
Mt Wilson Mt Irvine Bushwalking Group

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EVANS CROWN AT TARANA

TOPIC

OUR OCTOBER WALK

EVANS CROWN NATURE
RESERVE at TARANA

Friday 25th October 2019

Our return visit, after five years, to this venue in the month of October, was prompted by the kind offer of Jenny Dargan to combine a short walk up to Evans Crown with a visit to her and Greg's nearby property. October being chosen as the garden would be clothed in its spring wardrobe.

Fourteen walkers gathered at the Lithgow Valley Shopping Centre carpark where we welcomed Jeremy Whitty, a friend of Mark McDonnell, who was joining us for the first time. A vehicle rationalisation soon had us comfortably ensconced in five cars for the approximately twenty-five kilometre drive to our walk venue.

The journey takes us along routes and through areas with evocative names; Magpie Hollow Road, Sodwalls, Sandy Hollow, Honeysuckle Falls Road. We cross the head of Lake Lyell, holding back the waters of the Coxs River, and wend our way along the shores of the lake. The ribbon of road then climbs over high crests and dives down steep inclines, leading us through open grazing country; gracefully weeping willows and tall columnar poplars



Spring in the Bush

adorn meandering creek lines. We negotiate two narrow bridges where the road crosses and recrosses a tight curve in the Main Western Railway Line and soon we arrive at the Evans Crown Nature Reserve where we are met by Jenny, Greg and Merren Dargan.

Since our last visit an off road parking area has been provided with new signage and Greg informed us that stairs had now been installed and the track upgraded all the way to the top of the ridge. This is an oft visited reserve but it was not always so, as the following

passage indicates.

“At Tarana Station there is a watering-place for the engines. It is a pretty place, but dull. The country appears to be poor, and the mode of farming rather careless. The fencing is extremely rude and picturesque – a mere separation of the land by felled timber, heaped together. There is one hotel at Tarana – Fawcett's. Here you can get a carriage, or buggy, and go to Mutton Falls, westerly – about 4 miles off. From the Mutton Falls you can ride or drive to a small township called Oberon – a good agricultural settlement, with mineral resources – and go on thence to the Fish River Caves. Tarana, 85 miles from the Fish River Caves, is the nearest point of the Line to those vast Limestone Caverns. There is some nice scenery along the road in that direction.”

This is the entire, rather unflattering entry for Tarana in The Railway Guide of New South Wales of 1879 - nary a mention of Evans Crown.

Assistant Land Surveyor, George William Evans, would not have been amused by this omission. Sixty-six years earlier, while surveying the route of what was to become Cox's Road to the site of Bathurst, his diary entry for the 1st December 1813 included: "My course is down to the Rivulet (Fish River); it appears to lead me north of west. On the north side of it at this place is a remarkable Sugar Loaf Hill having a stone peak of it, which I named after myself."

Evans Crown. How very royal of him, George was obviously not the shy, retiring type.

As several walkers had travelled some distance today it is decided to have an early morning tea before we start the climb proper.

We move off the track, which is lined with Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda australis*) and Common Bracken (*Pteridium esculentum*) to select suitable seating. Ray spots a log just the right height and takes up a position on the near end; he invites Daniel to sit on the far end. Daniel only remained seated for a very short time as he sights an unwelcome companion not far from the log; a large brown snake in the grass. Following Daniel's rapid departure the snake also departed in the opposite direction away from the log. Morning tea for Daniel was far from relaxed.

We then begin our climb to the ridge. The track is fairly steep initially but soon turns to the left and contours across the hillside. Some large Blackthorns (*Bursaria spinosa*) line the track, the bark at the base of their trunks deeply furrowed; the genus name referring to the purse-like seed pods carried by these shrubs.

On this eastern slope of the reserve there are also Apple Box (*Eucalyptus bridgesiana*) their trunks, encased in rough, light grey bark, carry crowns of crooked branches. Ribbon Gums (*Eucalyptus viminalis*) are also present, so named because of the narrow strips of cast off

bark which hang from these trees. In the understorey are Green or Black Wattles (*Acacia decurrens*), green referring to the dark green foliage, black alludes to the dark bark, take your pick; the bark has a high tannin content and was once used in the processing of leather.

As we gain elevation the view to the area outside the boundary of the Reserve reveals public roads and private lanes snaking across the undulating grazing lands; trees dot the landscape and define boundaries; unfortunately the pastures do not look particularly lush at this time. The towers of a high voltage transmission line march across the scene.

Outcrops of granite now appear on the hillside and pink grains of decomposed granite cover the track. On our previous visit here these spherical grains were a slip hazard in places; the track refurbishment has alleviated that problem; many thanks to the National Parks Service.

Soon we get our first glimpse of a large granite boulder sitting atop a granite outcrop above the track; a mere foretaste of what lies ahead. The track swings right for the final short climb to the top of the ridge. A sign here directs us to turn left and follow an unformed and unmarked track to Evans Crown. We however have the advantage of the local knowledge of Jenny and Greg Dargan who lead us first to a large cave below a granite megalith. Here we could climb up to the rear of the cave where a window opens out onto a ledge which affords magnificent views of the landscape below. Though one is tempted to sit on this ledge and let the day pass by, there is more exploring at hand.

We head off to the right of the cave, climbing a little, until we reach a huge granite tor. We make our way past a group of Native Cypress, possibly the Black Cypress Pine (*Callitris endlicheri*) and climb onto a large platform adjacent to Evans Crown or Crown Rock.

