
Mt Wilson Mt Irvine Bushwalking Group

Volume 27 Issue 8

August 2017

PULPIT ROCK TO CRIPPS LOOKOUT

TOPIC

OUR JULY WALK

**PULPIT ROCK to CRIPPS
LOOKOUT and RETURN at
BLACKHEATH**

Friday 21st July 2017

It was with a rather heavy heart I bid farewell to the group as they set off down the track which leads to Pulpit Rock Lookout. I have damaged ligaments in my hip and my Radiation Oncologist has advised bushwalking only on flat terrain; a little boring but that's life. My mood was greatly lifted however to see Libby was back to undertake at least some of this walk; so wonderful to see.

A little history to start. The Pulpit Rock Lookout was opened by then Minister for Lands E.A. Buttenshaw (of the Buttenshaw Bridge on Prince Henry Cliff Walk) in December 1935.

The Pulpit Rock Track was constructed in 1936, work starting near the middle and extending to each end, which allowed the track to be opened sooner as a complete project.

The walk today started at Pulpit Rock Lookout and followed most of the Pulpit Rock Track toward the Govetts Leap Lookout area and return. With Libby unsure as to how far she would go along the track Karin Kirkpatrick kindly stepped in as leader and Des Barrett took up my usual position as whip. And



Winter in the Bush

Barbara Harry volunteered 'army style' to be the scribe for today - here is her story.

Something very special about our walk today. Libby has returned. (Much cheering.) However, not so special, our revered whip and literary expert, John, has sustained a hip injury while bush bashing near the Butterbox and has been advised to walk only on flat surfaces. Hence he drove Helen and departed to enjoy scones and no doubt important chatter with Mary Reynolds.

I somehow won the raffle to be the scribe for our walk today in John's absence; he will add the interesting and important historical bits.

A most perfect winter's day for our Pulpit Rock walk. No wind, no cloud, gentle sun and around 3 degrees as we assembled on the sunny side of Hat Hill Road. The group was clad in scarves and gloves, with Kim Gow sporting a very snazzy multi-coloured hand knitted beanie with purple fluffy tufts; Wendy Holland may well have been its creator.

We bundled into cars for the 5kms or so to the start of the Pulpit Rock Track. Libby was welcomed back with spontaneous applause. Michael Ihm's two teenage granddaughters, Sarah and Fiona, who were visiting from Germany, joined our group bringing the numbers to twenty-two. We descended to the stunning lookout named Pulpit Rock as, like a pulpit, it perches, protruding high above

Govett Gorge. With three levels of lookout platforms it allows 220 degree views deep into the Govett and Grose Gorges, across to Mt Banks, the peaks to the south and the east and around the bend into the Blue Gum Forest.

Here we had morning tea, lots of chats, photos and exploration of the different viewing platforms, each offering a new angle and perspective to this expansive panorama.

Back up to the main track to follow the contours of the mountain as it meanders, with ups and downs, narrow sections and one rather wet muddy patch. All the way we were spoilt with marvellous shimmering views across the valley to the massive cliffs opposite, at times clear and others through the tall mottled trunks of eucalypts in the foreground. Now, about the flora. All the way our path was highlighted with glowing splotches of sunshine wattle (*Acacia terminalis*). Also, many *Leptospermum* with small waxy 5 petalled flowers. Despite asking Ray Nesci and Merren Dargan (another native plant expert) no one knew the exact type. Merren told me many other very long named plants; one I recall was v.l.n. fuschia tricolour, little cigarette shaped flowers, very pretty delicate and prevalent. Kim Gow was very interested in milking Merren's knowledge of the hanging swamps as she and Tim have such vegetation on their property in Leura.

The fauna was less evident. No snakes, beetles, koalas or red triangle slugs, that I saw. A lyrebird was heard and Libby spotted a raptor.

