

# BLUE MOUNTAINS

## 5 DAY SELF GUIDED WALKING NOTES

### THE START OF YOUR HOLIDAY

Your trip starts in **Blackheath** any time after 2pm, on:

**25 June 2016**

There is no walking scheduled for this day. However, you need to arrive in time for dinner.

### THE END OF YOUR HOLIDAY

Your trip finishes in **Leura** after breakfast, on:

**29 June 2016**

### HOW TO GET THERE by car

Apart from peak morning and afternoon times, this drive will take around 2-2.5 hours from downtown Sydney. From Sydney follow the M4 motorway towards the Blue Mountains. The M4 will become the Western Highway then pass through many small townships. When you get to Blackheath turn R at the traffic lights into Govetts Leap Rd and your accommodation is on your L in about 200m.

While you are walking your car will be parked at the first accommodation. If you arrived by car, at the end of this holiday you will need to catch a local train back to Blackheath to collect your car.

### HOW TO GET THERE by public transport

Take a local train from Sydney Central Station to Blackheath. A train timetable is included with your documents. The train departure platform appears on the "Departures" screen. Trains depart approximately every hour. The journey takes around 2 hours and costs about \$15 each way. You can't pre-book or purchase tickets in advance. At Blackheath, exit to the highway on the R side of the station. There are shops and a telephone booth.

When you arrive at Blackheath you can either walk or catch a local taxi to your first accommodation. There is a taxi stand on the highway beside the station, the number is 02 4782 1311 or if you would prefer to walk your accommodation is about 1km away. Cross over the main Great Western Highway and turn right. Walk one block until you reach Govetts Leap Rd. Turn left walk a short distance and the accommodation is on your left.

If you arrived by train, at the end of this holiday you will be transferred to Leura train station after breakfast, where you can board the train to Sydney.

## **VOUCHERS**

If you have booked this holiday as part of a group of friends/family, then any vouchers required for your holiday will be given to the group organiser – these vouchers will cover the whole group.

## **CONSIDERING THE ENVIRONMENT**

We hear a lot about this, the shortages, human impact, emissions, global warming etc. There is no doubt the threat is real, but do we really modify our behaviour to make a significant difference? In reality, you can make a worthwhile difference without too much inconvenience. Here are some suggestions we'd like to offer.

### **Public transport versus car?**

How will you travel to this holiday? In daily life, most of us use our private vehicles rather than public transport. For a change, why not use public transport to join this holiday? Most of our walks have excellent public transport connections and bus/train travel makes an interesting, pleasant change from the car. You'll see attractive countryside and meet all sorts of people along the way. And it's better for the environment.

### **Water usage**

Australia is a dry country and we need to share water with an ever increasing population as well as the environment. Please be considerate of your water usage during this holiday, as you no doubt do at home. Spas are a particular problem. Did you know that every time a spa has been used in commercial accommodation, cleaners are required to refill it with clean water, run it for a short time, and then let the water run away?

### **Waste disposal**

We have provided you with a reusable, insulated lunch bag to carry on day walks. These are yours to keep - they'll have a multitude of additional uses at home such as carrying a bottle of wine to a restaurant or for keeping cans of beer chilled. It is good practice to carry out all rubbish in the bag. If you ask, your accommodations will often be able to recycle some or all of your leftovers/rubbish. Here's another thought - why not pick up a piece of someone else's rubbish each time you walk? If everyone did that, our tracks would be cleaner and more pleasant.

### **Taking care of the bush**

When toileting, go well away from any watercourses and bury your waste and toilet paper or bury the waste and carry the toilet paper out with you. Do not light fires or pollute streams. Please don't pick wildflowers within national parks: this is illegal anyhow. Remember this motto - Take nothing but memories and photographs - leave nothing but footprints!

## **LABEL YOUR LUGGAGE**

**This is extremely important!** Many different people will handle your luggage during this holiday so please ensure each bag is clearly labelled with your name and mobile phone number. You can use the Auswalk luggage tags provided for you.

## **LAUNDRY FACILITIES**

Generally there are no guest laundry facilities at our smaller accommodations such as B&Bs. However if you ask your hosts nicely and they have time, they may assist with small amounts of washing. Larger properties usually have coin laundries (\$1 or \$2 coins).

