

NSW – Sydney Group

Coordinators: Ken and Cheryl Parrott

Blackheath 25 -28th July 2017

When Blackheath in the Blue Mountains was proposed as our first Gathering at our inaugural Morning Tea in June, there was some comment about how cold it might be. Sure enough, as 9 Avans gathered at the Blackheath Glen Caravan Park for the next 3 nights we experienced sun, wind, some overnight showers and chilly nights but the fellowship and camaraderie of the group was WARM, WARM, WARM!

Ken and Cheryl welcomed everyone at the first Happy Hour and Evening Meal on Tuesday evening in the warm and well equipped Camp Kitchen, the scene was set for a very happy and enjoyable time. Hosts David and Margaret outlined the proposed program for the next two days and encouraged people to join in as much (or as little) of the events planned as they wished – emphasis was on enjoying the atmosphere of the Blue Mountains at this time of the year.

Wednesday was a bright sun-shiny windy day and a group set off to get “a taste of the Blue Mountains”. Car sharing brought us together for a visit to Govetts Leap Lookout, a short walk towards Popes Glen and then a drive to do walks at the Wind Eroded Cave, Anvil Rock and the Pulpit Rock Lookout over the Grose Valley. The high winds of the day led us to find a very sheltered stone weather shed on the path to the lookout and a picnic lunch was enjoyed by all. Some of the group then went on to explore Blackheath village while others drove on for a walk around the Rhododendron Gardens – surprisingly sheltered for what was a very windy day.

Everyone then gathered back at the Caravan Park for a most interesting and informative stroll around the Avans for “Show and Tell” – everything ranging from simple exterior towel racks to gas strut roof lifters, and a whole lot of good stuff in between!

Off to the Ivanhoe Hotel in Blackheath for Happy Hour and Dinner – the famous “Homemade Meat Pies” were a popular menu choice that certainly lived up to their reputation – given their size, some folks were very glad they hadn’t ordered TWO pies! Great conversations around the meal table in a warm and friendly environment.

Car sharing again was a great way to tackle Thursday’s program – off to a guided tour of the recently completely renovated and restored Hydro Majestic Hotel at Meadow Bath. Our Guide Rebeika gave us an excellent tour of the beautifully restored public areas of the Hotel and regaled us with some great stories of the early days of the buildings, particularly during the period of original ownership by Mark Foy, the retail store entrepreneur.

It was then off to Alchemy Pizza Restaurant at Little Hartley for a most enjoyable lunch of wood fired pizzas – again the bonding of the group was very evident over much laughter and conversation.

Driving on to Hartley Historic Site we were lucky enough to convince National Parks Ranger Jess to give us a personal tour of the recently restored Motor Garage, Gaol and Courthouse – the conditions and punishments endured by our early convict settlers sent a chill through us all. Jess’s enthusiasm and knowledge of local history made our visit to this significant site very memorable, as was the wander around the fully operational “Talisman” metal crafts workshop also in the historic village.

Back to Blackheath Glen Caravan Park for our final Happy Hour and Evening Meal together. Jenny from Wentworth Falls dropped in to meet the group and we look forward to her company at future meetings and gatherings. Whilst the time together just seemed to fly, friendships were forged over the opportunities to socialise and outings shared. Ken thanked everyone for their participation, the hosts for planning and leading an interesting and varied program and reminded everyone of the October morning tea and Nelson Bay Gathering in March 2018.

Friday morning saw a showery start to the day and the Sydney Group saying their farewells as we all departed for home. A VERY MEMORABLE AND ENJOYABLE START TO A NEW AVAN CLUB OF AUSTRALIA GROUP.

Captions for Pictures:



Picture 1: ***A 9 Avan Takeover at Blackheath Glen Caravan Park !***



Picture 2: ***Lunch at Pulpit Rock Shelter Shed with Christine, Michael, Cheryl, Ken and Judy***



Picture 3: *Waiting for pies at the Ivanhoe Hotel, Blackheath!*



Picture 4: *Under the Dome of the Restored Foyer (originally the Casino Ball Room) of the Hydro Majestic Hotel*