From this angle the Crown Rock looks like a Gargantuan loaf suitable for the amiable giant king, Gargantua, of medieval or Celtic legend,

who consumed enormous quantities of food and drink. Everything else in the area is of gigantic proportions. Crown Rock sits atop a jumble of enormous granite tors, many of them rounded; one pyramidal shaped rock with smoothed corners looks as though it was moulded to fit perfectly atop a domed tor. Nearby there is an almost spherical boulder sitting in a triangular space below a huge tor.

These amazing edifices start their life underground as molten rock. Huge blocks, essentially rectangular in shape, are formed due to movement and faulting as cooling occurs. Water seeps into these cracks taking off the sharp edges and making the blocks more rounded. Much of this reshaping takes place underground, however, once the landscape is eroded sufficiently to expose the granite, weathering accelerates, creating the wondrous forms we see today. The granite consists of silica and two of the common rock-forming minerals, mica and feldspars. The soils on this reserve are so sandy and erode very easily because the mica and feldspars weather very readily to leave behind only the grains of silica; the pink-tinged sands we see along the track. Incidentally, the pink granite used in the construction of the Sydney Opera House was quarried near Tarana.

Dwarfed by these surroundings one cannot help but feel a presence and connection to this area. Any wonder that it is a significant place for the Wiradyuri people, along with the Darug and Gundungurra, who met here for initiations, corroboree and to go through their law together. Aboriginal people actually lived on Evans Crown up to 1900.

Also visible from here is Jenny and Greg's home nestled among shading trees and surrounded by open grazing lands; our destination for this afternoon.

While most of the group are content to spend time here taking in the panoramic views and marvelling at the granite formations, Merran Dargan leads Karin Kirkpatrick and Anne Rodrigues across the adjacent gully and up to the base of Crown Rock. We then all meet

back at the large cave we inspected this morning to settle down for lunch.

We then return to the cars, passing along the way some examples of the Fringe Myrtle (*Calytrix tetragona*) displaying their plentiful pinkish white five-petalled star-like flowers with numerous stamens; a very attractive shrub. Also beside the track are a few Donkey Orchids (*Diuris sp*) holding aloft their bright yellow "ears". As could well be expected in this area there is a Granite Bluebell (*Wahlenbergia graniticola*) beside the track carrying its blue to mauve white-throated flower atop a slim bare stem.

Back at the cars we form a small convoy to follow Jenny and Greg to their property, we cross a ford and wind our way across the fields to arrive at their house.

What a glorious garden this is in which to spend some time. Wonderful shade trees, blossom filled crab apples, conifers lining a stairway topped with meticulously trimmed box hedges curving away from the stairs around two specimen trees. At the base of the stairs is a bed of Iceland Poppies, a kaleidoscope of colour.

On the opposite side of this courtyard is a beautiful cut leaf maple, its light green delicate foliage formed into floating clouds. Nearby there is a small fish pond sitting below a large rounded granite boulder; a brilliant red cut leaf maple mimics the shape of the boulder and overhangs the pond; a delightful setting. The garden has several very tasteful classic statues along with, as a point of contrasting interest, an old Electrolux gas producer.

From the patio where we had our afternoon tea the view is across a lush green lawn, over the dam with its elevated gazebo and walkways, past the open pastures to Evans Crown; what a magnificent outlook. It must be a delight to sit on this patio and watch the first rays of the rising sun kiss the top of Crown Rock and to see the Crown illuminated by the setting sun.

Many thanks Jenny and Greg, and to you Merran, for the very enjoyable afternoon tea;

indeed a most pleasurable way to end yet another bushwalk.

John Cardy

OUR NOVEMBER WALK

Friday 15th November 2019

Little Zig Zag, Bushrangers Cave, Rienits Pass, Wilsons Glen, and perhaps a little more, at Mt Victoria.

The group last visited this venue in November 2015. This is a circular walk; with perhaps a few side branches, and is rated as medium grade. There is a 250m descent and ascent. It includes the mystery of the Bushranger's Cave, open woodland, rainforest and stunning views.

The walk will commence at the far end of Kanimbla Valley Road at Mt Victoria at 9.30am. However, please note this road consists of two discontinuous sections so to avoid possible confusion, if travelling from the east, turn left into Kanimbla Valley Rd (the first street after the traffic lights for the Darling Causeway), then left into Victoria St and next right into Innes Rd which becomes Kanimbla Valley Rd. If travelling from the west turn right into Kanimbla Valley Rd and follow the above directions.

Those wishing to car share from Mt Wilson should meet at St Georges Church for a 9.00am departure.

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

Contact Helen and John Cardy on 9871 3661 or on mobile 0400 444 966.

FUTURE WALKS (Tentative schedule)

Friday 6th December – We are trying something new this year for our December walk and end of year / Christmas get together. We have reserved the Brunet BBQ Shelter at Mount Tomah Botanic Gardens for the day. So do try and keep **6th December** free. Armchair walkers will be welcome as usual to come and stroll around these special gardens or simply join us for lunch.

Friday 17th January 2020 – To be advised

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.

Friday 8th November – Meet at Queens Road

Friday 13th December – Meet at Queens Road

Mt Wilson contact Alice Simpson 0414 425 511 or 4756 2110

Council contact Tracy Abbas 0428 777 141