
Mt Wilson Mt Irvine Bushwalking Group

Volume 28 Issue 7

July 2018

MT WILSON TRIBUTE WALK FOR LIBBY

TOPIC

OUR JUNE WALK

A MOUNT WILSON
TRIBUTE WALK FOR
LIBBY

Friday 15th June 2018

On this rather special, bittersweet occasion, thirty-eight walkers gathered in the Merry Garth gardens. Libby's son Peter had mapped out a village walk and kindly offered to lead us along the route; Libby's daughter Beth also accompanied us for this memorial walk along the laneways and byways so often trodden by Libby.

Gathered in this Blessed Enclosure we thought it would be appropriate to break with tradition; my better half Helen explained:

Today in memory of Libby we thought we would serve Bushwalker Cake before we start the walk, that all sounds easy; Libby had made more than 350 cakes for the group over the years.

Karin had received the recipe from Libby, not hard to do, only six ingredients all mixed together. Freda, Karin and myself each made our interpretation; Freda saying she had never made a cake in her life but she would give it a go.

Email from Freda ----- I have baked my third cake today. I think my second one was the best but I have eaten most of it; the third



Winter in the Bush

one was also a bit addictive, I had to eat two slices to see what was wrong; I think I will have to hide it from myself.

Thanks for trying Freda.

Slices of the three versions were served, all quite nice but none had the rich moist fruity texture of Libby's cakes.

We will eventually put the recipe in the newsletter but at this stage it is still in the Test Kitchen with Head Chefs Freda and Karin. Stop Press! Libby's recipe on page 6.

So, all fuelled up by the early morning tea, we set off along Galwey Lane; thirty-eight walkers and two dogs brought along by Alison and Alex Halliday in recognition of the two dogs who accompanied the group on that first walk to the Tessellated Pavements twenty-eight years ago.

We paused on the track below the Wynstay stables and Peter pointed out the domed brick roof covering the well and the circular platform, which formed the horse gang. A harnessed horse circled round and round driving a shaft which powered the pump to raise water from the well to a tank on a high stand from which it was gravity fed to the property; it also drove the chaff cutter and other machinery in the stable complex.

Continuing on we crossed Waterfall Road and moved onto Walford Lane, which runs between the Chimney Cottage and Rimon properties. Here we passed a neatly stacked

wall of firewood presenting a rather sculptural appearance. Across an open field to the right was a magnificent stand of fifteen or more very tall tree ferns; a reminder of the lush rainforest which once cloaked this area. Only a stones throw from here, in Sloan Reserve, Libby was planting tree ferns and coachwoods on the April bushcare morning, only four weeks before her passing; such was her strength of character and desire to leave a legacy for future residents and visitors to the Mount. To paraphrase English writer and physician Thomas Fuller (1654-1734) *She that plants trees loves others beside herself.*

Soon we paused near a power line and Peter explained how the power authority, when upgrading the electricity supply to the village, proposed simply running the power line along The Avenue. This would have meant severe lopping and/or removal of some of the magnificent trees along the roadside. Libby, along with Bill Smart, worked out a route for the lines running them along the rear of properties wherever possible in order to avoid interference with the iconic trees. This plan was presented to the power authority which did not receive it well, but pressure from the community eventually won the day and the trees we see and admire so much today were saved. Another wonderful legacy of Libby, and Bill.

We then turned onto Applecot Lane, into Wyndham Avenue and onto The Avenue and headed toward Silva Plana. Along the footpath here were some wonderful examples of that fairytale mushroom, the Fly Agaric (*Amanita muscaria*), domes of red, spotted with white and a little white skirt on the stems; an entrancing specimen but quite poisonous.

We paused on Silva Plana where Peter and Beth recounted stories of childhood adventures here when the area was often, in effect, a swamp. Peter told of making canoes from sheets of corrugated iron to paddle on the waters of Silva Plana; Beth told of swimming here but being restricted to breast stroke as the use of overarm freestyle stroke resulted in dredging handfuls of mud due to the lack of water depth. (More recently, due to continuous

heavy rain, Silva Plana almost reverted once more to a swamp when Baz Luhrmann was filming *The Great Gatsby* in Mt Wilson.)

