



# Mt Wilson & Mt Irvine Historical Society

Newsletter N° 33

September 2018

## Letter to Members – August 2018

Dear Members,

It is that time of year again to send out membership renewal notices for the 2018 to 2019 year and to extend our sincere thanks for your continued support of the Mt Wilson & Mt Irvine Historical Society.

We must apologise for the delay in sending out the renewals. This task has been approached with a little trepidation this year as the society is facing some daunting challenges.

One of these challenges is the ongoing preservation of the society's historical archive material.

You may be aware that the Historical Society archives are being housed in a small space in the Mt Wilson Study Centre (formerly the public school). Late last year, this building, together with the adjacent principal's cottage, was condemned due to termite infestation which caused severe structural damage to the building. This placed the society in a dilemma as there were no alternative storage locations for the archive material at either Mt Wilson or Mt Irvine and it seemed unlikely at the time that the buildings could be repaired in the foreseeable future. The NSW Department of Education who own both buildings were completely disinterested in assisting. The Mt Wilson Study Centre committee, responsible for the management of these buildings, in consultation with the various other stakeholder groups including the MW&MI Progress Associations, MW&MI Rural Fire Brigade and the MW&MI Historical Society prepared and submitted a heritage grant application for urgent funding to carry out the needed repairs. The outcome of this grant was due to be known by early July but has only recently been announced last week.

These grants are highly competitive but miraculously it was successful and funds of \$100,000 will be available to have the two buildings repaired. The Society, mainly thanks to the work of one of our committee, Des Barrett, negotiated beforehand with the Study Centre committee, that once the necessary repairs were completed, the archives could be moved into the adjacent principal's cottage which will ultimately afford a larger and more suitable storage space than was previously available.

The restoration of the two buildings and the rehousing of the archive material now all appears to be on track, to our great relief.

Of greater concern, however, is the current state of the society and its future.

It has become increasingly clear that society membership is falling. This is understandable to an extent as many Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine residents have now moved away from the area and some have very sadly passed on.

Letter to Members August 2018.....	1	The Turkish Bath of Wynstay and its Occupants.....	7
AGM Report 2018.....	2	11 November 2017.....	14
Eulogy for Libby Raines.....	3		

The majority of our current membership appears to be the members who do not reside at either Mt Wilson or Mt Irvine and for this continued support we extend our deepest appreciation. Ideally, we need to garner more support from the local community so that a 'new generation' of members can assist in taking on the mantle of carrying the work of the society forward. At the last annual general meeting, which was modestly attended in November 2017, there were no nominations received for membership of any of the committee positions. Also the ability to enlist the volunteers needed to open the museum each Sunday through spring and autumn is increasingly becoming a challenge, to the extent that on some days we are unable to open. Currently we are carrying on as best we can with an interim committee who primarily comprise the available museum roster workforce.

We are writing this letter to keep you apprised of the current state of the society. But more importantly, we would very much welcome your thoughts and ideas as to how we might strengthen the society and allow it to continue its important work. We are also acutely aware we are unable to offer much in the way of tangible benefit to your membership due to a lack of resources and we would very much like to change this.

Any ideas or comments on increasing local interest and membership in the society, encouraging participation in the museum roster, ideas about fundraising events or any general insights you may have would be very welcome.

We are all very committed to preserving and promoting the history of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine and truly believe that a committed and active society is integral in achieving this.

Thank you again for your continued and unwavering support.

Malcolm Reynolds. President, Mt Wilson & Mt Irvine Historical Society

---

## Mount Wilson & Mt Irvine Historical Society AGM Report – November 2017

The meeting was held on Saturday 18 November 2017 at the Mt Wilson Village Hall commencing 10.30am.

As drought grips 100% of New South Wales, it was incredible to reflect that just prior to this meeting, the Mounts endured one of the most torrential downpours yet experienced. This dampened proceedings somewhat but failed to deter a stalwart group who met at Mount Wilson for the Annual General Meeting of the historical society.

The meeting was held at the Mt Wilson Hall on Saturday 18 November 2017 commencing at 10.30 am where a light morning tea prefaced proceedings. Thanks are extended to all who organised and provided the catering particularly Helen Freeman and Helen Cardy.

