
Mt Wilson Mt Irvine Bushwalking Group

Volume 12 Issue 4

April 2002

SPLIT ROCK, HANGING

A Further Tribute to Hans from Libby Raines who walked many paths in the Bushland with him testing and searching tracks suitable for our Group.

Thank you to the many who attended his funeral at Pinegrove Memorial Park Cemetery Rooty Hill on 4th March 2002 and especially to Bruce Gailey and John Cardy who spoke so movingly of Hans and his contribution to our lives, to conservation and to the environment.

During the past 12 years our little walking group has seen many changes. More than 240 different people have walked with us on 163 walks. Some have only walked with us once or twice, some for a year or two and others for many years only stopping reluctantly when they felt unable to participate physically. Throughout these years Hans has walked with us, gentle and kind, thoughtful, helpful and informative with everyone, making many special friends over the years.

His presence with us, his extraordinary knowledge of the plants and the terrain, his natural ability to find the best way to tackle a difficult situation such as a large log, slippery boulders, or a steep descent or a rock climb along with his love and enthusiasm of these wild and beautiful Blue Mountains which was so infectious have been a great comfort and reassurance for me, leading the walks over the years.

Hans often said it was the "being there" he loved. I was fortunate to spend many joyous hours walking with him, exploring walks for the Group, checking

the parking and the time, looking for morning tea and lunch spots, making sure the walk was not too difficult.



Autumn in the Bush

ROCK BLACKHEATH

Sometimes Keith and /or Bill joined us on these expeditions but many times it was Hans with me, treading the paths together.

We can all understand his love of "being there". He loved the great cliffs and awesome views, the deep valleys with their spectacular canyons and cool, clear streams (in which he often swam) the rainforest with its mossy rocks, green ferns, giant softwood trees and soft quiet beauty. He admired the majestic trees, oreads & blue gums which grow in the moist gullies and the open sandstone ridges with their rocky outcrops and wondrous array of different plants and flowers. He

taught us so much about these things he loved.

We learnt how to cross a slippery log across a stream-- flat footed with the toes facing outwards, the best way to walk up hill, --keep a steady pace and take little steps ! Few of us could be as light footed and nimble as Hans was in the bush.

So many times we would stop to admire the scene before us, the *Eucalyptus piperita* in full flower, lighting the tree tops of the mountain side with their soft yellow flowers, the splendour of the tree trunks, tall, straight and smooth, the still pools of clear water where yabbies hid beneath the rocks. We heard the deep bass of the Bull Frogs, and watched -- spell bound -- the eagles riding the currents, we saw the flocks of honeyeaters feeding on the *Banksias* and we marvelled at the lyre birds' joyful singing. These shared experiences will remain with us for ever.

Hans was very observant. Remember the powerful owl, roosting quietly above us and which he spied as we plodded our way up from the Blue Gum Forest to Perry's Look Out in 1997 and the snake in the Cox's R., lying motionless in the water, looking like a stick floating on the surface ? Often he would stop and pick up a cluster of leaves or seed capsules, and if he did not

know what they were, we would put them into the top of his knapsack to take back to Keith Ingram to identify.

As Hans was so well informed on many issues; his interesting conversation covered a wide range of topics and he always wanted to know more about the world. He loved classical music and often went to concerts with Robin and Barbara. He loved wood turning and made bowls and clocks from local timbers which his friends gave him or he found in the bush. He invented and constructed various machines for his property, including a water wheel to pump water up to his house from a little stream far below. He grew seedling ferns and tree ferns on his property and was able to sell these to local nurseries.

Hans was a very kind and thoughtful man. When his wife Doris became ill, he decided to go to the Blood Bank to give his blood as a way of saying thank you for all the donations she had received. During the last three years since Bill Smart died, Hans came with me to the Blood Bank every 10 weeks and we often scouted out a walk for the group on the way.

Hans often helped Norman Rodd on Mount Tomah, taking him shopping & doing things on his property for him. In the apple season he spent hours helping Brian Hungerford pick apples. These were a few of the many kind things he did for others. His Sundays were often given up to the Bush Fire Brigade, helping with the fire trails and mending and checking equipment.

Here on Mt Wilson we have a lasting legacy from Hans as he grew many of the ferns and tree ferns which we planted in Sloan Reserve to restore a small area of rain forest.

