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# Mt Wilson Mt Irvine Bushwalking Group

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## GLOW WORM TUNNEL AND PAGODAS

## TOPIC

### OUR PLANNED MARCH WALK

**GLOW WORM TUNNEL and  
PAGODAS on the NEWNES  
PLATEAU**

**Friday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2017**

Health Report: Libby came home from hospital on 28<sup>th</sup> February, she is progressing well, started a course of chemo on 5<sup>th</sup> April which will run for some months; visitors and phone calls welcome. I also had my fifth chemo (second last) on 5<sup>th</sup> April, responding well to the treatment, still no bad side effects.



Autumn in the Bush

John Cardy

### Another Touch of History and Other Things

A rather Gothic little creature would have been encountered lurking in the darkness on this walk. By regulating the reaction between bodily products and oxygen in the enlarged tips of its four excretory tubes it can control the bioluminescence emitted. It spins silken snares dotted with a sticky substance, which hang enticingly from the roof and walls of the dark damp places in which it dwells. It uses its bioluminescence, which it can increase or decrease in brightness, to attract unsuspecting victims to a sticky end in its net. This is the charming *Arachnocampa richardsae*, the Glow Worm.

What are deadly yet irresistible siren signals to unsuspecting insects are a delight to the eye for we humans when the Glow Worms turn up their brightness and cluster in large numbers, as they tend to do the more moist the conditions. They would have been just one of the exceptional attractions we would have encountered on our scheduled March walk.

Also on show would have been the wonderful array of pagodas along the Old Coach Road which originated as a construction road for the Wolgan Valley Railway. These

impressive formations are known as platey pagodas because of the convoluted ironstone ledges, pipes, canopies and awnings which jut out from the softer base sandstone cones, sometimes extending so far they appear to defy gravity. These terraced cones are so named, as they resemble Asian pagodas. Adding a touch of colour to these rocky sculptures from mid-spring through to early autumn are the tiny Pagoda Daisies (*Leucochrysum graminifolium*) displaying their bright yellow flowers above wiry grass-like leaves.

The engineer in charge of the construction of the Wolgan Valley Railway, Henry Deane, is credited with discovering the Pagoda Daisy; in addition to being a brilliant engineer, he had a keen interest in botany. He co-authored many papers on eucalypts with JH Maiden, Director of the Sydney Botanic Gardens and

Government Botanist, and that iconic tree of the Blue Gum Forest carries his name *Eucalyptus deanei*. He had several other plants named after him including Dean's Boronia (*Boronia deanei*) and Dean's Paperbark (*Melaleuca deanei*).

That leads us of course to another of the astounding features we would have encountered on this walk, Henry Dean's amazing railway into the Wolgan Valley. In April 1906 he was employed by the Commonwealth Oil Corporation to supervise the survey, design and construction of a line to the shale mining operation at Newnes; he managed to have the line completed in just eighteen months. We would have driven along part of the perway and through No1 Tunnel then walked, via the Old Coach Road back along the perway and through No2 Tunnel to view the glittering display put on by the Glow Worms; a wonderful legacy following the closure of that line in 1932.

If economics had not been a consideration the tunnels on this line would have taken a very different form. Dean stated; "In that case, it would have been possible to start cork-screwing down from the top of the ridge, inside the mountain, till the level of the valley was reached, when the line could have passed out into the daylight. This method was, of course, out of the question." It seems a rather wistful statement by the engineer.

Imagine, a spiral of Glow Worms from the ridge to the valley floor.

John Cardy

Those spellbinding mysteries of the bush continue. An illusionary figure beside the road near Bungleboori; a twist of dust and it was gone. Was that someone atop the pagoda; must have been an apparition. A glimpse of movement at the portal of the Glow Worm Tunnel; it has disappeared into the darkness. The elusive riddles of the bush continue; stay tuned. (JC)

## OUR APRIL WALK

Friday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2017

**Yes, Yes, we walk again!!!**

**Open Woodland and Heath then Magnificent Views into the Upper Grose Gorge**

**Hat Hill, Bald Head Ridge and Bald Head at Blackheath**

Karin Kirkpatrick and Freda Moxom have kindly offered to lead this walk in Libby's and my absence; both Karin and Freda have had extensive bushwalking experience in the mountains so you will be well looked after. This is a 'there and back' walk of less than 8 km involving a short climb onto Hat Hill then a mainly ridge top walk with some ups and downs not exceeding 250 metres in total. The views are outstanding.

**Meet at Merry Garth for a 9.00am departure if you wish to car share from Mt Wilson, or in Hat Hill Road just off the Great Western Highway in Blackheath at 9.30am where there may be some vehicle rationalisation.**

Bring morning tea, lunch and plenty of water. **Karin has kindly invited us back to her place in Evans Lookout Road after the walk for afternoon tea.**

**Please ONLY Contact Helen and John Cardy to book in for this walk on 9871 3661 or on mobile 0400 444 966.**

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## FUTURE WALKS (Tentative schedule)

Friday 19<sup>th</sup> May – Fortress Rock Lookout, Fortress Ridge and Fortress Hill at Leura

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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.**

**14<sup>th</sup> April – Good Friday – No Bushcare**

**12<sup>th</sup> May – Meet at Wynne Reserve**

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