
Mt Wilson Mt Irvine Bushwalking Group

Volume 21 Issue 1

January 2011

JINKI RIDGE OFF THE **OUR DECEMBER WALK**

**JINKI RIDGE off the BELLS
LINE OF ROAD between
BELL and Mt WILSON**

Friday 17th December 2010

Another year disappears into the annals of history, another twelve months of wonderful walks. Be thankful we are not living by the old Roman calendar which had only ten months; two less walks in the year!

January and February were added as the last two months in about 700 BC but around 450 BC, for some unknown reason, they became the first and second month leaving December, named after the Latin for 'ten' as the twelfth month; that all seems logical doesn't it?

January takes its name from Janus the Roman god of gates, doorways and bridges; he was also the god of endings and beginnings. Very appropriate for us, as this was the month we opened the door on the beginning of our 2010 walks. (Janus was represented as having a face at the front and the back of his head; this would have made him an ideal political candidate in Australia, both from a policy formulation and a self-preservation perspective.)

Speaking of politics we visited a veritable fairyland on our January walk. The Lady of



Summer in the Bush

BELLS LINE OF ROAD

the Bower welcomed us into the Fairy Bower, Coxs Cave and The Grotto at Mt Victoria. Mist-shrouded valley views, the gaping mouth of Coxs Cave, the red shales at a huge overhang on the Ferris Cave circuit and afternoon tea on Sunset Rock are memories which linger.

Februs was a Roman festival of purification from which February takes its name. There was little need for purification on our walk this month to the

Ruined Castle; the misty morning cleared to a perfect day. Lunch atop the ramparts of the Castle with 360 degree views, the intimate atmosphere of the rainforest along the Federal Pass and the grandeur of the Giant Landslide demonstrating the immense power that nature can unleash; just some of the purely stunning images which remain from that walk.

March took its name from Mars, the Roman god of war. Indeed it was necessary to wage war on our March walk against the prolific stinging nettles which encroached onto the track and some did find it a bit of a battle making the long continual climb out of the valley later in the day, but no one surrendered! We followed Carlon and Breakfast Creeks in the Megalong Valley down to the Coxs River. Scenes of tranquil reflective pools with overarching trees, giant She Oaks, a large Goanna and extensive pebble beds; just some of the things stored in the memory bank for

future access when calming peaceful thoughts are required.

The derivation of the name April is a little obscure however traditional etymology indicates it is from the Latin *aperire* 'to open'. I am not sure of the relevance of 'to open' in the naming of a month which falls in the Northern Hemisphere spring other than leaf buds and flowers begin to open at that time. A further derivation of '*aperire*' is '*aperient*', being a purgative or laxative; this may well have been a metaphor for the mood of the populace at the end of a long harsh northern winter. Of course in the Southern Hemisphere, where things are the right way up, April is in the middle of autumn and it was on a stunning autumnal morning that we set off for the Wollangambe River, Joes Canyon and Du Faur's Rocks. The overpowering grandeur of Clarence Creek, a meandering water-worn rill leading to the encroaching walls of Joes Canyon and the pensive expressions on the faces of those resting atop Chinamans Hat as they gazed back across the Wollangambe Wilderness in the late afternoon are among the images I retain of that day.

Maia, the Roman goddess of spring and growth was the source of the name for the fifth month of the calendar - May. The hand of Maia may well have touched this Group when it was formed in May twenty years ago for its growth has been remarkable; more than two hundred and fifty individuals have walked with the Group since then. To celebrate our twentieth anniversary we walked to the Tessellated Pavements at Mt Irvine, the venue for that first walk, and gathered for a celebratory afternoon tea at the Mt Wilson Village Hall. Spectacular scenery, Aboriginal rock art and sharpening grooves, and the changing mood of the mountains as a storm gathered come to mind from this walk; the most endearing memory however is the camaraderie of the forty-seven past and present walkers who gathered at the hall on that special afternoon.