We continued along Queens Avenue and into Wynnes Rocks Road where we picked up three more walkers; Helen Freeman and Alice Simpson & Robbie Feyder, bringing the number of walkers to forty; Alison having taken the two dogs home earlier.

At Wynnes Rocks Lookout we braved the blustery winds to take in the views across the upper reaches of Bowen Creek to Mt Charles, Mt Bell, Mt Tomah and Mt Haystack. In the foreground the light green of hanging swamps contrasted markedly with the grey/green of the eucalypt-clad hillsides; in the background the forms of Mt Banks and Mt Hay loomed.

Having had our fill of the views on offer and the buffeting winds we returned along Wynnes Rocks Road to Mill Road and made our way down to Daintree Lane where we turned left. This led us first along the margin of some majestic tall open forest on our left with views down to the Mill Paddock on our right; a lovely bucolic scene with cattle grazing in lush improved pastures.

Here Peter spoke of the nearby timber mill run by Syd and Albert Kirk, now almost completely reclaimed by the bush, from which the road and paddock take their names. He mentioned how Syd and Albert walked down to their mill from opposite sides of the village forming what became known as Syd's and Albert's tracks. He related how Albert used to carry a lamp until the light became sufficient and he would then hang it on a tree beside the track. As the days became shorter he would hang the lamp on trees closer and closer to the mill thus being able to reach it before the light faded completely on the return journey. Syd eventually began driving a vehicle down the steep rough track used to extract the timber products. On the return journey back up the hill he would always drag a log behind the vehicle so that if it stalled it would rest against the log allowing him to manually crank the engine to restart it.

Matthie Davies who, when he first came to Australia, worked as a butler at Wynstay for Colonel Wynne, having been his batman during WWI. He and his wife Flo later lived in Woodstock on Davies Lane running a guesthouse. Matthie formed a track of his own when he walked to and from the timber mill where he commenced working during World War II as part of the war effort; timber milled there was used to manufacture rifle butts. His track came down through what is now the Merry Garth property. Matthie too carried a lamp as he made his way home from the mill. When he emerged from the rainforest he gave a wave and bid a cheery good evening to the children peering from the tiny cottage nearby. That cottage was rented by Libby's parents and one of those children peering from the window was indeed our beloved leader Libby.

We then entered thick enclosed rainforest, the light subdued by the enclosing canopy formed by coachwood, sassafras and lillypilly; the understorey containing many tree ferns. We passed a couple of very large wombat burrows tunnelled beneath the ground cover. The track climbed and dipped, climbed again and we emerged close to Queens Avenue opposite Windy Ridge. We then made our way up Waterfall Road and back along Galwey Lane to return to Merry Garth completing a very interesting circuit of the southern area of the village; many thanks Peter for mapping out a walk with such a variety of landscapes.

Back in the sublime gardens created and tended with such loving care by Libby and Keith we gathered on the front veranda and lawn for lunch; it was an honour to have Mary Reynolds join us here; Mary was co-founder of the walking group with Libby twenty-eight years ago.

My better half Helen laid out an impressive collage of photographs she had cleverly assembled, covering walks over the last twenty-two years, most photos featuring Libby. A celebratory cake baked by Helen was positioned on the collage; it also contained photos of Libby. Simon Changson displayed enlargements of several of his photos of more

recent walks featuring Libby; he donated these to the family at the end of the day.

The beautifully written tribute submitted by Kim and Tim Gow, which was included in the last newsletter, concentrated on the Merry Garth garden. I felt it would be appropriate to read aloud that tribute while in this sublime setting to round off this very special day. The last lines of that tribute were "Libby and Keith are the garden and the garden is Libby and Keith, for these three beings are indivisible". Indeed!

So ended a wonderful walk in honour of Libby; a walk which elicited both poignant and pleasant, mostly pleasant, thoughts of Libby. The weather conditions were much kinder than occurred on the following two days; perchance Libby had something to do with that.

