
Mt Wilson Mt Irvine Bushwalking Group

Volume 9 Issue 4

May 1999

Tesselated Irvine

Our April Walk

It is most encouraging to receive all the favourable comments about the current format of the newsletter.

It was wonderful to welcome back Helen Freeman after a considerable absence. We know, too, that Helen was delighted to be walking again.

Bill is in North Shore Hospital undergoing further tests. He is definitely responding very well to his treatment. His doctor is pleased with the progress he has made.

Friday, 16th April, 1999

Once again John Cardy has come to the rescue of the editor in providing a fine account of our April Walk. She is most grateful.

THE TESSELATED PAVEMENTS

MT IRVINE

The visual rewards on this walk begin even before your feet touch the ground. The drive along the Mt Irvine Rd from Mt Wilson is one of the prettiest 13 Kms you could encounter. In the Zircon Creek area a lyrebird scurried across our path, disappearing into the bush.

(Probably on its way to the Freeman's garden to dig up more of Helen's bulbs. What a long walk it would have!)

The group assembled just past the gate at the end of Mt Irvine Rd. This being the school holiday period we once again welcomed some younger walkers. It was a very good roll up; thirty two enthusiastic participants (or was it thirty one? Hurry back Bill we need a reliable



Autumn in the Bush

Pavements Mt

counter.) set off along the roughly formed vehicle track. We soon veered to the right onto the ridge track where a pair of beautiful *Angophoras* stood guard, displaying their recently exposed new bark. Their branches were contorted into curious shapes giving just a hint of the human forms often assigned to trees in illustrations of fairy tales.

The track is a somewhat indefinite one providing a wonderful feeling of being enclosed by the surrounding bush while still providing easy access. Not far along the track there was a small decaying stump which was encrusted with brilliant green mosses

and lichens from which sprouted many match head sized fiery red fungi --a miniature masterpiece. On reaching a rocky outcrop we took in magnificent views over the Wollangambe, including Mt Wilson and the seemingly endless ranges beyond.

There are many examples of *Lambertia formosa* along this ridge brashly displaying their showy red tubular flowers which fade to a pale pink as they mature, wilt and begin to set their devilish little seed pods. *Platysace linearifolia* are also present, the subtle beauty of their almost microscopic white flowers and wispy stems and foliage contrast with but also complement the more flamboyant and rigid habit of the mountain devils. Some superb *Banksia serrata* grow in this area, their gnarled trunks and branches supporting a large population of Big Bad Banksia Men, some with mouths agape and eyes wide open, others with sealed lips, peering through half closed eyes from their heavily whiskered faces.

A short diversion took us to a rock ledge on the opposite side of the ridge which overlooked Bowens Creek and afforded imposing views across to the verdant slopes of Mt Tootie and Little Mt Tootie (the site of a previous walk) and down Bowens Creek to the

headland which is the destination for our June Walk, and then across the repeating patterns of ridges and valleys beyond.

The track continued across an area of Hanging Swamp with the native grasses nodding their seed heads in the almost imperceptible breeze. Past an outcrop of intricately crinkled rock, a lovely glade of *Angophoras* was situated on a small saddle in the ridge. Their trunks were clad in smooth fresh bark, some displaying a circular, pock-marked pattern while others exhibited vertical striations. These are remarkable trees; some have knobby twisted trunks while others are smooth and straight. Those which have grown near rock ledges often appear to have been melted down, then flowing across the rock surface. The urge to touch the trunks as you pass is irresistible. On this day the trees appeared to sit on mats of recently discarded bark in many different hues of pink, orange, grey and brown. These combined beautifully with the many sandstone floaters covered in velvety green moss which were strewn amongst the leaf litter through out this little glade.

Lyrebirds are active in this area as a ledge under a nearby rock overhang supports the 'twiggy' structure of a nest and the dancing mound of a male bird was noted earlier right beside the track. The nest has been here and used regularly for many years. In the area above this overhang *Eucalyptus schlerophylla* became more numerous, their glowing silver grey bark providing ideal parchment for the abstract messages of the Scribble moth (*Ogmograpta scribula*). The already sculptured appearance of many of these trees had been further embellished by the forces of nature. Their pot-bellied trunks had been gutted by bushfires, leaving mysterious and dark crevices, some partly illuminated by windows where the fires had completely penetrated the trunk.

