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# Mt Wilson Mt Irvine Bushwalking Group

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## LITTLE ZIG ZAG AND RIENITS PASS

## TOPIC

### FIRST, DETAILS OF OUR CHRISTMAS / END OF YEAR GET TOGETHER

It will be held on Friday 6<sup>th</sup>  
December with a morning walk  
and Christmas lunch at Mount  
Tomah Botanic Gardens.

We have booked a private area,  
the Brunet BBQ Shelter on the  
Brunet Meadow. All the food has  
been arranged but we **need to  
know numbers. Please ring  
Helen before Sunday 1<sup>st</sup>  
December on 0400 444 966 or  
9871 3661.**

Arrive at 10am and park in the large car park  
(P1 or P2). In the adjoining shelter shed a  
lovely Devonshire Tea will be served. We will  
then have a 5 minute walk down hill to the  
Brunet BBQ Shelter, helping Helen carry all  
the food.

From there we will do a group walk through  
shaded rainforest, then you will have time to  
wander at your leisure through the gardens  
until lunch time. Lunch will be served at  
1.00pm.

You will only need to bring plenty of water, a  
thermos and mug to have with your lunch.

Some people may like to join us for **lunch  
only**. Arrive anytime at the Brunet BBQ  
Shelter, leave your things, wander the gardens,  
maybe arrange for the Shuttle to drive you



Summer in the Bush

around on a 20 minute tour;  
bookings at the Visitor Centre.  
Or have coffee at the restaurant  
in the Visitor Centre. Be back  
at the BBQ Shelter in time for  
lunch at 1.00pm.

**Do hope to see you there.**

## OUR NOVEMBER WALK

**LITTLE ZIG ZAG,  
BUSHRANGERS CAVE,  
RIENITS PASS, WILSONS  
GLEN and PULPIT ROCK  
at MOUNT VICTORIA**

### Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2019

Astute readers would have noted that the 22<sup>nd</sup>  
was not the usual third Friday of the month for  
these walks, indeed not. State wide total fire  
bans, a declared state-wide week-long State of  
Emergency, high temperatures, low humidity  
and strong winds indicated the usual third  
Friday was perhaps not the best time to be  
venturing into the bush; thus the walk was  
transferred to the fourth Friday.

Unfortunately, this meant many of our usual  
walkers were not available, and a group of  
only nine gathered at the end of Kanimbla  
Valley Road in the thick smoky haze. Mark  
McDonnell's friend Jeremy Whitty joined us  
for the second time today; we must have done  
something right last month.

We set off and continued past the branch to  
Pulpit Rock, one of the ten formations

carrying that name in the Blue Mountains. At the top of the Little Zig Zag, rather than turn left onto the Zig Zag, we followed a lesser footpad to the right. This is referred to as the Franklin Clifftop Track by Keith Painter in his "Great Walks at Mount Victoria"; just one of his Pocket Pal series of wonderful bushwalking guides. He believes F. A. Franklin, a Roads Engineer, supervised the construction of the Little Zig Zag, then known as the Kanimbla Pass down into the valley.

A short distance downhill along this footpad we veered left and arrived at a large rock prominence; a superb lookout point.

Today the distant features were masked by the smoke from the Wollemi National Park fire and perhaps from other fires further north in the State. Close at hand, to the left, was a rock outcrop with a thin ledge extending into space; this prompted the thought among some in the group as to just what was beneath our feet. To the right was a magnificent view along the sheer cliffs below the Engineers Cascade extending around to Sunset Rock and beyond, then to Mitchells Ridge where traffic could be seen crossing the narrow saddle on Victoria Pass beyond the form of Mount Victoria. Straight ahead the view of Sugarloaf Mountain was shrouded in the eerie grey veil of smoke while further afield the features were completely hidden behind a thicker curtain of grey formed by the pall of smoke.

Having taken our fill of the views on offer we followed the footpad back up the hill, noting along the way a Broad Leaf Drumstick (*Isopogon anemonifolius*) displaying its bright yellow globular flowers and some almost spherical cones persisting from last season; we arrived at the start of the Little Zig Zag. This pass into the Kanimbla Valley was constructed during 1875-76 at a cost of £200. The dry stone walling which continues to support each leg of the pass after one hundred and forty three years is testament to the skill of those who worked on its construction.

We headed down the zig zagging pass, at the sixth turn a blue painted sign on the rock face

indicates The North Track which skirts along the top of the talus slope.

At the next bend in the track we take a path off to the left and climb up to a jumble of large boulders; this is the path to the Bushrangers Cave. Some, who have seen the cave many times, remained here while the rest of the group scrambled down yet another steep rock face and made their way around to the Bushrangers Cave. This cave has been known by this name since about 1888, it was previously referred to as part of the Kanimbla Caves complex encompassing other caves and overhangs in the vicinity. An old flint lock tower musket, boot last, an auger, a gimlet, old clothing and parts of an 1822 Sydney newspaper with notices regarding four escaped prisoners were found in the cave by the son of a local farmer. No definitive evidence that bushrangers actually occupied the cave has been presented; evocative names such as this do no harm to the tourist trade however.

The cave is about twenty metres deep and the main chamber is about five metres high; there are several small offshoot passages. A formation known as The Wedding Cake has a thick layer of pure white soft sandstone topped with the more usual darker sandstone with ironstone banding; the softer white stone is obviously eroding much more quickly than the harder topping.

On the return of the cave explorers we settled down for morning tea. Michael Ihm produced his wife Beth's version of Libby's Bushwalker cake; a fine moist version it was too, we all agreed. Michael was keen for each of us to have multiple slices to lighten his load; he didn't have to use his powers of persuasion. Yum! Many thanks to you Beth.