In attendance were Zaharah Braybrooke (president), John Braybrooke (secretary), Des Barrett, Mary Reynolds, Helen Freeman, John and Helen Cardy, Malcolm Reynolds, Libby Raines & Robert Chesney. Sadly both Libby and Robert have since passed away and are no longer with us.

We were also joined by Dr Peter Rickwood, the president of the Blue Mountains Association of Cultural & Heritage Organisations (BMACHO), Patsy Moppit, their secretary, Jan Koperberg, Professor Ian Jack of the University of Sydney with his wife Jan and Suzanne Smith from the Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society. There were over 40 apologies so attendance may have been affected by the inclement weather. Disappointingly, very few local residents were able to attend.

Zaharah Braybrooke presented the president's report thanking everyone for coming and acknowledging the committee members for their support. The main thrust of the president's address was the plight of the archives currently housed in the Mount Wilson Study Centre. The study centre and adjoining principal's cottage have been condemned due to structural damage from

termite infestation placing the entire archive at risk. The urgent need to digitalise the records to ensure their survival and how the building itself can be repaired provided much material for discussion later in the meeting.

No treasurer's report was available as Milba Kirk, our treasurer, has been very unwell and was unable to attend. However John Braybrooke was able to provide a brief summary of the financial position.

As noted above, much of the discussion during the meeting was around the precarious state of the historical archives housed in the termite damaged Study Centre. Professor Ian Jack delivered an address on behalf of BMACHO on the value of the archive material and the need to ensure it is safeguarded. This speech was very well received. Since the meeting we have now learned that a heritage grant has been successful allowing sufficient funds to repair the building which is great news.

The ceremony for the payment of the annual peppercorn rent to the owners of Wynstay for the lease of the Turkish Bath Museum was re-enacted. Unfortunately Wendy Smart, the owner, could not attend. For readers who are unaware, the Historical Society pays the owner of Wynstay \$1 per annum for the lease of the Turkish Bath museum building and the immediate precinct.

At the conclusion of the meeting, nominations were called for the various committee positions in the society. Unfortunately none were received so the current committee have remained in their positions on an interim basis. Volunteers were also called for a proposed Archive Sorting Workshop to be held on 3 and 4 February 2018.

The highlight of the meeting was the presentation by Mary Reynolds. The topic was 'Reflecting on Mount Wilson's History'. Mary discussed the early exploration of the area and the encounters between the indigenous inhabitants and early explorers such as William Romaine Govett. Tracing through this period to the early European settlement in the 1870s and providing much interesting background on the original eight families who took up residence on Mt Wilson. The talk was very informative and much enjoyed by all who attended. Mary's ability to recount historical events in minutest detail is to be greatly admired.

Thanks go to all those who attended, particularly our president Zaharah, our speakers Mary Reynolds and Professor Ian Jack and everyone who assisted with catering for the morning tea. The next AGM of the Mt Wilson & Mt Irvine Historical Society will be held later this year in November 2018. Date to be advised.

Malcolm Reynolds August 2018

---

## Eulogy for Libby Raines

I was asked to give this eulogy for Libby Raines at her funeral held 18 May 2018. Several other people spoke including her son Peter, her older sister, two of her friends from her time training to be a nurse and John Cardy from the local bushwalking group.

Once upon a time...this is the story of three little girls marching across the grass to the flagpole and hoisting the family flag, showing a hake fish, and saluting; all the while watched by their father. The middle one of these three girls is Libby.

Libby's father Denys Hake was Headmaster at The Kings School and soon after he and his wife Elizabeth arrived in Australia in the late 1930s it was apparent that they needed a refuge from living full time at the school. They may have met Col. Wynn through Archbishop Mowll, then staying at Withycombe, but if not the end result was that the tiny 4 room workman's cottage was rented for about 26 years, for a minimal amount. Here the family came in the school holidays. They grew potatoes, gooseberries and rhubarb; a thyme lawn was made and Hake scythed the grass. The

little girls played in the bush, they made cubbies out of tree fern fronds, climbed along fallen logs and walked all over the mountain, including down to the creek where they caught yabbies which were brought home in a billy to be cooked and eaten. On the 'lawn' they played quoits and shuttlecock. They virtually lived outside for a table and benches was moved outside whenever the weather permitted and the girls slept in tents. Thank you to Libby's sister Cecily for painting such a vivid picture of these childhood times. These wonderful and idyllic holidays were the start of Libby's life-long passion for the mountain.

