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# Mt Wilson Mt Irvine Bushwalking Group

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## MT WILSON AND THE TRAIL?

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### CHRISTMAS WALK - DESTINATION VARIABLE!

Friday 12th December 2003

Four of the Sydney based contingent of walkers (Rosemary, George, Helen and Moi) made an early start on an overcast morning intending to lend a hand to the Bush Care group prior to the afternoon walk to Bowens Creek. The further we proceeded along the Bells Line of Road the more dense the clouds became and as we neared the Mt Wilson turn-off the amount of casual water present indicated there had been some heavy falls in this neck of the woods. Rain began in earnest as we approached the village.

At Mary and Ellis Reynolds place we learned that Bush Care had been cancelled as you would expect in these conditions and that the walk venue had been changed from Bowens Creek to the Northern Fire Trail. The combination of heavy overnight rain and the passage of a few OKA buses may have made a couple of sections of the Bowens Creek road a little doubtful. So, following a most welcome cuppa with Mary and Ellis we four managed to keep ourselves gainfully employed through



Summer in the Bush

## NORTHERN FIRE TOPIC

this rather stormy day until the 3pm start of the revised walk.

Eight hardy souls gathered at Merry Garth in what was promising to be partly clearing weather. We headed off into that delightful little pocket of rainforest behind Campanella and Linden. Noticeable in this area since our last visit was the number of trees which had fallen victim to the strong winds. We set off at a rather quick pace and I thought Ray

Nesci had lost the plot completely as he mentioned we must be approaching Central as we had just passed Redfern - until I noticed the brilliant red fronds of new growth on a Rasp Fern (*Doodia asper*) - good one Ray!

Soon we were at the Cathedral of Ferns Picnic Area, the cloud cover appeared to be lifting and all looked promising as we crossed the road and moved onto the Northern Fire Trail. Here the first of many Grass-leaf Trigger Plants (*Stylidium graminifolium*) was noted, their bright pink clusters of flowers held aloft on slender stems. The moist leaves of the ubiquitous Black Wattle (*Callicoma serratifolia*) glistened even more than normal while the flowers, usually perfectly formed balls of fluff, looked decidedly bedraggled in their moisture laden state. Peeping out from among the undergrowth were the blue/mauve flowers of the Slender Violet (*Hybanthus*



*monopetalus*) and occasional light pink flowers of the Dog Rose (*Bauera rubioides*). The colours of the wildflowers seemed to be intensified under the overcast skies.

As the trail dipped slightly the view to the north opened up along the line of Serendipity Canyon to the wilderness beyond. It was a glorious sight in these conditions - gossamer shreds of pure white mist twisting up from the valley against the dark background of rain soaked bushland. The weather appeared to be improving although distant rumbling of thunder could still be heard.

Clumps of the Pouched Coral Fern (*Gleichenia dicarpa*) decorated the banks beside the trail and Mountain Heath-myrtle (*Baeckia utilis*) lit up the bush with its brilliant white five petalled flowers. Some examples of the Smooth Flax Lily (*Dianella longifolia* var.) ) were also present here. The pale blue flowers of this lily, supported on multi-branched stems, provide a vivid contrast to the orange and green filaments at their centres.

Soon we pass a fork to the left in the trail and begin a slight descent, the weather also suddenly began to go downhill! That distant thunder is no longer so distant and we are treated to a veritable strobe-light display of lightning. We decide being among all this tall timber in these conditions is probably not a good idea and head back toward the Church of St George. There was an entertaining little episode as we negotiated a wombat passage under a fence. The techniques employed were as varied as they were comical. While not being able of course to view my own technique from afar, I'm sure it would have been quite dignified!

A short stroll up the hill through a large swathe of daisies which were endeavouring to provide an alternative version of a white Christmas and we were at the church. Here we met fellow walkers Elizabeth and John Mason who were busily cleaning the church and mowing the grounds. As the afternoon was still young following our curtailed walk, Diana

Landsberg kindly invited us to afternoon tea at the Withycombe cottage and to view the tree which had recently been struck by lightning. Diana and Joe were sitting on the verandah of the cottage when the lightning struck and indicated the light show rivalled the New Years Eve fireworks on Sydney Harbour!

This walk was becoming a religious metaphor. We began at that Garden of Eden which is Merry Garth, travelled via the Cathedral of Ferns, experienced heavenly views over Serendipity Canyon and beyond, were subjected to a hellish display of lightning, sought refuge at the Church of St George and were now entering the grounds of Withycombe which is close to paradise! From the towering Scots Pine near the gate displaying its smooth medallions of bark, the huge spreading oak, the row of closely planted cypress (?) trimmed of branches on the lee side while the windward side is an intricate tangle of intermingled branches from the ground up, the most magnificent evergreen dogwood this writer has ever seen to the open meadow and secluded pathways, this is Utopia to anyone with a love of gardens and grand mature trees! (Apologies for the lack of proper names for the trees, I'm afraid horticultural correctness failed me here - I was just overwhelmed by the magnificence of these grounds).

