

Mountain Meanderings

Around the middle of each month a certain restlessness manifests itself in Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine. It soon radiates to wider areas of the Blue Mountains and indeed all the way to Sydney. As the third Friday approaches, this restlessness transmutes into itchy feet for it is on this day of each month when the Mt Wilson Mt Irvine Bushwalking Group embarks on regular excursions into all corners of these beautiful mountains.

This informal group originated in 1990 when seventeen members of the local communities gathered on the 17th of May and walked to the Tessellated Pavement under the instigation and guidance of Libby Raines. As we approach the fifteenth anniversary of that first walk Libby and Mary Reynolds are the only members of that original seventeen who still regularly with the group. The spread of participants has widened greatly over the years. Now as well as walkers from many of the mountain towns we have people from Lithgow, Penrith and indeed a few escapees from Sydney.

The group covers a wide and varied range of venues chosen to cater for the varying degrees of fitness and ability of participants. A short list includes those which offer spectacular views such as Lockleys Pylon, Fortress Hill and Banks Walls; the soft intimate rainforest environment of The Fernery below Evans Lookout or at Happy Valley; the Majesty of the granite tors at Evans Crown; the grandeur of The Blue Gum Forest; the glittering light shows in the Glow Worm Tunnel above Newnes and one magical morning walking through freshly fallen snow in the pine forests on Mount Bindo. We also visit areas of historical interest such as the various oil shale mining sites, old coal mining areas and abandoned railways, etc in the mountains.

The walking experience is greatly enhanced by Libby's intimate knowledge of the mountains, the flora and of the birdlife and by Mary's incredibly detailed knowledge of local history and of the mountain flora. We are also blessed with people from such varied backgrounds and eclectic interests that no matter what unusual item confronts us, usually someone in the group has some knowledge of the subject.

As stated earlier the group is led by Libby Raines and it is Libby who arranges the yearly program, does any pre walk checks she feels necessary and arranges car shuffles if required. Mary Reynolds handles the production and arranges for the printing of the newsletter which is distributed by Helen Freeman who also looks after the finances of the group. Many others are always ready to lend a hand when the need arises and a very cooperative and supportive atmosphere pervades.

The newsletter provides a means for many who are no longer able to directly participate to enjoy an armchair journey each month into these wondrous mountains. Those of us who are still able however are beset with that strange twitching and itching sensation as that third Friday approaches.

(This is a transcript of the handwritten item prepared for Joe Landsberg for use in the April 2005 issue of the Mt Wilson Progress Association Inc Newsletter – our old computer had given up the ghost at the time the item was required)