Libby and Keith met while walking on the mountain. They contrived to meet 'accidentally' in The Avenue; Libby leaving from Merry Garth and Keith from Coppins. Their courtship took place as they rediscovered and resurrected the old Happy Valley path as a mutual project. After their marriage they lived at Coppins which was then just a glorified garage built by Keith. He added on one room and later, as the family grew, he took the roof off and added a second storey.

In the meantime the Hake family had bought Merry Garth and the original tiny cottage had an extra room built on to it. Denys Hake died, and in 1978 Libby and Keith moved to Merry Garth where Keith built a family home around the old cottage, embracing the 20 foot square original. The extra room was moved down the slope for Mrs Hake to stay in when she visited.



There Libby and Keith build a wonderful and beautiful garden. Libby and Keith were entirely self-taught gardeners, learning from books and experience. Keith took responsibility for the trees and shrubs while Libby focused on the smaller plants, bulbs and all the special tiny alpine plants that she seemed to grow effortlessly. Don Schofield, who has his own lovely garden at Mt Tomah, and Libby became gardening friends. Don has commented that Libby was both gardener and plants-person. In the garden at Merry Garth we can see the history of at least 40 years of cool climate gardening. He has said that Libby understood the culture in horticulture. Don saw that Libby had a real understanding and knowledge of plants – putting them where they would be happy. She created the nursery, having learnt many of the skills of growing young plants while working for Bill Smart. There was also a flourishing vegetable garden. The garden reflected many friendships and Keith and Libby made use of natural changes, such as the 2011 windstorm which opened up new areas for planting. Right to the end she was propagating and when she last visited Don she was still asking for a bit of that or a piece of another unusual shrub.

Soon after I joined the Progress Association she gave me some advice – we are only all volunteers and we have to accept that we can only do so much. And then you look at what she did!

The RFS was very important to her. Libby had said that she would never be able to pass even the basic training today – it was just too hard; I am not sure that I believed her. As with so much else she was always quietly there when needed. Helen Freeman remembers July 2002 when a page went out to attend a fire burning on the property of Breenhold. The stockpile of felled timber had been illegally lit by persons unknown. Libby was part of the all-girl crew, along with Helen, Milba Kirk and Allison Heap. They all arrived at the station and set about putting their training into action- with considerable success.



Libby, being an earlier riser, went around to the hall during the 2013 fires (and earlier ones) and was making beds and tidying up at the start of every day. And I recall driving up Bells Line of Road on a very misty Friday night and there was Libby on traffic control at Mt Tomah after a traffic accident.

Libby was part of the very first First Responders group which was set up under the combined aegis of the RFS and the ambulance service. Like a number of you I remember her quiet confidence as we waited for the ambulance to come. Libby was of course no saint and one of her hates is the reason for her retiring as a first responder. It required use of technology that she flatly refused to learn. She just about coped with a cordless phone but a mobile phone, computer or even an iPad or anything to do with the internet or email was just ignored. She would smile and say she would try and then would resist any further suggestions. She could be very stubborn!

Libby was a member of the MWPA from its beginning. For many years it seemed as though the village was run by her and Bill Smart, and then a more formal committee was set up. She soon became Treasurer; a position she occupied until the very end. For everyone who was ever on the Progress Association she was a source of wise advice, understanding the politics of the village and the history behind so many past decisions. For example she and Bill (and others) decided that when the power lines were expanded they were placed along the various unmade roads where they could reach every property, be largely out of the way and the trees of The Avenue would be saved from desecration. She knew where all the unmade roads ran. One of her real regrets was the failure to get the power lines either bundled or put underground to save the true shape of golden elms on Mt Irvine Road. It was Libby who helped to negotiated with the BMCC so that we could use local contractors and decide our own priorities about what work to be done when.



