
Mt Wilson Mt Irvine Bushwalking Group

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LOCKLEY PYLON AND THE MT HAY ROAD

Our November Walk

Lockley Pylon and Du Faur
Head off the Mt Hay Road

Friday 19th November 2004

Huge drifts of flannel flowers,
vivid white and green tea tree
totem poles, brilliant red beacons
of waratahs and lofty spears
thrusting skywards from the leafy tussocks of
grass trees. All this laid out before us and we
were only driving to the starting point.

Following a vehicle rationalisation at Leura
where we transferred to the four wheel drives
of Libby and Fred (many thanks to you both
for making them available) we set off on the
approximately 9km journey to the Lockley
Pylon track head.

Thirteen walkers were greeted by thirteen
thousand bush flies as we readied for the walk.
This elicited a few minor grumbles but of
course flies were put here for a purpose and
they too are entitled to make an honest living.

We welcomed Jan Northam who was joining
us today for the first of what we hope will be
many walks with the group. Immediately on
leaving the road we were welcomed to the



Summer in the Bush

DU FAUR HEAD OFF TOPIC

track by the exquisite little
herbaceous plant the Slender
Violet (*Hybanthus
monopetalus*). The prominent
mauve lower petal of this
dainty flower gives, as the
name implies, the impression
that it has only one petal.

After passing through a
sparsely wooded area we
emerged onto exposed terrain
where the effect of the quite
strong wind was more evident.
Also evident on the short walk

to The Pinnacles was the vast array of
wildflowers on display at this time. Initially
the most conspicuous colours were yellow,
blue and purple. The yellow was provided by
the spiky globular flowers of the Broad-leaf
Drumsticks (*Isopogen anemonifolius*) and
many small *Goodenias* (possibly *Goodenia
bellidifolia*) with their interesting five lobed
blossoms, three supine lower lobes and two
erect upper lobes. The various shades of blue
and purple were provided by both the Blue
and Purple *Damperia* (*Damperia stricta* and
D. purpurea) and the Native Iris (*Patersonia
sericea*).

We climbed up onto The Pinnacles to take in
both the expansive views and some morning
tea. The views from here included Mounts
Hay, Caley, Tomah, Bell and Wilson.
Morning tea included a few flies.

As we relaxed in this idyllic setting we were treated to the sight of clustered white flowers of the Long-leaf Coneseed (*Conospermum longifolium*, probably sub species *mediale*), the pink flower heads of the Rush Lily or Vanilla Plant (*Sowerbaea juncea*) swaying on their slender stems, the starburst like pink and white flower clumps of the Pink Swamp Heath (*Sprengelia incanata*) and the occasional appearance of the delicately fringed mauve/pink petals of the Common Fringe Lily (*Thysanotus tuberosus*). Providing a stark contrast to all these graceful embellishments were a few weather beaten *Banksia serrata*, gnarled and twisted by the elements, creating the impression they were as old as the jagged rocks among which they tenaciously clung to life.

Back on the main track the scene was enriched by the sporadic flash of red provided by the Mountain Devils (*Lambertia formosa*). The track passed through some stands of Blue Mountains Mallee Ash (*Eucalyptus stricta*) and it became quite sandy underfoot as we crossed a small saddle. Here there were numerous Waratahs (*Telopea speciosissima*) the brilliance of their flowers now fading however a subdued glow still emanated from their red bracts.

We passed several examples of the Broad-leaf Geebung (*Persoonia levis*) carrying large quantities of glossy green fruit. Nearby a Prostrate or Mountain Geebung (*Persoonia chamaepitys*) formed a light green mat dotted with bright yellow flower buds.

We emerged into a meadow like area which was dominated by the fluffy clusters of blossom of the Pink Kunzea (*Kunzea capitata*). Here a short diversion took us to a rocky knoll which gave us spectacular views into the Grose Valley and in the opposite direction into the gully carrying Fortress Creek. In this gully the dense tree canopy was broken by the presence of numerous hanging swamps above the line of the creek. A walking track could be seen emerging from the bush, meandering around the edge of the hanging

swamps and once more disappearing beneath the thick canopy. Thoughts drifted to the possibility of another journey on another day.

A second saddle was crossed before the short climb up Mount Stead. Here the effects of a past bushfire were still evident. Mother Nature as usual takes advantage of all opportunities presented. White velvety bracts of the Flannel Flower (*Actinatus helianthi*) which flowers profusely following a fire were shown off to magnificent effect against a background of the blackened skeletal remains of burnt shrubbery. As we climbed up the gentle slope the pink flowers of Black-eyed Susan (*Tetralitea ericifolia*) were scattered among the wondrously contorted trunks of the Scribbly Gums (*Eucalyptus sclerophylla*). Many of these trunks carried charred hollows resulting from fires. Here also were many examples of Old Man Banksia (*Banksia serrata*) carrying numerous shaggy Big Bad Banksia Men with mouths agape after the fire. Any walkers with mouths agape in this area would very soon be treated to a smorgasbord of flies. The singed demonic little seed pods of the burnt Mountain Devils seemed to be grinning fiendishly at the thought of such an occurrence.



Geoff Kelly's Digital camera at work near Mt Stead. Where are those flies, Geoff?

The exposed ridge on the descent from Mt Stead is awash with wildflowers. There are numerous examples of the Slender Violet (*Hybanthus monopetalus*) along with the pale blue flowers of the Smooth Flax Lily (*Dianella longifolia* var *longifolia*) and the splendid four lobed tiny pure white flowers of the Mitre Weed (*Mitrasacme polymorpha*). Extensive views into Walford Gully are also on show here.

