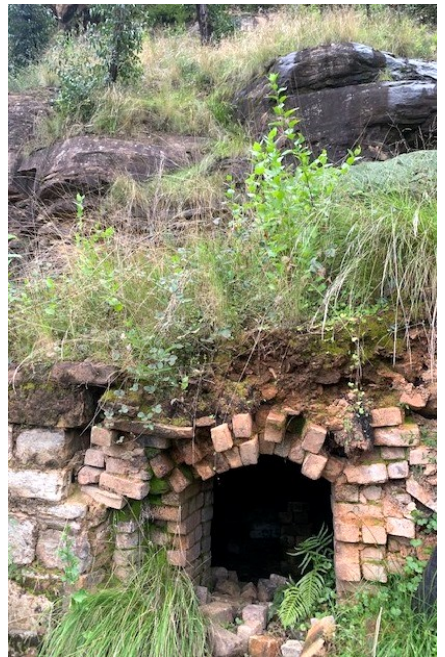


MOUNT VICTORIA: Asgard Swamp and Surrounds (Katriona)

Amazing rocks, banksias, amazing swamp, an old mine and coke oven dating back to late 19th century on a walk to Asgard swamp and surrounds.



Mt Wilson Mt Irvine Bushwalking Group, in its November 2011 newsletter (Issue 21 Volume 11), published an account by John Cardy which beautifully describes a walk by 21 of its members to Asgard Swamp and surrounds. Here are some excerpts:

"The heavenly realm of gods and goddesses connected to earth by a rainbow bridge; this is the Asgard of Norse mythology. A heavenly array of scenic wonders; this is the Asgard of Blue Mountains reality."

"Rich and varied natural resources of food, diverse ecosystems in a limited space and a relatively favourable climate once made this area a prime occupation site for Aboriginal people. Adjacent to the coal seams exposed below the cliff lines were outcrops of chert, an ideal mineral from which to fashion cutting and scraping tools."

The Asgard mine was just one of a number of sites in the upper Grose Valley to be investigated by prospectors. This shaft was one of several test adits driven into the coal seam, circa 1881. "The nearby coke oven is being slowly reclaimed by the bush yet is still intact enough to display the fine workmanship of its construction." The inside of the kiln looks as though it was never actually used.

"Today the mine is a dark dank tunnel only a little over a metre in height and not much wider; mosses grow on the walls near the entrance and tiny orange stalactites formed by seepage hang from the ceiling."

But this is the perfect place for two little birds to build a large nest, suspended from the ceiling and safe from predators. The Rockwarbler (*Origma solitaria*) is restricted to the sandstone formations around the Sydney region of New South Wales. The nest is reused each year.





MOUNT PIDDINGTON, views across the Kanimbla Valley

Lockdown has kept us even closer to our home at the top of Mount Piddington. The kangaroo is watching us through our lounge room window. You can see the vista behind him, southwards in the general direction of Jenolan Caves across the Kanimbla Valley. He is a regular visitor, along with his family.

I often wander around our block admiring the view. Hopefully it won't be too long before we can walk in the Valley again.

Best wishes and keep safe. (Jim)

THE WATTLE

Colouring the bushland with yellow blaze
You warm the last of winter's days
Bending with your weight of gold
The promise of springtime you unfold.

We love to see you wattle tree
You warm our days with your golden rays
Your fluffy flowers smell so sweet
It's you we sing of and it's you we greet.

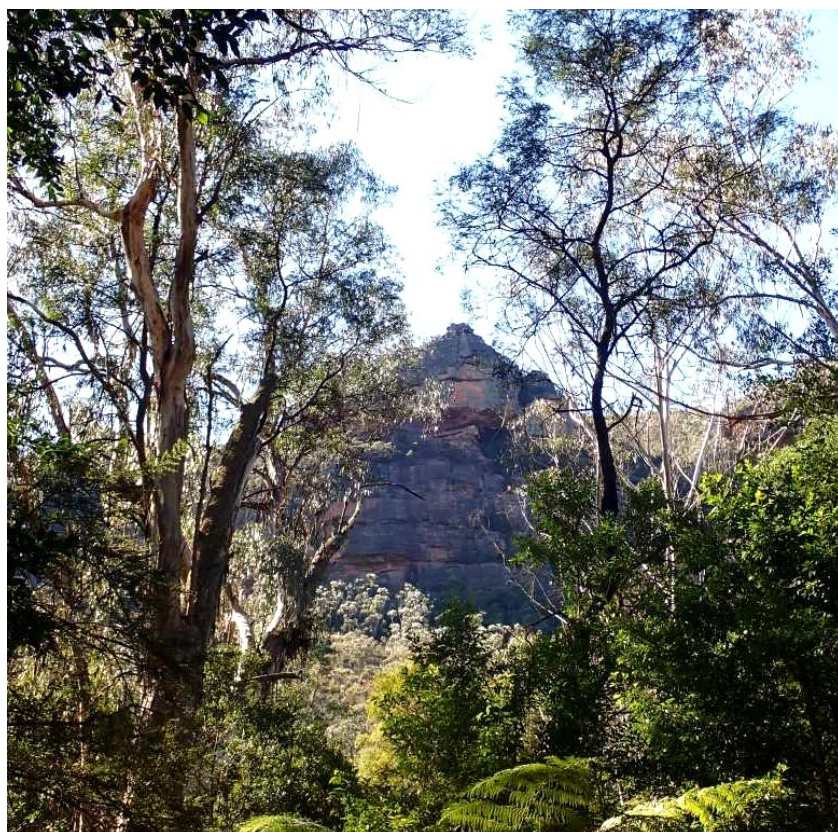
A song by Jim Low (first verse and chorus)

