

---

---

# Mt Wilson Mt Irvine Bushwalking Group

---

---

Volume 11 Issue 3

March 2001

---

---

## PRINCE HENRY CLIFF

---

# OUR FEBRUARY WALK

FRIDAY, 16TH FEBRUARY  
2001

Another enjoyable contribution from  
John Cardy with some great  
memories from the past.

Childhood memories of very rare visits to Katoomba include at the 'kitsch' end of the spectrum, shop windows populated by those satanic little figures with bodies fashioned from red dyed pipe cleaners which supported horned heads of Mountain Devil seed pods. At the other extreme I remember being in awe of the art deco elegance of the Paragon in Katoomba St.

Today's walk offered similar extremes, from the highly developed tourist spots of Echo Point and the Scenic Railway to the stunning views of the Jamison Valley and the delight of sheltered gullies supporting beautiful stands of Blue Mountains Ash or *Eucalyptus oreades*.

Eleven members set off from the Katoomba Park picnic area along a path which has been upgraded to wheelchair access standard as far as Cliff View Lookout. From this vantage point a huge gamut of mountain views is on show. To the right is Katoomba Falls-- hard to believe this spectacular display results from that rather insignificant little stream back at the picnic area. Then there is the tourist development of the Skyway, the new cable car which glides into the valley and the more historically interesting Scenic Railway which up until about 1940 descended much further into the valley to haul coal and oil shale. It serviced the Katoomba Coal Mine near the present bottom station as well as mines at the Ruined Castle and on the other side of Narrow Neck in the Megalong Valley. The Mt



Autumn in the Bush

## WALK, KATOOMBA

---

Rennie tunnel under Narrow Neck and the Daylight tunnel which ran from near the giant landslide site to the railway were driven to facilitate transport to the transfer station. For a short period an aerial ropeway operated from near the Ruined Castle mine to the railway. However it collapsed and its cable and some skips can still be seen on the valley floor. Interesting to note that the coal seam at Katoomba is 600metres above sea level and is part of the same seam which lies 900 metres below Sydney Harbour and which was mined from Balmain.

Moving on from this point we traverse an area of hanging swamp

which was exuding copious amounts of moisture which flowed across the rock shelf to drop into the valley below. We stopped at Lady Darley's Lookout for morning tea and a more spectacular spot is hard to imagine. Mt Solitary dominates and is a geological time capsule. The upper cliffs are Triassic sandstone laid down some 240 million years ago, the sloping areas are the Permian coal deposits 290 million years old and the small cliffs visible deep in the valley are of the Devonian period, 400 million years old. Incredible to think these vast valleys were once solid rock which has been eroded away ! In the vicinity of the lookout there are fine examples of the Blue Mountain Mallee Ash [*Eucalyptus stricta*]. As we continue toward Echo Point we take in the panoramic long distance views past Kings Tableland and Mt Solitary to features as far away as Mittagong and Bowral.

At Echo Point it is a real multicultural experience with tourist buses disgorging a continuous stream of local and overseas visitors to catch a glimpse of this spectacle. Incidentally, who stole the echo from Echo Point ? Didn't hear a coo-ee all day. We paid a quick visit to the Three Sisters then continued to Leura, the presence of visitors declining rapidly as we moved away from Echo Point.

The track becomes more enclosed in this area where white is the predominant flower colour at this time, including the exquisite *Platysace lanceolata* with its dense heads made up of dozens of tiny five petalled flowers, each no more than 2mm across. Occasional Trigger plants [*Stylidium graminifolium*] and Mountain Devils [*Lambertia formosa*] provide brilliant contrasts. Soon after passing a large drift of the Umbrella Fern [*Sticherus flabellatus*], we turn off to a rocky outcrop to settle down for lunch. In the gully below us there are several beautiful examples of Cedar Wattles [*Acacia elata*] in full flower. Just as we complete lunch the valley becomes shrouded by approaching showers so after donning our rain gear, we began to retrace our morning journey.

We passed a majestic stand of Blue Mountain Ash [*Eucalyptus oreades*] their smooth cream to white trunks glowing in the dull conditions and their branches decorated with long streamers of recently discarded bark. A male lyrebird was sighted displaying his superb tail feathers for a pair of females who appeared completely indifferent and soon wandered off. Typical isn't it fellas, you put in a big effort and get the cold shoulder !

Back at Echo Point the view was completely obliterated by the mist and cloud. A group of tourists had just arrived to be greeted by this wall of white and Helen Cardy cheered them up immensely, saying, 'You should have been here this morning, you could see forever !'

Approaching Cliff View Lookout we met up with Mary who was prevented from joining us for the full walk by a speaking engagement. Back at the picnic area we enjoyed the customary cup of tea in light rain before heading home after another delightful day of soaking up the ever changing atmosphere of these wondrous Blue Mountains.

**A special thank you to John for his detailed observations along the track and humorous insights.**

### Memories From the Past

A Letter from Miss Betty Clarke, one of our members who spent much of her life in Mt Irvine. She recalls some of those times which our walk in January along the Bowens Creek Road rekindled for her.

“ Dear Mrs Heap,

I do enjoy reading about the Groups' Walks, especially the places I've not been to, but the last two held some interest dating back awhile when the Bowens Creek Road was being constructed. It was then our Younger Set would make little iced cakes for one penny and sell to the men working there, the money going towards the cost of the wire netting for the tennis court.