Amy Porter perhaps would have felt she had been blessed by Juno, the Roman goddess presiding over marriage and women, for she

considered she lived in paradise when growing up near the escarpment above Kanimbla Valley south of Blackheath. In June (named after Juno) we walked Porters Pass (which takes its name from Amy's father Timothy) and Centennial Glen. Images which linger include the intricate honeycomb 'stalactites' fashioned by native bees below a large rock overhang, extensive views into the Kanimbla Valley and walking behind the diaphanous curtain of water at Centennial Glen Falls.

July, named for Julius Caesar who was born in this month, found us at a venue most certainly worthy of the stature of this Roman general and dictator. We walked the Valley of the Waters, National Pass, Slacks Stairs and Wentworth Pass at the head of the Jamison Valley. The exquisite beauty of the many waterfalls and cascades, the imposing sandstone cliffs and the image of Fred Roberts sitting alone beside the pool at the base of Wentworth Falls, a man at peace with the world, linger in my memory.

Julius Caesar was the great uncle of Augustus, the first emperor of Rome; August takes its name from this heir and successor of Caesar and it was the month in which we walked the Bowens Creek Road from Bilpin to Mt Irvine. The Romans had a reputation as great road builders, perhaps they should have been employed to construct this road; they may have been able to reduce the thirty-two years it took from conception to official opening. However, as it was political equivocation and indecision that actually delayed the completion for so long maybe a couple of Roman centurions would have been better suited to sort the problem. Memories taken from this walk include the evidence remaining of the skills and tenacity of the road builders in finally bringing this road to fruition, the sighting of a rather rare plant; grass-like tufts growing on vertical rock faces and the rusting pot and tins at the old camp under a rock overhang, poignant reminders of the hardships endured by the work gangs.

(Of course some in the group felt even twelve walks were not enough and winged away to Lord Howe Island in August to walk on this

little piece of Pacific paradise. Ray 'The Mountain Goat' Nesci cantered up Mt Gower; others from the group reached the summit at a more steady gait. We explored rainforests where magnificent Banyan Figs literally march across the landscape and astounding Pandanus, the Screw Pine, line the creeks supporting themselves on long prop roots that form tepee-like structures. We wandered along ocean and lagoon beaches, walked the top of towering cliffs which plunge straight down to the turquoise sea. Fed the fish at Neds Beach and ate less fortunate ones at Pinetrees and of course we couldn't leave the island without taking Ray to the Goat House Cave on Mt Lidgbird. A great time was had by all, especially those who had extra days added - courtesy of Qantas.)

No colourful or curious gods or goddesses, I'm afraid, are associated with the name of the month of September. It is taken from septem, Latin for 'seven' since in the early Roman calendar of ten months to a year, this was the seventh; rather mundane after the exotica associated with the earlier months. Mundane however is the last word one can imagine being used in relation to our September walk along the last section of the Six Foot Track and the subsequent cave inspection at Jenolan. The view across an impressive limestone crag down to the Blue Lake, the grandeur of the cavernous open arches and the magical formations in the enclosed cave system had us in seventh heaven.

The following month of our walking programme also has a rather prosaic derivation, being named for the eighth month of the early Roman year. However, an event that attains octogenarian status this year had significance for our destination in October. It is eighty years since Clarrie Hungerford applied for a lease over forty acres of what is now known as the Blue Gum Forest. The purchase of this lease from Hungerford, saving the forest from the threat of logging, is considered to be the Cradle of Conservation in NSW. The overwhelming image retained from this walk is the magnificence of those towering Blue Gums, thankfully unscathed by

the 2006 fires. The group who stayed on high to explore the cliff tops took in the breathtaking views from Pulpit Rock and the more immediate beauty of the native flora.

November, from the Latin novem for 'nine' brings us of course to our eleventh and penultimate walk for the year. Ikara Ridge, an enchanting walk through a kaleidoscopic array of wildflowers, culminating in stunning views into the gaping Upper Grose Gorge from a rocky headland that bears fantastically sculptured ironstone protrusions. The myriad wildflowers however are the outstanding image that lingers from this walk.