John Cardy

Further Tributes to Libby

Fred Roberts

I have not been a walker for around 2 years but in that time the group has not left my mind; especially now with the passing of Libby. She was not only the Matriarch of the Mountain as described by Barbara Harry but also a true Leader and Organiser, as unbeknown to quite a few Libby and Keith have driven and walked many kilometres to do a reconnaissance of a walk before taking the group. Hence there was never a call for help or assistance from the emergency people, and if a car shuffle was needed Libby would always have it worked out on paper. Her smile and welcoming peck on the cheek were always there no matter how she was feeling.

Libby set the bar to the top notch in everything she took on and never went under it. A wonderful and caring lady who will be greatly missed

Fred and Fay.

Jenny Dargan

Libby was a truly amazing and special person and I feel honoured to have known her for the 3 or 4 years I have been part of the Mt Wilson

Mt Irvine Bushwalking Group. She was welcoming and inclusive to all newcomers and went out of her way to chat to everyone and was always interested in your story. She calmly and thoughtfully led the group without obviously controlling up to 20 or more people.

She was particularly kind to me when I had a fairly major medical issue a few years ago and she told me all about her experience with a similar condition.

I was astounded to see Libby soldiering on so bravely last year and still turning up with, of course, the famous bushwalker cake.

I will really miss Libby, her cake and her stunning garden. I have a beautiful fuschia I acquired from Merry Garth a few years ago. It just keeps on flowering. It currently has pride of place in our living area, indoors for the winter, and never fails to attract admiring comments from visitors.

Farewell Libby.

Jenny

Helen Robbins

I always loved those Fridays, walking with Libby and friends to magical places; hidden valleys and majestic peaks, and I would get very upset if I was unable to make the trek from Sydney to that slice of heaven. She was a great and caring leader, but always helping and encouraging the slow coaches at the rear. And of course the cake is legendary – I have led walks for our local group and I have never been able to get up early enough to bake cakes!

I remember Merry Garth in its infancy and have marvelled at the incredible amount of backbreaking work that went into creating the Paradise it has become. Since Libby and Keith opened it to the public it has become a source of inspiration to the hundreds, nay thousands, of visitors who have passed through that tranquil and calming place.

Libby was a great correspondent – no emails or sms for her, I have kept all the exquisite cards she has sent me, full of news of the village and evocative descriptions of her

garden in all seasons. Not long before she died I was visiting her, enjoying a quiet talk in the garden when a small group of elderly people arrived. She gathered her strength and despite being in considerable discomfort, she kindly greeted them; welcoming them with all her usual grace and lovely smile; never hesitating to share her beloved Merry Garth with everyone.

Libby was an inspirational and exceptional person, devoted to her family, her garden, the village and the Mountains. We are all bereft and our world is a sadder and poorer place without her.

Helen

Carol Conway

Some five years ago I had the good fortune to join the bushwalking group and get to know more about my new home in the Blue Mountains. Thanks to Libby and her love and knowledge of the bush I have been to wonderful places I would never otherwise have seen. As a new walker to the group Libby was so thoughtful in making sure I was managing ok, such as on my first ascent of the Furber Steps. She shared her early experiences walking the Butterbox Track as a child so it was clear the bush was in her blood. In a card last year after her first spell away, Libby wrote that it was wonderful to be home again in this beautiful and healing place. Merry Garth could not work its magic completely for Libby but it is a place of peace and tranquillity which Libby created and where her presence is still felt.

“Let us be grateful to people who make us happy. They are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom.” Marcel Proust

Indeed. I will use the tea towel where I found this quote to wrap around my attempt at the Bushwalkers Cake!

Thank you Libby.

Carol

Julia Reynolds

Libby was the Lady of Mount Wilson. A gentle woman who achieved so much, quietly,

in her lifetime. People like her and Keith achieve so much that most people don't realise unless touched by them. I have beautiful memories of Libby, the quiet achiever for the flora and fauna in Mt Wilson.

If the world had more people like Libby it would be a beautiful place.