We continued zigging and zagging down the track, passing at the twelfth corner a sign to the Sugarloaf Track. Soon the steepness of the track lessened and we turned left onto Rienets Pass.

This pass is named for Henry (Heinrich) Guenther Rienets who ran a very successful private school for boys at Mount Victoria; it was called simply 'The School'. He set the

private school up after resigning from his posting at the public school following a disagreement with what he considered a very disagreeable school inspector. (He employed Henry Lawson's father, Peter Larsen, to build the school in Montgomery Street.) Rienits was very active in community affairs on various trusts and associations; he lobbied successfully for the road to Victoria Falls which was constructed in 1908. He died in 1928 and is buried in the Mount Victoria cemetery.

This pass initially took us through a more sheltered yet still fairly open environment where the track was decorated with a few examples of the Spreading Flax Lily (*Dianella revoluta var revoluta*), its dark blue flowers displaying prominent yellow stamens. Also present here were many Black Wattles (*Callicoma serratifolia*) carrying their fluffy globular flowers along with many tiny yellow unopened buds. The Black Wattles take their common name from the fact that they were used in wattle and daub construction in the early days of Sydney Town; in turn Black Wattle Bay at Pyrmont took its name because these small trees grew in profusion in that area.

Just before we reached the margin of the rainforest there was a hurried rustling in the shed bark beside the track, it continued up the loose bark of a nearby tree trunk; we had disturbed a young Goanna. The Goanna in turn had disturbed a pair of Sulphur-crested Cockatoos who repeatedly flew toward it screeching loudly; they probably had eggs or young in a nearby tree hollow.

We then entered the deeper shade of the rainforest and there was a welcome drop in temperature. Here many Soft Tree Ferns (*Dicksonia antarctica*) were unfurling an abundance of new fronds, elegantly coiled crosiers reached up from among the older fronds, in some cases their soft green curled form silhouetted against the reds and golds of the sheer cliffs beyond. Along the creek line below the track, large boulders, and the prone trunks of long-fallen trees were shrouded with moss and lichen, both quite dull in these extremely dry times.

The track zig zagged up the steep slope, vines coiled across the path and hung in loops above, easily entangling the unwary walker. Having climbed up the slope we dropped back down to the upper reaches of the creek we saw far below us earlier. Mossy stepping stones took us across this small almost dry water course.

Shortly we arrived at the rainforest margin and were back in more open country as we climbed toward the top of the talus slope where this track tees into a track running in both directions along the base of the cliff line. The area here appears to be constantly dry; the spectacular cliffs above seem to form a rain shadow along the base of the cliff line. There was a convenient ledge here on which to sit and rest awhile; Michael took the opportunity to pass around the Bushwalker cake to lessen his load once more.

Rested and re-energised we headed off toward Wilsons Glen. The track led us along the base of the cliffs past the 'letter box rock', a large cube of sandstone with a horizontal slot through it.

As the track turned into a gully we entered a cooler environment. Here we saw clusters of Dragons Tails (*Dracophyllum secundum*) some still carrying a few late-flowering bell-shaped pinkish-white blossoms among their lush arching leaves. Also in this area was a single example of the Pink Matchheads or Heath Milkwort (*Comesperma ericinum*) holding aloft its racemes of bright pink matchhead-shaped flowers. We then entered an enclosed little nook; we had reached Wilsons Glen. We crossed a small creek and climbed up into the shady gully to a point where the track divides; we turned left toward Pulpit Rock.

We were now in more open country but as the track skirted close to the south side of the hillside we were protected to a large degree from the heat of the day. We arrived at Bedes Lookout, a point on the end of a small ridge surfaced with red shale. The lookout is named for William Bede Dalley (1831 – 1888). Born to convict parents he rose to become a

barrister, served in both houses of the New South Wales parliament and was the first Australian to be appointed to the Privy Council. He is honoured with a memorial statue in Hyde Park and a stained glass window and plaque in St Mary's Cathedral. Magnificent views into the Kanimbla Valley and across to the sheer cliffs near Bushrangers Cave and those below Hourn Point are to be had from here.

Continuing on we passed some impressive rock overhangs, one carrying a triangular cluster of Rock Sprengelia (*Sprengelia monticola*) displaying many pure white star-like flowers and climbed the stone stairs which delivered us back to Pulpit Rock to complete the circuit.

Here we took up positions near the Pulpit to have lunch and to take in the magnificent views into and across the valley. Over the years the name of this valley has been spelt as Cunimbula, Kinumbula as well as the present day Kanimbla. It is said to come from the Aboriginal for 'fighting ground' or 'big fight'. Rather incongruous for one could not think of a more peaceful outlook; a wonderful place to rest awhile after this walk.

As we headed away from Pulpit Rock there was a lovely little token presented by Mother Nature. An unusually small Grass Leaf Trigger Plant (*Stylidium graminifolium*) nestled against a boulder beside the path, displaying its bright pink flowers atop a slender stem; a lovely touch to end the day.

John Cardy

## OUR JANUARY WALK

**DUE TO FAMILY COMMITMENTS and BECAUSE OF LOW ATTENDANCES IN THE JANUARY HEAT IN PAST YEARS WE WILL NOT BE SCHEDULING A WALK IN JANUARY 2020**

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## FUTURE WALKS (Tentative schedule)

Friday 21<sup>st</sup> February – To be advised

Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March – To be advised

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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 13<sup>th</sup> December – Meet at Queens Road**

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

**Council contact Tracy Abbas 0428 777 141**