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# Mt Wilson Mt Irvine Bushwalking Group

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Volume 10 Issue 9

October 2000

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## LUNCH ROCK

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### Our September Walk

Friday, 15th September 2000

The Opening Day of the  
Olympics in Sydney. The 27th  
Olympiad.

Tucked away in the bushland  
at Bell the contrast must have  
been striking for those on this  
walk. Here is John Cardy's  
record of that experience.

Although there was a promise of a touch of summer as the day developed, it was a rather crisp morning when fifteen gathered at Bell for the walk to Lunch Rock. After leaving two cars at the intended finishing point, we parked adjacent to the main western railway line and walked a short distance along Sandham Rd, skirted around a private property which contained an amazing collection of "things which might come in handy one day" and linked up with a fire trail which follows the ridge toward our intended goal.

Initially we walked through rather open forest where the understorey contained many examples of the Broadleaved Geebung { *Persoonia levis* } with their characteristic dark flaky bark intensifying the green of their foliage. As we progressed along the ridge the forest became more open and by far the most dominant tree was now the Scribbly Gum [*Eucalyptus sclerophylla*] with their smooth grey trunks displaying the intricate but indecipherable doodling of burrowing insect larvae. The variation in trunk forms of these trees is astounding, most being wide-based



Spring in the Bush

## NEAR

## BELL

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with burnt out hollows, adding a touch of mystery while there are occasional examples of coppiced trees with several slender, sinuous trunks emerging from around the base. There was one exceptional tree which had an opening burnt right through the trunk large enough to walk under with only thin slivers of live wood on each side, yet the tree was flourishing with abundant foliage above.

A neat little cairn marked the point where a foot track diverged from the Fire Trail and this narrower, at times indistinct path, gave that welcome feeling of closeness to the bush surrounds. We soon emerged into heath country and here the fluffy red

star-bursts of the female flowers of the *Casuarina* contrasted brilliantly with the golden glow of blossoms on the occasional Sunshine Wattle [*Acacia terminalis*]. The most prevalent shrubs in this rocky open area were the Conesticks [*Petrophile pulchella*] carrying an abundance of elongated cones on their upright stems. Of the *Banksias* present here *ericifolia* was the most plentiful with their yellow/orange flowers peeking out shyly from among the foliage. There were occasional examples of *Banksia spinulosa* with a sparse scattering of *Banksia serrata*.

Soon Lunch Rock hove into view just beyond a much smaller but much more delicately sculptured companion formation. In the blink of an eye Nicholas and Indii Pembroke were clambering all over Lunch Rock and other nearby formations with the agility and sure footedness of a couple of mountain goats — Ah, the exuberance of the young! As the rest of the group eventually made their way to the top of Lunch Rock we settled down for -----well ----- lunch!

The 360 degrees panorama laid out before us was stunning on this glorious sunny Spring day. The course of the Wollangambe River, whose source is not far from here, wending its rather tortuous path toward Mt Wilson

was clearly visible. Gooch's Crater area could be seen and the host of pagoda type formations in the Wollangambe Crater vicinity formed a spectacular foreground to the profile of Mt Wilson on the skyline.

Following lunch we took the short walk down to a rock ledge overlooking the Wollangambe. A cliff face across the river was illuminated by a single wattle which stood out on the shaded wall like a golden beacon. While some of the group relaxed on the rock ledge with the pleasant sound of running water wafting over them from the river below, others explored a short distance downstream where the gully narrowed into a deep canyon.

Retracing our path to Lunch Rock we then moved off the ridge and descended into a cooler more moist area where the path became enclosed in tea-tree [*Leptospermum sp.*] creating an almost tunnel like effect. We stopped briefly near a creek crossing where *Gang-Gangs* [grey with a pink head] were heard and one was seen feeding nearby. In this gully were many Waratahs [*Telopea speciosissima*] still carrying last seasons empty seed pods and new buds swelling in readiness to light up the bush with their brilliant red flares. In this cooler environment there were some large moss covered rock faces adjacent to this beautiful creek crossing which were draped with an abundance of *Epacris reclinata*, their pinkish red flowers highlighted against the green moss background, a wonderful sight. Some texts state they are generally a solitary plant rarely growing near each other -- these were most definitely the exception to that rule!

The track then led back onto a ridge adjacent to that on which we started, following a fire trail through open forest once more. Several large termite nests were sighted in this drier area and at the edge of the fire trail one of nature's miniature delights-- a cluster of Sundew [*Drosera spatulata*] waiting patiently for unsuspecting insects to sample their dewy offerings. Soon the sound of vehicles on the road signalled we were approaching the end of another delightful walk. After retrieving our vehicles from our starting point, we enjoyed the customary cup of tea before heading home, once again rejuvenated by the beauty and atmosphere of the Australian bush.

John's description brings it all to life for those of us unable to be with the walkers.

## Our Second September Walk

**Friday, 29th September, 2000**

September conveniently provided 5 Fridays and hence an opportunity for a second walk.