Libby was a member of the Historical Society; she had been a member of the CWA and continued to be at lunch for Ladies Day whenever she could. Libby was church warden for St Georges Church where she was a regular monthly worshipper at the Sunday service, on the other Sundays she went to Mt Victoria. She guarded the allocation of the grave sites with determination, as I found out when she allowed a position of a memorial stone for my mother. Libby set up the Bush Care

program at Mt Wilson, and recently while working at Sloane Reserve she showed the rest of the group how to wield a shovel. In 2013 Libby was recognised as a bush care volunteer of legendary status and was awarded the 'Golden Trowel' in recognition of her service.

Graham Tribe described her, correctly, as the 'conscience of the mountain community', and you were not very sensible if you did not listen to her. For all her work as mentioned above she was awarded an OAM in 2006 for 'service to the community of Mt Wilson, particularly through a range of environmental, horticultural, civic and church activities'. It was not all work though. For many years Libby ran the New Year's Eve party with Cecil Kirk playing the squeezebox and Elsa Armitage calling the dances – Libby loved to dance.

Meanwhile she organised the appropriate trees for the avenues and verges in the village, she counselled and consoled the community, she was part of the choir for the 11 November Remembrance Day, she contributed a wreath for that day and for ANZAC day to put on the Memorial. She made her famous cake for the bush walking group and the Bush Care meetings, delicious egg sandwiches for any meeting or gathering, marmalade for the Hamlin fistula hospital in Ethiopia; and she painted her delicate, precise water colours of the flowers and plants in her garden. Ray Harrington recalled that when she started coming to his studio, for a painting group which evolved into more formal classes, Libby knew very little but over the years she showed 'incredible improvement' working very hard and not distracted until the coffee break and then the finishing time. Painting was something that she seemed to do primarily just for herself, a rare event in her life. And threaded through all of this was her love for her family and her joy in her grandchildren.

Libby's immense local knowledge, gained through endless walks and a fantastic memory for place, was an essential tool for many of the rescues over many years. Police and ambulance officers respected and called on her knowledge of the gorges, creeks, slopes and cliffs, and access points and tracks. This was partnered by her deep understanding of the natural world. I remember her picking up a long branch and showing us the little furled back pieces of bark all over it – this was where the cicadas had laid their eggs. Similarly she delighted in the birds in her garden, especially the golden oriole which took up residence for a couple of years. All this was, for her, an intrinsic and essential part of living on Mt Wilson.

Libby fitted all this in by getting up very early, writing letters both personal or for one of the organisations with which she was involved – if you wrote a letter to Libby you always got a reply – perhaps doing a bit of painting, then going for a walk through the village – bringing in our garbo bins if she went around our block – then back home for a cup of tea and into the garden; and still finding time for all the meetings and discussions, and for chatting to her friends and the many visitors who came to the garden again and again.

She layered more into her life than 10 people altogether. We are so lucky to have reminders in our own gardens, owning one (or more) of her paintings, having received one of her wonderful chatty letters which always talked about Mt Wilson and the trees and plants of her garden, being reminded of some historic event or a person long gone and being able to collectively hold vivid and personal memories of conversations, shared walks, and her sheer pleasure in our lovely mountain – her refuge, sanctuary and most special place in her heart and imagination.

Alison Halliday

---

## The Turkish Bath of Wynstay and its Occupants 1922—1950

We know the name of at least one of these gentleman, Duncan McLeish, Duncan is the man in the middle. It is possible that another was James Watson Melville; Standing proudly outside the front entrance of Wynstay, dressed for this important occasion with waistcoats, ties and watch and gold chain.



Scottish stone masons, builders of Wynstay



Duncan McLeish born at Beith, Scotland in 1876. He arrived in Australia 1912; lived at Brighton-le-Sands NSW; and worked on the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

<sup>1</sup>When Colonel Richard Owen Wynne returned to Mt Wilson with his new English wife Mariamne Ronald from the United Kingdom in about 1921 the presence of a Turkish Bath on his property perhaps carried little weight. Were there links with the past associated with the loss of his father Henry John Wynne in 1898, and buried in the cemetery at Mt Victoria?

