

**PENSHURST RSL TRAVEL CLUB
PALM BEACH TO ETTALONG DIGGERS CLUB
2 FEBRUARY 2023**



Departure was at 8 am from Penshurst with a full coach (minus two unwell members) and regular driver Malcolm who runs McDermott Chartours.

Despite the peak hour traffic, we drove through St Ives an hour later, then Newport just after 9.30. Here, at the beachside Bert Payne Park, was a brief comfort stop and a hasty morning tea consisting of Liz's baking and fruit juice instead of the usual tea/coffee. A little bit about this park: The Payne

family occupied a strong position in the Newport Surf Life Saving Club's activities. Bert joined the club as a junior member in 1937-38. He also was a butcher at their Newport shop until the early 1950's, when he started a timber yard. Bert was made a Life Member of Newport SLSC 1956, was a tireless worker for the club until 1963 and finished his active committee work in 1979. Bert was also a very keen beach sprinter and surf boat competitor. So, the park in front of the club is named 'Bert Payne Park' which recognises not only his club activities but also his strong community efforts as a member of Rotary and the Flora and Fauna Society. He also was a member of the Volunteer bush fire brigade for many years. Ironically, Bert and his wife Reika's Ingleside house was burnt out in the bush fires of 1984, after which they left Sydney for Noosa.

Couldn't find any information on the huge road-widening project along Barrenjoey Road, but it would be costing an absolute fortune! There were no holdups, however, and we arrived at the already crowded Fantasea Palm Beach Ferries wharf in plenty of time to catch the 10.30 am ferry to Wagstaffe and Ettalong. Due to high winds along the NSW coast that day and our close proximity to the open sea, the Broken Bay crossing was a little choppy, but the fast boat made light of it. It was particularly interesting to view Lion Island and its ocean-side Hawkesbury Sandstone formations close up, when the island is normally seen in the distance from the Hawkesbury River. Lion Island was originally named Mount Elliott Island by Governor Arthur Phillip in 1789, because it resembled Gibraltar where his friend, General Elliott, had inflicted defeats on French and Spanish fleets. This name continued to be used by cartographers until the 1920s. In 1956, the Lion Island Fauna Reserve was established on the island. In 1977, it was reclassified as the Lion Island Nature Reserve, a protected nature reserve administered by the NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service which covers all of the island, an area of approximately 8 hectares (20 acres). Due to the island's significant biodiversity, it was added to the Australian National Heritage List in December 2006. Public access to the island is by permit from the National Parks and Wildlife Service Regional Manager, and is restricted to conservation, education and research purposes. There are no recreational facilities provided.



Wagstaffe wharf was quiet, but just across the water at Ettalong, the jetty was groaning under the weight of those waiting to board for the return trip to Palm Beach – it's obviously a very popular run! Our journey had taken just over 30 minutes and the lovely Kim from Ettalong Diggers was there to transport us the short distance to the club in 'her baby' the courtesy bus. Of course, several of our fitter members chose the pretty beachside walk instead. By 11.30, we were comfortably seated in the vast air-conditioned dining area where staff took our lunch orders, with several mains to choose from. The club is located at the front of the imposing and very white Mantra Ettalong Beach Resort, that building completed in 2005. However, the club existed

for many, many years before that. Anyway, the meals were enjoyable and cake, tea/coffee followed. Plenty of time to relax. It would've been really lovely to eat outside under their sails, but the weather was too hot for that.

Our members are renowned for their love of shopping and some couldn't resist the nearby fashion boutique (Green Fashion & Footwear) where several really nice purchases were made. As promised at 2 pm, Kim returned many of us to the wharf in time for the 2.30 ferry. A different boat this time, with a limited outside area which made it difficult to take further photos. However, it was a direct trip to Palm Beach, so quicker. Here we met up with Malcolm who'd been unable to join us for lunch, as any coach parking was some distance from the wharf. However, he'd really enjoyed himself, unexpectedly coming across filming at so-called 'Summer Bay' for TV series "Home and Away".



The bus ride home coincided with school traffic and it was dreadfully slow, taking much longer than the trip over. So much so that Malcolm decided that the large WestConnex toll on the cross Sydney tunnel would be well worth it. We joined it in the Homebush area and this fabulous construction took us through the brand-new M4-M5 link to King Georges Road near Beverly Hills. After a very pleasant day, we arrived at Penshurst about 30 minutes late at 5.30 pm.