
Mt Wilson Mt Irvine Bushwalking Group

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BORONIA POINT AT MOUNT WILSON

TOPIC

OUR DECEMBER WALK

**BORONIA POINT at MOUNT
WILSON**

Friday 19th December 2014

A name, an appellation, a cognomen, a moniker, a handle - just what is in a name? There can be quite a lot actually. The derivation of place names can lead to unexpected places and to some disagreement. If we review the walks of the last year via just some of the place or feature names encountered along the way who knows where it may take us?

In January we walked the Bowens Creek Road from Bilpin to Mt Irvine, starting of course at the Bells Line of Road. The name of the small village of Bilpin, according to the Geographical Names Board, is of Aboriginal origin – name of a mountain; we have our first point of disagreement. Wikipedia claims it is named after Archibald Bell Jr who, with the assistance of Aboriginal local knowledge, discovered the Bells Line across the mountains. The rationale claimed by ‘Wiki’ is that Bilpin is a contraction of “Bell’s Pin” (pin as in pinnacle). You choose dear reader; the ‘Wiki’ version sounds rather wacky to me. The exquisite beauty of the masses of Forked Sundews in flower and the dramatic evidence of the power of Mother Nature in the landslides, washaways and tree trunks and



Summer in the Bush

branches piled on the bridge remain among my memories of this walk.

In 1887, at a cost of £187 278, the Peninsula & Oriental Steam Navigation Company took delivery of a new passenger liner. In 1909 it was sold for £11 520 and scrapped in Genoa. What, you may well ask, does this have to do with a walk in the Blue Mountains; it does have a connection. The liner was the SS Britannia; a gentleman who retired in 1888 to the Blue Mountains, James Murray, commanded it. He had such an affection for the P & O

ship that he named his daughter, born in 1893, Margaret Caroline Britannia (Brita) Murray. James Murray was on the sub committee set up to name the waterfalls in the Valley of the Waters; thus a waterfall was named after two of his loves – his daughter and the last ship he commanded. We walked adjacent to Britannia Falls on our February walk along the National and Wentworth Passes and through the Valley of the Waters. Things that linger in my mind from this walk are the majesty of the full drop of Wentworth Falls after recent rain, the fine diaphanous curtains of water dropping over Sylvia, Britannia and Flat Rock Falls and a piece of graffiti (which I usually abhor) beside the track– in fine copperplate, simply the word ‘Paradise’; says it all really.

Some names are written into history due to rather fortuitous circumstances. Captain William Paterson discovered and named the

Grose River after Francis Grose in 1793. Francis Grose had assumed command as NSW Administrator in 1792 due to the illness of Governor Phillip. One could say the Grose took its name because Governor Phillip took a sickie. March took us to the Blue Gum Forest at the junction of Govetts Creek and the Grose River. The towering Blue Gums, a quite relaxed Diamond Python crossing the track, the intimate enclosed atmosphere of the rainforest along Govetts Leap Brook and the cotton wool clouds of mist lying in the valley remain in my memory from this walk.

Features in the landscape often take their names from politicians and parliamentarians; the name of a feature we visited in April has a different reptilian origin. Joes Canyon is named after a snake. Explorers of this canyon often saw Joe the snake (was his last name Blake?). An appropriate association for there is a beautiful serpentine rill worn in the bedrock of the creek leading to the canyon. The grandeur of the Clarence Creek ravine, the devastating effects of the October fires and the signs of regeneration; soft buds emerging from charred trunks and branches: memories from this Wollangambe walk in Mt Wilson.

The Naiads were objects of archaic cults, worshipped as essential to humans. Ritual cleansings in their waters were credited with magical medical properties; not so magical for animals - they were ritually drowned in the same waters. These female spirits presided over all bodies of fresh water; they were the Water Nymphs. In May we visited Water Nymph Dell and Minnehaha Falls. The splendour of the narrow white ribbon of water of Minnehaha Falls dropping into a deep green pool, a series of small cascades flowing into a mirrored pool on Yosemite Creek and the dimly-lit rainforest of Water Nymph Dell remain as mental pictures of our May walk; even the water nymphs would have been impressed.