Colonel Wynne had already employed highly recognised architects, Josland and Gillings, to plan and supervise the construction of a new home overlooking the vast bushland to the north and west of Mt Wilson. It was to be a neo-colonial Georgian home built with local sand stone from a near-by quarry. It would be some distance from the older home Yarrawa built 1878- 1880c., a weatherboard structure and named by his grandfather, Richard Wynne, the original founder of the property. The name Yarrawa was said to be aboriginal land there has been considerable research by Dr Jim Smith and Dr Peter Rickwood (see article in the Newsletter No. 26 pages 12-15 of the Mt Wilson & Mt Irvine Historical Society). It is unlikely that the name Yarrawa was a local name for a tree fern. Colonel Wynne discarded that name once the new home was complete, using Wynstay instead, reflecting on his origins and close links with his grandfather's home in Sydney, also known as Wynstay.



What of the Turkish Bath? Was it also to be discarded? Fortunately the architects were able to persuade Colonel Wynne to retain it. Often over the years we have been eternally thankful that the architects were able to convince Colonel Wynne to keep the Turkish Bath. But it must be used...



Richard Owen and Mariamne Wynne amid the stone blocks for Wynstay c1922

Above left: Loading the sand stone blocks from the quarry nearby using the pulley. Richard Owen Wynne on the right.<sup>2</sup> Who was the man on the cart and the local lad standing close by? Note the form of transport in 1921-22. Hard work indeed.

The site of the construction was isolated in many ways. Remember Mt Wilson had roads that were impassable in wet weather and was some distance from Sydney; and 10 miles (16 km) from Bell Railway station so what better idea than to make this unusual building into accommodation for the Scottish stone masons!

Following is a description of how this rare building was converted for domestic use.<sup>3</sup>

The original entrance under the turret used by Mary Ann, Richard's wife, in 1880s was closed off and became a very Spartan-like bathroom. Inside was a ceramic decorated toilet made by Lassiter and Co.; well-known at the time in Sydney. Above was a cistern attached to a septic tank, again highly unusual for 1920s; a deep narrow ugly copper bath and finally a chip bath heater notorious for misbehaving unless handled with delicate care. The Turkish Bath had concrete coke ceilings, clearly there to contain the heat.



Five of the beautiful stained glass windows still to be seen in the Turkish Bath. A miracle of survival.<sup>4</sup>



All these were removed and replaced by horsehair plaster ceilings in the three rooms of the building. The concrete ceiling in the basement remains there today. The tessellated tile floors in two of the three rooms were covered with timber, creating a bedroom next to the converted bathroom and a sitting room in the third room where a fireplace was built in the south eastern corner.

In the middle room two of the original windows were removed and replaced with doors, one door giving access to the building on the eastern side. The carpentry of some of this work was, to say the least, not in the highly skilled bracket. This room became the kitchen with the installation of a fuel stove plus chimney above, and on the northern wall a wooden sink with attached 1920s plumbing. Originally this room had two cubicles for massaging; one of these was added to and become a pantry in 1920s.

By 1923 the elegant home of stone had been completed. It was time for our Scottish stone masons to move on. We know that Duncan McLeish was to work on the Sydney Harbour Bridge.



A Model T Ford. Grandfather sitting on the side of the truck. Reg Lever's father is in the driving seat. Reg and Jack Lever are sitting in the back. The truck is outside the main gates of Wynstay. This was in 1929.

The Society was fortunate to encounter Mr Reg Lever during the days (in the 1990s) when Wynstay was open to the public to raise funds to restore and conserve the Turkish Bath as a museum. Mr Lever remembered staying in the Turkish Bath as a child with his grandfather, David Woodgate, a gardener at Wynstay in the late 1920s and 1930s. It is probably not surprising that Mr Woodgate was employed by Colonel Wynne as he had recently arrived from England with a background in horticulture.<sup>5</sup> More fortunately for the Society Mr Lever had a collection of old family photos revealing the days when his grandfather and his uncle Jack Woodgate worked at Wynstay, both as gardeners. These photos were graciously donated to the Society, and Mr Lever became a member of the Society.



Mr Lever had driven from Sydney and Granville along the Bells Line of Road. He had been delayed by a bushfire and did not reach Mt Wilson until midnight or later. His family thought he was totally lost. The roads were extremely rough in those days.

The Woodgate Family. From the right: Mrs Woodgate, David Woodgate her husband, Jack Woodgate their son and his wife Ivy, Mrs Lever their daughter. In front her two sons, Reg and Jack Lever.

