

THE PEAKS – 22 July 2012

Having climbed Mt Atherton at Byfield a number of times now, I was seriously starting to doubt Alan Rogers' stories about extending that walk to include the adjacent summit of The Peaks in a single days walk – obviously they were much fitter in the past ... or the vegetation was much thinner. So I had for some time resolved to lead a walk to visit the western half of that chain of mountains as a separate dedicated walk. Eight other hardy souls fronted for a walk billed as 'not pre-walked and likely to be a bit of an adventure'.

Well, it was a bit of an adventure with some on-the-run changes of proposed path but things turned out pretty well in the end. Starting from the same bend in the road to Stockyard Point as has been the case for Mt Atherton climbs, the aim was to walk to a point in the ridge between the two mountains, run west along the ridge to The Peaks summit and return down a southern ridge and back to the cars. OK, we didn't get the southern ridge I intended and there were more deep creeks in the area than are marked on the maps, but generally the plan worked.



Who's that climbing The Peaks?

The creeks were running nicely but not so deep as to be hard to cross – the challenge was getting up and down the banks. The delightful junction of three creeks coming together that is a feature of the Mt Atherton walk made for a very pleasant morning and afternoon tea spot. The final climb up the east face of The Peaks is quite exposed and rocky and needed some careful route choices. Once at the top, the summit is actually an extremely narrow north-south running ridge so there were great views all around even though the air wasn't that clear on the day. Our arrival there was timed just right for lunch though the lack of trees that made the views so good meant that there wasn't as much shade as you might like.

All up, it was a solid eight hours of walking for the day meaning that we could not spend too much time in any one spot. By the end, we all had had enough of walking and nobody seemed much interested in the idea of combining the Peaks with a Mt Atherton walk again ... at least not until there are some very widespread fires in the area.

Steve