

PENSHURST RSL TRAVEL CLUB

MID WEEK YULEFEST - BATHURST THURSDAY 18 – FRIDAY 19 JULY 2019



DAY ONE: Departure 8.00 am from Connelly Street. Morning tea will be at Glenbrook Park just off the highway and behind the Blue Mountains Visitors Centre.

We'll enjoy lunch in the Bistro at Bathurst RSL Club and then a guide will board our coach to show us around the town. Bathurst has an historic city centre with many ornate buildings remaining from the gold rush period of the mid to late 19th century, and many of these will be sighted during the two-hour tour. Bathurst is the oldest inland settlement in Australia and had a population of approximately 35,000 at the 2016 Census. Often referred to as the Gold Country, this regional city was the site of the first gold discovery and where the first gold rush occurred in Australia. Today education, tourism and manufacturing drive the economy. The internationally known racetrack Mount Panorama is a landmark of the city.

Our night's accommodation will be at the family-owned Bathurst Heritage Motor Inn with its well-presented and spacious rooms. Conveniently situated on the Mid-Western Highway, it is only a short stroll to many of Bathurst's attractions.

There will be time to freshen up before the 10-minute drive to Abercrombie House where the dinner will be themed to reflect a winter Christmas, with reference to the character of grand country houses of the era and their Christmas traditions. The Travel Club last toured this beautiful home in 2013 as part of our Oberon trip, but for those who've not been: the house was built in the 1870s by James Stewart, the eldest son of William Stewart and his family who were Bathurst pioneers. The 50-acre land and house is currently owned by the Rex Henry Morgan Family and occupied by Christopher Morgan and his family. Since 1969, the Morgan family has made major restorations to the house which is considered to be of extreme historical significance.



On arrival at 6 pm, we'll be escorted to the Front Entrance Hall and then on to the Drawing Room for pre-dinner drinks, hot mulled claret or chilled beer, orange juice or water and cheese platters. At 6.30, we will be led into the Ballroom where the tables are set with all the expected tableware, candles and damask napkins, and the open log fire crackling and the Christmas tree twinkling, ready for our three-course dinner accompanied by musical items:

- Home-made pumpkin soup with cream, parsley and crusty bread.
- Traditional roast turkey, smoked ham, roasted potatoes with rosemary, roast vegetables, minted peas, Caesar salad, gravies, mustards and garnishes.
- Christmas plum pudding with brandy butter, cream and custard, or individual hand-made pavlovas with berries and cream. Coffee, tea and chocolates.
- Table wines at dinner, sauvignon blanc, claret and tawney port. Your BYO wines for the table are very welcome.
- **Special dietary requirements will be catered for with prior notification.**

During the evening, Christopher will give a short history of the house and there will be time to explore the principal rooms.



DAY TWO: After a continental breakfast, we will farewell our hosts and depart for Ben Chifley's House.

Number 10 Busby Street, South Bathurst, with its rendered brick walls and five rooms within, is a modest late Victorian Italianate semi-detached residence and was built sometime in the 1880s as a speculative investment. Close to workplaces and low in rent, Milltown, as this area is known, was popular with a growing railway community. Eventually in 1903, No.10 was purchased as a rental property for £200 by George McKenzie, engine driver and canny investor who lived directly behind No.10, on Logan Street. In 1914, the McKenzies gave tenancy of the house as a wedding gift to their daughter, Elizabeth, and her bridegroom, Ben Chifley. From then, until Ben's death in 1951 and that of Elizabeth in 1962, this house would be the only home known to the Chifleys. The improvements made over the years were both modest and practical, and there was little about the house to distinguish it from others in the neighbourhood. Because of Ben's political activities, they were amongst the first to have a telephone though. The vacant block next door was purchased for £20 in 1939. The only use made of the block was for a garage (now demolished) to house Ben's American Buick, his one big indulgence. Whether it be locomotive or motorcar, Ben had a love for powerful machines. Upon Elizabeth's death, the property passed as a bequest to St Stephen's Presbyterian Church. Following a public appeal for funds, Bathurst City Council purchased the house and its contents in 1972 as a memorial to Prime Minister Chifley. Opened by Prime Minister Whitlam on 24 March 1973, the property has been maintained as a house museum since then.



Heading back to Sydney, we'll be stopping for lunch at the friendly Tarana Hotel, located in the picturesque Tarana Valley. "The Na", as it's affectionately known by the locals, was established in 1873 and has an interesting history. One of the few remaining pubs of its time, it features original pressed metal ceilings and an open fireplace made from local granite. The building is filled with photos and mementos from bygone years, plus photos of the many colourful locals (some of whom still

frequent the bar) and the famous locally-born pacer Hondo Gratten. Tarana is the former junction of the Oberon Branch railway with the Main Western Line. This 24.3 km pioneer line was opened in 1923, has one of the steepest gradients in NSW and was built to convey local produce, timber and livestock from the Oberon district. The last train ran in September 1979 but the line has never been officially closed. Volunteer members of the Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway (formed in 2005) have almost completed the first stage of the track restoration from the heritage listed Oberon Station to Hazelgrove Siding (5.3 km). Other village history includes tales of bushrangers such as Henry Stratton and Richard Norris, who held up the nearby Mutton Falls General Store in 1864. And, of course, there is the "Tarana Tiger" which many have reportedly seen, but no one has proved to be fact or fiction.

There will be a coffee stop on the way back to Penshurst where we should arrive by 5.00 pm.

INCLUDED IN THE COST \$300 PP/Twin Share, S/Supp \$55, Non-Refundable Deposit \$50:

Coach

One night's accommodation

One continental breakfast

One morning tea, two lunches

One grand three-course Yulefest dinner

Entry to attractions

OPENS 6 FEBRUARY AND CLOSSES 5 JUNE

