
Mt Wilson Mt Irvine Bushwalking Group

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TO BILL SMART

Tributes from Our members.

This edition of our newsletter will be devoted to Bill Smart who was a most loyal and dedicated member of this Group.

Bill passed away on Wednesday, 14th July, 1999 after a brave struggle with cancer in North Shore Hospital.

Members of our Group who knew Bill well and regularly walked with him will record here what his passing will mean for them and what lasting legacy he has bestowed on us all to carry into the future. Many members attended his funeral held on Tuesday, 20th July, 1999 at St George's Church Mt Wilson.

LIBBY RAINES

(Libby has known Bill for the longest period and his family and hers have had a very special friendship.)

BILL

In the bush the lyre birds are accompanied by a little pilot bird or a tiny scrub wren, as they go about their daily search for food amongst the fallen leaves. I liken my friendship with the Smart Family to that of the little bird. For many years I have known well all seven members of the family, sharing their joys and sorrows along life's path. This friendship has been a unique privilege and I will always hold dear these memories.

As we farewell Bill, and reflect on his life, I ponder what it was that made him so special to so many people.

His kindness certainly: --He took a lot of people under his wing, quietly giving them the support and friendship they needed. Bill was an extremely kind and gentle man.

His generosity, not only with gifts and money, but with himself, his precious time and his equipment which he



Winter in the Bush

TOPIC

used to help others in all kinds of ways. He was very practical.

Bill's love of nature was very apparent and appealing; one learnt so much when one was with him. His knowledge of plants and the things around him made his company interesting. He had a wonderful gift of quietly passing on his knowledge to those who wanted to hear and took the trouble to learn. For those of us who had the privilege of working closely with him whether it was in the glass house, or the nursery, or about one of his properties, or with the cattle, or in the village or in the bush -- it was always a time of learning and observing.

Like all the Smarts Bill's sense of humour was very refreshing and delightful; his choice of words often echoed his work.

Bill was well respected by the people he worked with in the Nursery Trade, in the C.S.I.R.O., in the Agricultural Department, in the Blue Mountains City Council and with the Ryde School of Horticulture. His advice on a large range of subjects was sought by many.

He was honest and gentle, yet strong and determined and he would put in very long hard working days, only occasionally admitting at the end of the day that he was 'a bit used up' when he must have been exhausted.

His sense of responsibility as he went about his daily life was very apparent to those close to him. He thought deeply about things, pondering over things, working things out methodically and always wanting to learn how things worked and why.

This sense of responsibility and his love for these mountains, firstly at Mt Irvine as a young man and then at Mt Wilson, made him deeply involved in the running, maintenance, preservation and care of this beautiful Village and the bush which surrounds it. Bill was part of

every aspect of the Village and its life, and this involvement was one of his greatest joys.

Our family 'down the hill' will miss him greatly. Our lives have been intertwined for years and Bill was a dear friend to us all. We cherish the wonderful memories of all the good times we spent together.

We know Bill is at peace now, free from the pain, hurt and illness. However I don't think he will be very far from us as we set out on our walks each month down new or old well remembered paths. We can picture him sitting on a rock, looking out to the view before him or walking quietly at the end of the group, observing the beauty all about him and keeping a watchful eye on us all.

These words by John Bunyon (with a little adaptation) seem appropriate and I pay tribute to Bill with them.

' You have been so faithful and loving to us

You have worked so stoutly for us

You have been so wise in counselling with us

That we shall not forget your kindness towards us'

The following contributions are from some who, in comparative terms, have known Bill for a much shorter time span but have come to respect and love him largely through the Bushwalking Group.

JOHN and HELEN CARDY.

Occasionally your life is touched by someone special and although not immediately apparent this was the case for Helen and me when we met Bill on a bushwalk to the Pagodas and the Glowworm Tunnel in March 1996.

As fate would have it our association with Bill spanned less than three and a half years but we treasure many memories of both our bushwalking and Historical Society activities with him. The vast knowledge Bill had of the local bushland, which he never pushed onto you but gave freely when asked in his deliberate, precise manner, added greatly to our enjoyment of the many walks we shared. His love of the bush in general and for Mt Wilson in particular was infectious.

Bill always gave a sincere, warm welcome -- a gentle hug for Helen and the firm handshake of a man of the land for me. He had a genuine concern for the safety and wellbeing of all on our bushwalks. Bill was truly one of Nature's Gentlemen; it was a privilege to have known him for that all too short a time.

