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# Mt Wilson Mt Irvine Bushwalking Group

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TO LIBBY

TOPIC

## TRIBUTES TO LIBBY

TO DEAR LIBBY FROM  
HER BUSHWALKING  
FRIENDS

May 2018

This edition of our newsletter will be devoted to Libby who led this group for twenty-eight years as of May this year. Libby passed away on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> May after a brave struggle with cancer.

Members of our group, some who have known Libby for many years, others who were fortunate enough to have had Libby's acquaintance for but a shorter period, will express here what her passing will mean to them and what lasting legacy she has conferred on us all to hold dear well into the future.

Many members attended Libby's Thanksgiving and Remembrance Service held on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2018, appropriately our May walking day, at her beloved St George's Church at Mt Wilson.

Presentation by Helen and John Cardy at the Remembrance Service for Libby on behalf of the Bushwalking Group

Helen and I met Libby 22 years ago through the Bushwalking Group, an event which changed our lives; Libby's involvement with that group is what I shall be talking about.



Winter in the Bush

Libby, along with Mary Reynolds, established the Mt Wilson Mt Irvine Bushwalking Group in May 1990 when 17 walkers ventured out to the Tessellated Pavements; what an achievement to keep a group together for 28 years, over which time about 600 different people have walked with the group.

Always thinking of others, as was her wont, Libby's motivation for forming the group came from her realisation that many residents, while loving their gardens, rarely ventured out into the surrounding bushland.

Initially the walkers were drawn from the two communities, but soon they were drawn from further afield; other parts of the mountains and from Sydney; as indeed was the case with Helen and me.

During the walks Libby would always encourage us to pause and observe our surroundings, to open our eyes to the diversity of the bush, to absorb the tranquillity of the rainforests, hear the songs of the birds, take in the majesty of the cliff faces and gorges.

Many times I observed Libby sitting on a rock outcrop, taking in the view before her; the perfect picture of someone at peace with their world.

Being leader was just part of Libby's contribution to the group, her thoughtfulness went further. She would rise early on each bushwalk day and bake her legendary Bushwalker Cake; sliced in the baking dish and wrapped in a tea towel, it would be distributed, often still warm, to the group at lunchtime. It was no worry to Libby if there was a large group walking on a particular day; she simply baked two cakes.

She had a very caring and protective attitude to the group. A classic example was when dear departed Ern Morgan was reluctant to hang up his boots. Libby used to assist him over rough patches of track, even walking backwards down irregular stone steps to prevent him from losing his balance; she really was quite a lady. She inspired such confidence in the group we would follow her anywhere. This was amply demonstrated on one walk when Libby left the track and walked into the bush, we all dutifully followed until we realised Libby was heading into the bush for a comfort stop.

Libby also led us on Li Lo trips down the October and DuFaur Creek canyons, through the first and second sections of the Wollangambe Canyon with short explorations of Serendipity and Whungee Wheengee Canyons. Opening up this incredible, wet, green, mystical world; an experience many of us never imagined we would ever encounter.

I eventually became involved with helping Libby with the planning of walks and with writing of the newsletter. This led me to accompany Libby on exploratory walks to new venues or to check out tracks we had not ventured onto for some years. These quiet times with Libby, sometimes accompanied by Beth, were very special. Libby would quietly clear debris off the track, rebuild cairns, replace stepping stones etc.

At the time of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the group we did a rough calculation of the distance Libby would have walked on the actual walks, plus check walks, and it would have equalled walking from Sydney to Darwin

and back to Brisbane. We have walked almost 100 walks since then which means she would have probably made it back to Sydney.

What an achievement, to introduce 600 people to the splendour of the bush, if each of these introduced just 2 or 3 new walkers to the bush, and so on, what a wonderful legacy to leave.

With your indulgence and with apologies to any serious poets, past or present, I would like to finish with an Ode to Libby, first penned for the twentieth anniversary of the group.

