
Mt Wilson Mt Irvine Bushwalking Group

Volume 9 Issue 2

March 1999

POPE'S GLEN

Our February Walk

A note of explanation for all our readers. The format of this newsletter will be rather different as your editor has been forced by the purchase of a new printer to use Microsoft rather than Wordperfect. If there are strange twists at times that will be the reason.

The February Walk on Friday, 19th February, 1999 is described below by John Cardy who, I forecast, will be a frequent and popular contributor to this newsletter.

TWENTY SEVEN members gathered on this pleasantly cool and cloudy morning for the walk to Pulpit Rock. After the usual smoothly arranged car shuffle (many thanks to those involved) we headed off along Wills St to the start of Govetts Walk along Popes' Glen Creek. Here Gloria Harris gave a short talk on the work being carried in the vicinity by the Bush Regeneration Group of which she is a very active and enthusiastic member.

Initially the valley is fairly open and there is an abundance of wildflowers. There is *Baekkea linifolia* or Swamp Baekkea with heavily scented foliage and there is the tiny "conifer like" plants with cone shaped flowers, *Lycopodium deuterodensum* or Bushy club moss. The track crosses the creek several times and a side track leads down to Boyd's Beach where we settled down for morning tea. This is a lovely spot with a small sandy beach beside a tranquil pool. To reach this pool the creek flows through a tunnel of overhanging tea trees where it ripples gently over a rock bed. On the hill side upstream from the beach a large area of lush green ferns contrasts markedly with the grey /green foliage of the surrounding eucalypts.



SUMMER IN THE BUSH

TOPIC

Continuing towards Govett's Leap the creek cuts into more deeply into the rock and the valley takes on a more intimate, enclosed atmosphere with beautiful small cascades and tiny rapids flowing over water worn rocks and pebbles, providing delightful sights and soothing sounds.

Crossing the creek via some conveniently placed stepping stones and climbing a small embankment leads to a sight which could not contrast more with the area from which we had just departed. There is an explosion of the senses as the intimate, miniature environment of the creek is, without warning, replaced by the absolute grandeur

of the Govett Gorge. We paused here to marvel at the majestic beauty of this huge valley. No matter how often one may have seen the gorges of the Blue Mountains you are always captivated by their sheer sandstone cliffs dropping vertically to the heavily timbered talus slopes which terminate at the streams still flowing on, relentlessly carving deeper into this ever evolving landscape.

One could spend hours taking in this view however Pulpit Rock beckons in the distance and we continued along the well worn track. The sun by this time was beginning to burn off the low cloud and the shadows cast on the valley floor and cliffs presented an ever changing vista. As is always the case on these mountain walks these grand vistas are complemented by a myriad of intriguing smaller details such as the miniature trigger plants noted near the Horseshoe Falls, probably *Stylidium lineare*, the occasional bank of intricately folded and fluted rock formations and the incredible variety of tiny plants which cling to every nook and cranny of rock overhangs which are kept constantly moist by the seepage from hanging swamps.

From various vantage points along this track magnificent views are to be had of both the Horseshoe falls and Govetts Leap Falls, the latter being playfully bent sideways occasionally by the force of the localised wind at the cliff face. In the vicinity of the Horseshoe Falls the hanging swamps can be seen extruding over the cliff edge giving the appearance of rich green velvet draped over the golden sandstone. Several caves are encountered along this path and one can only wonder if they were once used by the original inhabitants of these mountains.

The Lookouts at Pulpit Rock provide perfect eyries from which various landmarks visited on previous walks can be observed. Lockley Pylon, Mount Hay, the Blue Gum Forest and Evans Lookout are all clearly visible while the smaller hump of Mount Banks peeks out from behind a closer headland. As the afternoon moved on all too swiftly we reluctantly retraced our path to Govetts Leap Lookout, constantly entertained along the way by the changing colours of the sandstone walls as the sun dipped lower in the sky.

The short car trip back to Memorial Park was followed by afternoon tea in company with the ducks. (These ducks are known as Maned Ducks and they feed on the grass and herbs in the open areas near the caravan park and Memorial Pool. Maned ducks nest high in hollow trees and have grown accustomed to the presence of people in their environment. From the N.P.W.S. leaflet on Blackheath Walking Tracks.)

Libby provided a cake with candles to celebrate Mary's birthday and as is always the case at the conclusion of these walks, people began to slowly head for home, seemingly unwilling to let the day end.

(Thank you John for a fine and perceptive account.)

A thank you to all who celebrated with me that particular birthday and /or sent me good wishes. It will remain a very memorable occasion for me. Mary

BUSH REGENERATION

BY GLORIA HARRIS.

About 5 years ago, a meeting was called by the Blue Mountains Council and the National Parks to discuss the setting up of a Bush Regeneration group of volunteers to work in the Pope's Glen area of Blackheath.

This area, below the duck pond and the caravan park was heavily infested with honeysuckle, ivy, blackberry, cherry laurel, holly, cotoneaster, montbretia and radiata pines.

All the native bush was smothered by this seemingly impenetrable jungle. To our group it was a daunting prospect. However we were encouraged by two supreme optimists. Eric Mahoney was formerly employed by the

B.M.C.C. and gave much of his own time to the job. Alan Lane, who became the author of our monthly newsletter is an enthusiast and a prodigious worker.

