

## PENSHURST RSL TRAVEL CLUB MYSTERY TOUR REPORT THURSDAY 22 APRIL 2021



A stunning day and we departed Penshurst on the dot of 8.30, after waiting a few minutes for one member who was a no show. Mal from McDermott Chartours was our driver and, because there were only 30 members travelling today, we had booked their smaller coach.

Out along King Georges Road, then Roberts Road, the traffic was its usual abysmal self. Finally, we turned left on to the M4 and, momentarily, breathed a sigh of relief! There was trouble ahead though! Just a little way along as we drove over what looked like a metal expansion joint on a bridge adjacent to Sydney Olympic Park, there was an almighty bang. To us, there appeared no aftermath, but eagle-eyed Mal had spotted what looked like a cloud of dust at the rear of the coach. Being on the motorway and too dangerous to stop, we took it easy until the Merrylands exit where Mal was able to examine the situation, but he already knew that we'd blown a rear driver's side tyre! Fortunately, coaches have two wheels on each side at the back, so we were able to limp along on the remaining one. Even more fortunately, Mal has his coaches serviced by Baxters Coaches at Girraween and, after a call to them, was able to drive to their depot/workshop to have the tyre changed. The replacement didn't take long, but we put that time to good use, setting up morning tea on the grassed area outside the property. As well, Baxters was extremely kind in allowing us to use their office toilet. It worked well really, but disappointing for Elizabeth who'd planned an enjoyable cuppa at a park overlooking Richmond RAAF Base! Oh, and by the way, the tyre was a complete write-off!

After stints back on the M4, then M7 and Richmond Road, we passed through Richmond anyway and headed up the Bells Line of Road and, at Bilpin, turned left into Wildwood Garden which was the Mystery. Owner, the very friendly Wayne, had heard our coach heading down the driveway and was already out to greet us. No other visitors were around, as the property is only available to groups on Tues, Wed and Thurs during Spring and Autumn. Others are very welcome from Friday to Monday. We chose to spend time wandering around the property before lunch, but some preferred to browse in their amazing gift shop and nursery. All stock, including the plants, was very reasonably priced plus they were offering a 25% discount on everything!



Wayne's very hospitable wife, Sue, and a couple of other assistants served a substantial lunch about an hour later. Their café is very pleasant and has a lovely outlook over the lake and garden which had grown considerably since we last visited here in August 2016. The only thing missing was a glass of wine, but there was plenty of tea and coffee!

At 2 pm, it was unfortunately time to leave and Mal headed back the way we came until turning into Londonderry Road at Richmond, eventually joining up with the M4 (with its usual traffic jam near the Flemington Markets) and then Roberts Road at Greenacre. The Lucky Seat Prizes went to Karen S and Annetta J. We were back at Penshurst just after 4 pm. Apart from our first tyre blowout in 19 years of travelling all over Australia (there's been a couple of flat tyres), it had been a particularly pleasant day!