In May nineteen ninety - an idea came to mind  
Which Libby and Mary were to push  
For walks each month – for those inclined  
To don boots – explore the bush

Seventeen gathered – with dogs and a billy  
For that initial walk had been slated  
Skies were cloudy – the wind was chilly  
But they reached the Pavements Tessellated

And so it began – this magnificent obsession  
The pattern would hardly vary  
Each month saw Libby - lead a happy  
procession  
The event written up by Mary

Libby has led us – through forest and heath  
Into canyons as cold as the fridge  
Had us swinging from ropes – lookout  
beneath!  
Through valley, on mountain, along ridge

In Blue Gum Forest – we've seen Goannas  
scowl  
Above the Butterbox – watched Eagles soar

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## Mt Wilson Mt Irvine Bushwalking Group

We've seen Swimming Snakes – a Powerful Owl

Heard Bellbirds tinkle – wild rivers roar

On one winter morn – as we climbed Mount Bindo

Footprints were all that we left

On the pristine expanses – of freshly laid snow

Libby's planning was so very deft

From modest beginnings – the group has grown

Now coming from far – and from near

Over twenty eight years – the seed has been sown

A love of the bush – to endear

Libby has taken us – some wondrous places

Our lives being enriched by so much

We have gained such a lot – met many new faces

She has such a wide reaching touch

Merry Garth – the place where she lived

The name means Blessed Enclosure

For everything that this lady giveth

Blessed are all that knew her

In conclusion, may I suggest the spirit of this lovely lady, from the Blessed Enclosure which is Merry Garth, is now walking bush tracks through a Blessed Enclosure in another place.

Farewell Libby, thank you for so very much; your passing leaves a huge hole in our lives; you will not be forgotten.

Helen and John

Freda Moxom

**Free Spirit**

We shall miss you Libby!

But when we walk your mountains we shall recall

Your strength and elegance in the trees and plants

Your endurance in the mountain trails

Your love in the gentle creatures of the forests

Your ever flowing kindness and generosity in the waterfalls

Your conversation as the wind blows gently through the trees

And your kind words in those you touched and left behind

Farewell Libby

May you rest in peace

With all my love

Freda

Mary Reynolds

In memory of Elizabeth (Libby) Raines  
May 2018

For me personally the loss of Libby is beyond expressing. She was a person of unlimited talents. I know that Mt Wilson will never be the same. There was no facet of life in Mt Wilson in which she did not participate. Quiet, gentle, modest but with a deep sense of strength and dedication she exercised a wide influence in the small Mountain community. When she and Keith, her husband, developed Merry Garth and the fine small plant nursery her influence spread far beyond Mt Wilson. Her love of plants and her depth of knowledge soon gathered many garden devotees around her. They came from far and near always happy to chat to her and receive advice about the plants to grow. Libby was forever patient and always warmly welcoming.

Her involvement with the community was stunning and amazing not only to those who had lived long in these mountains but also to those relative newcomers like my husband, Ellis and myself.

St Georges Church was always a centre of her interest. The grounds, through working bees, received her undivided care and attention along with the many plaques which are a feature of the cemetery beside the Church. Many who spent time at / or lived in Mt Wilson chose to return here after passing on.

In the 1980s she became involved with the Mt Wilson Progress Association, along with William H Smart from 'Wynstay' who was president, commencing as Secretary- treasurer and finally becoming Treasurer, a position she held until May 2018.

Ever conscious of the need to protect Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine from the ever present threat of bushfires surrounded as the mountains are by National Parks, it is not surprising that Libby was an active member of the Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine Bushfire Brigade (established in 1957). I have vivid memories of Libby and I rising at 5.00am in January 1994 to feed and look after fire fighters sleeping in the Village Hall and the Study Centre. Many a time she was able to show less informed rescuers and fire fighters the tracks to follow when looking for lost people or ways to defeat fires. Later of course The Brigade became the Rural Fire Service led today by Beth Raines, her deputy being Peter Raines. Libby naturally remained involved.

Already you would have heard of the founding of the Bushwakers' Group in 1990, still alive and very active and thriving under its current leadership of John and Helen, assisted by Freda, Barbara, Karin, Helen F and others.

In 1999, seeing all too clearly the need for removing threats to the bushland within Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine and without, the Bush Care Group was formed by Libby and some backup from me. It was fortunate to receive some help and support from the Blue Mountains City Council and its Bush Regeneration Department. This organisation continues its sustained and positive work of keeping public places and reserves free from weeds such as ivy, blackberries, holly, honey

suckle, etc. Many years ago in the 1980s cattle had wandered the lanes and byways of Mt Wilson keeping to some degree the public ways free from unwanted weeds. The residents and the Council decided the cattle had to go for other reasons! So for many years the weeds took charge! But no longer – recently it was wonderful to see the planting of natives in the Reserve of Ferny Corner or Sloan Reserve. Another Libby creation!