Following afternoon tea at the cottage Diana and Joe graciously offered a guided tour of the main house. They didn't need to ask twice! What a glorious home this is, home being the operative word. With the magnificent antique furnishings, grand paintings, high ceilings and the scale of the rooms it retains a wonderfully warm, intimate and welcoming atmosphere.

We reluctantly wended our way back through the grounds noting the various installations for use by the children. One can only assume previous occupants of this property would be thrilled to hear the laughter once more of little ones exploring and engaging in the most wonderful adventures in this magical setting.



Many thanks Diana and Joe for this unexpected interlude.

As we made our way along The Avenue, Waterfall Road and Galwey Lane to return to Merry Garth we enjoyed the special treat of seeing the village glistening in the subdued afternoon light following the day of rain. This walk took many unexpected twists and turns but proved to be an extremely enjoyable experience! Here we bade a temporary farewell to Libby for we would shortly be returning for the Christmas barbecue.

### THE CHRISTMAS BARBECUE

Once again the weather gods were kind to us on this evening and thanks once more to the generous hospitality of Libby and Keith we were able to catch up with members and friends in these beautiful surroundings and relive some of the memories of the walks in the past year. Walks such as to the cool green beauty of Happy Valley and the return via Cathedral Creek, the walk in constant rain down the Giant Stairway returning by way of Furber Steps past the thundering Katoomba Falls, the grandeur of the Pagodas and the magic of the Glow Worm Tunnel, the Sunday Afternoon Walk and the Bogey Holes. Then there was the misty walk to Pulpit Rock in lieu of Nellies Glen, the always fascinating shale oil works at Newnes in the Wolgan Valley, the spectacular Mt Banks and the edge of the Grose Valley, the return to Nellies Glen and the Megalong Valley - who could forget encountering that group of young girls on their Duke of Edinburgh walk, their expressions ranging from exhilaration to utter despair? - that magical walk to the Tessellated Pavements in heavy mist and the return in brilliant sunshine and of course that marvellous first time walk for the group along Fortress Ridge.

How fortunate we are to experience this huge diversity of locations and terrain. A heartfelt thanks to you both Libby and Mary for the effort you put into organising these

invigorating adventures which we all look forward to and enjoy so very much!!

**This account of our Christmas Walk and Barbecue, so beautifully presented by John Cardy is a wonderful introduction to 2004. We thank all our members and friends for their constant support and loyalty as we enter our 14<sup>th</sup> year. No mean achievement for all those who have been associated with us. Thank you to John for his kind words of appreciation to Libby and myself. Libby of course is the driving force but without members like John and Helen Cardy and many others our group would not be the thriving entity it still is today. In a world of uncertainty, fear and much intolerance and little honesty our association as a group exploring the dynamic Australian bushland strengthens lasting values such as love of our environment, better understanding of and caring of each other, a willingness to learn and appreciate the extraordinary diversity of life on this planet; in the process diminishing fear, uncertainty, intolerance and always being prepared to search for the truth.**

## Our January Walk

### TO BOWENS CREEK

**FRIDAY, 16<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2004**

This walk was planned for December but as you would now be aware the weather put an effective stop to that exercise.

This time we think that it would be sensible and enjoyable to make it a day walk to allow for flexibility in activities so that, once having reached Bowens Creek, people can spend time wandering along the shores of the creek or paddling or swimming or just sitting and enjoying the coolness and beauty of this natural place and if they wish to return when they feel the need this can be arranged.

The same conditions apply for this walk as were set down for the December Walk.



**SEE BELOW:**

“ To reach our meeting place it is necessary to drive through Mt Wilson almost to Mt Irvine where the road goes to the left to Mt Irvine. At this junction with Bowens Creek Road follow Bowens Creek Road for a short distance [Ignore the road close sign] and meet at the gravel heap just beyond where the bitumen ends. The property, ‘Rutherglen’ is on the left.

Libby would appreciate any members intending to come and owning a 4WD to bring it as this would assist with transport from Bowens Creek. Could you please let Libby know by Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> January 2004 if you can help in this regard ? Early notice is important so please contact Libby by that date.

**MEET at 10.00 a.m.**

Bring morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea and swimming costume and/ or suitable clothing for water activities and a towel if you wish.

**FURTHER WALKS**

Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> February 2004 The Engineers Track off the Darling Causeway. This walk was to be held in November 2003 but had to be postponed. It is a new walk for our group and should be very suited to February weather conditions.

**BUSH CARE**

Whatever the circumstances Bush Care continues to be an important activity for Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine.

In January it will take place on Friday. 9<sup>th</sup> January 2004 outside ‘Jalscene’ Galwey Lane Mt Wilson from 9.00a.m. to Noon

In February it will be on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2004

Contact Beth Raines for further information on 4756 2121

**MEMBERS NEWS**

We send our warmest thoughts and affection to one of our foundation members, Helen Naylor whose husband Ron has been in hospital for some weeks battling with severe illness.

Helen Freeman, our treasurer has her mother in hospital. We all hope that her mother will soon be home and well again.

For our January Walk remember to contact Libby early on 4756 2121, especially if you have a 4WD.i.e. by Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> January 2004.

You can also contact Mary Reynolds on 4756 2006 or Helen Freeman on 4756 2053

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