

80 WALKS BY 80 LEADERS



Blue Mountains NP: Tracks above the Grose – Leura Ridges

Leader: Jacqui Hickson

Date: 20th October 2019

Participants: Jacqui Hickson, Tony Hickson, Carol Thompson, Colin Isaac, Adrienne Kinna, Tom Dowling, Libby Dabbs, Tim Dabbs, Stephanie Leung, Jon Hestelow, Joy Bell, Chris Edwards, Florence Cho, Margaret Rozea

Report:

The day began as a perfect one for walking in the mountains in search of views - crisp and clear. After an initial hiccup regarding a missing backpack, 12 of us set out along the Fortress Ridge Trail, following a left fork along an unnamed side ridge above Govetts Creek to views across Carne Wall to the west. Returning on the same track a short distance,



Walk description:

Leura ridges above the Grose Valley, includes Dark's Cave, Fortress Ridge, Lockley Pylon. A couple of 100 - 200m steep roughish uphill - some scrambling. Otherwise undulating plateau walking, stunning views into various parts of the Grose Valley. Lots of photo opportunities. Map: CMA Katoomba and Mt Wilson



we met up with two more members and the retrieved backpack and headed down a well-marked but steep track to Dark's Cave for morning tea. I'd heard that a lot of rubbish had been left in the cave, but obviously someone had cleared it out again. From there most of us followed a side track around to a precarious lookout looking down into an 'amphitheatre' where some cascades finally drop into the valley hundreds of metres below us.

From Dark's Cave there was a steep scramble up on a rough pad to re-join the Fortress Ridge trail, where two members left to return to the cars. The rest of us headed out to Fortress Hill and the rock shelves beyond for lunch, again



looking down into Govetts Creek from a different angle and across Rodriguez Pass. Returning along the track for a couple of kms we then headed down the canyons' track to cross Fortress Creek at a shallow point before another rough scramble up to the Lockley Pylon Track near Mt Stead. Another four members left us at this stage, while the rest of us continued out to Lockley Pylon to what I thought were the most stunning views of the day - down the Grose Valley to the east, north across the Blue Gum Forest to Mt Banks and south-west back to the cliffs and rock shelves where we'd had our lunch.

It had been a long day and the 'stayers' made good time back to the Lockley trackhead, finishing at 4.45.

Apart from the breathtaking views of the cliff faces of the Grose River and Govetts Creek valleys, the carpets of wildflowers confirmed why this is one of my favourite Spring walks. Thank you to all who joined me on it.