A London Bobby and Australian Aboriginal dialect appears an unlikely combination, yet features we visited in June have names derived from these disparate sources. Megalong Head sits high above the Megalong Valley -

Megalong being Aboriginal for 'valley under the mountain'. Adjacent to Megalong Head is a large towering rock formation known as Policemans Rock, so named as its profile resembles a Bobby's helmet; two feature names linking vastly different cultures. June saw us on Radiata Plateau and at Megalong Trig and Megalong Head. An intriguing small circular stone structure in the bed of a dry dam, stunning expansive views of Megalong Valley and Narrow Neck Plateau and a series of cleverly-built stone cairns marking the path to Megalong Head are memories from this walk.

In July we visited Jellybean Pool on Glenbrook Creek. The name of this creek, subsequently the town, and all its associated features is based on a misconception. Sir John Jamison named this stream Glen Brook in 1818. He assumed, wrongly, that it rose in Prince Regent Glen; the source is actually near Woodford. This misconceived name persisted until 1834, after which it became known as Glenbrook Creek. The powerful images of links to Aboriginal Culture via the hand stencils and balloon-like loop drawings at Red Hands Cave along with the sharpening grooves and water wells with connecting channels on Camp Fire Creek, mirror-like reflections in Jellybean Pool and the beauty of a cluster of flowering Pygmy Sundews nestled in the leaf litter endure from this walk.

Stories of pursued bushrangers leaping off the cliff, some on foot others on horseback. An alcohol-induced jump off the cliff, an accidental fall from the cliff, an act of bravado in leaping across a ravine; all propositions for the derivation of Govetts Leap - perhaps the feature name with the most misconceptions regarding its origin. A statue beside the Great Western Highway of a horseman and steed leaping into the unknown, a large mural on the Blackheath Railway Station of a similar scene, in this case the horseman brandishing a pistol; surely these verify the source of the name. Not so of course, Govetts Leap was named after its discoverer, the surveyor William Romaine Govett - 'Leap' being Scottish dialect for waterfall. In August we explored Popes Glen

and the Cliff Top Track between Govetts Leap and Evans Lookouts. The view vertically down onto the dense canopy of the rainforest below Horseshoe Falls, the narrow line of Govetts Leap Brook beside the Braeside Walk mimicking a Scottish burn and the iconic Blue Mountains view across the Govett and Grose Gorges stick in the mind.

Although Tarana pub has been, and indeed still is, a rather popular watering hole, I venture the pub is not the source of the Aboriginal word 'Tarana' meaning a Large Waterhole. In September we visited Evans Crown at Tarana, a feature which surveyor George Evans modestly named after his good self in 1813. The huge granite tors sculpted into an array of amazing shapes dominate the senses here yet tiny jewels nestle among the boulders; purple-splashed white petals on the petite flowers of the charming Early Nancy delight the eye.

The Grand Canyon in Arizona was designated a national monument in 1908. One could be excused for assuming the Blackheath feature took its name from there; in fact it was initially known as Grand Canon, this Spanish appellation given by Blackheath Station Master, Tomas Ramon Rodriguez, in 1890. It was anglicised to Grand Canyon in 1907. This feature was our October destination; one of the most popular walking tracks in the mountains. Outstanding memories among many are the spectacular views of the cliffs below Point Pilcher from the rock platform just off the Horse Track, the soft cool greens of The Fernery, the rush of water over Beauchamp Falls and the convoluted shapes in the enclosing walls of The Slot and The Cathedral.

"Once it wasn't too bad but now it is a slimy, hideous quagmire." This very unflattering description was of the Black Cave; that description was certainly not warranted when we walked across its mouth in Witches Glen on our November walk; dim and dark yes, thus its name, but not slimy nor hideous. Stunning views of the Kanimbla Valley from the Sundeck Cave above Witches Glen, the magnificence of the vast cavern which is Coss

Cave and The Odd Couple, a 1912 cartoon painting on a rock face along Fairy Bower Creek; just some of the images from this walk.

The name of our destination for December takes us to an accident site in Greece. A servant of English botanist John Sibthorp died in that accident. His name was Francesco Boroni; the fragrant-flowered boronias and thus Boronia Point took their name from Francesco. A fatality in Athens more than 200 years ago with a link to a cliff top in Mt Wilson; Libby provides a short account (space limited) of the walk to the edge of that cliff.

