
Mt Wilson Mt Irvine Bushwalking Group

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May 2001

DANES WAY--
FIRE TRAIL-

Our April Walk

FRIDAY, 27TH APRIL 2001

John Cardy is the excellent
story teller of this colourful
account of a very beautiful day
in our bushland.

Following a car shuffle to obviate the need for an afternoon walk back up the hill we gathered at the gate on Danes' Way which leads to the 'Yurunga' property. Libby briefly outlined the plan for the day; introduced those who may not have known each other, including two new walkers, Rosemary and George Knott who joined the Group immediately after this walk. We must be doing something right! Welcome Rosemary and George.

We set off under a glorious clear sky across this 'plateau' area which had been cleared for agricultural use. A few clumps of sassafras, *Doryphora sassafras* with their glossy foliage contrasted with the stark white sculptural form of the skeletal remains of a few forest giants which stood like sentinels against the brilliant blue of the sky.

Soon we moved into the wooded area where many sassafras are regenerating below the towering Brown Barrels (*Eucalyptus fastigata*). The oil from the Sassafras leaves has a pleasant almost citrus like aroma. Flowers were conspicuous by their absence at this time. However some colour was provided by the *Senecio linearifolius* displaying numerous heads of clustered yellow flowers. Clumps of the spiny-headed mat rush *Lomandra longifolia* were scattered across the forest floor. On a sun drenched section of the track we encountered a quite large diamond python which appeared completely unperturbed by our presence. It



Autumn in the Bush

THE MT IRVINE THE RAMPARTS

reluctantly terminated its sunbaking and moved off the track when we approached a little too closely for comfort. Presently we reached 'Booralee' (the home of Ron & Helen Naylor) and settled down on some convenient logs for morning tea. We were joined by Helen & Ron and by Anne who had missed our starting point on Danes Way. [That is another story!]. Near this spot is a quite large Manna Gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis*) sometimes also called the Ribbon Gum or the White Gum. Its pendulous branches and long narrow leaves contrasting with other eucalypts in the area. Following this break we continued on down the slope

, moving onto the eastern fire trail. There are numerous smooth-barked apple, (*Angophora costata*) in this area displaying their recently revealed new bark in colours ranging from soft pinks through light orange and greys to one which was almost mauve. The recently spent bark formed a colourful carpet at the base of the trees while in some cases small curls of shedding bark still clung to the trunks presenting an interesting effect. Soon we encountered a large drift of flowering hairpin Banksia (*Banksia spinulosa*) which added a splash of colour to the scene as the trail began to descend. Walking on fire trails as opposed to narrower walking tracks affords the opportunity to move in small groups and to converse more easily, a pleasant bonus - you can catch up with what others have been doing, exchange ideas or solve the world's problems-- so much easier than solving your own!

As the fire trail dips into small gullies, the vegetation becomes more lush and Birds' Nest Ferns (*Asplenium australasicum*) appear, one particularly large clump was sighted high in its host tree. The musical charm of trickling water is heard as we approach Humpy Creek, so named because a bark humpy was built on its banks

by two of the first three settlers on the mountain, Basil Knight Brown and Harold Morley.

At Painui Gully there are large stands of the soft tree fern (*Dicksonia antarctica*) with piles of spent leaf stalks, the product of many years of prolific growth, at their bases. Here we leave the fire trail and descend in to the wondrous moist green world which is part of Sue and Bruce Gailey's "backyard". Sue and Bruce have constructed a walking track through this charming area. There was evidence, too, it had received some recent maintenance. Many thanks to you both !

The track crosses the creek, then following the northern bank past dripping wet moss -covered rock walls, across ancient tree roots spreading along the ground in search of nourishment accompanied here and there by thick vines which snake across the surface before spiralling up tree trunks in search of light at the roof of this arboreal tunnel. As is her wont, Mother Nature punctuates this overwhelmingly green vista by occasionally illuminating dark corners with clusters of tiny, brilliant red fungi. Further on, the gully is bridged by a fallen tree trunk now clothed in velvety green, the gentle curve produced by the sag due to its own weight, enhances the beauty of this fallen giant. In this area there are many fine examples of *Dracophyllum secundum*; some texts state they normally grow to 50 cms; here there are stems up to 2 metres.