JOURNEYS WITH A GENTLE MAN

Sit quietly contemplating in a rainforest glen

See sky far above you, clear and blue --- when

Your eyes are drawn upwards by the raucous shriek

Of black cockatoos flying along a near creek

Hear the whispering wind in the blue gum crowns

See the play of sunlight on the cliffs all around

Marvel at nature's sculpture in the canyons deep

And the wondrous valleys where waterfalls leap

Our knowledge, understanding, our love of the bush

So much enhanced by him -- and as we push

along every bush track, around every bend

We will encounter the spirit of our bushwalking friend

FOR BILL

by John Cardy.

HELEN FREEMAN

Our Special Friend

What a friend we had in Bill as a member of our bushwalking group. He would come down through the paddock of Wynstay to meet at Merry Garth, always with a warm heartfelt greeting and eager to help out with transport. Bill held an important position in our group, that of last walker, responsible for keeping count of and track of our group. What a record he held-- not one walker lost. Although on one occasion a small group, one of whom was Bill, was so engrossed in discussing the flora inadvertently took a longer route, never admitting they were 'lost' as they knew where they were.

Bill, the quiet achiever, always pleased to share knowledge on plant life, weather conditions and the quirks of nature and ever patient in his explanations.

Bill, always there with a helping hand to help one achieve, at times, the near impossible! Bill's dry humour, bringing many a laugh and Bill's bushlore --- such a wealth of knowledge. I shall never forget my lesson from Bill on wallaby and wombat droppings--the rounder being the wallaby and the squarer being the wombat and Bill's admission to having never worked out how the square shape was produced!

Bill was always there when we went canyoning, accompanying us to the launching site, giving us an encouraging send off and always there at the end to make sure we arrived back safely. Bill, at the end of the walks enjoying a cup of coffee and a piece of cake. We shall miss Bill on our walks, but somehow I feel he will always be there, keeping an eye on the walkers and doing an extra count, just in case. Thanks Bill for being you, a true gentleman and a man attuned to nature.

BRUCE and SUE GAILEY

Sue and I, new to the mountains first met Bill at the Mount Wilson Village Hall on Polling Day. We had arrived with posters etc. for the Greens and the Democrats. He seemed quite amazed and amused but introduced us and made us welcome.

On the walks Bill was always at the end of the line having great discussions about birds, plants, rocks, the clouds, the environment usually with Hans or Mary. Bill only showed patience and humour to the tired walkers, often taking their packs for them. On one walk I asked Bill how he found the time to walk as he was always so busy. He replied that the Walks were his only days off and meant a great deal to him.

We miss you Bill and hope you walk in good company.' Bruce.

During the first years of our exciting move to Mt Irvine, I often noticed Bill attending to the needs of Mt Wilson always working regularly and quietly. Then I joined the Bushwalking Group. Bill was no longer the man who lived in the big house on the hill but a gentle walking companion to us all, with never an unkind word to say about anyone.

It wasn't until I found I was limping last again, as I did on so many walks that I really got to know another part of Bill. His well informed knowledge of the flora and fauna made him a true 'Man of the Mountain'. I have much to thank him for. I have fond memories of him patiently waiting to make sure all walkers got home safely. Thank you Bill, you will always be part of the mountain. I don't like pasta either.' Sue

GLORIA HARRIS of BLACKHEATH

Five or six years ago, when Ron and I retired to Blackheath, we were invited to join the Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Bushwalking Group. There we were welcomed by such a gracious and friendly group of people, that we felt completely at home. One of these people was of course, Bill Smart. I felt he carried with him the stillness of the typical Australian bushman. Slim, rather taciturn, but with such a warm smile and knowledge of the bush; he obviously loved the plants, especially the trees.

He had a fund of information about the early days of Mt Wilson and I remember in particular the walks we did on his property. I remember following the old millers' tracks and seeing the magnificent stand of Mountain Ash which he showed us with pride. As I got to know him better, he always greeted me with a hug and it was reassuring on our walks to know that Bill was 'bringing up the rear', keeping a look out for stragglers, just chatting about plants, or maybe watching a lyre bird.

During the Spring and Autumn Openings of Wynstay, I got to know him even better, and my lasting memory of Bill will be asleep in his chair

beside the fire, with his little dog asleep on his lap. His bushwalking mates will miss him greatly.