The track swings to the left and Lockley Pylon is in full view. The visible track line across this ridge to the Pylon gives a sense of scale to the scene. As we climb to the summit of Lockley Pylon we pass many examples of the Bloodroot (*Haemodorum planifolium*) in full bloom. The flowers of this unusual plant have a funereal air about them. They are black with just a hint of yellow in their anthers. They are a distant relative of the Kangaroo Paw. Also present here is the Small-flowered Mat-rush (*spp Lomandra micrantha tuberculata*) taking refuge from the elements by crouching beside rocks.

Lockley Pylon was named after CJ Lockley who wrote a horticultural and nature column for The Sydney Morning Herald under the name Redgum. He had a keen interest in conservation and was invited by The Blue Gum Forest Committee, in order to gain some publicity, to a meeting in the Blue Gum Forest to discuss purchase arrangements in order to save the area from logging. This meeting took place on the 15th November 1931, that is 73 years almost to the day prior to this walk. He apparently commented on the great rocky pylon and it was subsequently given his name.

We and the increasingly numerous flies had lunch at this breathtaking spot. The views down to Govetts Leap Brook, Govetts Creek and The Grose River are stunning. The sandstone walls on this day took on a sombre appearance in the muted light. Many sites of previous walks could be noted - Fortress Hill, Junction Rock, Govetts Leap, Pulpit Rock, Perrys Lookdown, The Blue Gum Forest, Mt

Banks, Mt Hay and more. There was certainly a feeling of being on top of the world.



On top of the world at Lockley's Pylon
Thank you to Geoff Kelly.

After descending from the pylon and as time was on our side some of the group decided to explore the track which leads to Du Faur Head. (This track ultimately leads down to The Blue Gum Forest - perhaps yet another journey for another day). The short section of track which we followed opened up some dramatic close up views of sheer sandstone cliffs while the delicate form of a Spreading or Black-anther Flax Lily (*Dianella revoluta* var *revoluta*) was sighted.

Close to Du Faur Head we were privileged to see three examples of the uncommon shrub *Atkinsonia ligustrina* in full flower. This unusual plant is a root parasite on other plants and was discovered by Louisa Atkinson. Louisa was a remarkably talented lady who made many journeys into these mountains during the 1860's in search of botanical material.

As we rested on a steep section of track on our return to the Lockley Pylon junction a large group of Common Sundew (*Drosera spathulata*) was sighted in a hollow beside the track. Many carried pink and white flowers on slim stems. Also in this depression were several examples of the Lesser Flannel Flower (*Actinotus minor*). The tiny velvet bracts surrounding the flower head of this herb are only ten millimetres across. These two charming plants are probably hiding in this

depression in embarrassment at the popular names allocated to them - "Common" and "Lesser" - not to my mind.

The return journey simply follows the inward path. Dark storm clouds gathered in the distance as clouds of flies took up much closer positions. The Macquarie Dictionary (regards to Editor in Chief Arthur Delbridge who has participated in many walks with this group) defines repellent as something which repels, drives back or away. Tell that to the flies! They seemed to love the repellent we were spraying around in copious quantities.

On arrival back at the 4WD's we finished our customary cup of tea just as a few spits of rain commenced. Another wonderful walk, magnificent scenery, both the grand visions and the close up beauty of the wildflowers. Now lets get into the cars and away from these cursed flies!!

John Cardy has, as is his style, maintained his excellent standard of detail and descriptive writing in his account of this picturesque walk in spite of those pesky flies.

**I hope I have placed the photos correctly.
M.**

Our Short December Walk

FRIDAY 10TH DECEMBER 2004. [Note that this is the second Friday].

TO RIGBY HILL overlooking the Grose Valley

Rigby Hill is at the end of a short track which turns off the track that goes down through Pierce's Pass the entrance to which is off the Bells Line of Road on the right coming from Bell or on the left coming from Mt Tomah.

Meet at the entrance to Pierces Pass at 3.00 p.m. or at Merry Garth at 2.30 p.m.

Bring afternoon tea.

Following this pleasant walk is the traditional CHRISTMAS BARBECUE commencing about 6.00pm. at Merry Garth Mt Wilson.

All present and past members along with family and friends are most welcome.

Please bring your own utensils i.e. cutlery, plates, glasses and drinks, nibbles, bread meat and salads etc.

Desserts, tea and coffee will be free.

Our special thanks go to Keith and Libby and Beth Raines for their gracious and generous hospitality in welcoming us all to their lovely garden, 'Merry Garth' for this special occasion.

BUSH CARE

This will take place on the morning of Friday 10th December 2004. Friday 10th will be a busy day.

Meet at Rimmon on Waterfall Road Mt Wilson at 9.00a.m. For further information contact Beth Raines at 4756 2121.

Bush Care is of primary importance in places like Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine as we are surrounded by National Parks. Our diligence in keeping weeds out of public reserves contributes to the overall protection of our wonderful bushland. We are very privileged to be able to live in such a beautiful district. Let us take great care of it.

MEMBERS' NEWS

Helen Robbins who was a very active walker with this group until she departed to live at Nambucca Heads in 1999 lost her husband, Brian recently. He had been ill for a long period in which Helen had cared for him. Unfortunately Helen at the time of Brian's passing was struck by a severe and painful condition in her back. This has entailed many weeks in hospital and a very slow recovery. We send Helen our warmest good wishes for a