We work every fourth Saturday morning of the month and newcomers are welcome with open arms and chocolate biscuits for morning tea! The weeding is done by hand and woody weeds have their cut surfaces painted with weed killer. We do no spraying as the intention has always been to allow any native seeds to germinate. Over the years we have received Council grants which have allowed us to plant trees, shrubs and grasses indigenous to the area.

Large numbers of Radiata Pines have been felled which has opened the area to welcome sunlight.

Another area where we work intermittently has been below 4th Street where we have removed a great deal of gorse as part of the strategy of clearing all the gorse from the Grose Valley.

The Pope's Glen Group was one of the first to be set up in the Blue Mountains and it has been followed by many others. I understand that it was largely as a result of these operations, and increasing awareness of the problems of weed infestations and siltation that all the roads in Blackheath have been sealed and large siltation traps have been constructed in trouble spots.

Chris Dewhurst has taken over from Eric as our Council Bush Regeneration Officer and is continuing the excellent work. A group of professional bush regenerators is working on contract further down the gully. The results of their work are now becoming evident, although like house work, bush regeneration is more obvious when it hasn't been done.

Our little group, up to about 12 people at times, has shown what can be achieved. The Blue Mts Council has been most supportive, as has the State Government with its Hawkesbury/ Nepean catchment clean up scheme.

I'm sure with the support from local people, the new Mt Wilson Bush Regeneration Group will be equally successful. **Happy Weeding!**

Could I add that in those 5 years Gloria's Group has transformed that area of bushland! Thank you very much Gloria for that clear account and your enthusiasm and your good wishes. (Mary)

THE MT WILSON BUSH REGENERATION GROUP

or

MOUNT WILSON / MOUNT IRVINE BUSHCARE

Through out the almost 9 years of our existence as a Bushwalking Group we have gained so much from the bushland both spiritually and physically and here is a great opportunity for us to demonstrate in a practical way our gratitude and appreciation for what the bush has done for us. Already we should be aware of the problems people living near the bush can create. The Blue Mountains City Council is happy to help in a practical sense. Chris Dewhurst, the Bushcare Officer will come to supervise and supply gloves, herbicides and tools and to suggest the best ways to target the weed problem. Let us become involved in Bushcare which is all about the repair and protection of natural areas through volunteer participation.

The first day will be on Friday, 12th March 1999 and then every 2nd Friday of the month. Sloan Reserve at Mt Wilson has been chosen as it is a small area and some work has been done there a few years ago. We commence at 9.00a.m. and will work to 12.30 p.m. with a morning tea break.

Contact Liz Raines for further information on 02-4756 2121.

We do urge you to join this very important project even if it is only for an hour now and again.

OUR MARCH WALK

TO THE GLOW WORM TUNNEL

FRIDAY, 19TH MARCH, 1999

This has been a popular walk in the past, although I was amazed to find that the last time we visited the tunnel was in November, 1993 and this was well before we began describing our walks in the detail that is the custom now. Indeed that qualitative change began to appear in 1995 and finally took shape in the form of a newsletter in July, 1996.

Back to the Glow Worm Tunnel. I shall quote from the National Parks & Wildlife Service pamphlet.

“ACCESS : From the Bells Line of Road at Clarence (Zig Zag Railway). Follow the gravel road through the Newnes State Forest for 34 Kms.” Therefore it is a longer drive than is normal for many of our walks.

The walk to the tunnel is described as easy and level. It can be 5Km or 1 Km if you drive to the vehicle barrier. (only limited parking at this barrier). **Bring a torch with you .**

It is a fascinating and delightful place and full of surprises. You will love the pagodas!

MEET AT CLARENCE (ZIG ZAG RL.) AT 9.30 a.m. or at Merry Garth at 9.00a.m.

It would be very helpful if we had some 4 wheel drive vehicles and there will be some rationalising of transport at Clarence.

BRING MORNING TEA, LUNCH & AFTERNOON TEA.

FURTHER WALKS

Friday, 16th April, 1999 To the Tesselated Pavements at Mt Irvine.

Friday, 21st May, 1999 To the Grand Canyon, Blackheath. Probably our 4th visit.

Friday, 18th June, 1999 To Mt Tootie; the Fire Trail overlooking Bowen's Creek.

Friday, 16th July, 1999 To Glenbrook and the Red hands Cave. A new walk for our group.

Friday, 30th July, Evans Look Out, Junction Rock and Govetts Leap .A Classic Walk, difficult and hard.

Friday, 20th August, 1999 To Mount Airley via Cullen Bullen -Capertee and Glen Davis Rd -a long drive.

MEMBERSHIP FEES

Alison states that these have been coming in at a great rate. Thank you to all who are supporting us.

Four longstanding members have decided to resign for reasons of health and we thank them very much for the many years they have been with us and given their support. A special thank you to John and Judy Leaver of Blackheath and Gerry and Jean Lenihan of Hazelbrook.

Bill Smart is still not fully recovered and we are all hoping he will be back with us very ,very soon.

Our group has paid \$500 to the Historical Society towards the cost of a new Canon Photocopier so that we can share in its use. The Mt Wilson Historical Society is most appreciative.

Contact Libby Raines (02 4756 2121) or Mary Reynolds (02 4756 2006) or Alison Heap (02 4756 2116) if you are coming on 19th March Walk. It is very important to let us know in advance !!