

First my apologies for the late arrival of this newsletter for November. Unfortunately the computer chose two weeks ago to cease to function and I had to wait for the arrival of a replacement to produce what you are reading now.

Boronia Point

Friday 27th October 2000

Thirteen gathered at Merry Garth on what can only be described as a perfect spring day. There was a soft breeze; the sun was warming us and the bushland while Libby and Keith's garden was vibrant with colour, beauty, fragrance to capture the most reluctant of imaginations. A wonderful day for walking!

We set out down Davies Lane, turning to descend the steps so well constructed by Peter Raines into that little patch of rain forest behind 'Campanella' and 'Linden'. The Bush Care Group has paid a visit here to remove intruders from our gardens into this forest and will of course return. We admired particularly a giant *Banksia integrifolia* its head of branches away out of sight above our heads. This forest is on the south eastern side of Mt Wilson and is rich in specimens, especially further down the slopes. The track then brings us back to 'civilisation' again as we linked up with Shadforth Rd and Stephen Lane. Both those names are associated with the Stephen Family. Sir Alfred Stephen, the Chief Justice of NSW from about 1842 to 1870 bought land here but never settled. However his son, Matthew Henry did and built the original 'Campanella' which was burnt down in 1930's. Matthew Henry married Caroline Shadforth .

Libby told the story of the Banksias which were planted to help with regeneration in this area but as they lacked protection from larger vegetation and a drought period followed they did not survive.

So we passed beside a number of large properties. It was disturbing to see in one property the number of trees that had been removed to make way for a large development. Then we crossed through the Cathedral Reserve where there has been considerable regeneration to the beginnings of Cathedral Creek, an oasis of remnants of rain forest. We walked along Mt Irvine Rd which here curls its way through rich rainforest and at least displays an inkling of what rain forest on this mountain may have been years ago to where the old Mt Irvine road deviates off to the left from the present road. This is opposite the track down to Happy Valley.

Along this track were golden examples of *Pultenea*. At this time of the year it and the *Hakea dactyloides* with its creamy branches present a wonderful array of colour. Many years ago some used the area below this track as a tip. Fortunately that practice has ceased as we become more conscious of the environment. Wonderful views could be seen across the wilderness. In the distance Mt Yengo was clearly defined with its distinctive flat top. The darker green of the bushland was decorated with creamy patches, indicating Eucalypts in blossom. In deed this Spring the Eucalypts have been flowering with great profusion, probably *Eucalyptus haemostoma* and *Eucalyptus sieberi* would be two of these.

We met three more of our members at the bottom of Farrer Rd. where morning tea was organised along the Boronia Point track. Here I left the group to return home. A special thank you to Helen Freeman who kindly drove me back.

John Cardy takes up the tale.

It was great to see Mary back on the track giving her dicky knee a workout; however she understandably chose to complete only the abridged version of the Boronia Point walk and that is why I am reporting on the full, unexpurgated edition.

After a convivial morning tea beside the fire trail near Farrer Rd, Mary called it a day and the rest of the group continued towards Boronia Point. Initially there are quite a few Smooth-barked Apples (*Angophora costata*) beside the trail displaying their salmon pink bark with occasional light grey tinges, a delight to the eye. Here and there the sparse understorey is illuminated by the brilliant orbs of the Waratah (*Telopea specioissima*), some times lone flowers striking in their isolation and elsewhere small groups in shallow gullies make a fiery statement. Although these majestic flowers are spectacular in any quantity there were far fewer than when the group last undertook this walk in 1996.

As the trail leads us closer to Boronia Point, the forest becomes more open and the dominant trees are now the Scribbly Gum (*Eucalyptus sclerophylla*). Their trunks are gnarled and twisted into glorious sculptures by the elements in this exposed area. There are many plants flowering at this time including the occasional Golden Glory Pea (*Gompholobium latifolium*) and Matchheads (*Comesperma ericinum*) with the two most prominent sepals of the open flowers giving the appearance of elegant pink winged insects clustered below the matchhead shapes of the unopened flowers.

At the margin where the open forest gives way to heathland on the exposed ridge there are clumps of *Hakea dactyloides* displaying their wispy white to pink flowers clinging to the erect stems at the base of the leaves. The brilliant pure white flowers of the Coral Heath (*Epacris microphylla*) catch the eye and the first scattered examples of the Point's namesake, *Boronia floribunda* put in an appearance. These soft elegant shrubs displaying their beautiful, pale, pink flowers are a dramatic contrast with the nearby Drumsticks (*Isopogon anemonifolius*) with their yellow flower heads supported on rigid stems above the globular "cones" still held from the previous seasons.

A narrow path through the heath leads us the last few metres to the cliff edge at the Point where we each find a comfortable repose for lunch. What a wonderful place to rest awhile and soak up the magical atmosphere of this powerful landscape. The ridge ascending Lamb's Hill frames the view to the left while to the right the vast expanse of rugged, gloriously untamed country stretches away toward the Wollemi National Park, prompting thoughts of what other gems may be secreted among those ridges and gorges.

Directly below, the waters of the Wollangambe could be glimpsed deep within narrow canyons and then tumbling into a sparkling emerald pool before continuing on its tortuous path toward its eventual meeting with the mighty Colo River. Vertical cliff faces rising from the river led the eye to the ridges where the white blossom of the Sydney Peppermint, (*Eucalyptus piperita*) punctuated the landscape. At a couple of points high on these cliffs, grass trees (*Xanthorrhoea media*) clung to the edge, their long narrow leaves cascading into the emptiness below while the flower shafts thrust skyward.

All too soon it was time to head back, retracing our outward path. Some of you may not be aware that I usually keep count of the number of walkers participating and remain near the rear of the group to ensure we do not mislay anyone, usually quite simple really -----
-but not today! Thirteen left Merry Garth; On arrival at Farrer Rd we were joined by Elaine, Ernie and Bruce so that there were 16 for morning tea. Mary left with Helen Freeman, then Helen returned so that 15 set out for Boronia Point. Fifteen arrived back (that means we didn't lose anyone) at Farrer Rd where Helen Freeman and Elaine departed by car as did Ernie and Bruce. Peter and his friend decided to return via the main road in order to keep an afternoon appointment. This left nine (I think) to return via Lamb's Hill and the Cathedral of Ferns. Are you confused? I nearly had a brain explosion trying to keep count!

Back at Merry Garth we were welcomed into the garden by Libby and Keith for afternoon tea. It transpired that it was Elaine Turnidge's birthday. It was lovely to be able to help her celebrate here at Mt Wilson, a place she still holds dear to her heart and always will. Bruce Wright also owned up to it being his birthday! What beautiful and inspiring surroundings in which to celebrate and to end yet another wonderful walk. Thank you Libby and Keith for your generous hospitality.

Thank you to John Cardy for that excellent report.

We have received a kind thank you letter from Gloria Harris. She and Ron definitely hope to see us at the Christmas Barbecue.