## **NUISANCE WILDLIFE**

In a lush forested environment such as Blue Mountains, you are sure to encounter a few mosquitoes or flies. Insect repellents such as Rid, Aerogard or Bushmans all help to keep these insects away. Repellents come in different strengths for different requirements. If you put lots of repellent around your socks and tops of boots, repellent also helps to keep leeches off.

In wet weather you'll encounter an occasional leech during walks in the Blue Mountains. There might be quite a lot following unusually high rainfall. Leeches look like small stretchy worms, and are easy to deal with. Check your boots and socks often, then mostly they can be flicked off as soon as you see one. Otherwise remove it with salt. They HATE salt and drop off almost immediately after coming into contact with a few grains. Carry salt (mixed with a few rice grains to keep it flowing) in a small sealed container in your pocket. Cover the bite with a bandaid to stop bleeding, and leave it there several days.

## **WHAT TO CARRY WITH YOU EACH DAY**

### **Essential items**

- walk notes, map and map case
- picnic lunch packed in insulated container (when supplied)
- quality waterproof jacket with a hood
- warm jumper or jacket
- sunhat
- sunscreen (at least 15+)
- 1 to 2 litres of water
- first aid kit
- toilet paper
- some money
- mobile phone (note that reception is not available in all walk areas)
- personal insect repellent & bandaids & small container of salt mixed with rice grains

### **Optional**

Whether or not to carry some of these items may depend on the prevailing conditions.

- waterproof overtrousers
- warm hat
- sunglasses
- camera
- binoculars
- notebook and pen
- matches
- small torch
- walking stick
- thermos (for hot drinks)

## **WE ARE MONITORING YOUR PROGRESS**

During this walking holiday, your accommodation hosts will be expecting you well before dark each day. If you are delayed (eg. having a drink in the pub!), please contact them. If you do not turn up before dark they will assume there has been a problem and commence a search procedure.

## **EMERGENCIES**

It is essential that you carry a mobile phone (or satellite phone) on this holiday. With mobile phones, we have found that the best coverage is on the Telstra network. However, you will not have reception on some parts of this walk.

The Australian Communications & Media Authority manages emergency phone numbers in Australia. In the event of an emergency, phone 000 from any landline or mobile phone. Use this number even if your mobile phone company does not have reception where you are, because the call will roam and be connected through any phone network that does have reception.

If you want to be sure that you'll get telephone reception everywhere, then you will need a satellite phone. These can be hired from many outlets, including the following:

**Rent a Sat Phone** - <http://www.renta2way.com.au/>

This site provides a lot of information about renting phones.

**Renta2Way** - [http://www.renta2way.com.au/gallery\\_satilite\\_phone.html](http://www.renta2way.com.au/gallery_satilite_phone.html)

Based in Melbourne where you can pick up a phone or they can mail it to you.

**Satcom Hire & Sales** - <http://www.usathire.com.au/>

This company will mail the phone to you.

If you happen to have an injury, the information on our sheet "First Aid, Prevention and Treatment" should be helpful.

## **FEEDBACK**

We always appreciate feedback on any aspect of our walking holidays. After you have completed your holiday we will email/mail you a survey asking for specific information on the walking routes, accommodations, meals, hosts, documents etc. We are particularly keen to receive specific information on the detailed walking instructions provided. If possible, it would be great if you could jot down any ideas and comments along the way. Note that if you booked through an agent and we don't have your contact details, you will find your survey in your information pack.

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# DAY ONE - 25 June 2016

Arrive at your first accommodation any time after 2.00pm, when your room should be ready. If you arrive before 2.00pm, you will be able to leave your luggage, but not check-in to your room. If you are travelling by train you can catch a taxi for the 1km to Glenella or walk. Dinner is included this evening.

ACCOMMODATION:      Glenella Guest House  
                                 56-60 Govett's Leap Road  
                                 Blackheath NSW 2785  
                                 Ph 02 4787 8352  
Hosts:                      Rowan Bouttell

Glenella Guest House is a typical Blue Mountains historic Guest House. Now listed as a heritage building, Glenella was built in 1905 by George Phillips, a carpenter by trade. A south Australian born of Welsh parents, the Philips family moved to the Blue Mountains with his family on account of delicate health of one of his eight children. He purchased three allotments over the years which accounts for the spectacular land and gardens that now surround Glenella Hotel and Restaurant.