It seems that David and Jack Woodgate both worked at Wynstay as gardeners and stayed in the Turkish Bath. They must surely have exercised much influence on the landscape of the gardens as desired by Richard Owen and Mariamne Wynne in those early years. In the course of time David

retired to Granville while Jack stayed on as head gardener. Meanwhile Jack had married Ivy Gill who came out from England in 1929. They had four children. After David retired Jack, Ivy and family moved into the Lodge and were there until the early 1940s.

'A Mount Wilson Pilgrimage' (see newsletter No 28 August 2013) records the memories of a member of the Woodgate family. It is reproduced as follows:

At the beginning of May 2013 while on trip to Australia from my home in Scotland, my daughter Cally and I (Heather Woodgate Brennan) visited the Blue Mountains. Our goal was a visit to the Wynstay Estate in Mount Wilson which has connections to our family through the two gardeners, David and Jack Woodgate who lived and worked at Wynstay from the 1920s to the 1940s.

When I was a child, my dad (Ted Woodgate) occasionally referred to relatives who went out to Australia from our hometown, Eastbourne, in Sussex on the south coast of England. He seemed to know little about what happened to them, and instead fantasized that they had taken up sheep farming and become very wealthy.

I knew nothing more until a few years ago, when information was passed on to me by the wife of a cousin who had done some family research. I learned that my Dad's uncle David Woodgate and his son Jack Woodgate, worked on my grandfather's market garden in Eastbourne just after the First World War. Dad a teenager at the time worked with them.

About that time David's daughter by his first wife married an Australian soldier and moved to Sydney in Australia. David, his second wife Naomi, and Jack decided to join them. They emigrated in 1920. Sometime after they were settled in Australia, both David and Jack were employed as gardeners at Wynstay by Colonel Richard Owen Wynne. (Coming from England would appeal to Colonel Wynne as he had spent much of his life there). He had inherited Wynstay from his grandfather Richard Wynne who called the previous house Yarrawa.

David and Jack Woodgate probably built the various areas of hard landscaping; the Italian garden, the walled garden with the fountain and the Sunken garden.

A special thank you to Heather Woodgate Brennan for her background on the Woodgate Family.



Left: David Woodgate with the family dog; the small child on the seat in the background is Jane Wynne born 1923.  
Above: The Sunken Garden





Wynstay, facing north and overlooking the Blue Mountains National Park and the Wollemi National Park with an established garden, taken in the 1990s.

Trying to learn if the Turkish Bath was occupied after the Woodgate family departed in the 1940s has been quite a challenge. However, almost by chance, while studying the records of the Mt Wilson Progress Association the name of Joe Webb appeared. It seems that he was appointed by the Shire Council at Lawson to care for the roads at Mt Wilson and the road to Mt Irvine. In those times there were three local Councils: The Shire Council at Lawson which administered Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine; the Katoomba Council; and the Blackheath Council.



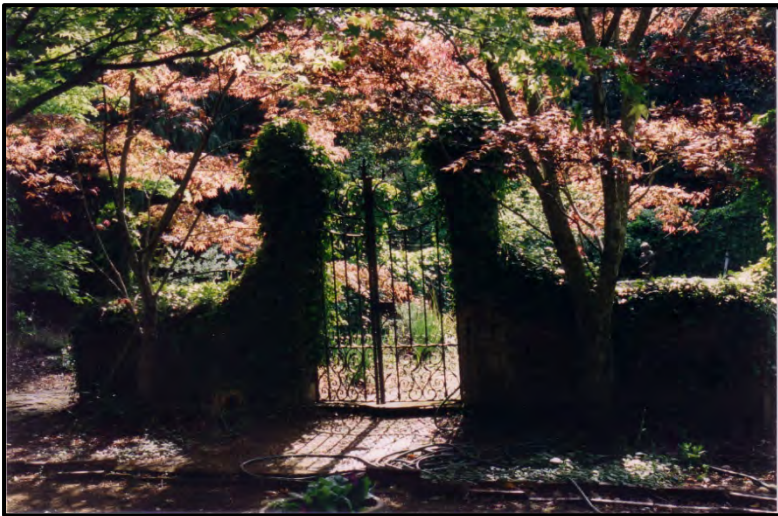
Left: The Lodge or the Gatehouse in the days of the Woodgates. Right: outside the main gates of Wynstay and a view of the Lodge in the 1930s.