BLACKHEATH: Being at Coachwood Glen

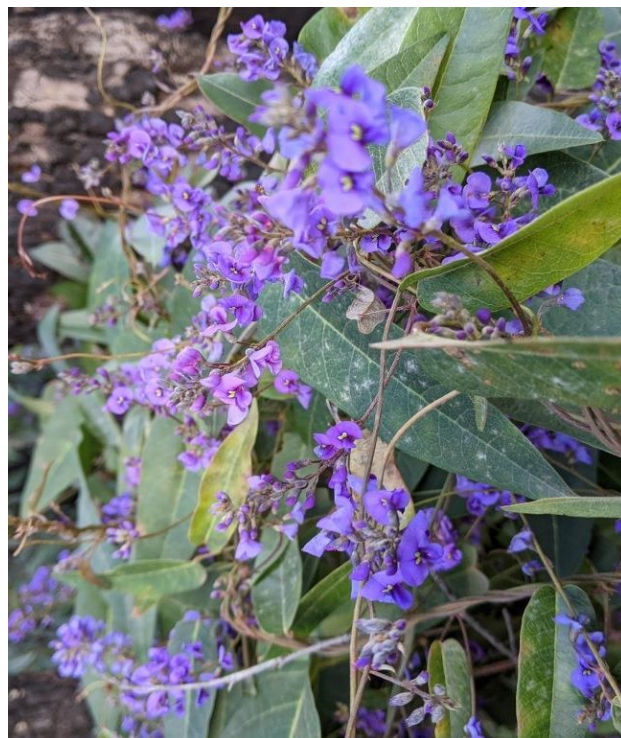
Cool green rainforest; the pattern of lichens decorating the trunks of coachwood trees; the softness of moss covering a rotten log; tall tree ferns and twisted woody vines; leaf-covered soil raked by lyrebirds; the nest of a Yellow-throated Scrub Wren suspended above the creek; songs of little birds hidden in the foliage; a young male whipbird learning to make a "whip" call and, after several attempts, managing to reach the high note at the end - the crack of the whip. .

Words and photos are not enough - you have to be there and not in a hurry to be somewhere else. There are places to sit and soak up the atmosphere.

The Coachwood Glen Nature Trail was constructed by volunteers for the Blackheath Rotary Club in the 1960s as an environmental education walk, with plaques (long gone) giving information about trees and shrubs found in this lovely little rainforest reserve, sheltered beneath the cliffs of Medlow. It's a short walk, less than a kilometre, with two creek crossings. Estimated time - two hours! (Christine)



The cliffs of Medlow tower above Coachwood Glen



WENTWORTH FALLS: flora and fauna on Kings Tableland

On my excursion along Kings Tableland I came to an area where the whole bush was swathed and cloaked and carpeted with Hardenbergia. I have never seen such a stunning display and I wanted to run and tell everyone to come and see! I was also lucky to see an elusive Glossy Black-Cockatoo. (Sue)

SPRINGWOOD: Martins Lookout, a true story

The last section of the road to the lookout was a lot rougher than my previous visit, especially in my 1996 Toyota Corolla. Actually it was Margaret's - she bought it.

Rounding a bend, a young lady waving, trying to attract my attention. When stopping, she was on the passenger side, couldn't hear her. Perhaps the road ahead was too dangerous, impassable? Stepped outside, she told me she had just seen a baby HEDGEHOG.

ECHIDNA, I replied. She was happy to show me where it was. How big? - about fifteen centimetres. Watched for a while. The lady said she cried when she saw it. That was rather nice, made me smile. Thanked and wished her well.

Made the lookout, spent around half an hour. Across the other side, the Lost World lookout. Nice and peaceful. Pat Malone and I are pretty close, he never upsets me. Two tracks leading down to Perch Ponds. No problem for me once upon a time, no more these days.

The real bonus, of course, was that baby Echidna. Amazing what you come across in the bush. (Ron)





BLACKHEATH WEATHER CAN BE INTERESTING

An inspiring sight

In early August I drove out to Anvil Rock, at Blackheath, on a windy, showery afternoon. I had to stop on the way to take this shot looking east from Hat Hill Road.

Rainbows are always uplifting. (Sue)

Storm clouds approaching Blackheath:

An imminent storm coming over the Kanimbla Valley.

(Katriona)



The melting of the snow, at Blackheath

It had snowed overnight and a blanket of snow covered the garden. It was very quiet, no traffic, no bird songs. Then the sun began to shine through the clouds and the snow began to melt, slipping from the branches and dripping from the leaves. Everything sparkled. It was such a pretty scene! .

Two kookaburras perched on the TV aerial next door. A boisterous flock of Pied Currawongs had taken up residence in the neighbourhood during the winter and they arrived on the scene. They swooped back and forth, past the kookaburras, calling loudly and yahooping in the treetops. Pied Currawongs love unusual weather and they were celebrating.

One of the kookaburras flew away. The other stayed and watched. We had the feeling that he was not enjoying the spectacle as much as we were. (Christine and Don)

Photo caption: The kookaburra who didn't laugh.