You will have a private room with ensuite bathroom and you will stay here for two nights. Please be aware that the bedrooms are very small but they have a lovely spacious communal lounge where you can go and relax.

A simple home-cooked dinner is included tonight. Margaret & Rowan will also give you breakfast in the morning and a lunch to carry. Tomorrow night we have left free for you to choose from the many excellent restaurants that are around. We recommend you ask your hosts for advice.

You should hand your lunch bag into reception today.

If you arrive early enough you may like to visit the Bacchante Rhododendron Gardens. You can find the route from the coloured map in your document pack. The gardens are marked near the top edge of the map, and the easiest route is to follow the Western Hwy most of the way. These unusual gardens contain large numbers of small exotic plants, planted in open spaces between the larger native trees. The gardens are in full bloom in spring time they become a cool haven in summer and display a rich variety of colours in autumn. There are numerous gentle walking paths that meander through the garden and around the delightful lake. You could easily spend an hour or more here.

# DAY TWO

Collect your picnic lunch before leaving today. Today's walk is a circuit walk, returning you to the same accommodation you stayed in last night. The walking route can be found on the coloured map.

## FINDING YOUR WAY

Care has been taken to provide simple and clear descriptions of the route to be followed. **Left (L)** and **Right (R)** apply facing in the direction you should be walking.

Your kit contains a map of the walking area. Maps are a miniaturised representation of features on the ground. Lay the map out flat then turn it around until it has the same alignment as the real features around you. However, don't worry if you can't read a map – our walking notes are very accurate and are used by most walkers without even referring to the maps.

The walking instructions are in **bold** and the rest is interesting information about the area you are walking through.

Abbreviations we have used include:

<b>St</b>	street	<b>m</b>	metre
<b>Rd</b>	road	<b>km</b>	kilometre
<b>Ave</b>	avenue	<b>L</b>	left
<b>tk</b>	track	<b>R</b>	right
<b>min</b>	minute	<b>4WD</b>	four wheel drive
<b>hr</b>	hour		

## AN OVERVIEW OF TODAY'S WALKING

- Section 1: 1 hr 30 mins / 1 hr 45 mins – 5.5 km. Mostly gentle terrain with one short climb at the end.
- Optional: 1 hr 45 mins / 2 hrs 15 mins – 6 km. Mostly gentle terrain with one short climb/descent at the start.
- Section 2: 10 mins – 0.5 km. This is a short, but steep track. There are lots of steps.
- Section 3: 1 hr 5 mins / 1 hr 15 mins – 3.0 km. Mostly down to Govetts Leap Brook, then up the rest of the way.
- Section 4: 25 mins – 1.5 km. Flat walking path.
- Section 5: 1 hr 30 mins / 1 hr 45 mins – 5.6 km. Mostly on quiet roads, undulating.

## **SECTION 1: BLACKHEATH TO GOVETTS LEAP**

**Expected time: 1 hr 30 min/ 1 hr 45 mins**

**Approximate distance: 5.5 km**

**Grading: Mostly gentle terrain with one short climb at the end.**

- 1) Leave the Glenella property and turn L along Govetts Leap Rd for about 400m.**
- 2) Turn L into Prince Edward Street, which is the 2<sup>nd</sup> rd.**
- 3) After about 300m you'll pass Memorial Park on your L.**
- 4) Here, road veers R past a large sign for "Popes Glen".**
- 5) Continue following the road for another 400m then turn R at the sign for "Popes Glen Track 3.3km".**
- 6) Follow this path downstream to a small bridge.**

The path meanders through low heathland and masses of delicate coral ferns. The extensive fern area on the left side of the creek is a hanging swamp. It is poorly drained soil with thick layers of decaying vegetation on top, which release water slowly, even through hot summers. The rustling sound you often hear in the bush is made by skinks, small lizards which are able to shed their tails during attack by predators. The old tail wiggles, distracting the attacker, while the skink escapes to grow a new tail later.