A short distance further on the track dips down to the rock outcrop known as the Tessellated Pavements. The pentagonal / hexagonal patterns are very distinctive and one wonders why the pattern is so localised, adjacent areas of the rock shelf being devoid of similar patterns. The rock pools and small moss islands with their stunted weatherbeaten shrubs added to the beauty of this area in which we settled down for lunch.

In addition to Mother Nature's inscriptions the rock shelter contained an Aboriginal Rock Carving of a female figure and there are several sharpening grooves present. As we sat enjoying the expansive mountain views on this magic Autumn day one could not help but conclude that the original occupants of this area had got it right, spending many hours in this unsurpassed environment fashioning tools and producing their art. A point worth pondering that after thousands of years of

occupation the only obvious marks left on the landscape were these grooves and that simple rock carving.

After a long, leisurely lunch, some exploration of the immediate area, including an inspection of the remarkable regrowth since the bushfire some sixteen months ago, we turned to retrace our steps back to Mt Irvine. Thus we experienced a second exposure to the beauty of this ridge. There were the sparsely scattered Flannel Flowers (*Actinotus helianthi*), *Banksia spinulosa* with their tightly formed golden candles and the glimpses of the distant views in the afternoon light.

The day was concluded back at the vehicles with the usual welcome cup of tea, a birthday cake for Helen Cardy, thoughtfully provided by Helen Freeman and lots of lively chatter as we prepared to head for home.

Another thoroughly enjoyable and memorable day!

A NOTE about NEW MEMBERS. On this walk we had the pleasure of gathering in two new people. They are Mary Shaw from Wentworth Falls and Helen Mc Innes, a friend of Patricia Andren. Both are most welcome. It was very enjoyable welcoming back the Pembroke family and Daniel, Tom Nelson's grandson as well as Barbara Harry and to have Patricia Andren with us again.

Have just heard that Hans had a nasty fall from a ladder recently and broke his heel. Do hope Hans that you are soon recovered. We cannot do without you.

DO NOT FORGET THE MOUNT WILSON / MOUNT IRVINE BUSH CARE GROUP. It meets every 2nd Friday of the month at Sloan Reserve in Mt Wilson at 9.0a.m. Friday 14th May, Friday, 11th June, Friday, 9th July, 1999 & Friday, 13th August, 1999.

Ring Liz Raines for further information on 02-47 56 2121.

OUR MAY WALK

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TO THE GRAND CANYON AT BLACKHEATH

Another very popular walk with our Group. This will be our fifth visit. However it is not classed as an easy walk as it involves going down from Evans Look Out to the creeks below and then of course returning uphill through Neate's Glen. Nevertheless it is a wonderful experience amidst rain forest, bubbling creeks and those rugged canyon walls. It is rare to be able to access a canyon such as this from a walking track in the Blue Mountains.

MEET AT THE NEATE'S GLEN CAR PARK IN EVANS HEAD LOOK OUT RD. BLACKHEATH at 9.30 A.M. OR MEET AT MERRY GARTH at 8.30 A.M.

BRING MORNING TEA, LUNCH & AFTERNOON TEA and PLENTY OF WATER.

IT IS OUR NINETH BIRTHDAY THIS MAY. LET US CELEBRATE IT ON 21ST MAY,1999! CAKE CONTRIBUTIONS WELCOME!

WITH 32 ATTENDING OUR APRIL WALK WE ALMOST DOUBLED THE NUMBERS WHICH CAME IN 1990 TO THE SAME WALK! WELL DONE!

THE GROSE VALLEY WILDERNESS PROPOSAL IS AVAILABLE (\$ 10) AT THE GOVETT'S LEAP OFFICE OF THE N.P.& W.L.S. As walkers we should take an interest in this proposal as it could affect our access to some parts of the Grose. That is on the local level.However as lovers of the bush we all have a responsibility to understand what is proposed and its implications for the future protection of this truly wonderful section of the Blue Mountains National Park.

FURTHER WALKS

Mt Wilson Mt Irvine Bushwalking Group

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 Govett's Leap. A Classic Walk, difficult and hard.

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

Friday, 17th September, 1999 To Gooch's Crater or Centennial Glen.

Friday, 15th October, 1999 The Southern Fire trail and back via the Waterfall Ttrack at Mt Wilson.

MEMBERSHIP FEES

A reminder in case someone may have forgotten!

Again thank you to all those who have been so prompt in paying.

Contact Libby Raines (02-4756 2121) or Mary Reynolds (02- 4756 2006) or Alison Heap (02-4756 2116) if you are coming on 21st May Walk.Always let us know in advance it is such a help.