On a more personal level, a final tribute! In the 1990s and the first decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Libby became a fine Botanical artist attending classes led by Ray Harrington of Mt Irvine, himself a gifted artist. As a result her artistic skills revealed wonderful results in her exquisite paintings of flowers from the garden of Merry Garth and the Australian Bushland. To these were added a never ending supply of simple but delightful cards carrying the same symbols of flowers.

Little wonder that those of us who were fortunate to be her friends will miss Libby always deeply and intensely. Her loss to the community is immeasurable.

Mary

Helen and Barry Freeman

### **THANK YOU LIBBY**

Thank you Libby for being you, a friend so dear;

Many a tear will fall for you.

Thank you Libby for being you, a smile so warm to lift our hearts;

The tears shall dry and the smiles will stay.

Thank you Libby for the twinkle in your beautiful blue eyes;

Very special memories of you.

Thank you Libby for a heart so warm to love and care for all.

Thank you Libby for sharing your world, a world of nature and joy.

Thank you Libby for many a walk on paths of delight.

Thank you Libby for cuppas shared with a scone or two.

Thank you Libby for being you.

Thank you God for giving us Libby.

Helen and Barry

### Barbara Harry

A huge void has enveloped the mountain with the death of Libby. However, her legacy is almost immeasurable, with a life so richly and generously lived, a life that touched and influenced so very many people in a myriad of ways and circumstances; she really was “The Matriarch of the Mountain”.

As bushwalkers, we had a special monthly encounter with our loved leader and friend. Libby mostly led the walks giving us an outline beforehand, but it was always a good idea to walk up front with her for some of the walk as extra fascinating little gems of natural or historical info would be learned.

I have so many lovely images of Libby, with her gentle unassuming manner, wearing her bushwalking gear, usually blue shirt and darker blue pants. The words “state of the art” or “top of the fashion” were not in her vocab. Her time was allocated to far more meaningful and broad pursuits.

Libby had the rare gift of ensuring every person felt important and welcomed with her gentle, soft and open manner. I feel enriched for having known her over the past thirty years; Libby’s influence and spirit is not lost, it will continue to live on in all of us who knew her.

Barbara

### Karin Kirkpatrick

I have been thinking a lot about Libby since the service.

I have so many memories but would like to offer this as typical of her optimism, courage

and unwavering love of the natural world. I visited her shortly before she died. She immediately insisted on making me a cup of tea to have with her homemade biscuits, while gently caring for Keith who sat with us having breakfast.

She talked about how fortunate she was to be living in Mt Wilson, how much she loved the colours of the autumn leaves and all the different seasons in the garden. She was looking forward to having her chemo treatment to ease the pain and make it possible for her to join us for our next walk.

At the memorial service, the hymn ‘All things bright and beautiful’ really captured her delight in the world and her faith.

My memory of her will now be of her resting like her autumn garden and her spirit waking up in spring.

Karin

### Judy Tribe

Bushwalking with Libby

In March 2007 I was looking forward to my third bushwalk with the Mt Wilson / Mt Irvine Bushwalking Group when the Newsletter came and the walk to Gooch’s Crater was described as not difficult but there will be some scrambling. Since easy and scrambling are definitely not synonymous for me I called Libby. She assured me the walk was beautiful, easy and the scrambling was optional except for descending a rock face via a rope. What was that again, I say, where does easy fit in there? You’ll be fine says Libby there will be lots of people to help. So off I set on the walk. Many thanks to Libby, as usual she was correct, the walk was a wonderful experience.

Thanks to that initial encouragement from Libby I have enjoyed so many bushwalks and the fellowship of the group, all in the amazing Blue Mountains she loved and knew so well.

Judy

### Robbie Feyder and Alice Simpson

Libby always had time for you. She did so much work for the community and whenever

you did something quite trivial she was always so thankful. And when you had done something slightly less trivial Libby would send a card with a lovely message. I once carried the bushwalking cake for Libby (felt so important) and she thanked me ever so much, but it was such a small thing compared to the actual preparation of the cake that she diligently did for every bushwalk. Always a smiling face and so welcoming. Soft but firm. She was a shining example as to how we could all help. Libby fought fiercely (steely determined) to protect and preserve Mt Wilson. Libby's leading by example, always willing to help, always on the front line, even in failing health, has set a high standard for us to follow. She has very big boots to fill!