Suddenly it is summer and we are in December, the twelfth month named after, what else but decem, Latin for 'ten'. Astounding don't you think that a glitch in the nomenclature for the months that occurred so long ago persists to this day. There were no glitches however for our twelfth and final walk of the year when we followed Jinki Ridge down toward Dalpura Creek, Jinki Creek and the Upper Grose Gorge.

Twenty-two walkers gathered to explore this new venue for the Group. The weather was more than kind to us as the high cloud provided perfect walking conditions and nebulous puffs of pure white fog rose from the valley, opening up distant views as we approached the first of the vantage points.

It was apparent from the start of this walk we were once again to be treated to a plethora of wildflowers; a veritable rainbow of blues, yellows, violets, reds, greens, pinks and whites. Dagger Hakeas (*Hakea teretifolia*) displayed profuse flowers about to burst open while the fluffy white blossom of the uncommon *Hakea constablei* contrasted markedly with their large dark woody fruit. Near the start of this track, in rather swampy areas, the tiny pure white four-petalled flowers of the Mitre Weed (*Mitrasacme polymorpha*) were scattered in abundance across the ground. Soon there were clumps of Grass-leaf Trigger Plants (*Stylidium graminifolium*) holding aloft clusters of pink flowers scattered among carpets of Flannel Flowers (*Actinotus*

helianthi) with their white velvety green-tipped bracts surrounding the central flower heads.

We paused at an elevated vantage point to take in the view down to the Grose Gorge with distant sheer sandstone walls partly screened behind the lifting fog. Continuing on, as we approached the pagoda formations, we crossed rock platforms carrying miniature gardens containing the exquisite Narrow-leaf Trigger Plant (*Stylidium lineare*) in abundance.

We were then at the base of the spectacularly sculptured pagodas; sandstone pillars layered with intricately contorted veins of ironstone. Some spent time exploring these amazing formations, others were content to find little nooks to their liking and relax in these magical surroundings.

Though ancient Roman deities figure in the names of many of the months we have walked, we end the year in an area where, perchance, gods of a more local nature reside; Jinki being an Aboriginal term for 'Spirit Place'. While resting atop one of these fantastically formed pagodas, taking in the surrounding splendour, one cannot be but deeply moved by the primal spirit of the Australian bush.

And so it is back to Merry Garth where, thanks once again to the generous hospitality of Keith, Libby and Beth we enjoyed a fine Christmas luncheon. Anne Clarke, in a thank-you speech, eloquently expressed the spirit of cooperation, camaraderie and good cheer that exists in this Group; long may it be so.

John C

OUR JANUARY WALK

Friday 21st January 2011

Some Gems of the Carmarthen Hills

A Mount Wilson Ramble

Our first walk of the year will be in Mt Wilson. Just where exactly will depend upon the prevailing weather and will be decided on the day.

Meet at Merry Garth at 9.30am and be pleasantly surprised.

Bring morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea.

Contact Libby Raines on 4756 2121 (after 7pm) or Helen and John Cardy on 9871 3661 or on mobile 0418 646 487 if you need to leave a message.

FUTURE WALKS (Tentative schedule)

Friday 18th February 2011 – The Grand Canyon at Blackheath

Friday 18th March 2011 – Goochs Crater on the Newnes Plateau

MEMBERSHIP

Included with this issue are renewal forms for membership of the group.

You will note that cheques for contributions are to be made payable to HL Cardy and to be sent either direct to Helen at 14 Gum Grove Place, WEST PENNANT HILLS NSW 2125 or they may be sent to Libby Raines 'Merry Garth' 17 Galwey Lane MT WILSON NSW 2786. Cash payments of course can still be made to Libby or Helen Cardy.

Full records of income and expenditure continue to be maintained and a financial statement will be issued mid-year.

It would be appreciated if completed forms were returned as early as possible in the new year.

BUSH CARE

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 both by the other workers and by the native vegetation.

11th February 2011 at Sloan Reserve

11th March 2011 at Wynne Reserve

Contact Libby or Beth Raines on 4756 2121 for details