

February Parks run. By Bobbie Nicholls

Those, like us, who had whizzed past Ashley Park for nearly 50 years, were amazed by what was on offer there when the Parks Run stopped for morning tea on February 18.

We took an elderly aunt there about 40 years ago for Devonshire tea among the antiques. Now we are the antiques we found a world of nostalgia, when, having finished our bottomless cuppa, scone and sandwich, we ventured through the back door to the museum opened 15 years ago.

It was a case of "But wait there's more" as we exclaimed over about 100 china teapots, then the aisle of 'shops' of collections which ranged from a fully stocked early 20th century grocery shop to children's toys, ball point pens, shells and about 300 salt and pepper shakers. There was a lot of "I remember that" among those of us to whom these were once everyday items. Some are still in use. Remember the bean slicer that bolted onto the bench? Who uses Robin starch or Reckitt's blue bags now?

Our host invited the drivers to line up the MGs (and one Triumph) on the circular driveway in front of the house and the result can be seen below.

Then it was off to another stately home, Bushy Park, built in 1906 by lifelong bachelor and race horse owner G F Moore and left to Forest and Bird who lease out the homestead for B & B and events. A wedding there the previous day limited the rooms we could view but most of the crowd managed a walk in the extensive bush well maintained by Forest and Bird volunteers. Thanks to the predator-proof fence we saw North Island Robins and Saddlebacks which are well established there. It's worth a visit (\$10) if you have not been there recently. The old stables are currently being extensively renovated.

Although we had started the day with the hood down, doubtfully eyeing the grey clouds, the day got hotter as we travelled.

Travelling back to Wanganui via Brunswick we stopped at Caroline's Boathouse for excellent iced coffee and congratulated ourselves on an interesting day with good company. See Dom Scott's excellent photos of the cheeky North Island Robin which posed for him during our picnic lunch, and other views of the day.