ALISON and ALAN HEAP

It could have been a difficult relationship. Here we were, two 'wet behind the ears Poms', buying Bill Smart's former property Gowan Ross. The amount of work that Bill had put into the property was evident. The house had been built from timbers cut on the property. The impressive basalt dam wall had '**Hugh and Bill Smart 1965' incised in the top. There were the beautiful specimen trees, evidence of Bill's wholesale nursery and the sturdy cattle yards built for the wild cattle. So when Bill came to call it is difficult to say who was the most nervous. We started to talk about one of the topics that we both felt comfortable with and that was plants. He told us the names of all the trees he had planted, including the two *Cedrus atlantica* in the drive way which date from when his daughters were born. We told him of our plans for the property and our ideas were received with interest, not resentment.**

Bill could be a man of few words except for the topics that really interested him. One of these topics was cattle. He was very proud of his herd of Poll Hereford cattle which he had built up over twenty years. When we first met Bill we had a very motley group of steers and he suggested it was time that we got some nice 'ladies'.

An incident that showed Bill's character occurred when Bill and I sold some cattle at the local Hartley saleyards. I observed that we would have made a great deal more money if we had separated our six months calves from their mothers and sold them separately. Bill was horrified, 'You can't do that', he said. He was much more concerned about the welfare of the animals than the profit margin.

When we said that the cattle yards which we both used were falling down Bill cut and left a neat pile of yellow gum logs for the posts. He showed us how to put in the uprights using rammed earth and how to mortice in the rails which he insisted be made of narrow-leaved peppermint. We spent many days rebuilding the cattle yards and when they were finished they were carefully signed '**Alan Heap and Bill Smart 1999**'. 'That's important', said Bill. Not out of any conceit but a desire to do things properly.

During these long working days his capacity to swing an axe or wield a fencing bar seemed endless. His hands were testimony to a lifetime of hard physical labour. It may have been more expedient to put in metal yards but that just wouldn't have been the same.

Some may be surprised to know that every year Bill would send a contribution to the Bushwalking Group not just for himself but also for Jane. So how will we remember Bill? Not as he was at the end but as a delightful dinner guest standing with his back to the fire

with a glass of good red or single malt in his hand or sitting eating his sandwiches in the paddock with his little dog, Flair by his side.

So let's raise a glass of red and say a toast, ' **To Bill Smart-- dear friend and gentleman.**'

TOM NELSON (brother of DR BILL NELSON, brother-in-law of SALLY NELSON)

I can't recall if I met Bill before I joined our great Bushwalking Group but I was certainly aware of other people's high opinion of him from comments by Sally and Bill.

All that I had heard was more than confirmed since joining the Group and meeting Bill. He was a fine person--always pleasant, helpful and friendly and I don't know who we are going to get to succeed him as ' Tail End Charlie' on our walks. In that regard I looked upon him as ' Reliabil'. I shall miss him as will many others.

HANS OBERSTEBRINK (Mt Tomah) Hans is one of our original walkers, with an outstanding knowledge of the flora of our bushland and of the bush of this area.

HELLO BILL!

Sadly you are physically not here any more, but I can still talk to you as if you were. We did not converse that often on our walks with the Mt Wilson Bushwalking Group but when we did we used to talk about flora and fauna. I often consulted you on the type of Eucalyptus species we were confronting as to what you thought it was just by looking at the tree. One of those was *Eucalyptus Dives* which comes out with big bluish gray leaves after a bushfire. On another occasion you pointed out a Fork Fern, (*Thesipteris truncata*) to all of us which grew on a fern tree near a concrete water enclosure. This was in the rainforest on the road between Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine where there is a water refilling point for tankers. I had never seen this Fork Fern in the forest.

Once you made me a nice compliment. On a walk very early during the establishment of our bushwalking group you said that I encouraged you to learn more about the native flora, just because I, a newcomer to this country knew some native plant or another which you did not know. As a keen plant nursery man you knew of course a lot about exotic species which you propagated in your glass houses. You also talked about the yearly migrations of Dingoes in the Mt Wilson area. This was after I mentioned hearing them howling on Haystack Ridge from the northern end of Mt Tomah.

Those conversations cannot be repeated! I will miss your company on our future walks.

HELEN RAPHAEL, a devoted carer for Mt Wilson.