We then begin to climb back toward the ridge and the sound of running water in the creek becomes a distant whisper. A Pepper bush (*Tasmannia insipida*) is sighted beside the path still part of the rainforest environment. As we merge into more open country on the ridge there are several tea trees (*Leptospermum sp.*) in flower. A short diversion to a rock ledge gave a view down into Painui Gully. A few minutes later we were at The Ramparts, a rocky outcrop where we settled down for lunch.

The view from here is spectacular, across Bowens Creek to the Bilpin District. An OKA 4 WD tourist bus was sighted climbing the Bowens Creek Road giving another group of people the opportunity to glimpse this wonderful area. The rock formation here is very unusual with smooth humps of sandstone having veins of ironstone protruding from them. One's imagination does not have to stretch too far to see the humped back and spiky rigid spine of some ancient dinosaur which had slumped down to gaze into the valley and become frozen in time.

After lunch we bade farewell to Helen and Ron Naylor who headed for home at 'Booralee' while we broke into two groups to return to the Fire Trail. Some opted to retrace the path through the gully while others followed the ridge, passing a lyrebird's mound on the way. After regrouping it was then a stroll along the fire trail to emerge at the tennis courts; a short walk along Mt Irvine Road and then a diversion onto what was initially

an almost indistinguishable fire trail which led us to Bowens Creek Road and onto the place where cars had been left in the morning shuffle.

A short drive took us back up to 'Carisbrook' where we enjoyed the customary cup of tea. Once again the weather had been particularly kind to us; we had treasured friends, beautiful scenery----but more, much more than this ---- **We did it Dane's Way !**

Our May Walk

DEEP PASS OFF THE NEWNES ROAD via CLARENCE.

Friday, 18th May, 2001

A familiar walk to many of our past walkers but always a delight. It is not a long walk but takes you into some wonderful rock formations and a remarkable canyon and impressive sandstone cliffs. I was surprised to look back through our walks to find that it was in November 1996 we last visited this enticing place. **This walk will celebrate our 11th Birthday. Functioning as an active group for 11years is quite an achievement for our Group.**

MEET AT CLARENCE NEAR THE ZIG ZAG RAILWAY at 9.00 A.M. or at MERRY GARTH at 8.30 A.M.

We would appreciate the use of 4 WHEEL DRIVE vehicles for this trip.

Bring morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea.

FURTHER WALKS

Friday, 15th June, 2001 A change again for this date. It will be to Pulpit Rock from Govetts Leap. Libby & Keith are off overseas in June for a special trip. The Ikara Ridge will be transferred to 16th November 2001.

Friday, 20th July 2001 To Kanangra Walls, a wonderful trip and walk.

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

Friday, 21st September 2001 To Mt Hay.

Friday, 26th October 2001 The Sunday
Afternoon Walk and Du Fours Rocks Mt
Wilson.

BUSH CARE

As always Bush Care takes place on the second Friday of each month. The next Bush Care Day will be Friday, 8th June 2001 at Sloan Reserve; Friday, 13th July, 2001 on the Mt Irvine Road, Mt Irvine; Friday, 10 th August 2001 Galwey Lane. The time is 9.00 a.m. to midday. It is a friendly and most productive exercise so do join us in our endeavours to protect the bushland.

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

MEMBER NEWS

We wish Libby and Keith a rewarding and wonderful trip in June to Switzerland and other fascinating places. They certainly deserve the joy, beauty and excitement of such an experience. They will be sorely missed while they are away.

**FOR OUR MAY WALK CONTACT Libby Raines
(02) 4756 2121 or Mary Reynolds (02) 4756 2006
or Alison Heap (02) 4756 2055**

It is always very helpful if you make contact a few days before the walk.