Robbie

I have so many memories of Libby in the years we have been at Mt Wilson, from her warm welcome when we first arrived to recent ones. One of my last memories of Libby was at Bushcare just last month. We were planting tree ferns and coachwoods in Sloan Reserve, and I was scratching away at the surface, making very slow progress in my attempt to dig a smallish hole. I looked across and saw Libby with a big spade and with a few deft movements she had excavated a huge hole for some lucky plant to grow in. Right up to the end, through her illness and medical treatment she showed such strength and determination to plant a beautiful rainforest, not for herself, but for the benefit of Mt Wilson. And always, without fail, her famous bushwalkers' cake. Libby will be missed.

Alice

And to finish, a sublime tribute from Kim and Tim which beautifully encapsulates the love and devotion which Libby, and Keith, bestowed upon their garden at Merry Garth.

#### Kim and Tim Gow

Merry Garth is a garden that excites, stimulates and beguiles; at once it appeals to tentative novices and to seasoned plant-collectors, to hopeless romantics and to grizzled engineers, to energetic youngsters

who noisily disappear for hours into an enchanted rainforest and to the more elderly who find solace in a place where they can languidly recall a long distant era when they themselves noisily disappeared into the bush for hours.

True, the garden's natural constituency are the day-dreamers, the dawdlers, the doodlers. All however are warmly welcomed, though those seeking the latest fashion in garden design or an ostentatious display of garish colours will inevitably be disappointed as this is a garden without ego or affectation or bravado.

Here, the exotic and the endemic, the structured and the chaotic, the soaring and the miniature, the simple and the complex all merge seamlessly into a perfectly balanced and proportional whole. In a sense, it is difficult to identify the separate design elements, as they are everywhere, and nowhere. In this garden, a vista that captivates may be one metre away, or ten metres or one hundred metres away, or, to the south towards Mt Tomah, maybe ten kilometres distant.

In this magical place, the visitor leaves only reluctantly, and always with a kinder, gentler outlook on the world.

Libby and Keith are the garden and the garden is Libby and Keith, for these three beings are indivisible.

*"Show me your garden and I shall tell you what you are"*

*Alfred Austin, the nineteenth century English Poet Laureate*

Kim and Tim

Note: Should anyone wish to submit a tribute to Libby but missed the deadline for this newsletter send it to [jhcardy@gmail.com](mailto:jhcardy@gmail.com) or 14 Gum Grove Place West Pennant Hills NSW 2125 and we will include it in next month's issue.

## **OUR JUNE WALK**

**FRIDAY 15<sup>th</sup> June 2018**

**Meet at 10.30am at Merry Garth in Mt Wilson**

**This is a very special walk to celebrate Libby's devotion to and leadership of the group, and her staunch companionship to all who trod those bush tracks over twenty eight years. Libby's son Peter has mapped out a walk which covers various aspects of the village and we will have the pleasure of his company as he leads us along the route.**

**Leaving from Merry Garth we will tread some of Libby's childhood and lifelong haunts taking in some of the less trodden back lanes of the Mount and strolling along avenues and roads. We will visit Silva Plana and then Wynnes Rocks Lookout for spectacular views across Bowens Creek to Mt Charles, Mt Bell, Mt Tomah and Mt Haystack. We will then return to Mill Road and down to Daintree Lane for views across the meadows of the Mill Paddock before passing through a delightful little pocket of rainforest before making our way back to Merry Garth.**

**For those who have not been walking of late there are a couple of opportunities to shorten the walk.**

**Back in the gardens of Merry Garth we will be having a celebratory cake for afternoon tea to honour Libby's 28 years of leading the bushwalking group; there will be a display of photos of Libby with the group over the years.**

**Ex-walkers and family who wish to participate in the afternoon tea only would**

**be very welcome and should plan to arrive at Merry Garth at about 1.00pm.**

**Bring lunch only, we shall remember Libby with servings of her Bushwalker Cake for morning tea and we shall have the celebratory cake for afternoon tea. Remember to bring plenty of water.**

**Contact Helen and John Cardy on 9871 3661 or on mobile 0400 444 966.**

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## **FUTURE WALKS** (Tentative schedule)

Friday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2018 – Charles Darwin Walk and Kings Tableland Track, Wentworth Falls

Friday 17<sup>th</sup> August 2018 – Asgard Swamp and Thor Head north of Mount Victoria

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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.**

**8<sup>th</sup> June – Meet at Hay Lane – Sloan Reserve**

**13<sup>th</sup> July – Meet at Silva Plana**

**Mt Wilson contact Alice Simpson on 0414 425 511 or 4756 2110**

**Council contact Tracy Abbas 0428 777 141**