And we would go to the Wollangambe River from Danes Way using a rope for the last few metres. A neighbour and my father made a craft with six empty

oil drums and discarded timber planks from the local sawmill. They would row up and down that section taking Rosemary [my sister] and me of Primary school age as passengers. It was beautiful, so quiet and peaceful down there where the cliffs rose sheer out of the water. I think of it now in horror--- no one could swim and the river was deep !

I enclose a cheque to renew my subscription thank you.

Best Wishes to you all

Sincerely Betty Clarke”

Betty Clarke has a marvellously rich memory of her life in Mt Irvine. We are fortunate to have her as one of our members.

## Our March Walks

**FROM GOVETTS LEAP to EVANS LOOKOUT; a cliff walk**

**Friday, 16th March 2001**

The last time we undertook this walk was in October, 1997 in the Spring. It is a relatively short walk and quite reasonable as it is along the cliff top overlooking the Grose Valley and it provides wonderful views of that valley. There is also a short walk called the Braeside Walk which can be explored.

As Libby will be in West Australia, Hans will be leading this walk with some support from Mary.

**MEET AT GOVETTS LEAP LOOKOUT AT BLACKHEATH AT 10.00 A.M.**

**OR I WOULD BE HAPPY TO TAKE MEMBERS FROM MT WILSON. MEET IN THE AVENUE AT 9.30 A.M.[ MARY]**

Bring morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea.

### **SECOND MARCH WALK**

**Friday, 30th March 2001**

**To Erskine Creek via Jack Evans Track at Glenbrook. This extra walk has a very rough track and members should check with Libby before coming. Libby will have returned from W.A. by then.** This section of Erskine Creek contains large rock pools, sandy beaches, and shady picnic sites. Sounds rather lovely.

**MEET AT THE GLENBROOK NATIONAL PARKS CENTRE at 9.00 A.M. or at Merry Garth at 7.30 a.m.**

To reach the National Parks Centre if coming from Sydney, turn left off the Great Western Highway at Glenbrook immediately after the Information Centre. If coming from the west, turn right at the Ampol garage into Ross St which is signposted Blue Mts National Park. Follow Ross Street through Glenbrook shops, then turn left into Bruce Road at the "T" intersection next to the station. Bruce Street takes you into the National Park. [ Note there is a car entrance fee ].

Bring morning tea , lunch and afternoon tea.

## FURTHER WALKS

Again we remind everyone if you would like a particular walk , do contact us and offer your ideas.

Friday, 27th April, 2001 [ **not the third Friday as there is a Fine Craft & Art Exhibition in the Turkish Bath from 14th April to 22nd April, 2001**]. Danes Way Mt Irvine and the Fire Trail.

Friday. 18th May, 2001 Ikara Ridge. A fascinating new walk. Do you know where it is?

Friday, 15th June, 2001 back to Deep Pass off the Newnes Road.

Friday, 29th June, 2001 An extra walk yet to be determined.

Friday, 20th July 2001 The Grose Valley from Yarramundi, a new walk of great interest.

Friday, 17th August 2001 The Leura Cascades and the Leura Forest. Return either via the Furber Steps or the Scenic Railway.

**Don't forget to tell us about walks you would like to undertake.**

## BUSH CARE

There was a good attendance at our first Day on Friday, 9th February 2001 at Mt Irvine. It was pleasing to meet two officers from the B.M.C.C. 's permanent Bush Regeneration Group which has been involved with weed clearing at the Waterfall Track at Mt Wilson. Many *Acer Negundas* or Box Elders were pulled out along Mt Irvine Road. This newsletter will be too late for the March Bush Care Day which is at the corner of Galwey Lane and Davies Lane. **There is no Bush Care Day in April as 13th April is Good Friday.** Bush Care is normally every second Friday. i.e. Friday 11th May at

Sloan Reserve; Friday 8th June at Sloan Reserve. The company is always pleasant so do join in.

**Contact Elizabeth Raines for further information.  
Tel: (02) 4756 2121**

**Last November in the Blue Mts Gazette this letter appeared with this quote which I feel is worth sharing with you. It first appeared in the Katoomba Daily, August 24th 1934.**

**" We cannot live for commerce alone, nor will our civilisation be deemed great until we thoroughly recognise the fact that the bushlands and all they naturally contain are gifts of Nature far transcending in value all monetary and commercial considerations. The humanising gifts of Nature are necessary for our interests, education, adventure, romance and peace of mind. They constitute an antidote for our semi-artificial existence. As we destroy our bushland environment we destroy just so much of ourselves. The balance of Nature is finely adjusted; upset it, and there will be a desert at our doors. All the glory of the canyons, caves and rolling plateaux of our great Blue Mountains is not nearly so much a commercial asset as it is Nature's heritage for legitimate enjoyment, and our own gift to prosperity."** This was quoted by John Hill in a letter in which he said he saw it on the back of a book, " A History of the Blue Labyrinth" by Bruce Cameron.

Seventy years ago those words were sending a message; in 2001 they are even more relevant and has the message been received ?

FOR OUR 16TH MARCH 2001 WALK CONTACT **Mary Reynolds (02) 4756 2006** or **Alison Heap (02) 4756 2055**; FOR OUR 30TH MARCH WALK CONTACT **Libby Raines (02) 4756 2121**

It is always a help if you make contact a few days before the walk. However as this newsletter will be later than usual and my apologies over that, it may not be possible to contact a few days beforehand.

We all wish Libby and Keith a wonderful trip to W.A. made especially pleasurable as Peter will be sharing some of it with them.