

# A VIRTUAL INTERPRETIVE BUSHWALK

## Our leisurely journey through Covid lockdown 2021

### **Unisolated**

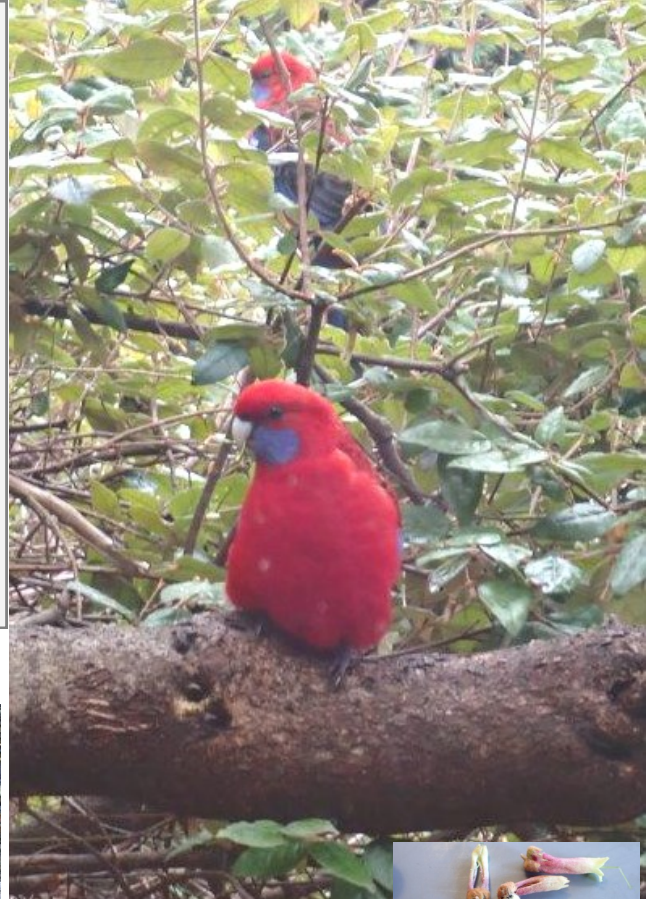
We have not been isolated from nature during the time a biological threat has forced some of us to physically isolate from each other.

During the winter and spring of 2021, nearly all of us have been able to observe the way other species interact with each other and the planet. It has been an ideal time to share the scenes of nature that capture our imagination and to put into words some of the feelings these scenes arouse in us.

We have seen the bush begin to regenerate after the dreadful fires of December/January 2019/20 and watched the changes as the days lengthen and winter turns to spring. Birds build their nests, migratory cuckoos arrive and call for a mate, displays of wildflowers are amazing.

We start the journey in **JULY 2021** ...

TING (Thursday Interpretative Nature Group)  
Members of Blue Mountains Conservation Society



### **Mount Victoria:** a frosty morning at Mount Victoria (Sue)



### **Blackheath:**

As I watched through my window, I wondered why the Crimson Rosellas were picking the Correa flowers.

*Correa reflexa* hides its nectar at the base of a long narrow tube and, of the honeyeaters that feed in my garden, only the Eastern Spinebill is equipped with a beak which can reach it. In return for the nectar, the spinebill pollinates the flower.

The Crimson Rosellas, which eat mainly seed, were using their strong beaks and flexible claws to cut, hold and dissect the flowers - eating the nectar and discarding the remainder of the flower. (Christine)



### **The Grose Wilderness:** (near Butterbox Point) A ray of sunshine! (Katriona)







## Springwood Cemetery

The Ashes walk, nothing whatsoever to do with cricket.

Nice quiet spot to sit awhile. There are times when entering the path when a spider has been at work, the web brushing my forehead. This needs an apology to the said spider.