This return walk was chosen in case Libby or anyone else wished to have a break and pick up the walkers on the way back. No one did. So lunch was at the turnaround point, opposite Govetts Leap, the not very full cascading waterfall, We could see workers in high vis jackets opposite producing chain saw noises. Lunch spots were chosen on rocky outcrops up and down the slope on either side of the track, enjoying full sun and the view across the valley with millions of eucalypt leaves shimmering in the reflected sunlight. As

always Libby's bush walker cake was a lunch highlight.

The return seemed much faster than the outward trip, possibly because we didn't make the several off track extensions to the many vantage points jutting into the valley offering even greater spectacle. It's interesting too, how different the terrain appears travelling in the opposite direction. The view was now on our right and the western sun gleamed golden on the striated rugged sandstone cliffs opposite.

The photos and chatter continued as we snaked around the side of the mountain. Tales of travel, breakfast ideas, hot water bottles and the status of clothing as it moves from good to gardening to garbage. Nothing too deep.

Not a cloud blemished the big blue canopy all day, but the temperature had reached double figures. John met us at the cars to share afternoon tea. We had walked 9.2kms, 12,104 steps and climbed 26 floors.

I had hoped for an incident or two to add a little drama to this composition, but alas it proved to be just another brilliant day of walking with friends in our magnificent mountains.

Barbara Harry

Thank you so much Barbara for that bright and breezy account of the walk, and thank you Freda Moxom who, I believe, shepherded Libby during the day.

Now, a little more history to finish; pay attention please, questions may be asked at the conclusion of this newsletter.

The group turned back just short of Cripps Lookout at a spot where they could take advantage of the luxuriant warmth on a sundrenched hillside in which to have lunch.

Cripps Lookout was named for William Sydney Cripps (1873 – 1947). He was an army private in the Boer War. He later operated an orchard on his land holding in Shipley Road, Blackheath. An Alderman on Blackheath Council from 1923 to 1944, he was Mayor from 1933 to 1939 and again in 1943. He was

very active in promoting the natural beauty and attractions of Blackheath. (This was previously known as the New Sight Lookout.)

Another vantage point the group would have passed today was Boyds Lookout, named for Michael John Boyd (1880 – 1956), Park Ranger for Blackheath Council from 1926 to 1945 when he resigned for health reasons. This name was suggested by Brian Fox in 1999. (Boyds Beach along the Popes Glen Track was also named in recognition of his work on walking tracks in Blackheath.)

As stated by Barbara the views to the cliffs across the valley were outstanding. Cliff faces which would have been prominent included Griffith Taylor Wall to the left of Govetts Leap, Carne Wall between Greaves Creek and Govetts Creek, and the cliffs below Fortress Ridge, Lockley Pylon and Du Faur Head.

Griffith Taylor Wall was named for Thomas Griffith 'Grif' Taylor (1880-1963), academic, geographer, geologist, meteorologist and explorer. He had far sighted opinions regarding the sustainable population for Australia, and denounced the White Australia policy. He joined Captain Scott's ill-fated 1910 to 1913 *Terra Nova* Antarctic expedition as geographer on which Scott's party of five reached the South Pole, only to find the Norwegian party led by Roald Amundsen had beaten them; Scott's party of course perished on the return trip across the ice.

Carne Wall was named for Joseph Edmund Carne (1855-1922). As government geologist he carried out extensive studies of the coal and kerosene shale deposits in the Blue Mountains.

Barbara also mentioned the lunchtime views across to the waterfall of Govetts Leap; this spectacular fall has long been a special attraction in these mountains. Following is an abbreviated extract from *The Railway Guide of New South Wales* of 1879 written by Eccleston Du Faur who had close connections with Mount Wilson and whom Du Faur Head was named after.

