

Trip Report – Exploring the Blue Mountains Sept 2009

Hans, John, Vicki, Jenni, Phil, Barbara, Ruth, Alan, Karena, Rose and Bronwyn started a day of walking and exploring at the Blackwood Recreation reserve. The day unfolded with sightings of a crocodile, an elephant, false starts along the beautiful Lederderg river, the grave of a rock legend, a film set, lost mountain top cemeteries, farmers market, water falls, off track bush bashing, river crossings, mineral water tastings, devonshire teas and views of the rain swept Blackwood hills while sipping cappuccinos. What more could you want in a day!!

We started searching for a track along the Lederderg River and after a few false starts found our way to the great Dividing Trail leading to the mineral springs reserve. We meandered our way up through the hills to the Blackwood Cemetery. This is where we found the grave of rock legend Paul Hester, drummer with Crowded House. Being late morning we adjourned to the local cafe for our first coffee of the day. Whilst enjoying our coffee we looked out over the rain swept hills and replanned the remainder of the day. We then headed to Trentham where we discovered a farmers market where some of us indulged in venison barbequed sausages and other local produce. This didn't dampen our appetite for lunch in the rotunda by the lake. By now the rain had eased and we headed out to the spectacular Trentham Falls. Some of the group even explored the lower reaches of the falls.

From here we returned to the main objective of the day (re-scheduled due to rain) and headed back south to Blue Mountain. Parked our cars near Water Mill Farm and walked the road as far as we could and then took off cross country, up the steeper timbered slopes of the mountain. To our surprise our track took us past a large secluded film set of an authentic 1800's township complete with church, hotel, train and many other buildings.

The walk took us into another hidden surprise, the forgotten Blue Mountain cemetery, located close to the summit. Even though there are the remnants of only about 15 graves visible, internet research shows some 240 people buried there. We completed the walk up to the summit with its fire tower and other bits of technology! took in the surrounding spectacular views and then retraced our steps back down the hill to our cars. Well worth a visit to see the cemetery, the picturesque film set and experience the beauty of the mountain. We finished the day by relaxing in the late afternoon sunshine on the veranda of the Blackwood cafe with

coffee, scones jam and cream.

A day of spectacular views, beautiful green landscapes, spring blossoms, daffodils blooming everywhere, water filled dams, new places explored, interesting sights, good company and interesting conversations.

Ruth Barnes

P.S. The crocodile (plastic) was sitting on the edge of a lake in Blackwood and the life size elephant (also plastic) in a horse float on the side of the road at Newbury!