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# Mt Wilson Mt Irvine Bushwalking Group

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## HAZELBROOK AND LAWSON WALKS

## TOPIC

### OUR JUNE WALK

**WATERFALL CIRCUIT AT  
LAWSON AND TERRACE  
FALLS CIRCUIT AT  
HAZELBROOK**

**Friday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2011**

There is an old adage that warns you should be careful of what you wish for. Last month we changed our schedule to slot these two circuits in, hoping the waterfalls would still be running well following the good rains early in the year; then the heavens opened! Flooding on the Central and North Coast, torrential downpours in the Sydney area and steady rain for days on end in the mountains. (In a note received recently from bushwalking group co-founder Mary Reynolds, she stated their rain gauge at Mt Wilson keeps overflowing in this appalling weather.)

Then, lo and behold, Friday 17<sup>th</sup> dawned to a clear blue sky; we are blessed. Perfect conditions in which to walk these gullies and view the plentiful bounty from the skies tumbling over the rock faces as it courses toward the Nepean and so out to sea to begin the life giving cycle once more.

Eleven gathered in Honour Avenue (named to recognise those who served in WW1) on this clear but windy morn, eager to explore this new walk for the group. Our progress was brought to an abrupt halt however by a notice



Winter in the Bush

declaring the park was temporarily closed due to helicopter activity associated with track reconstruction in the area. A quick call to the BMCC number quoted on the sign determined that the work had been cancelled due to the windy conditions and we were free to continue. (How did we ever manage without the ubiquitous mobile phone?)

As the terrain levelled at the bottom of the stone steps the muddy conditions prompted the tucking of trouser cuffs into socks (my shorts wouldn't reach) and we continued

toward Lawson Creek. Soon, through the forest canopy, we caught a glimpse of the silver veil of a waterfall. At creek level we made our way through a mossy fern-filled bower to arrive at the base of the first falls for the day, Adelina. A narrow band of water drops into a shallow pool before flowing down the creek line bordered by moss covered boulders.

These falls are named after Adelaide Mary Wilson, daughter of Henry Wilson, publican of The Blue Mountains Inn at Lawson (Lawson Public School now occupies the site). In 1882 he organised the building of a track to these falls as an added attraction for guests at his inn and tourists generally. (Adelaide, or Adelina as her father called her, must have been a rather flamboyant dresser for she was known locally as The Blue Mountains Parrot.) The falls were known as Adelina before 1871

but then became known as Livingstone Falls after the famous Scottish doctor. In 1910 they reverted to Adelina; a victory for local history over Dr Livingstone, I presume.

We then made our way along the western bank of Lawson Creek accompanied by that magical sound of water burbling and gurgling as it rushes down the gully, often hidden below the overlapping circles of tree fern fronds. There are beautiful examples of the Smooth-barked Apple (*Angophora costata*) here. Some rise from colourful mats of discarded bark; their trunks, now clothed in freshly exposed garb, are irresistible to touch. Contrasting with these smooth colourful trunks are those of the Sydney Peppermint (*Eucalyptus piperita*) clothed in rough fibrous bark. As the track leads us deeper into the gully Blue Mountains Ash (*Eucalyptus oreades*) become more prominent, their smooth white trunks towering up out of the confines of the gully; their rather sparse canopies now able to catch the sunlight. Today these tall slender trunks, rising above skirts formed by ribbons of discarded bark, sway slowly back and forth; a majestic wind-powered ballet performed to a symphony of water music.

Presently we arrive at the junction of Lawson and Ridge Creeks and descend to the base of the thoughtfully named Junction Falls. Here the waters of Ridge Creek first drop in three main ribbons to a rock shelf then fan widely to cascade into a shallow pool. Nearby Lawson Creek leaps in a single bound from atop a large rock protuberance onto fallen boulders below. It is decided this is a perfect spot for morning tea.

A timber bridge then leads us across Lawson Creek which we follow for about three hundred metres. The rocky slope on our left contains many small caves partially hidden behind the vegetation while to our right the swaying Blue Mountains Ash put on a rhythmic encore performance. We ignore the stone steps on our left and continue on to Federal Falls on Cataract Creek. These are a delightful set of falls in a small amphitheatre surrounded by lush vegetation and containing

a sandy beach. These falls were named for the Federation of Australia in 1901, curiously however the name was given in 1889; obviously a decision by someone full of optimism. Previous to this they were known as Hays Cascades after Joseph and Eliza Hay who had extensive land holdings in the area.

