
Mt Wilson Mt Irvine Bushwalking Group

Volume 11 Issue 6

June 2001

DEEP PASS NEWNES PARK

Our May Walk FRIDAY, 18TH MAY, 2001

John Cardy provides us with a wonderful insight into a very unusual part of this remarkable plateau.

Following not one but two vehicle rationalisations, seventeen members set off from Clarence in a small convoy of four wheel drives on this cool invigorating morning. A big thank you to the owners who provided their vehicles for this journey on unsealed roads across the Newnes Plateau. We proceeded past Happy Valley Springs, Bungleboori, the Twelve Mile Pine Plantation and turned off the 'main' road near Cockatoo Hill. Here several large kangaroos lazily loped into the pine forest upon our approach, quickly dissolving into the background. Presently we arrived at the carpark on the northern entrance to the area which was our goal.

We were welcomed into the Wollemi National Park by the cheery golden glow of the Sunshine Wattle, *Acacia terminalis*, lighting up the forest floor. There were some classic sculptural examples of Old Man Banksias (*Banksia serrata*) while further down this steep track the Hairpin Banksia (*Banksia spinulosa*) were displaying their spectacular flower spikes. Soon we branched off the track, climbing onto a rocky outcrop to relax in the sun and partake of morning tea. This vantage point provided wonderful vistas of pagodas and cliff lines to be enjoyed while we were serenaded by a lyrebird running through its impressive repertoire. There is an example of the relatively rare *Atkinsonia ligustrina* here, a parasitic shrub which gains nourishment from the roots of host plants. It was discovered by and named after Louisa Atkinson (1834-1872), a highly respected botanist and one of the first Australian women writers of Australian stories who was



Winter in the Bush

WOLLEMI NATIONAL

born (and died) at Berrima, but lived for some time at Kurrajong Heights.

The section of this outcrop on which we had rested was exposed and dry whereas the opposite side, which we passed on continuing down the hill, was cool and moist and covered in lush green mosses and ferns with occasional clumps of *Epacris reclinata* decorating the scene with their soft pink flowers. The group proceeded down the hill, across a small creek and it came to pass we were in Deep Pass. Today was the eleventh anniversary of this walking group during which time we have built a good record for not having

mislaidd anyone. On this day we surpassed this record, for we actually found someone. As we emerged into the grassy clearing there was Bruce Gailey's smiling face to greet us!

This outing is real value for money as it involves three separate walks. The first is relatively short in distance, but definitely not short on spectacle! After following a narrow track through knee high ferns and *Lomandra*, over fallen tree trunks, past a sheer moss-covered rock face, we climbed up between some huge boulders and were then enticed to worm our way through a narrow opening below a huge fallen rock with a promise it would be worth all the trouble. It most certainly was!! We entered a world which could have been a scene out of the **Temple of Doom**. A narrow passage no more than a metre wide has been formed by this huge monolith splitting vertically resulting in two passages at right angles to each other. The walls rise possibly thirty five metres where a slash of sunlight is visible. Matching horizontal veins of ironstone can be seen on each side indicating where they were once joined. A fascinating and awe inspiring place.

After emerging from within the bowels of this colossus, we followed a circular path back to the clearing where

we had left our packs. This took us past some moist rocks where the Rock Felt Fern (*Pyrosia rupestris*) displayed its mixture of short, oval, sterile fronds with its long narrow fertile fronds, both soft and fleshy, rather more like leaves of a shrub than fern fronds. We then walked along the base of an overhanging cliff face, coloured in many shades of yellows and orange, which carried some indistinct hand stencils. The dryness of this area contrasted dramatically with the moist environment of earlier sections of the track. Back at the clearing we had lunch during which the entertainment included a fly past by a flock of about fifteen black cockatoos [yellow tail] and a wattle bird's raucous calls reverberating off the nearby cliff faces.

Refreshed and refuelled by lunch and Libby's bushwalking cake, we set off on walk number 2 along the gully which flanks the cliff line at the base of Mount Norris. In this area there are many bushes of the State floral emblem, the Waratah (*Telopea speciosissima*) some carrying seed pods, both empty and full, hanging like claws from atop the stems, while others, perhaps caught up in Federation fervour, have even at this early stage, numerous swelling flower buds. We followed this track past the intricately sculptured cliffs which at two places had vertical semi-circular flutes containing small flows of water from the hill above. On reaching the saddle overlooking the fire trail which forms the southern entrance to Deep Pass we turned and retraced our steps, diverging through some False or Soft Bracken (*Calochlaena dubia*) to climb onto the ledge which ran along the cliff under majestic overhangs for most of its length. This route took us behind two small cascades and past some magnificently wind worn rock formations.

