
Mt Wilson Mt Irvine Bushwalking Group

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CORONAVIRUS ISSUE 2

TOPIC

OUR CANCELLED MAY WALK

30th ANNIVERSARY of the
GROUP. TESSELLATED
PAVEMENTS at Mt IRVINE

Friday 15th May 2020

It was planned to walk to the Tessellated Pavements this month and then have a celebratory luncheon to mark this anniversary; Covid-19 has put paid to that. Perhaps we can organise something in the future when things get back to some normality.

Indeed this walking Group was formed 30 years ago this month when a note penned by Mary Reynolds and supported by Libby Raines was distributed to residents of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine in early 1990. A transcript of that note follows. Subsequently the Group's first walk was organised for Thursday 17th May 1990.

Over those thirty years the Group has visited the Tessellated Pavements twelve times. I have reproduced here the very abbreviated reports of the first two visits and the more detailed, but still rather contracted report of the sixth visit; all written by Mary Reynolds.

I have then included Mary's more expansive report of our Walk No 88 to Deep Pass on 15th November 1996. I feel it is a good example of Mary's writing style, and again, you can hear Mary's voice as you read her descriptive text



Autumn still not in the Bush

and, as is her passionate wont, interesting snippets of relevant historical facts.

So sit back and absorb a little more of the story behind this Group and have Mary lead you once more around Deep Pass, that gem of the Newnes Plateau.

“PROPOSED
BUSHWALKING GROUP
FOR MT WILSON/MT
IRVINE

Some residents have expressed an interest in a walking group which could undertake easy walks in this lovely district

every month or two months. There are many interesting and delightful places within reach of an hour or 90 minute walk. These walks need not be too strenuous but will provide an opportunity to enjoy our bushland and widen our knowledge of it at the same time. It offers, also, a basis for pleasant companionship among those of diverse interests.

Possible venues for these walks could be –
The Tessellated Pavements at Mt Irvine – a 90 minute walk;

Boronia Point below Farrer Rd, Mt Wilson – a shorter walk;

The Bogey Holes, off the Five Mile, near Ryans Corner – a one hour walk;

A picnic lunch could be taken, if desired, and the billy could be boiled in the Autumn, Winter and early Spring.

This proposal is supported by the Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine C.W.A., and an established and knowledgeable resident, Mrs Libby Raines.

The first walk proposed is for Thursday 17 May, 1990 or the following Thursday to the Tessellated Pavements (Mt Irvine).

If you would like to join this walk, or would like to join in future walks, could you contact either Mrs Libby Raines (56 2121) or Mrs Mary Reynolds (56 2006)."

(Note the 6 digit telephone numbers – John C)

The brief record of this walk is a handwritten note by Mary Reynolds as follows;

"1990 Mt Wilson/ Mt Irvine Bushwalking Group First Walk 17th May, 1990

Destination: Tessellated Pavements Mt Irvine

Walkers: Libby Raines, Vera Strano, Katerina Colagiuri, Joan Rogers, Helen Ghent, Liz Harding, Elly Gunn, Sue & Bruce Gailey, Helen & Ron Naylor, Fae & Cedric Boulton, Trudi Spranger, John Ward and Mary & Ellis Reynolds.

Mild, overcast"

Followed later by one typed paragraph:

" Those who attended our first walk, held on 17/5/'90, were delighted with the Tessellated Pavements, in spite of the very overcast conditions on the day. We were wonderfully pleased with the response to this walk in which seventeen participated, and were keen to have a second walk soon."

The Group's next visit to the Tessellated Pavements was Walk No 15 on 19th September 1991; the list of walkers was as follows:

"Libby Raines, Sandra Milne, Sue Gailey, Mary & Ellis Reynolds, Kath Turner, Robert Watson, Terese, John Leaver (Blackheath), Helen Naylor, Kath Kerridge (nee Morley), Fae & Cedric Boulton and Graham Turnidge (new comer, buyer of Telopea Cottage).

Rather windy but sunny day – good walk- cup of tea at Naylor's."

Again followed later by one typed paragraph:

"Our September walk to one of our favourite haunts – The Tessellated Pavements – was attended by 15 members, in spite of the gale winds. It was pleasing to welcome Graham Turnidge who joined us for the first time. Many thanks to Helen and Ron Naylor for their warm hospitality at the end of the day."

Walk No 77 March 1996, to the Tessellated Pavements was followed by a more detailed report by Mary:

"We awoke on Friday 15th March to find the tree tops lost in the clouds and a soft mist falling. Once more a decision had to be made as to whether the walk should be cancelled or should we proceed. The predictions were the clouds would clear, so we took the risk. Eight gathered at Mt Irvine, eager for a day in the bush. We welcomed Terry and Diana, friends of Wendy Holland and Graham Whale. Our leader donned wet weather trousers and jacket to brush off the raindrops on the bushes along the narrow track. The trees enclosed by the smaller growth were fresh and lovely, washed by the gentle rain. A few flowers were bright against the green while a number of small birds flitted about in the trees, yet it was very still, the mist enveloping us, isolating us in our own world. Along the track we stopped to listen to a lyre bird, marvelling at the same time at the remarkable Angophoras, their smooth trunks, pink and orange, and their strange sculptured branches.

At the Lookouts the cloud kept low, but as we emerged from the bush onto the pavements, the sun broke through and the mist slowly dissolved, revealing the winding gorges and cliffs of the Wollangambe on the left, the Bowens Creek ravine with Mt Tootie beyond on the right. Around were the everlasting wooded hills and narrow valleys. It is always a memorable sight.

The next few hours were spent discovering ever more curious rock formations and discussing their possible origins with Diana, a Geomorphologist. Serenaded by a lyre bird, it was most relaxing sitting in the warm sunshine and we lingered long before returning slowly

along the track, enjoying the friendship of our fellow walkers and a contented day in the bush.”