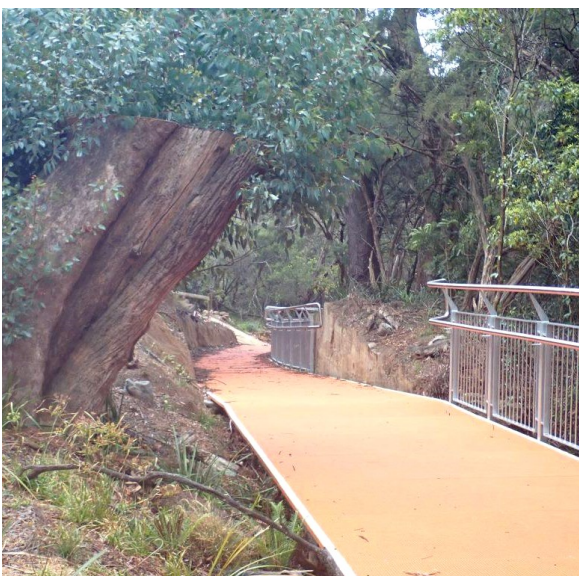
*Angophora costata* and Turpentines dominate this area. After rain or mist, maybe a little dappled sunlight, that beautiful rusty/orange bark from the *Angophora* transforms this lovely special pathway.

I haven't seen the family of Eastern Rosellas for a while. Hope they turn up soon. (Ron)

## Leura: a new walking and bicycle track

Don loves to revisit old walking tracks and find new ones and encourages friends to walk on them. The newest is Blue Mountains Council's excellent bicycle/pedestrian shared path. (He thanks Cathy and Paddy for info on this.) It goes from near the lookout opposite the old Leura Falls bushwalking kiosk, known in the modern day as Solitary restaurant, to Gordon Road, Leura, which used to be the eastern end of Cliff Drive before a landslide caused by flooding closed the road in January 2020.

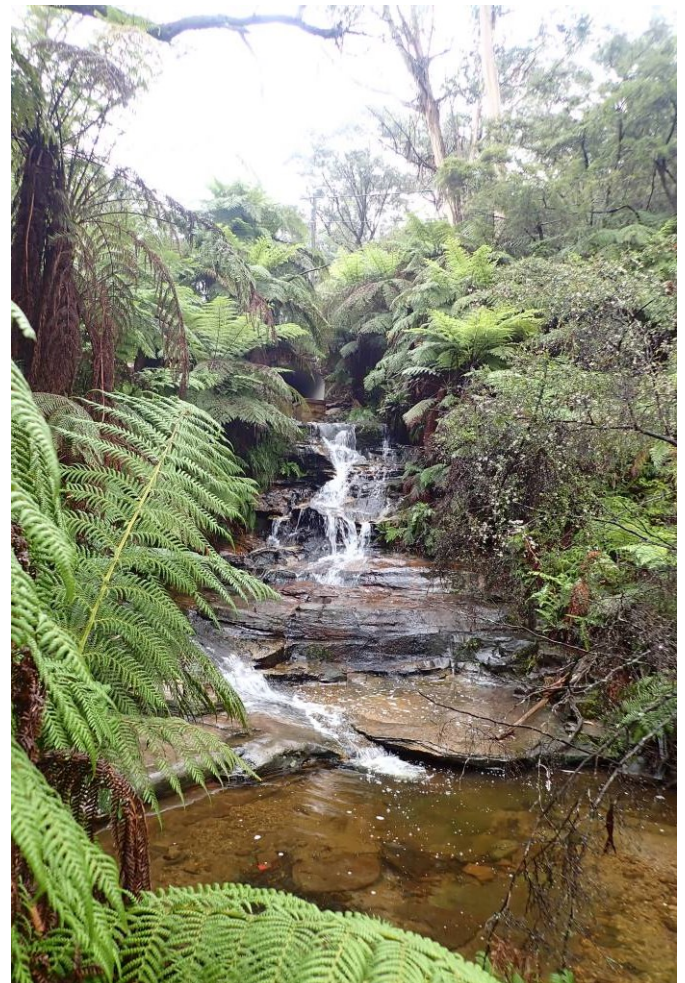
It is a fairly even grade and easy walk the whole way, with width appropriate for social distancing. There are glimpses of the Prince Henry Cliff Walk (opened 1934) before the path enters the Leura Cascades picnic area and passes the short, three year old, track to the beautiful upper Leura Cascades. Local Dawdlers might be able to check it out during their Covid exercise program. The rest of you are very likely to find it listed as part of a future TING walk. (Christine)



TING Virtual Interpretive Bushwalk

## Upper Leura Cascades

Can you spot the dancing woman?