One has to have much sympathy for Joe Webb whose only equipment consisted of a shovel and pick, hand tools. After the Woodgate family left the Turkish Bath Joe was to occupy it for quite some years. How he managed to repair, let alone maintain, the roads at that time would have been a miracle. Yet he was much admired and respected by the local residents. So much so that in November 1951 when the newly established Blue Mountains City Council, which had been formed in 1947, abolished Joe's position and replaced it with a different system, there was a strong outcry from the local residents.<sup>6</sup> (see the letter from Roland Clark.)



The Blue Mountains City Council was unmoved. Its solution was to replace Joe with what was named 'a Flying Gang'! According to the 1953 Minutes of the Progress Association, the Council had promised a better service on the roads but this promise was not kept. In those times the condition of the roads was a constant concern, not least because of the increase in visitors but also due to the impact of the local transport.

Finally, we may ask what of the Turkish Bath when it was no longer occupied. It is difficult to tell but it seems it became a depository for items to be stored over the years with the occasional use of the fuel stove to make sweets such as marshmallows; home-made lollies by the Wynne children and their friends the Gregson daughters. Strangely, during these years this building did not arouse the sort of curiosity that later brought it to life in the 1990s under the ownership of William H. Smart and Jane M. Smart (nee Wynne).



The entrance to the Italian Garden designed by Mariamne Wynne.

The lily pond and statue inside the Italian Garden.



The Turkish Bath after restoration

The following document reveals, in 1948, the extent of Joe Webb's responsibilities in maintaining the roads.<sup>7</sup>

3rd February, 1948

Memo to Mr. JOE WEBB, Maintenance Patrol, Mt. Victoria.

Mt. Irvine - Bowens Creek Road Maintenance:  
Will you please attend to the following matters on the Bowens Creek Road and Mt. Irvine Road of which complaints have been made by the Local Progress Association.

(a) Clean out all Water Tables where possible.  
Arrangements will be made for the grader to patrol the area when he can be spared, but it is not anticipated that he will be in that area for about 4 - 5 months.

(b) Check all culverts. The Association states that the following culverts need attention -

(i) Culvert near bridge - needs clearing.  
(ii) Culvert two miles from bridge - needs clearing.  
(iii) Culvert 1½ miles from Mt. Irvine turn off needs clearing.  
(iv) Culvert at Mt. Irvine turnoff (50 yds. downhill) - has collapsed and needs new timbers. I will see if pipes can be obtained for this job, but in the meantime make temporary repairs.

(c) Carry out what maintenance is possible with equipment available to you.

I will arrange with Mr. Priddle, the District Engineer, to contact you at an early date and discuss your problems.

It is anticipated that a horse and dray previously used in the Laura area, and belonging to the Katoomba City Council, which will be replaced by Motor Lorry Maintenance in the next month or so will be available for transfer to you and this might be of some assistance in your work.

For your information Council has approved of the following sums for maintenance in your patrol area for 1948 but this money is to be spread over the whole year.

<u>Mt. Irvine - Maintenance - unpaved</u>	
roads .....	£100
Maintenance - drains and culverts .....	50
Maintenance - Bridge .....	10
Storm Damage .....	20
P.W. Incidental Expenses .....	20
	<u>£200</u>
<u>Mt. Wilson - Maintenance unpaved</u>	
roads .....	£100
Maintenance - paths .....	20
Maintenance - drains and culverts .....	30
Storm Damage .....	10
P.W. incidental expenses .....	20
Tree Planting .....	40
Maintenance Parks and Gardens .....	20
	<u>£220</u>

Mary Reynolds

<sup>1</sup> Photographic Collection Wynstay Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine Historical Society from the McLeish Family

<sup>2</sup> As above from the album belonging to Jane Smart nee Wynne Wynstay Collection.