Part of Hans will always be here on Mount Wilson as the plants mature and reproduce. Just as his love and knowledge of the bush, his help and kindness and our many shared experiences have enriched our lives and will remain with us. He will never be far from us as we continue to tread the familiar paths and look out over the mountains he loved. **Libby.**

Our March Walk

FRIDAY, 15TH MARCH 2002

HANGING ROCK or SPLIT ROCK BLACKHEATH

This day was mild and very pleasant. There must be surely some special arrangement for our walks for the days are so often delightful for walking. Of course it had been raining earlier sufficient evidence was there in the large puddles in the road we took but there was no rain this day and the sun was with us.

Sixteen gathered at the corner of Ridgewell St with the Great Western Highway at Blackheath. Libby as always rearranged the transport to reduce the number of

vehicles. Off we drove along track where the enlarged stretches of water made us wonder if the road was in fact really open. Some kilmometres further along the ridge we drew into an open area and gradually the other cars appeared, delayed by the challenges of those deceptive puddles.

Now we set off on foot along a much more presentable track than the one we had driven over. The impression of the vegetation along this rather exposed ridge was one of richness almost lush growth. Indeed the leaves were green and shiny and bursting with life. This applied especially to the shrubs beneath the trees. There were many examples of *Lambertia formosa* or the Mountain Devil displaying the odd redflower and endless specimens of *Platysace linearfolia* with its tiny white lacey flowers especially noticeable along the fringes of the track. The eucalypts were not tall but much twisted with the constant exposure to the winds along this ridge as it thrust its way into the Grose Valley. *Eucalyptus sclerophylla* or the Scribbly Gum always presents a fascinating combination of twisted branches and colours of cream grey and pink on the trunks in contrast with the more sombre *Eucalyptus piperita* and its darker stringy bark. These trees express so much the real essence of Australia; its ancient origins and its determination to survive in spite of the efforts of some to change or even destroy that spirit. We came to a more open patch of low growing plants like the *Caustis flexuosa* or Grandfathers' Beard, a curious name for a beard that is distinctly rather thin and here we settled down for that welcome morning tea break. Across to the south was a scar created by the major alterations to the Great Western Highway between Blackheath and Mt Victoria and signs of the settlement of Mt Victoria itself. The plateau nature of these mountains is so evident when you undertake a walk of this kind. There are none of those sharp angular slopes typical of young mountains as seen in places like New Zealand. On the other hand there are awesome cliffs glowering above the depths of deep wooded valleys.

We continued along our up and down bush track winding its way so happily through the thriving bushland, observing one or two samples of the pink flowered *Stylidium graminifolium* or Trigger Plant nodding at us cheekily at our feet. The tiny flowered white *Epacris* was showing its beauty too, while *Banksias* were well represented. Many plants were covered with buds waiting for the right signal to spring into life. As we came closer to the end of the ridge there were tantalising glimpses of the bulk of Mt Banks overshadowing the Grose valley while to the west below were the small valleys created by Crayfish Creek and Victoria Creek which find their way in to and feed the waters of the Grose. Above we saw again the Ikara Ridge running almost parallel with the Darling Causeway which meets with Bells Line of Road. As we approached the car park for the Baltzer's Look Out we moved through thick and thriving stands of the small but

strong *Eucalyptus stricta* or the Mallee Eucalypt emerging from the ground with many small wirey trunks. This Look Out provided rivetting views of the Grose in front of us and on both sides. The cliffs on the northern side were dark shadows but the slopes below were covered in the green lushness of trees hiding the streams at their feet. In the distance Mt Tomah, Mt Wilson and Bell itself could be easily observed. To the right tucked in a corner Hat Hill Creek tumbled over the cliffs into the valley, while above, the heath filled hanging swamp clung to the top feeding the creek. The sheer sundrenched sandstone cliffs were holding it all in place.

We then took a broken narrow twisted track to the cliff where below to the left was Split or Hanging Rock. *Casuarinas* responding to the recent rains had russet young tips, while at our feet was the *Eriostomen obovalis* with its curious spoon shaped leaves and the occasional small white flower.

At this stage there was a diverting exchange across the valley to Mt Wilson by way of satellite ! Helen Cardy armed with a mobile phone connected with Helen Freeman in Wynnes Rocks Rd Mt Wilson. Much laughter and happy exchanges took place.

As the descent to Split Rock was some what precipitous, only 12 of the 16 elected to venture to it. I was not one of the twelve so here is John Cardy's account of that interlude.

“ The views from Baltzer Look Out are indeed spectacular. However lurking just below this impressive eyrie is something even more dramatic. From the Look Out the upper section of Hanging Rock provides tantalising glimpses of what awaits. Pick your way down the steep path on the western side of the Burramoko Ridge and its full splendour is revealed.