We retrace our path for a short distance and now take the previously ignored stone steps; a sign, painted on the rock long before metrication, indicates it is half a mile to Cataract Falls. We climb up past a lookout, which is temporarily closed, and drop back down to, and cross, Cataract Creek. The track as we approach Cataract Falls is stunning. On our left the land slopes down beneath a thick tree cover to the creek. On our right are rock-faces and overhangs dripping luxuriantly in bright green mosses and tiny ferns; the brilliant green of the moss is emphasised at one point by the salmon pink trunk of an *Angophora* surrounded by vivid orange medallions of discarded bark. An old lichen encrusted wooden sign high on a tree trunk indicates we are at Cataract Falls.

These falls drop in two distinct stages into a wide shallow pool with a cavernous rock overhang to the right. Fallen and beautifully distorted moss-covered tree trunks surround the pool. Under the watchful eye of a stony face peering from the rock in which it is carved we take the track that leads us to the middle of the falls. From here someone notices an object in a tree at the top of the falls; is it a nest, perhaps a bird, what could it be?

We now emerge onto a fire trail that we follow along a ridge for a kilometre or so, surrounded by the golden blossom of the Sunshine Wattle (*Acacia terminalis*), then drop down to Terrace Falls Creek, our second venue for the day. After a stroll along Terrace Falls Road, with a shower threatening after such a clear morning, we arrive at the eastern entry point of the Terrace Falls Track.

Dropping down past some huge moss-shrouded sandstone tors we pass between two giant Mountain Grey Gums (*Eucalyptus*

*cypellocarpa*) growing no more than a metre apart, they form an impressive gateway to this magical area. We turn left across some fallen tree trunks and pass a grove of Coachwood (*Ceratopetalum apetalum*); their lichen-mottled trunks towering up past a gigantic triangular rock overhang. Soon we are at Pyramid Falls, falls which consists of three major drops each spreading wider as they descend into a delightful ferny dell. There is no visible outlet from the pool at the base of these falls, the water obviously flowing underground to emerge further down the gully.

Back on the main track we continue the rather steep descent through this most beautiful of landscapes. The open eucalypt forest gives way to rainforest consisting mainly of Coachwood with the rough dark trunks of a few scattered Sassafras (*Doryphora sassafras*) adding contrast to the scene. There is an abundance of ground ferns and many Rough Tree Ferns (*Cyanthea australis*) hold their fronds aloft on gently curving trunks. To our left we are looking down into an extremely steep-sided gully, at its base the waters of Pyramid Falls reappear to cascade and tumble over mossy rocks on their way to Bedford Creek. The track leads us past ferny banks and rock outcrops; we duck under a dripping rock overhang and after negotiating some rustic stone steps nestled in the thick leaf litter we arrive at Bedford Pool. We had planned to have lunch on the grassy bank on the other side of the pool however the creek was too high to cross. Instead we carry on to a large rock overhang beside the track and settle down on the long natural rock bench seat conveniently located there.

Perched here we are looking down through tall straight tree trunks to a long clear pool with water cascading in from two sources; the upstream of Bedford Creek and from the confluence of Terrace Falls Creek. It then escapes across rocky rapids to continue its combined downstream journey. As Libby was distributing slices of her delicious bushwalkers cake a lone bushwalker appears, perfect timing. Libby of course offered the new arrival, Anne, a piece of cake. It transpired

that Anne was from Sydney and she joined us for part of the remaining circuit.

Pushing on we cross Terrace Falls Creek with the help of an improvised hand-held handrail and head toward Willawong Pool. We pass an old stone fireplace on the left now completely clothed in vivid green velvety moss; this area is known as Picnic Point. Shortly on the right is a high rock wall, parts of which are blackened by fires from times of Aboriginal use of the area as a shelter; clumps of a grass-like plant cascade from the ledges above. At Willawong Pool, a beautiful sheltered spot, we look across to a small cave under a large boulder at the edge of the water. It is at this pool that Lawson Creek, along which we had walked this morning, meets Bedford Creek.