On arrival back at the clearing once more, Ern decided he would have an afternoon nap while we undertook walk number three. So with Ern suitably camouflaged under some ground sheets to protect against the now threatening weather, the rest of the group followed the course of a small creek. Soon the growth became more lush, the clear running water providing a musical accompaniment as the gully narrowed and the walls grew higher. Fishbone Water Ferns (*Blechnum nudum*) appear in large numbers on the creek banks; the rocks are suddenly moss-covered and decorated with a variety of tiny ferns. We enter a dark overhang, the water music increases in volume. Crossing the creek once again we are in more canyon like surrounds-- sheer walls with large fallen rocks forming tunnels through which the creek runs over the water worn pebble beds.

Skirting around a large boulder, we enter a stunningly beautiful amphitheatre containing a deep pool surrounded by King Ferns (*Todea barbara*) and fed by a narrow double drop waterfall, brilliant silver against the black rockface. The icy cold water exits the pool in a more sublime manner, a shallow flow over a wide rock ledge. In the depths of the pool a yabby was

sighted perched on a jutting rock. It seems a shame that place of such delicate beauty as this is nameless, our group could perhaps refer to it as **Libby's Dell**.

We lingered here, soaking up the atmosphere, recharging our batteries; each seemed reluctant to be the first to depart. However good things must end and we began the walk back down the stream, passing on the way a few clusters of brilliant red fungi highlighting some mossy rocks. This little stream incidentally flows into Nayook Creek, then to the Wollangambe and Colo Rivers providing a link between two widely separated walks in our programme. Some of the water which flowed past us as we admired the river views at the bottom of the Bob Turner Track off the Putty Road at Colo Heights had tumbled down that beautiful little cascade and wended its way along this lovely little stream.

The afternoon nap certainly re-invigorated Ern, for he bolted as we made our way back up the steep hill to the car park. **Helen Cardy had made a cake to celebrate the eleventh year of the group** and this was enjoyed along with a cuppa in misty rain which thankfully had held off for most of the day. So ended another memorable day---spectacular scenes, beautiful sights, tranquil sounds and above all good company.

Our June Walk

TO PULPIT ROCK FROM GOVETTS LEAP.

FRIDAY, 15TH JUNE 2001

Another familiar walk to many of us but one that never loses its appeal as it threads its way above the Grose Valley from Govetts Leap. We have visited in the summer, first in February, 1996 and now we will make a winter journey. In February, 1999 we visited Pulpit Rock by way of Popes' Glen, Blackheath. Another interesting point about that walk is that its story was contained for the first time in our newsletter in its current format. It was the March, 1999 newsletter over two years ago.

It is not a difficult walk and should suit all our walking members.

MEET AT GOVETTS LEAP BLACKHEATH at 10.00a.m. or in The Avenue, Mt Wilson at 9.15 a.m. Remember Libby and Keith will be away.

Bring morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea.

FURTHER WALKS

3

Mt Wilson Mt Irvine Bushwalking Group

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 Faur's Rocks Mt Wilson.

Friday, 16th November, 2001 To the Ikara Ridge --a new walk for the Group.

BUSH CARE

The next Bush Care Day will be Friday, 13th July 2001 on the Mt Irvine Road, Mt Irvine; then Friday, 10th August, 2001 at Galwey Lane. The day is always the second Friday in the month and the time is always 9.00a.m. to Midday. All who come always find it very satisfying and the company most pleasant.

Contact Elizabeth Raines for further information

Tel: (02) 4756 2121.

Please Note:

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

SATURDAY, 16TH JUNE 2001 10A.M.-4P.M.

SPRINGWOOD CIVIC CENTRE MACQUARIE RD SPRINGWOOD.

This is a free community event organised by the Blue Mts. City Council.

* If you want to learn how to be green at home and in your garden.

* If you are interested in World heritage

* If you are concerned about water quality

* If you are interested in your local community

* If you are renovating

* If you are in business

* If you want to buy green products

COME ALONG.

NEWS OF MEMEBERS.

If you know something of interest about members do let us know so that we can all share the pleasure or give support if anyone is ill.

We again wish Bon Voyage to Libby and Keith who depart on 14th June 2001.

We believe Alison and Alan Heap will be venturing to France very soon, although Alan will be off to Siberia first! We wish them a happy and rewarding experience.

FOR OUR JUNE WALK CONTACT Alison Heap (02) 4756 2055 or Mary Reynolds (02) 4756 2006.

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