In between everyone had been enjoying the Olympic Spirit to the maximum possible. Memorable times for those who were participants, for volunteers, for visitors and all those onlookers. **Public Transport can work if there is a will ! As can reconciliation !**

**Libby will take us on a great trip from Breakfast Creek to the Cox's River on Friday, 29th September 2000.**

A warm day with storms and a change was forecast but this did not daunt seven of the more adventurous of our group as we set off driving down into the beautiful Megalong Valley beneath the great cliffs of Narrow Neck. Pack Saddlers or to give it its original name, Green Gully was to be the starting point of the walk. It is situated in a deep valley among the steep sided hills at the northern of the Wild Dog Mountains. These rugged mountains offer some of the best walking country in the Blue Mountains, but most of the walks are too long, steep and difficult for our group. Places like Knights Deck and Splendour Rock are names we will enjoy hearing about but not be able to visit.

Bernard O'Reilly who used to live in the Kanimbla Valley before the First World War visited his relations, the Carlons at Green Gully as a child in 1910. It was the first time he had ever been away from home. He wrote in his book 'Cullenbenbone' " *All the peace and beauty of a clear winter's evening was upon Green Gully as I first saw it; blue smoke from the chimney hung in the still frosty air. Early dusk, tinged with reflected purple from the giant cliffs above softened the naked willows and touched the timbered hills with mystery. High up the ridge was the deep "hony" of cow bells while baritone frogs spoke in turn along the edge of the creek.* "

To earn a living and to introduce people to this beautiful rugged area, the Carlon family later established "Pack Saddlers" where many city families and children have enjoyed holidays riding, camping, walking and exploring the bush.

In 1998 the National Parks acquired large tracts of "Pack Saddlers" and the present owners now only have a lease for their life time. I guess the buildings will eventually all be dismantled, the horses and stock removed allowing the land to return to forest over the years. [ Surely this history should be preserved reflecting an era of considerable significance. Mary ]

The winding gravel road down into the valley is very steep but in good condition. We parked our cars beside the small Galong Creek, then set off up a very steep road to the saddle. We passed the old Carlon home, "tucked snugly in the shelter of enfolding hills," wondering what stories lay behind those shuttered windows. We shall never know but we can imagine the hard, yet simple and happy life of these people earlier in the 20th century as their large family gathered about

the warm hearth on cold winters' nights and "the garden filled with begonias, geraniums, asparagus fern and fruit trees." The willows and old trees still shade the garden and the wisteria in full bloom clambers high in their branches.

National Parks signs led us to a stile over the fence and the well worn track dipped down the other side of the steep saddle in to Carlon Creek which we followed in a southerly direction. It is a very beautiful area with tall open forest and beneath, very lush vegetation, native grasses, bracken, nettles and alas, great mounds of blackberry just coming into leaf. The nettles proved to be a bit of a challenge for those in shorts. We were glad we were not walking at the end of next month as the nettles were already over knee high. In a few more weeks they would be shoulder high and starting to fall all over the track. Native Clematis was flowering over the shrubs and had climbed high into some trees while purple patches of *Indigo australis*, large clumps of the golden *Senecio linearifolius* [Fireweed Groundsel] a tall perennial common in open forests, and a small flowered white daisy bush [was it *Olearia elliptica*?] all contrasted with the green of the forest. In the trees a wonderful chorus of many birds was an unforgettable sound all through the day. Some of those we recognised were the *Bellbirds*, *Rosellas*, *Wattle birds*, *Butcher Birds*, *Currawongs*, *White and Black Cockatoos*, *Kookaburras*, *Whip birds*, *Thrush*, *Golden Whistler*, *Lyre Birds*, *White Winged Chuffs*, *Wrens* and many others we could not identify.

It was very damp in this shaded gully. We crossed and recrossed the little stream many times before we reached Breakfast Creek where we stopped for a break-- [appropriate we thought after lunching at Lunch Rock on our last walk].

Breakfast Creek is in a wider valley travelling west to join the Cox's River, about 12 Km south of where the Six Foot Track crosses the Cox's River at the Suspension Bridge. There are many wide still pools but much of the time the Creek was flowing beneath the smooth rocks which filled the stream bed and were of many colours, some a lovely soft pink, others with intricate markings and colours. Great She-Oaks [*Casuarinas cunninghamiana*] grew beside and in the stream bed while there were numerous [*Backhousia myrtifolia*] Grey Myrtle with their small glossy green leaves forming shady thickets.

A lyre bird serenaded us as we sat beside the still pool in the dappled sunlight. We marvelled with Alison at the contrast of experience and emotions which one can enjoy within a few hours. The evening before she and Alan had been in Sydney beside the magnificent Harbour in the midst of crowds and the excitement of the many activities which were in the city in conjunction with the Olympic Games.

We still had a long way to go. The track wound beside the creek with many crossings [one book states 41]. There were some lovely shady glades, carpeted with soft green grass. Once or twice we climbed quite high above the creek where the vegetation was quite different, the soil shallow and very stoney with a few unexpected wildflowers growing in these harsh conditions. Many clusters of the pretty blue daisy *Brachycome angustifolia* ? possibly and the yellow *Hibbertia* along with tall groupings of the shrubby, *Stypandra glauca* with lovely blue flowers on nodding stems were all there and a few others we did not know.