The day dawned clear and sunny after a few wet days as 21 gathered outside Merry Garth. Cars had already been taken to the bottom of Farrer Road to bring us back following the walk; we welcomed James Stein and Kaarin Kirkpatrick who have both joined the group.

The first part of the walk took us through the beautiful rainforest in Galwey Lane behind the properties. We came across a young fox lying dead in the grass. It is an animal we don't like to see on Mt Wilson; its main food is birds and the small mammals which live in the bush. After passing through Cathedral Reserve we made our way up through the cool damp rainforest past several large Coachwood (*Caratopetalum apetalum*), their smooth straight greyish white trunks blotched with lichens, and on to the Giant Tree. This Brown Barrel (*Eucalyptus fastigata*) was sadly struck by lightning in 2008; only one large branch remains alive and a mass of Stinging Nettles (*Urtica incisa*) have grown up around it.

Up over Lambs Hill and we come to the area where the bushfires of October last year came to; the remainder of the walk was through burnt country. How different it looks now from this time last year when the first green shoots were appearing in all the blackness. We were impressed when we walked along the first part of the fire trail to Boronia Point by the tremendous growth of vegetation since those fires.

In the sheltered gully a grove of tree ferns with their bright green fronds guard the little stream and many ferns, including the Pink Rasp Fern

(*Doodia aspera*), abound. Near here too we saw the Smooth-barked Apple (*Angophora costata*) with its orange peeling bark and dimpled trunk in contrast to the blackened trunks of the surrounding bush; the Angophora only grows on the lower slopes of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine. Soon we were out on the ridge with its poor sandstone soil and different environment. Sun streamed through the canopy of scattered trees and understorey vegetation was pushing through the soil making small shrubs; most not flowering this year.

The great cliffs of the Wollangambe River appeared and we could see the huge double S bends the river has made over the years as it carved its way through the sandstone. The lone Grass Tree (*Xanthorrhoea sp*) stood sentinel on the cliff edge and as all the vegetation on the cliffs had been burnt they were very visible, glowing in the sun. We could see the river far far below with its tempting long pools of water and beautiful canyons.

Two bushwalkers surprised us as we admired the view. They often come to this area and frequently make their way down to the river. They enjoyed the Bushwalkers Cake, some grapes and cherries before they headed off. In this glorious place with the great cliffs below and the tree covered slopes of the mountain all around us the strains of Happy Birthday rang out as we sang to Stephen List for his birthday.

The morning was heating up and the shade very limited so we headed slowly back to the cars for a welcome ride back to Merry Garth. There a delicious lunch, organised by Helen Cardy, awaited us; we were met by more friends from the group and all enjoyed the afternoon beneath the trees in the garden.

Many thanks Libby for that condensed description of the walk and to you and Keith for your hospitality in allowing the group to end yet another wonderful year of walks in the magnificent grounds of Merry Garth.

John Cardy

OUR JANUARY WALK

FRIDAY 16th JANUARY 2015

Expansive Views across the Wollemi Wilderness over Bowens Creek and the Wollangambe River

The Tessellated Pavements at Mt Irvine

The group last visited this intriguing area in May 2010 on the twentieth anniversary of the group's first walk; that first walk was to these Tessellated Pavements. With the fire of October 2013 having swept across this area Libby has suggested some minor track clearance may be required on the day; an ideal way to put something back into the network of tracks on these mountains from which we gain so much pleasure.

Meet near the shelter shed in Cathedral Reserve at Mt Wilson at 9.00am. A vehicle rationalisation will be carried out here for the trip to Mt Irvine. (Parking is restricted at the walk start point especially if there has been wet weather, so the fewer cars the better.) Please ring in as early as possible to aid in the organisation of vehicles.

Bring morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea and plenty of water.

Contact Libby Raines on 4756 2121 (after 7pm) or Helen and John Cardy on 9871 3661 or on mobile 0418 646 487.

FUTURE WALKS (Tentative schedule)

Friday 20th February 2015 – To be announced

BUSH CARE

Bush Care is held on the second Friday of each month from 9am to Noon. Any help, even for a short time, would be appreciated.

9th January – Wynne Reserve

13th February – Wynne Reserve

Contact Libby Raines on 4756 2121