It is the most beautiful winter's day up on Danes' Way where I have chosen to write about Bill-- this simple rutted road with its hidden bends of giant trees and happy birds pottering quietly in hand with God along the roof of the world! Trying to look back to the early days of ' Carisbrook' in this extraordinary place, I think you feel just a glimpse of how a person like Bill might develop the unusual sensitivity to the rhythms of nature he possessed. His knowledge was all such a weave of things--weather, landscape, seasons, plants, birds, other animals, working miscellanea, etc.-- developing not just from this unique environment but also, from his exceptional capacity for observation and the central impact of a home in which such things were nurtured. Bill shared this knowledge so generously--so companionably-- especially on quiet times in the garden and on treasured walks during his often disguised illnesses. I had also felt disturbed about the quiet depth of loss that shadowed his absence at the 'missing bodies -- observational' end of the walking group. It is of some consolation, however that journals help to keep alive the memories of beautiful days with very special people long after the frail threads of our thought processes have ceased to function.

Bill also loved to work. It gave him so much purpose and obvious inner happiness and he strove to give of his best even when he was gravely ill. I don't think I've ever met a person who worked more quietly than Bill. I often heard him working, i.e. the sounds of his tools at work', particularly when I was living at 'Mollie's' (the Davies' Cowshed) or writing nearby..... but he was rarely that visible himself. (Regrettably, his prominence in photos is similarly limited.....such was the man!). When you write so regularly in quiet places, those special sounds become woven like a 'feeling of trees' into the 'soul of the place'! His hands, His heart! were just part of this mountain and part of this mountain's 'rhythm' is now missing. I think all who loved Bill and feel an indescribable harmony in the simple soul of this place, feel very much 'out of rhythm' too.

It was one of the greatest privileges to have known this quiet man.

HELEN ROBBINS (It is perhaps fitting that the two people who knew Bill for the longest period should have the first word i.e. Libby and the last word i.e. Helen (cousin-in-law of Bill's) Helen and Brian Robbins have moved recently to Nambucca Heads. We will feel their absence keenly.)

During the long road home after Bill Smart's funeral, I could not help thinking of how many people he had touched during his lifetime. So many friends, colleagues, professional people from all sorts of fields and just ordinary gardeners wondering where to put some precious plant. I met Bill over forty years ago as

the husband of my dear cousin ,Jane and it was not long before we became good friends, sharing a love of the bush and its flowering plants. From my first arrival here, he taught me bush sense, how to read signs in the bush, how to identify trees and flowers-- so very different from the ones I had been brought up with-- for that I will always be in his debt.

I know he loved our monthly walks, spending a relaxing day away from the demanding work schedule he set himself. Whatever the weather, we always managed to find many items of interest to share with our wonderful walking companions and usually the first thing we did on returning to Wynstay was to put 'Fairley and Moore' on the table and produce some rather limp and shrivelled specimens from our pockets. Hopefully we would identify them, and even more hopefully, remember the names! His knowledge was inspirational and he always cheerfully shared that knowledge with anyone who was interested. He could count, too -- we never lost a member of our group while Bill was in charge of the rearguard!

I loved those walks, too and I would like to take this opportunity to say how much I am going to miss them. I can assure you that often on the third Friday of the month, I shall be wondering which path you will be taking, whether you are groping through a white mist, trying to find a spot out of the wind for morning tea or gazing out over a deep blue gorge to the ridges beyond, everything clean and shining in the brilliant clear light which one only finds in the Mountains. I have many memories to treasure of our group -- Mary's notebook, Hans's incredible knowledge of the trees and flowers, Helen F's umbrella, John C's knees, Ernie's stamina, Bill's hat, our delicious afternoon teas and, of course, Libby's unfailing devotion to the group and its welfare. I hope you will have many happy walks ahead and when you do gather together, Bill will not be forgotten.

I was proud to be numbered among his friends.

These tributes have provided an insight in to the world of Bill Smart. I am sure there are many more who would have been pleased to contribute their memories and thoughts of this exceptional , gallant and gentle man. His legacy of integrity, respect for knowledge, loyalty, generosity, kindness, the value of warm friendship and an enduring love of the bush and his home Mt Wilson shall remain the real foundation of this Group. We do invite you if you wish, to send your thoughts which we will be very pleased to put in a future newsletter. (Mary R.)

Members of the Bushwalking Group provided afternoon tea in the Mt Wilson Village Hall on the day of Bill's funeral. The Group received a thank you note from members of the Wynne Family, particularly Mike and Irene Wynne.

As we have altered the format of this newsletter to pay tribute to Bill we hope you will bear with us in not providing a detailed account of the JUNE WALK. THE JULY WALK listed for July,16th was cancelled out of respect for Bill. The walk on 30th July will be described in our September Newsletter. Below are details of the August Walk.