I wrote the next six reports of walks to the Tessellated Pavements so I will not bore you with any of those.

Now here is Mary’s evocative report of our 1996 visit to Deep Pass:

“DEEP PASS, 15th November

Fridays have become quite a lottery in the weather stakes over the past few months. Thursday 14th November was one of howling winds and crashing trees. What would Friday bring? It was far from warm at first and those winds were still around. However has the weather ever deterred us? Certainly not the eighteen who journeyed to Deep Pass.

From Clarence along the road to the Glow Worm Tunnel there was a profusion of flora, more particularly *Boronia*, *Boronia nana var hyssofolia* and varieties of *Hibbertia*, all low growing. *Hakea dactyloides*, willow leaved *Hakea* with its creamy flowers was decorating every section of our dark green bushland. Framing this sombre green were the glowing russet, red and bronze tips of the spring growth of our bushland. What an inspiring sight!

Libby knew the way along the track from the road. We met with interest a group of year 11 students from Blayney High School who had been camping at Deep Pass studying geography and biology. Their enthusiasm was quite infectious. So we walked down the steep, rough track, stopping at a rock outcrop to view the scene below, a grassy stretch encased in steep cliffs.

On this rocky outcrop was the unusual *Atkinsonia ligustrina*, a root parasite plant, in bud. It is named after Louisa Atkinson, a remarkable 19th century amateur botanist who spent some of her life at Kurrajong. While there she made frequent trips to Mt Tomah on horseback, studying the flora and fauna. She was born in 1834, near Berrima and was to become the first Australian born woman novelist, a writer of nature columns in city

newspapers called ‘A Voice from the Country’ and an outstanding collector of specimens and contributor to the natural history of Australia. Between about 1860 and 1869 she and her mother lived at Kurrajong and it was during those years that she made some of her outstanding discoveries in plant life, including *Atkinsonia ligustrina*. Her companion on these journeys on horseback was Emma Selkirk, wife of a doctor in Richmond. Both women adopted male attire on these excursions and no doubt aroused some adverse comment in those strict Victorian days.

As interesting as Louisa is we must return to our walk. If anyone should like to know more about her, we could devote a special news letter to her. A book, ‘Pioneer Writer’ by Patricia Clarke published in 1990 is devoted to her life.

Deep Pass offers wonderful exploring opportunities. The rest of the day was spent enjoying this activity.

We left our packs on a grassy area and followed a track up into a small canyon-like valley. Beside us were the towering sandstone cliffs alive with colour, while close to our feet were the plants of damp places; the soft ferns of gentle green. Flowering was an *Acacia*, looking very much like a *Eucalypt*, with long curved gum-like leaves. Many of our group, including our remarkable 80 year old ventured into an impossibly narrow gap between the giant rocks to taste the effect of a cool dark repelling place.

After our return to base we ventured in another direction along a wider, drier valley which provided contrasting delights, such as delicate pinks of *Boronia floribunda*, a vision of white tumbling down the slope, *Epacris muelleri* and some wonderful specimens of *Leptospermum*. This valley is part of the headwaters of the Bungleboori Creek which eventually finds its way into the Colo River and thence to the Hawkesbury. On our return we followed a fascinating path below and along cave like overhanging cliffs of every shade of deep sandstone and the palest cream.

Surely Aboriginals must have used this exceptional shelter at some time.

Our final journey of discovery after a relaxed lunch in the shade, was into a narrow, enticing and cool, rocky place which rewarded our scrambling with a pool of unknown depths, but of a dark green blue into which cascaded a small waterfall and overhead the ever towering cliffs. Growing amidst this refuge of coolness were the *Elaeocarpus holopetalus*, the Black Olive Berry and the Black Sassafras or *Atherosperma moschatum*, only to be found in deep gullies at high altitudes.

Our return to the vehicles was up a steep, rocky track in the very warm afternoon sun. Fortunately it was not long before we were enjoying a cup of tea, provided generously by Libby. Nearby there was a most interesting patch of *Persoonia chamaepitys* or Prostrate Geebung with its bright, golden flowers covering the ground.

Everyone present expressed their intention of coming to the Christmas Barbecue and were most enthusiastic. A good way to end the day.”

I do hope you enjoyed your armchair walk with Mary at Deep Pass. With Mary’s descriptive text of the terrain, of the wild flowers and other native vegetation and the historical information included as a bonus one really got the feeling of being back at that magical place hidden on the Newnes Plateau.

John Cardy

FUTURE WALKS

With the relaxation of the coronavirus restrictions it appears we may be able to resume our walks in July. If that is the case I will give details for the walk in the July Newsletter. We should then have more up to date details on which venues have reopened, what restrictions, if any, still apply, etc.

In the meantime I will continue delving into the archives to reveal

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some more of the history of the Group.

So, for the present, remain bunkered down, remain safe and try not to go stir crazy as we all continue to partake as armchair walkers for what will hopefully be only a little longer.

FUTURE WALKS (Tentative Schedule for when the all clear is given)

Mount Banks and Banks Wall.

Tessellated Pavements at Mount Irvine

Waterfall Circuit north of Lawson

Coxs and Lockyers Roads at Mt Victoria

Ikara Ridge and Ikara Head near Mt Victoria

Kanangra Walls

BUSH CARE

BUSHCARE HAS RECOMMENCED

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 10th July – Wynne Reserve, next to the Church

Friday 14th August – Silva Plana

Friday 11th September – Wynne Reserve, next to the Church

Mt Wilson contact Alice Simpson 0414 425 511 or 4756 2110

Council contact Tracy Abbas 0428 777 141