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# Mt Wilson Mt Irvine Bushwalking Group

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Volume 25 Issue 8

August 2015

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## MERMAIDS CAVE WALK CANCELLED

## TOPIC

### OUR PLANNED JULY WALK

**MERMAIDS CAVE, the  
MYSTERY HOLES and  
COACHWOOD GLEN at  
BLACKHEATH**

**Friday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2015**

*It was a dark and stormy night;  
the snow fell in torrents – except  
at occasional intervals, when it  
was checked by a violent gust of  
wind which swept up the streets,  
----- rattling along the  
housetops, and fiercely agitating the scanty  
flame of the lamps that struggled against the  
darkness.*

Little did I think that in two consecutive months I would have an excuse to borrow Baron Lytton's famous (infamous?) opening; in this case his full first sentence is paraphrased. I am beginning to feel a little like the dog Snoopy, the aspiring author in the comic strip Peanuts. He was often pictured atop his kennel, sitting at his typewriter, punching out 'It was a dark and stormy night' but writer's block always set in for Snoopy at that point; I shall endeavour to continue.

A portent for this walk developed on the Thursday when several people ringing to book in opened with the query - 'Is the walk still on tomorrow?' It grew a little more ominous when those phoning from mountain locations stated how bitterly cold it was. Jeanie Cupitt,



Winter in the Bush

ringing from South Bowenfels, relayed that local media was predicting heavy snow overnight continuing up to about 9am on Friday; but we live in hope, no one likes missing these monthly ventures into the wonders of the Blue Mountains.

When Libby rang me as usual on Thursday night to check on numbers booked in she expressed doubts about the possibility of the walk proceeding. Snow had been, and indeed was still falling. It was decided to leave the final decision until early in the

morning.

During the next few hours Mother Nature made that decision for us. Heavy snow had fallen virtually right along the Great Dividing Range, in some areas the heaviest falls in fifty years. Libby was isolated at Mt Wilson, the Bells Line of Road was closed west of Bilpin, the Great Western Highway was closed west of Lawson.

The television news shots exposed a winter wonderland, exquisite scenes of avenues of trees, branches weeping under the weight of snow, parks and paddocks cloaked in white. Familiar sights, such as the streets and railway station at Katoomba, The Carrington, The Hydro Majestic all transformed into picture postcard alpine tableaux. Beautiful to look at but of course our walk had to be cancelled.

In the twenty-five years this group has been operating, with three hundred and twenty two walks scheduled, only eleven walks have had to be cancelled due to the weather; quite remarkable really. This is the first one cancelled due to snow.

Our last encounter with snow was back in August 2001 when our dear departed bushwalking friend Hans Oberstebrink suggested we change our scheduled walk and go to Mount Bindo off the Jenolan Caves Road. He was sure the overnight snow would have transformed the mountain; how right he was! On a still, clear sunny day we walked to the 1364 metre summit of Mount Bindo through enchanting pine and native forest, trees festooned and the ground blanketed with snow; a simply magical walking experience.

Snow of course can mean different things to different people, as illustrated in the following quotes.

An official of British Rail explaining major disruptions to services in 1991 said:

“We are having particular problems on this occasion with the type of snow which is very dry and powdery and is actually penetrating all the protection we had on some of our locomotives.”

This drew the following anonymous riposte:

“British Rail, which last week predicted that it was ready for the worst the weather could do, now blames the near total dislocation of its services on - the wrong sort of snow”.

The last word goes to novelist JB Priestley:

“The first fall of snow is not only an event, but it is a magical event. You go to bed in one kind of world and wake up to find yourself in another quite different, and if this is not enchantment, then where is it to be found?”

John Cardy

## OUR AUGUST WALK

Friday 21<sup>st</sup> August 2015

**Dry Open Forest, Lush Enclosed Rainforest and no less than Nine Waterfalls**

## The Waterfall Circuit from Woodford to Hazelbrook

This is a new venue for the group; it is an easy to medium grade walk of approximately 6 kms. The Transit of Venus Track at Woodford takes us past the first three waterfalls and a rather obscure track takes across to the Burgess Falls Walking Track at Hazelbrook; this leads us, via a few sidetracks, to the remaining six waterfalls.

**Meet in Brook Street in Hazelbrook at 9.30am or at Merry Garth for an 8.15am departure.**

To reach Brook St turn off the Highway at the traffic lights at Hazelbrook into Oaklands Road. Follow this road for about 1 km and around a sharp curve to the left turn immediately right into Brook Street. There will be a car shuffle to our starting point at the end of Woodbury Street in Woodford.

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.**

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## FUTURE WALKS (Tentative schedule)

Friday 18<sup>th</sup> September – Mount Banks and Banks Wall

Friday 16<sup>th</sup> October – Smiths Hill Fire Trail, Scrivener Pass and Danes Way at Mt Irvine

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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.**

**Friday 14<sup>th</sup> August at Hay Lane (Sloan Reserve)**

**Friday 11<sup>th</sup> September at Silva Plana**

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