashings of cream, tea/coffee and chocolates. Ron thanked Elizabeth on everyone's behalf for the wonderful meal. Again, we couldn't eat it all and most wouldn't have been able to eat dinner that night!

We left around 3.45 pm, returning via the same route, but the journey took over 1½ hrs in the heavy school traffic. Jan and Lyn S won the lucky seat prizes. Thanks again to Elizabeth, her very capable assistant Jenny and also to Chris for her photos (more of these on our website). It had been a really lovely day and a fitting end to a pretty successful Travel Club year.