Our August Walk

TO MT AIRLEY VIA CULLEN BULLEN -- CAPERTEE and the GLEN DAVIS RD.

FRIDAY, 20TH AUGUST,1999.

This is a new area for our Group and entails a drive of about 1 and a half hours. The Capertee Valley is a beautiful place and will captivate you. The walk itself is long but quite easy with a steady but not steep climb in one section. Would all who intend going please CONTACT LIBBY ON TUESDAY, 17TH AUGUST,1999? We will be most grateful for offers of help with transport.

Don't be put off by the distance if you do not wish to drive CONTACT LIBBY on the Tuesday,17th August and transport can be arranged. It is possible too to drive along the track with a suitable vehicle.

MEET IN THE COLE'S CAR PARK in LITHGOW AT THE END CLOSEST TO ST PATRICK'S SCHOOL (behind the school) at 8.30 a.m. OR MEET AT MERRY GARTH at 8.00a.m. Coles is in the Lithgow Valley Shopping Centre. St Patrick's School is in Mort St at the corner of Gow St.(set of lights at this intersection).

Bring morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea.

FURTHER WALKS

Friday, 17th September, 1999 To Centennial Glen (the Start will be from a different place from previous walks there.)

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

Friday, 29th October, 1999 Possibly the Blue Gum Forest via Pierce's Pass or to the Cox's R.

Friday, 19th November, 1999 Possibly the Minni Minni Ha Ha Falls or a walk at Wentworth Falls.

Rosemary Ringoff, one of our loyal walkers in Blackheath has her husband, Heinz very ill. We do hope that Heinz will improve very soon and we send our warmest thoughts to Rosemary at this time.

Do not forget to contact Libby (02- 4756 2121) by 17th August, 1999 for the August Walk. Contact Mary Reynolds (02--4756 2006) or Alison Heap (02--4756 2116) alternatively or for further information.

OUR JUNE WALK TO LITTLE MT TOOTIE in brief.

It was a typical winter's day with weak sunshine and a fine S W wind to hurry us along and to make us grateful for the exhilarating physical exercise which was keeping us warm. There were 26 including Hans driving his wonderful little buggy. Later Ernie was to be pleased to be able to join Hans in it to rest those remarkable legs of his which have carried him many kilometres. Hans's heel prevented his participation in the walking.

In 1997 we visited Mt Tootie in June and in the account of that walk the story was told briefly of its first settlement and its acquisition by Fredrick Ashwell in 1880.

We met at the junction of the Bells Line of Rd and the Mt Tootie Rd. Here the usual rationing of cars took place and then we were off along a road that is narrow, twisting itself through steep gullies giving wonderful glimpses of bushland about to burst into flower.

It is a brief drive and we were soon pushing our way up the hill with that biting wind behind us. This time we turned away from the top of Mt Tootie and headed through paddocks to reach the foot of Little Mt Tootie. This was an ideal place for morning tea. But first we must climb The Little One! A howling gale greeted us but the compensation was a splendid view in every

direction, across to Kurrajong, north to more mountains and south to mountains.

Basalt soil clads the Mt Tootie and its Little Companion and there are scattered some wonderful specimens of the Blue Gums or *Eucalyptus deanei*. These magnificent trees have quite extraordinary colouring of cream and blue-grey. Sadly there is very little else of the original vegetation in evidence. Farming for a century has made sure of that. Yet it doesn't have to be like that.

We moved off onto the fire trail which would take us into bushland of every type leaving behind the basalt soil. The bush was thick and rich with every variety of plant, some coming into flower. The *Pimeleas* were out in profusion with their delicate rice flowers and the *Banksia spinulosa* glowing. The Acacias, too were beginning to burst into bloom. It was a long and stimulating trek with the end of the trail overlooking the Bowen's Creek far below and somewhere not far away in the green depths of the gorge the Woollangambe linking its waters to flow onto the Colo R. Lunch was much enjoyed with that view to increase our appetite.

At afternoon tea we celebrated Alison's birthday and farewelled with much regret our good friend, Helen Robbins who was leaving for Nambucca Heads.

DO NOT FORGET THE BUSH CARE GROUP. It meets on Friday, 13th August, 1999 at the end of Mt Irvine Rd at 9.0 a.m. This will be a new area The Bush Care Group will be undertaking_ and we do hope that Mt Irvine residents will join it.

Ring Liz Raines (02--4756 2121) for more information.