“At a distance of 520 yards from the end of the road a small watercourse abruptly

terminates at the Falls known as Govett's Leap, the perpendicular depth of which has been determined at 520 feet, to where the water first touches the rocks below, while the actual foot of the Falls, at the basin, immediately below those rocks, may be considered as 600 feet. -----

----- From the top you can see nothing distinctly. Only an awful gulf, with a confused mass of growth far below; but from below it appears a large amphitheatre, filled with trees of luxuriant growth, and ferns and mosses. The water coming down sometimes like falling rockets, sometimes dissipated by the wind into clouds of spray before it has half completed its downward course, is wafted over a large area, and ensures the conditions of perennial moisture so plainly evidenced by the luxuriance of the surrounding vegetation. Then again, from below you have a skyline broken into many fantastic shapes, and lighted up in parts with delicate bright hues, while others are in deep shade in lieu of the almost uniformly level horizon seen from above. Standing at the basin at the foot of Govett's Leap, which is only about 25 yards from the perpendicular wall of rock, it is almost impossible to look up at the Falls. The better plan is to lie on one's back, and look upwards to the zenith, when the 700 feet cliffs forming the ends of the horse-shoe bend in which the Falls are situated, tower above you on either side, while the waterfall appears to be coming down from a depression in their centre almost onto your face. Few persons, perhaps, could lie in that position for more than a minute or two at a time without feeling giddy, -----.”

Eccleston Du Faur certainly appeared to be enraptured by the majesty of Govetts Leap. There are two other long descriptions of Govetts Leap in that Railway Guide, one declaring them, rather grandiosely, to be “one of the greatest natural wonders of the world”.

The falls were named after surveyor William Govett, perhaps the first European to see them; many myths ensued. Govett was described as convict Dick the Swell who fell over the falls when surprised by guards. He

then became a bushranger who rode his horse over the leap to escape capture. This myth attained such strength there is now a statue in Neate Park at Blackheath of the bushranger mounted on rearing horse and commuters are confronted with a mural on Blackheath Station of the pistol wielding bushranger and his horse taking the leap. These mountains are fertile grounds for myths.

On the return walk along the track the group would have had great views, from several vantage points, of the spire which is Pulpit Rock. This Pulpit Rock is one of, and at fifteen metres high, perhaps the most spectacular of at least ten Pulpit Rocks in the Blue Mountains region. There are at least sixteen features carrying the name "Pulpit" in this vicinity, possibly indicating a rather pious bent (or perhaps not very fertile imaginations) of those allocating names in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Contrary to the popularity of the name it appears sermons were only ever delivered from two of the ten Pulpit Rocks. Those were by John Britty North preaching to his miners from the Pulpit Rock at the corner of Loftus and Dulhunty Streets in Katoomba, and a sermon delivered at the Pulpit Rock on Hassans Walls in 1932.

And yes indeed I did enjoy a couple of hours pleasant conversation with Mary Reynolds, and her scrumptious scones; lots of her scones. Delicious.

John Cardy

Those unfathomable little happenings in the bush continue; enigmatic little movements, shadows, sounds and fleeting visions. Over the last few months they have carried a slight touch of femininity; today a hint of the male gender appeared. Perhaps there is more to come; don't go away. (JC)

OUR AUGUST WALK

Friday 18th August 2017

Valley Views and Pagodas Galore

The Lost City on the Newnes Plateau

The group last visited this spectacular venue in March 2012. This is an easy walk, only 3km

each way, and you will be rewarded with spectacular views. There will be a vehicle rationalisation at Clarence for the 11km drive to the Bungleboori Camping Area; 4WD vehicles would be appreciated though not absolutely necessary.

Meet at the Zig Zag Railway at Clarence at 10.15am or at Merry Garth for a 9.45am departure.

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 0400 444 966.

FUTURE WALKS (Tentative schedule)

Friday 15th September 2017 – Fortress Ridge near Leura

Friday 20th October 2017- Lunch Rock near Bell

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.

11th August – Meet in Hay Lane - Sloan Reserve

8th September – Meet corner of Queens Avenue and Wynnes Rocks Road

Contact Libby Raines on 4756 2121 for details