Some of the best memories of the day were the wild life we saw or heard; glimpses of animals in the wild always provide a thrill. Besides the wonderful bird songs, two wallabies were seen early in the day feeding on the lush grass; a black snake moved off the path in front of Hans and twice we watched a goanna slowly climb a tree beside the path. One was very large and as he climbed the tree, the birds in the tree became quite disturbed! Then there were the frogs singing happily from their watery abodes, their notes high and low. But our favourite was the wonderful Bull Frog with its deep bass 'twang' as if plucking the low note of a guitar or harpsichord.

Eventually we reached the Cox's River, finding a shady grass bank for lunch beside the wide slowly moving waters. The River is quite different here from where we saw it at the Suspension Bridge. There the waters rush over the huge granite rocks. Here the water was shallow, slipping gently over the sandy bottom, forming wide still pools. Hans found the water very much to his liking when he went for a short dip; so too did three Snakes! We watched fascinated as a black snake swam across the river, then a second followed but returned to lie motionless on top of the water for a long time, not far from where we had stood before, then it slowly moved off downstream. Quickly a small brown snake took to the water, swam brilliantly across with hardly a ripple, his slim form moving rapidly under the water. Quite breathtaking to watch!

The wind increased during the day, sighing in the tall She-Oaks, but it cooled our warm bodies as we retraced our steps up the two creeks. Dark clouds gathered in the western sky; the bellbirds were still singing in the trees in Carlons' Creek. We could see them twittering about among the green leaves. When we reached the Saddle, a shower of rain was threatening, but by the time we reached the cars most of the cloud had moved on. We enjoyed a cup of tea, while some horses quietly grazed near-by.

On our drive home we were accompanied by a brilliant red setting sun, slipping slowly down behind the western hills, farewelling another happy day spent walking and exploring more of this wonderful bushland surrounding us.

The seven who participated in this very special walk were : John & Helen Cardy, Ellen Freemantle, Alison Heap, Ray Nesci, Hans & Libby. Grateful thanks to Libby for providing such a clear and compelling account.

Our good friend, Gloris Harris of Blackheath is much improved but has to undertake further treatment for 6 months. We are sorry indeed that we won't be seeing Gloria for quite sometime but we do hope she & Ron will join us at our Christmas Barbecue.

## Our October Walk

**Friday, 27th October 2000**

**Note that this is the fourth Friday, not the usual third Friday of the month.**

**The reason is, of course, the Opening of the Fine Art Exhibition, " From the Mountains to the Sea" in St George's Church The Avenue Mt Wilson on Friday 20th October, 2000 at 7.0 p.m. by Mr Kerry Bartlett, the Federal Member for Macquarie, followed by a Champagne Reception { \$ 10.00 } at the Post House Cafe in the Avenue Mt Wilson .**

**The Exhibition will be open from 10.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday 21st - 22nd October. On Friday 20th October from 2.00 p.m.--5.00p.m. will be a preview of the Exhibition. All funds raised will go to the Mt Wilson Historical Society.**

**The October Walk will be to Boronia Point at Mt Wilson on Friday, 27th October 2000**

This is a very popular walk in Mt Wilson which takes us into a beautiful area of Boronia and above the canyons of the Wollangambe. It will commence at **Merry Garth**. From there it will follow various tracks, including the Cathedral of Ferns, along the old road and fire trail, coming out near the beginning of Farrer Rd where the trail to **Boronia Point** commences.

**MEET at 9. 30 a.m. at MERRY GARTH, MT WILSON.**

Bring morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea.

## FURTHER WALKS

FRIDAY, 17TH NOVEMBER 2000 to FAIRY BOWER , MT VICTORIA and possibly BERGHOFFER'S PASS.

FRIDAY, 15TH DECEMBER 2000 to RIGBY HILL off PIERCE'S PASS. An afternoon walk followed by our traditional CHRISTMAS BARBECUE. Libby and Keith Raines will be our hosts at Merry Garth. Their generous hospitality on these occasions is always deeply appreciated by all those who have experienced it. Everyone is always welcome. You do not have to be an active walker to participate. Your friends are very welcome too.

## BUSH CARE

Whatever activity is taking place Bush care must go on. It is always a very rewarding community venture and is held every second Friday of the month. Last month in spite of a howling westerly gale, there was quite a gathering on the track behind Campanella Cottage. So do join us !

Future dates are Friday, 13th October 2000 AT SLOAN RESERVE at 9. 00 a.m.

Friday, 10th November 2000 and Friday, 8th December, 2000

Contact Elizabeth Raines for further information.

Tel : ( 02 ) 4756 2121. Everyone is welcome.

FOR OUR WALKS PLEASE CONTACT LIBBY RAINES (02) 4756 2121 or MARY REYNOLDS (02) 4756 2006 or ALISON HEAP (02) 4756 2116