Like the bow of some gargantuan ocean liner emerging from the vertical cliff face, Hanging Rock juts defiantly over the gorge. A small tree growing near its extremity provides a befitting figurehead. To stand near the edge of this monolithic feature is overwhelming. The sheer scale of the rock faces is impressive enough, yet further enhanced by the range of colours in the sandstone-- browns, reds, golds, yellows -- all glowing in the sunlight on this glorious day. Looking back up toward the ridge, members of the group who did not venture all the way down are dwarfed by this expansive landscape.

Peering into the deep narrow fissure which separates the upper section of Hanging Rock from the cliff face, one wonders when the inevitable complete separation will occur and this colossus will plummet into the Grose Gorge. Deciding it is not going to happen today we turn toward the rocky plateau which leads toward Crayfish Creek. A short distance along this route there are abseiling anchors embedded in the lip of a perpendicular cliff. They are about one third the size I

would consider acceptable were I to dangle over the edge on the end of a rope !

From this point the the junction of Crayfish Creek and the Grose River is clearly visible. That juncture was our lunch stop on the Victoria Falls to Pierce's Pass walk which we undertook at the end of October 1998. The spectacle of Hanging Rock from down there is also very impressive. We continued on until a view into Crayfish Creek gully was obtained. Although the water was not visible it could be heard rushing to meet the Grose far below.

A shady spot in which to settle down for lunch awaited back at the Look Out. While retracing our path another of Mother Nature's little quirks was noted. In this dry, rugged environment a smattering of soft velvety flannel flowers provided an exquisite contrast.” [Thank you John.]

I believe, while our 12 intrepid ones were viewing Split Rock, a magnificent Wedgetailed Eagle soared in the skies above -- a great sight and a rather rare one.

The four left behind were entertained by tiny Thornbills in the small Eucalypts around them and enjoyed the peace and thought brought on by a late summer and a balmy day. It was nice to have Jean Crowley with us after a spell of health problems.

We returned along the track we had followed before lunch, enjoying again the rich bushland around us and the peaceful environment. At the vehicles we gathered in a comfortable circle to enjoy a cup of tea and some very profitable discussion and to silently drink to our dear Hans. Thank you too to Helen Cardy for that delicious birthday cake [Mary]. One decision made was that we would explore the need for a Disclaimer Form for each active walker to sign and another was to possibly use some of our funds towards repairs on a local track at Mt Wilson.

Our April Walk

From FARRER RD MT WILSON along THE BUSH RUN to DANES WAY MT IRVINE.

FRIDAY, 19TH APRIL 2002

This walk does involve some climbing up a steady, long but not too steep hill. This is the track followed by the runners in the Bush Fun Run. The last time the Group undertook this walk was in October 1998. Dane's Way Mt Irvine is always a delightful place to explore and appreciate the bushland. There will also be a car shuffle with some cars going to Dane's Way.

**MEET IN FARRER RD MT WILSON OUTSIDE
THE PROPERTY OF ERN MORGAN AT
“GOONONG”. This is about 1km from the entrance**

to Farrer Rd at the top of Farrer Rd. on the right. Farrer Rd is off the Mt Irvine Rd on the left about 4 km from Mt Wilson. MEET there at 9.30 A.M. or at MERRY GARTH at 9.15 a.m.

Bring morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea.

Bath Precinct Mt Wilson for our local Historical Society. Do come and enjoy the music and the environment. Mary.

FURTHER WALKS

Friday, 17th May 2002 Lawson's Long Alley
Mt Victoria

Friday, 21st June 2002 Evan's Crown at
Tarana

Friday, 19th July 2002 Station Rock Mt
Tomah

Friday, 16th August 2002 Breakfast Creek
Megalong Valley

BUSH CARE

Just a reminder that Bush Care takes place on the second Friday each month from 9.00a.m. to Noon.

Friday, 12th April is the next day. It will be held at Sloan Reserve Mt Wilson.

Although Sloan Reserve is now, thanks to Bush Care, in excellent condition, we still need to monitor it.

For further information contact Liz Raines on 4756 2121.

MEMBERS NEWS

With the Royal Easter Show in the news lately we hear Alison Heap and Helen Freeman have been having great fun among the cattle. Congratulations on those prizes !

MEMBERS' DONATIONS for 2002

Do not forget to renew your donation. Thank you to those who have already done this.

Send your donation to Alison Heap "Gown Ross" Lot 1
Farrer Rd Mt Wilson 2786

FOR OUR APRIL WALK CONTACT:

**Libby Raines 4756 2121 or Mary Reynolds
4756 2006 or Alison Heap 4756 2055**

JAZZ CONCERT

Enclosed is a leaflet for A Jazz Concert on Saturday 20 th April 2002 in the Turkish