
Mt Wilson Mt Irvine Bushwalking Group

Volume 23 Issue 11

November 2013

BLUE GUM FOREST WALK CANCELLED

TOPIC

OUR PLANNED OCTOBER WALK

BLUE GUM FOREST –
PERRYS LOOKDOWN to
GOVETTS LEAP LOOKOUT

Friday 18th October 2013

A plume of smoke could be seen ascending above the horizon on the afternoon of Wednesday 16th

October as Helen and I drove along an elevated section of Pitt Town Road while returning from grandparent duties at Cattai. “Looks as if it could be out past Mt Wilson” I casually commented; that was possibly the last *casual* comment relating to smoke that was made by anyone for the next couple of weeks.

That plume was the relatively benign-looking embryonic stage of the conflagration which erupted, fanned by strong winds - hot and dry, that night and the following day; the beginning of the now infamous ‘State Mine’ fire.

This fire sent fiery fingers east and north from Lithgow, devastating the Zig Zag Railway complex and seriously threatening Clarence, Dargan, Bell, Mt Wilson, Mt Irvine where two homes were lost, Mt Tomah, Beraming, Mountain Lagoon and Bilpin; its northward spread took it across the Newnes Plateau.

While that fire raged in the northern sector of the Blue Mountains there remained an



Spring in the Bush

ominous portent in other areas of the mountains created by the high temperatures, low humidity and strong gusty winds. Worst fears were realised of course when the Linksvie Road fire raged into life at Springwood causing devastating losses in Springwood, Winmalee and Yellow Rock; thankfully no lives were lost.

United States novelist Thomas Wolfe wrote: “Fire drives a thorn of memory in the heart.”

How true that must be for so many in the mountain community, and indeed

elsewhere in the State, who have suffered loss in the recent fires; our thoughts go out to them all. However, though thorns aplenty were driven into so many saddened hearts the blossoming of community spirit is wonderful to witness in times such as these.

In these circumstances of course bushwalking is the last thing one would consider undertaking and our planned venture into the Blue Gum Forest was put off and subsequently rescheduled for March 2014.

Although of a much lower order of importance, indeed shrinking into insignificance when compared to loss of homes, these fires have effected many tracks we have walked in the past; following are just some of them. In the Mt Wilson / Mt Irvine area one of the possible venues for our Christmas walk, Boronia Point, was burnt out. The fire also engulfed the tracks below Du

Faurs Rocks to Pheasants Cave, those leading down to the Wollangambe River, also the Tessellated Pavements track at Mt Irvine.

The northward spread of the fire took it across places we have walked - The Lost City pagodas, Bungleboori, Goochs Crater, Lunch Rock and up toward Deep Pass.

South of the Bells Line of Road the Jinki Ridge, Birrabang Ridge and Yileen Spur tracks were overrun. The fire surged across the tracks to Rigby Hill and Walls Lookout before running up over Mount Banks.

Across The Causeway several homes were lost in the Mt Victoria fire. Ikara Ridge and the Asgard Swamp area were burned and a hazard reduction burn was carried out from near Victoria Falls to Perrys Lookdown; this would have impacted on the track to Baltzer Head and Hanging Rock. The Mt Victoria fire also destroyed homes in the Mt York Road area and it appears the historic roads walking tracks in the area would have suffered.

Fortress Ridge, Lockley Pylon, The Butterbox and Mt Hay escaped the fires although at this stage Mt Hay Road is closed while operations are being carried out in the Grose Valley.

The fires have not impacted National Park areas south of the Great Western Highway.

John Cardy

OUR NOVEMBER WALK

Friday 15th November 2013

Wonderful Wildflowers, Vast Valley Views

Fortress Rock Lookout and Fortress Ridge off the Mt Hay Road north of Leura

The group last visited this venue in November 2009. This is a relatively easy walk, about nine kilometres return, which follows ridgelines with very few ups and downs, just some gentle undulations. We will first visit Fortress Rock Lookout with views to the west across Govett Gorge to Evans and Govetts Leap lookouts; we will then continue along Fortress Ridge to Fortress Hill which offers 360 degree views.

Meet at Leura on Mt Hay Road in the 'dip' just past Churchill St at 9.15am or at Merry Garth for an 8.30am departure.

There is no direct access to Mt Hay Road from the Western Highway at Leura Primary School when travelling from Sydney; it is necessary to approach via the roundabout above the new tunnel, turn 180 degrees and travel back down the hill to turn left into Mt Hay Rd at the school. (Or travel via Britain St or Victory Lane and Churchill St to avoid the school.) Those travelling from the Katoomba side also approach via this roundabout. 4WD vehicles would be most welcome. There will be a vehicle rationalisation to drive to the start. 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.

FUTURE WALKS (Tentative schedule)

Friday 6th December – A Mt Wilson morning walk – Zircon Creek area followed by our end of year Christmas luncheon. (Note the move to the FIRST Friday of the month to hopefully avoid clashes with other Christmas commitments.)

Friday 17th January 2014 – Bowens Creek Road – Bilpin to Mt Irvine

Friday 21st February 2014 – Grand Canyon, Evans Lookout to Neates Glen

Friday 21st March 2014 – Blue Gum Forest, Perrys Lookdown to Govetts Leap Lookout

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.

8th November at Founders Corner

13th December - meet at Hay Lane

Contact Libby Raines on 4756 2121 for details