## Lake Macquarie: Catherine Hill Bay

I often walk and swim on a nearby beach at Catherine Hill Bay.

Over the years, I have developed a profound attachment to the sea. It is moody. Every day is different. On some days it is smooth and glassy with barely a wave, on others, enticing to the surfer, perfectly formed waves roll gently towards the shore. Yet, like yesterday, it can be completely and dangerously wild and no one dares to enter. On these days even beach walking can be unsafe for fear of the unpredictability of the big swell.

It is comforting to me to know that, despite the fact that people, it seems, might make every effort to dominate the seascape as well as pollute and devastate marine life, the ocean itself is a force of nature that we must remain in awe of, never to be tamed, controlled or destroyed. (Anne A)

When I was a junior doctor I worked long hours at the old Newcastle hospital on the beach. I'd love being in the residents quarters (only boys could live there) when the weather was wild and listen to the wild ocean. (Katriona)



## Kanimbla Valley: armchair interpretation

Not seen on a bushwalk, but from my lounge, red-necked wallaby. (Rosemary)



Writing about the Ashes Walk at Springwood Cemetery, Ron reflects on a spider web brushing his forehead, so damaging the spider's work: "this needs an apology to the said spider". Paddy replied: "I too feel that need to apologise sometimes", and sent this poem ...

### TANGLED IN WEBS

Afternoons  
I find the time to pause  
ease my back  
and admire the work  
the Tiger Spider's done;  
deft and deadly,  
suspended, strung  
from plant to plant  
in the afternoon garden.

Like a sky-diver  
in Hawthorn colours,  
at the AFL finals.  
But at Night  
sometimes I stumble  
into unseen webs  
feeling the killer's  
sticky fingers  
across my face  
and in my hair;  
clutching at me

as seaweed does  
a drowning man;  
or a fisherman's net  
the drowning fish.

In fly-panic then  
I pull and tear  
rip and brush  
and curse  
and swear.  
And destroy that fragile beauty,  
the spider's work.

Till Morning,  
see it back again  
in place;  
glistening dew,  
enticing new victims.

(Paddy)



## Wollongong area: the Dark Tor

For our actual bushwalk today - and your virtual - we coastal dwellers found a mountain in our Wodi Wodi backyard. Not blue, but once famously described as the Dark Tor. From home through the urban wonderlands of Thirroul and Austinmer up to Sublime Point and along the escarpment for a bit of horizontal relief, down again and return via the Gibson Track through Austinmer Camp. All well within 10km/ Wollongong LGA.

A forest of eucalypts hangs on to the slopes, along with the local cabbage tree palms (Tharawal), burrawangs, ferns (tree, maiden hair and more). The track had been closed by NP&WS for a month or two, so sections were brand new, including fine sandstone steps. Other rocks were decorated by mosses and lichens.

In addition to the birds who kept us company at lunch (pictured), outside the closed Sublime Cafe were seen and heard lyrebirds, pardalotes, sulphur-crested cockies, ratbag lorikeets, whipbirds, wrens, bowerbirds and wattlebirds, all with the accompaniment of the surf in the distance. We wondered whether the magpie or its shadow is darker.

Enough blossoms though sparse: flannel flower, grevilleas, wattles, epacris, banksias, sundews.

The young working out, us older wearing out, pre-schoolers on foot or carried, families on a break from home schooling. (Anne and Geoff D)

Images: lunch company; lichens and mosses; seaview banksias



**Meanwhile -  
down on the  
rock shelf ...**



Two socially-distancing sooty oystercatchers