
Mt Wilson Mt Irvine Bushwalking Group

Volume 12 Issue 3

March 2002

LEURA CASCADES

To Our Dear Friend Hans ___ A Tribute from his Bushwalking Companions and Friends.

**On Sunday morning 24th
February 2002 peace and
tranquility came for Hans.**

For Robyn and his family who cared for him so devotedly his passing has left a deep chasm in their lives. Their comfort, if any, coming from the knowledge that he no longer has to endure suffering. We all extend to Robyn and Hans' family our deepest affection and warmest understanding for their grievous loss.

Our Group, too, has lost a dear friend who walked the bushland paths with us from 1990 with such wisdom and knowledge. John and Helen Cardy, enthusiastic members of our Group have written a Tribute to Hans below. Those of you who knew Hans will endorse their sentiments and thoughts completely.

While speaking to Hans at our Christmas Barbecue our conversation drifted to gardening (as it would in such a beautiful setting) and he said, " Helen and you have not seen my garden have you ? You should call in one time when you are passing." Unfortunately fate took hold and we didn't get the chance to take up the invitation to call in at his property.

This was the last time I spoke to Hans and upon hearing of his passing, the memory of



Autumn in the Bush

AND LEURA FOREST

that conversation started me thinking. Every bushwalk we undertake, each time we venture into one of those mysterious canyons, meander along craggy ridges, tread quietly though lush rainforests, descend into majestic valleys or climb a pine shrouded mountain dusted with fresh snow we are in fact, in Hans' true garden.

More significant than tilling the soil and sowing seed on his own property, out in the bushland of these mountains which he loved so much, Hans sowed the seed of enthusiasm for , cultivated the thirst for knowledge of, his adopted country's flora and fauna. He planted in all those he met an understanding of the delicate nature of this environment in which he felt so comfortable. He nurtured the desire of people for a full appreciation of the Australian bush.

As is the case with any crop you sow and tend with such care, Hans reaped a rich harvest. His most lasting reward is the spark of passion and the burning quest for learning which he ignited in so many of us who were lucky enough to spend time exploring these mountains with him. The immense satisfaction he obtained from

being in these surroundings was clearly evident when he spoke to you.

Walk with pride whatever bush tracks are before you now Hans; you have left a continuing legacy on those tracks which we have shared.

Yes, Hans----Helen and I have indeed seen your garden. John and Helen Cardy.

We invite other members of our Group to write of Hans and their special memories of him which they would like to share with other members. These will be printed in our April Newsletter. Send them to Mary Reynolds 20 Church Lane Mt Wilson 2786.

The Funeral for Hans is to take place on Monday, 4th March 2002 at the Pinegrove Memorial Park at Rooty Hill at Midday.

Our February Walk

FRIDAY, 15TH FEBRUARY 2002

LEURA CASCADES and the LEURA FOREST

As we were enjoying our customary cup of tea at the Katoomba Falls picnic area at the conclusion of this walk, it was astonishing to reflect on the extraordinary diversity of environments we had experienced during the past six hours. How fortunate we are to have this treasure on our doorstep !

In her usual efficient manner Libby allocated the 17 participants to as few cars as possible for the short but spectacular trip along the Cliff Drive to our starting point at Leura Cascades. Walking past the "imitation rock" toilets, (these and shelter sheds of similar structure in the Leura/ Katoomba area I find quite fascinating; somewhat ' kitsch ' but I do hope they are preserved) and under the stone arch we are immediately treated with some pretty little cascades as the upper reaches and a minor tributary of Leura Falls Creek tumble over rock shelves and then converge to provide that welcome sound of running water as we make our way along the very well constructed track which follows the Leura Cascades.

A short side track leads into a little grotto which affords views back up the cascades and soon we are at the top of Bridal Veil Falls. Here there are King Ferns (*Toledo barbara*) hugging the banks of the creek just before it plunges over the edge on its journey to the valley below.

A short climb leads to a vantage point which offers magnificent views of Mt Solitary framed on the left by the near by vertical cliff face below Bridal Veil Lookout. As we begin the descent to the base of Bridal Veil Falls the raucous screech of Black Cockatoos is heard overhead. Below us now is a forest of tree ferns,

their fronds appear as whorled spokes of inter-meshed wheels covering the floor of this small glen. Once below this spreading canopy the sunlight is filtered by the fronds, creating a delicate tracery. There is the gurgling of water as the tiny creek drops into a deep rock pool which is framed by the fibrous trunks of these fascinating ferns.

The rock shelves at the base of the Falls provide ideal seating for morning tea. Following the recent most welcome rains, there is a quite strong flow on the left hand side of the huge rock abutment while over the remainder of the rock face water falls as a finely dispersed spray thus forming the Bride's Veil. Far above us the vantage point at which we had earlier paused could be seen against the clear blue sky. A most pleasing aspect was that old car bodies which littered the base of these falls on our last visit had been removed. It is a pity that it is not as easy to remove those responsible for putting them there.

We now follow the Amphitheatre track passing through tiny pockets of lush moist rainforest then within six or so paces we are in open dry areas. This pattern repeats itself several times--- an amazingly diverse habitat. A left turn leads us to newly constructed stairways which descend towards Lila Falls, a dainty cascade which spreads across rocks encrusted with mosses and tiny ferns. Around a bend in the track we encounter Linda Falls, which by contrast, is a more concentrated flow of water, a silver ribbon dropping almost vertically into a fern rimmed pool from which Linda Creek flows onto to meet Leura Falls Creek just downstream from Leura Falls. A short distance on, after crossing another delightful little creek, we arrive at the Leura Forest.