We return to the main track and make our way upstream beside Terrace Falls Creek. This area is absolutely enchanting, green pervades the whole scene; mosses, lichens, ground and tree ferns and dense rainforest foliage dominate in this verdant little valley. We cross the creek below Little Terrace Falls, a stunningly beautiful double cascade, then make our way along the creek line. Here, in this fern-filled gully, the creek flows in a series of exquisite small cascades that link tiny limpid pools set among large mossy boulders; a sight to behold. We recross the creek below Salote Pool and soon we are at Terrace Falls.

How lucky we are to see these falls under these conditions! From a wide base on a smooth rock shelf the terraces step up the gully becoming narrower as they ascend. I didn't count them but I believe there are twelve terraces. Over these terraces wide silver ribbons of water drop from step to step with thin argent threads spreading to the edges of the terraces; the cascading water luminescent against the dark rock. The water accumulates momentarily in a wide shallow pool before streaming over the rock shelf past a huge pyramidal boulder topped with Rock Felt Fern (*Pyrrrosia rupestris*) and a host of other minute and delicate ferns. We stand transfixed by the sublime beauty of this scene; surely one of the gems of the mountains.

Our extra walker, Anne, leaves us here to make her way up the zigzag track to Terrace Falls Road. (This track with its skilfully made stone steps was built in 1892 by Thomas Gallagher for the grand sum of fourteen pounds.) We continue on toward Victor Falls, crossing the creek once more via what remains of some stepping stones on a rock shelf. We then climb into more open forest and glimpses of the falls are seen through the trees. A sidetrack leads us down to the base of Victor Falls. In these conditions of plentiful flow in the creek there are in fact two falls dropping over the cliff, one on each side of the gully. The falls were named in 1918 for the celebration of victory after World War 1. From 1882 until that time they were known as Bass Falls for Surgeon George Bass of the ship Reliance who, with two companions, made an attempt in 1796 to cross these mountains.

The track then leads us up past a cliffline and swings sharp right to deliver us back to the fire trail which returns us to the top of Cataract Falls at Lawson. From the bridge above the falls we can see that object spotted in a tree this morning from the middle of the falls. Was it a bird? Was it a nest? No, it was a pair of Reg Grundies; men's undies high in a tree, therein lies a tale I'm sure.

Soon we are back at the cars ending an exhilarating walk through a stunningly beautiful landscape; nine substantial waterfalls on six different creeks – magical!

Footnote: Historical details and anecdotes and sources of place and feature names were gleaned mainly from Keith Painter's 'Pocket Pal' series of booklets for this area and from Brian Fox's 'Upper Blue Mountains Geographical Encyclopaedia'; both invaluable sources of information relating to these mountains and their walking tracks.

John C

## OUR JULY WALK

Friday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2011

**A Little History, a Touch of Victory, a Little Mystery and Lots of Scenery**

## Coxs Road and Lawsons Long Alley – Mount York and Hartley Vale

The group last explored Coxs Road in 2007 and Lawsons Long Alley in 2002; this will be the first time we have combined these two routes in the same walk. This walk is approximately 9km with an ascent of about 250 metres on the return from the valley; the climb is however fairly gentle. The walk offers spectacular views, the history of these convict-constructed mountain crossings and of Hartley Vale, forested slopes, open grazing land and marshy creek lines.

**Meet at the Lawson Track Head parking area which is on the right hand side about 1.25km along Mt York Road (opposite the Berghofer Pass Track) at Mt Victoria at 9.00am, or at Merry Garth at 8.30am.**

**There will be a short car shuffle to the walk start point at the Mt York Lookout. Your early notification of attendance would help Libby in organising this shuffle.**

Bring morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and plenty of water.

**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.**

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## FUTURE WALKS (Tentative schedule)

Friday 19<sup>th</sup> August – Kanangra Walls

Friday 16<sup>th</sup> September – Six Foot Track; Megalong Cemetery to Coxs River

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## 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.**

8<sup>th</sup> July 2011 at Galwey Lane near Jalscene

12<sup>th</sup> August 2011 at Sloan Reserve

**Contact Libby or Beth Raines on 4756 2121 for details**