- 7) Cross over the bridge and stay on the R side of the creek, avoiding a track and bridge on your L. Stay on the main track.**
- 8) Continue following the creek until you reach an intersection to Boyds Beach.**
- 9) Follow the R fork to Govetts Leap.**
- 10) In about 400m you will reach a turnoff on the L going to "Pulpit Rock". Look carefully for this turn off as it is easy to miss it! There are two signs – one is low down near the ground and the other is up high.**

## **OPTIONAL SIDE TRIP TO PULPIT ROCK – highly recommended!**

**Expected time: 1 hr 45 mins / 2 hrs 15 mins**

**Approximate distance: 6 km**

**Grading: Mostly gentle terrain with one short climb/descent at the start.**

- 1) The Pulpit Rock track starts by stepping across boulders over a stream then climbs steeply for a few metres. Follow the track across the stream and out to Pulpit Rock.**

This return walk to Pulpit Rock hugs the cliff edge and has some outstanding views. If you're not planning on doing the entire side trip, at least try to do the first part and take in

the superb viewing points over Horseshoe Falls. Remember that the times listed throughout these notes are walking times and you need to add additional time for stopping and photography.

**2) Retrace your steps back to the Pulpit Rock turnoff.**

**SECTION 2: PULPIT ROCK TURNOFF TO GOVETTS LEAP**

**Expected time: 10 mins**

**Approximate distance: 0.5 km**

**Grading: This is a short, but steep track. There are lots of steps.**

**11) From the Pulpit Rock/Popes Glen track intersection; turn L towards Govetts Leap lookout and car park/picnic area. The last bit is a steep uphill climb, and you will pass several fabulous lookouts.**

At Govett's Leap, there is a lookout here with fantastic views over the Grose River valley. There are also picnic facilities and taps.

The dramatic cliffs are ancient indeed. 300-500 million years ago rocks were laid at the bottom of the deepest valleys. These layers have been folded and changed by pressure resulting in rocks like coarse-grained granite and quartzite. At the lookouts in the area it is easy to identify the thick layers of glowing yellow and brown sandstone, inter-woven with the thin beds of softer grey shale or claystone. Under these are the mixed layers of shales, fine sandstone and black coal seams, which are hidden by the green vegetation which clings to the sheer cliff faces.

**SECTION 3: GOVETTS LEAP TO EVANS LOOKOUT**

**Expected time: 1hr 5 mins / 1hr 15 mins**

**Approximate distance: 3.0km**

**Grading: Short steep descent to Govetts Leap Brook, then up the rest of the way.**

**1) Facing the Govetts Leap lookout, turn R between the protective fence and the car park, following the signs to "Evans Lookout".**

**2) After about 15 mins walking you will reach the spectacular Bridal Veil Falls.**

These falls are fed by pretty Govetts Leap Brook. The edge is a scary and dangerous place to be so don't go too close!

**3) Cross Govetts Leap Brook on concrete stepping stones.**

**4) On the other side of the creek, turn L towards "Evans Lookout".**

**5) After walking for another 40-45 mins you will arrive at a car park.**

There are toilets here as well as a drinking water tap (not suitable for filling water bottles though!).

**6) Walk through the car park and take the L track to “Valley View Lookout”.**

This splendid lookout is 100m down the track. There are superb views over the Grose Valley. It is hard to imagine that the area you are looking at was once a broad flat plateau. Over millions of years the rivers below you have eroded the landscape to produce the spectacular cliffs we see today. Many small creeks join the Grose River here. This in turn joins the Nepean River and later becomes the mighty Hawkesbury River, weaving its way to the coast near Sydney. The cliffs here have an average height of 150m and the Blue Gum Forest in the centre of the valley is over 500m below!

**7) Retrace your steps for about 15m and take the L track to “Evans Lookout”.**

**8) Walk for 1-2 mins and you will see Evans Lookout on the L.**

There are picnic shelters here but no toilets or water.

When you arrive at Evans Lookout car park, walk 100m down the track to the lookout. There are superb views over the Grose Valley. It is hard to imagine that the area you are looking at was once a broad flat plateau. Over millions of years the rivers below you have eroded the landscape to produce the spectacular cliffs we see today. Many small creeks join the Grose River here. This in turn joins the Nepean River and later becomes the mighty Hawkesbury River, weaving its way to the coast near Sydney. The cliffs here have an average height of 150m and the Blue Gum Forest in the centre of the valley is over 500m below! Have you ever wondered why the Blue Mountains are blue? It is because the eucalypts disperse droplets of oil into the atmosphere – the blue light rays of the sun scatter more effectively in the oily mist, this intensifying the usual light refraction phenomenon that causes distant objects to appear blue. Or, put more simply, the blue haze is caused by light rays passing through oil droplets – they scatter the light.