This is such an enchanting place. The forest sits on an almost flat "bench" of soil retained by the monolithic boulders which have crashed down from the cliffs above. The soil depth and the "bench" effect help to retain the moisture thus promoting the extraordinary growth of the trees present. There are Sassafras (*Doryphora sassafras*), Coachwood (*Ceratopetalum apetalum*) with their distinctive lichen blotched bark and at this time many spent flower clusters lying at the base of their trunks. The flowers and sepals are similar in form to its relative the Christmas Bush--*Ceratopetalum gummiferum*. There is a gigantic Lillypilly (*Acmena smithii*); some texts describe this as a common small tree. This then is an uncommon giant of a specimen ! Near by is a fine example of a Stringybark (*Eucalyptus blaxlandii*). What a wonderful place to pause for lunch; the soft green ambience, the stillness, the quietness. A lovely place to relax, to contemplate, to think of absent friends.

Continuing on our way after lunch, it was a pleasant surprise to see the octagonal picnic shelter (or **The Gazebo Tea House c. 1900** as more elegantly described on a near by plaque) was in the process of being rebuilt. It was a collapsed heap of rubble last time we were here.

The plaque also displays a photo of the trestle tables of the Lady Carrington Dining Hall which occupied this area in c. 1894. In this vicinity, near where the Federal Pass enters the Leura Forest is a huge boulder completely covered in rich green moss, a majestic sight.

Following the Dardanelles Pass, we head towards Katoomba Falls and soon after the forest becomes more open where we pass some imposing examples of Turpentine (*Syncarpia glomulifera*). The junction with the Giant Stairway is soon reached and a little further is the Federal Pass junction. There is extensive track refurbishment work in progress in this area. After rounding the base of the Three Sisters, glimpses of the Ruined Castle formation can be seen near Mt Solitary while the smooth-barked Apple (*Angophora costata*) declares its presence with its newly exposed smooth bark in pinks and greys and many with a golden colour which matched the sandstone cliffs towering above them. The traffic on the track increases as we approach the base of the Katoomba Falls where there is an example of a Black Sassafras (*Atherosperma moschatum*), an uncommon species restricted to deep gullies in the Upper Blue Mountains. We rest here briefly before continuing on toward the bottom station of the Scenic Railway and following the newly constructed path past the old coalmine to the Scenic Station. Here some of the group decided to be transported by cable car to the summit while others opted for the more traditional railway to the top. The remainder climbed the Furber Steps and were rewarded by uninterrupted views of the Katoomba Falls and a slightly different aspect of the Three Sisters. There appeared to be many more people descending these stairs than ascending them. In a small gully beside the Katoomba Falls nestled a Cedar Wattle (*Acacia elata*) in full bloom, a glorious contrast against the darker surroundings. Near the top of the climb we passed the Witches' Leap. (I will refrain from making any comment as to who, I thought, might leap out!). Suddenly we were back in "civilisation", rejoining the rest of the group at the picnic grounds.

As mentioned at the beginning this was an amazingly varied walk. There are sections providing easy access for those less agile who would otherwise never experience these valley environments right through to the most secluded enchanting little grottos and glens --- another truly wonderful walk !! John Cardy

Welcome to three new members who joined us on this walk: Geoff Kelly from Clarence; Fred Roberts from Littleton (Lithgow) and Norma Quin from Lithgow who came with Anne Clarke. It is most encouraging to have interest in the Group from the Lithgow District.

Our March Walk

TO HANGING or SPLIT ROCK BLACKHEATH

FRIDAY, 15TH MARCH 2002

The last time we undertook this walk was in March 1998. It is a reasonably flat walk as we follow the old Tip Road at Blackheath. There will be some marvellous views of the Grose Valley at various points particularly at Baltzer's Look Out. Hanging Rock or Split Rock is an incredible specimen of Nature's Work.

**MEET AT THE CORNER OF RIDGEWELL ST.
AND THE GREAT WESTERN HIGHWAY,
BLACKHEATH AT 9.30 A.M. or**

at MERRY GARTH at 9.00 a.m.

Bring morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea.

FURTHER WALKS

Friday, 19th April 2002 The Bush Run from Mt Wilson to Dane's Way

Friday, 17th May 2002 Lawson's Long Alley Mt Victoria

Friday, 21st June 2002 Evan's Crown at Tarana.

Friday, 19th July 2002 Station Rock Mt Tomah

Friday, 16th August 2002 Breakfast Creek Megalong Valley

BUSH CARE

It is very pleasing to report that the Bush Care Group have achieved a wonderful result in the Sloan Reserve Mt Wilson. It is now free from weeds and will only require monitoring from time to time. A great result and it demonstrates how quiet sustained effort from those who participated can protect and bring about a return to the natural environment. Congratulations to all those who have played a role in this valuable work. A special thank you to Liz Raines and Libby for their leadership and example and to Chris and Soren from the Blue Mts City Council Bush Regeneration Branch.

The next Bush Care Day will be on Friday, 8th March 2002 at the corner of Galwey Lane and Davies Lane at 9.00 a.m.

Friday, 12th April 2002 at Sloan Reserve at 9.00 a.m.

For further information contact Liz Raines on 4756 2121

Members News

One of our long term members, Gloria Harris recently under went surgery at Katoomba Hospital. It is good to know that Gloria is home and gradually regaining her strength. She hopes to be with us on our April Walk.

MEMBERS' DONATIONS for 2002

Alison sent out with the last newsletter renewal of membership notices and a financial statement.

We are sure you will be prompt in renewing your donation for 2002. Send it to Alison Heap "Gowan Ross" Lot 1 Farrer Rd. Mt Wilson 2786.

FOR OUR MARCH WALK CONTACT:

Libby Raines 4756 2121 or Mary Reynolds 4756 2006 or Alison Heap 4756 2055