Julia

Anne Rodrigues

Libby

I met a girl called 'Libby'
On a walking track one day
She was with a group of walkers
Who were resting on the way
"Why not come and join us?
If you're on your own today
We welcome you to join with us
Explore the wonders of nature's ways"

Libby exposed the many wonders
Of beauty I did not know
She shared her wealth of knowledge
Her warmth a never-ending flow

I started on this journey
To discover Libby's ways
Her boundless energy to help others
In her quiet caring way

A 'giant' in her community
Her involvement was immense
Always a warm welcome to everyone
Libby; someone to admire and respect

It was a privilege to know Libby
Though my time with her was short
She was an inspiration and will always be
Remembered in my heart

Anne

NB NB NB NB NB NB NB NB NB NB NB NB

Helen and I will be away on holidays from just after the July walk until the week before the August walk so will not have time to publish an August Newsletter. Therefore, the venue and meeting arrangements for both the July and August walks are included in this newsletter and we will issue a combined

August/September Newsletter in early September.

OUR JULY WALK

Friday 20th July 2018

Charming Cascades, Dramatic Waterfalls, Stunning Views and Afternoon Tea at Freda Moxom's place.

Darwins Walk, Rocket Point, Mulherans Cliff Edge Track at Wentworth Falls.

The group last traversed Darwins Walk in April 2015; Charles Darwin walked this first section of the walk in 1836 and described the view of the falls as "extremely magnificent"; who am I to argue with that? Mulherans Cliff Edge Track will be a first for this group. The view from Te Willa Lookout on the Cliff Edge Track is arguably one of the finest in the mountains. This is rated as a medium walk of about 10 kilometres with just a little bit of up and down in the vicinity of Rocket Point and a descent and ascent of about 70 metres along Darwins Walk.

Meet at Wilson Park in Falls Road just off the Great Western Highway at Wentworth Falls, (near the Bowling Club) at 9.30am. Those wishing to car share from Mt Wilson should meet at St Georges Church for an 8.30am departure.

Bring morning tea and lunch only. Freda Moxom has kindly invited us back to her place, just a stones throw from our meeting and finishing point, for afternoon tea. Remember to bring plenty of water.

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

OUR AUGUST WALK

Friday 17th August 2018

Open Woodland, Reeds and Sedges, an Historic Oil Shale Mine, an Old Coke Oven and the Bonus of Some Majestic Views

Asgard Swamp and Surrounds

The Group last visited this venue in October 2011. Majestic views from a swamp? Well may you ask; come along and be amazed by

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the sweeping vistas. This is a relatively easy walk made up of three distinct branches totalling about 7km, so choices can be made as to which you undertake.

Meet on Victoria Falls Road just off the Great Western Highway about 1km east of Mt Victoria at 10.00am. Those wishing to car share from Mt Wilson should meet at St Georges Church for a 9.30am departure. There will be a vehicle rationalisation for the 4km drive on unsealed road to the track head.

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

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

FUTURE WALKS (Tentative schedule)

Friday 21st September 2018 – Blackfellows Hand Rock and Temple of Doom near Wolgan Gap

Friday 19th October 2018 – Lockley Pylon

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 13th July at Silva Plana

Friday 10th August at Gregson Park

Mt Wilson contact Alice Simpson 0414 425 511 or 4756 2110

Council contact Tracy Abbas 0428 777 141

Libby's Bushwalker Cake

1 cup of chopped dates

1 cup of chopped apricots

1 cup of sultanas

1 cup of self raising flour

¾ cup of oat bran

¾ cup of brown sugar

1 cup of milk

Mix it all together and put it into a baking paper lined loaf tin.

Cook in a slow oven for 1 hour or more if necessary (if you put a skewer in it, it has to come out clean). Helen did 150 degrees for 1¼ hours.

Here is the secret to Libby's moist Bushwalker Cake; you mix it up today, put it in the fridge overnight and cook tomorrow.

Thanks Libby for all those wonderful Bushwalker Cakes; you made more than 350 for us.