

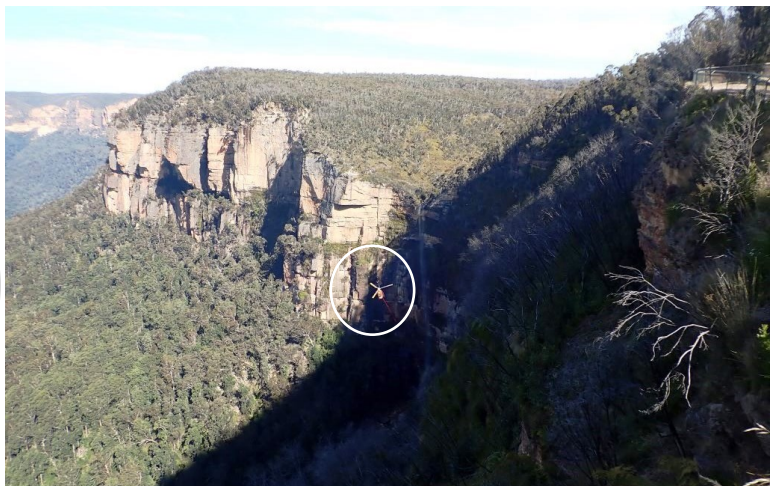
BLACKHEATH: Friendly helicopters

Where I live, at Blackheath, we sometimes hear helicopters working from the NPWS compound and there are no complaints from me. They are not conducting “joy” flights - a selfish and environmentally destructive pastime, but are usefully employed. During bushfires they transport firefighters to remote areas or water to drop on a nearby fire. That is a stressful time for us all. At present the helicopter is engaged in track work.

Bundles and pieces of material, collected from the compound, are carried at the end of a long cable and deposited where they are needed. Now the track workers are working on the tracks around and in the Grose Valley at Blackheath. A line of white bundles can be seen dotted along the clifftop track from Pulpit Rock to Govetts Leap.

I hadn't really appreciated just how deep the Grose Valley is until I saw the tiny helicopter disappear into its depths. The camera caught it as it emerged from the shadows.

(Christine)



MOUNT HAY ROAD:

Waratahs bloom after bushfire

Waratahs are thriving out on Mount Hay Road and the track to Lockleys Pylon after the bush fires. I remember in 1983 when the Waratahs were stunning on the track to Pulpit Rock from Govetts leap after the 1982 fires.

(Katriona)

LOCKDOWN: a hairy story

Hairdressers have been closed during lockdown and, after more than two months, it is beginning to show:

“Does anybody know where to find the German barber, Herr Kutt?” (Ron)



LAWSON: Cataract Falls

Deb and I had a most serene and leisurely walk - the day was temperate and golden.

There were a few other walkers - scattered here and there.

We met a bold little skink who initially darted back into his hollow in the rock wall and then came back out to lie in the sun, seemingly trusting of us.

I love the elusive little rainbows that appear in waterfalls and the green jewel-like colour of the water in the foreground.

Warm Friendship and soft Spring-time
Slows my edgy pace.
Sunshine slips over rocks,
Rainbows sparkle in watery lace . . .
And my heart's ease feels sublime.

Bernadette x



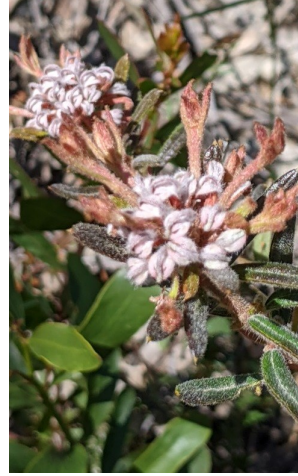
MOUNT TOMAH: Botanic Gardens

I was surprised to learn that Mount Tomah and Mount Wilson were both in the Blue Mountains LGA. Jill and I had a pleasurable stroll through the gardens for our daily exercise.

Spring was in the air and the gardens looked great. There was hardly anyone there and we were queried as to where we had come from.

We could not do the round trip as that would have taken us into another LGA but did enjoy all the wattle along the highway.

Stay safe. (Heather)



KINGS TABLELAND - a spectacular wildflower display (near High Valley)

Plant life must find it tough in parts of the Blue Mountains – the skeletal soils and the harsh and unpredictable weather. Maybe that's why so many Blue Mountains plants are found here and nowhere else. The eroded sandstone ridge which we call Kings Tableland would be among the toughest. But images on this page show just a few of the plants which have found ways to adapt and fill a niche in this harsh environment.

We came across the waratahs soon after we entered the national park – masses of them, shaded by a canopy of eucalypts. Further on, where a fierce fire had swept through two summers ago, we started to see immature leaves of the Woody Pear (*Xylomelum pyrifforme*). The Woody Pear is named for the shape of its fruit and it is closely related to the waratah. New shoots had sprouted from lignotubers around the bases of burnt trunks. Others had grown from seed, stimulated by the fire. Then we found one tree which had survived enough to resprout from epicormic buds on the trunk, and it was flowering.

The mass flowering of wildflowers was spectacular. (Sue and Christine)

KINGS TABLELAND: Along Kings Tableland Road

No traffic, so quiet, regeneration. (Ron)



Trees and friendship

Know you love trees Christine. For what it's worth I reckon when you leave this World, you will return as a beautiful tree, your choice of course. Just waiting, waiting for someone to come along and give you a big hug and tell you how beautiful you are. (Ron)



WENTWORTH FALLS: Inspirational tree art

An amazing tree seen while walking down to Queen Victoria Lookout at Wentworth Falls. Could images like these be what inspired Aboriginal painting?

I only noticed it because, with the inspiration of the Virtual Bushwalk, I was really looking, not just walking.

(Robin)



The patterns are made by a native slug - the Red Triangle Slug. The photos of the slugs were taken by Sue on a rainy day on the Fairfax Track.



KATOOMBA VIEWS: Rising mist and hybrid waratahs



The mist rising from the Megalong Valley is draped over Narrowneck Plateau, with Boars Head (left) in the foreground. Sometimes, when weather conditions are exact and the humidity is high, the mist will flow over the plateau and fall down the other side into the Kedumba Valley. This phenomenon is known locally as the “Phantom Falls”. Hybrid waratahs decorate the front garden of a Katoomba cottage. (Marilyn K)