<sup>3</sup> The history of the Turkish Bath 2005 Archives Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine Historical Society

<sup>4</sup> Photo Collection Turkish Bath Museum Archives Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine Historical Society

<sup>5</sup> Newsletter No 27 2013 Mt Wilson & Mt Irvine Historical Society

<sup>6</sup> Mt Wilson Progress Association correspondence and minutes

<sup>7</sup> Minutes of the Mt Wilson progress Association. 1939-1965



## Remembrance Day 11 November 2017

The last four years have seen a huge amount of material being published, discovered and re-published on WW1, everything from serious histories to the media getting in on certain events such as (most recently) a 'history' of the light horse attack on Beersheba being published in magazine format on 28 October 2017 in *The Australian*. One of the more interesting publications has been the work of Sarah Wearne, in England. Her project was tweeting one grave stone inscription every day of the First World War centenary, (4 August 2014 to 11 November 2018)<sup>1</sup> and publishing a brief commentary in an associated blog. Subsequently two small but potent books have been published on epitaphs of the Great War, one on the Somme and the other on Passchendaele. I have made use of some of her valuable commentaries.

I suppose being a little contrary I wanted this year to talk about two people from WW1. Both cast short shadows but have great connections with our two mountain communities. Through their lives we are offered a little microcosm into what life was like at Mt Wilson and at Mt Irvine many years ago.

I want to re-visit, once again, the life of Colin Smith. This is the third time I have examined his life, and this time it is a very personal report, rather than one so dependent on the many other wonderful sources who have surfaced during my research into this one man.

In July of this year [2017] Alex, Matilda and myself got on a train in Amsterdam and a couple of hours later, with one change of train we arrived in Dalfsen (local windmill on left).

There we caught the local bus, with a very helpful driver to the town cemetery.



Below: Dalfsen train station







This is a very tidy place and peaceful. It is on the edge of the town, opposite a field (see above).



Cemetery entrance



There is a place on one side of the cemetery, separated by a neat low yew hedge, for war



graves. Here are the grave markers of the crew of two bomber planes and one sole pilot.

In this well cared for place lie the remains of Colin Smith, the pilot Viney and the rest of the crew of their bomber plane. They would have been brought here from temporary burial sites in the years after the war.

The graves are maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and, as is the case with all their cemeteries, local workers are used to maintain them. The actual stones are uniform in size, made of limestone, and family were restricted as to the number of letters they were allowed to use on the headstone; only 66 characters. The use of the cross was usual but not mandatory. The inscription was chosen by the family or relative, if they could be found.







Colin Smith (far left) and the bomber crew

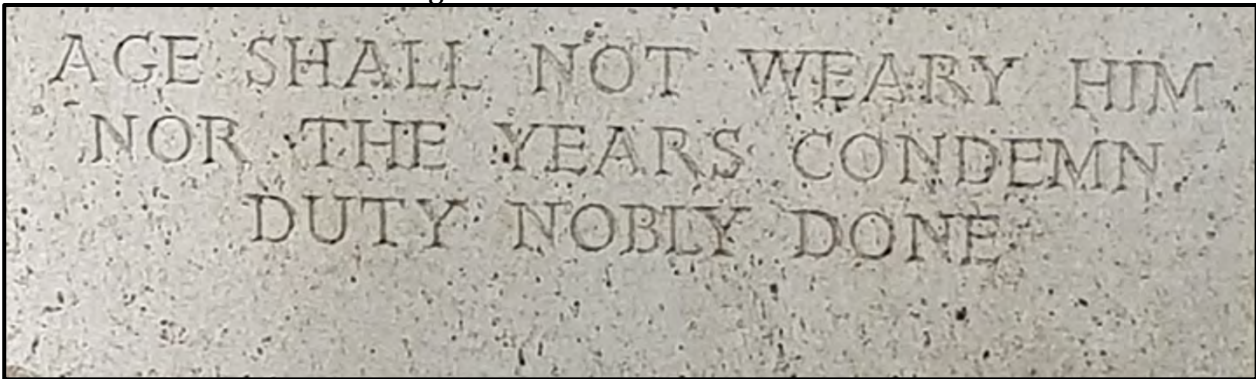
All the grave stones have the service badge on them<sup>2</sup>.



The motto of the RAAF is *per ardua ad astra*. There is no definitive translation so it may be variously translated as 'through adversity to the stars' or 'through struggle/difficulty to the stars'<sup>3</sup>. It is not unique to the RAAF as it was first used by the newly formed 'Royal Flying Corp' in 1912 in England and then adopted by other Commonwealth air forces as they were formed.



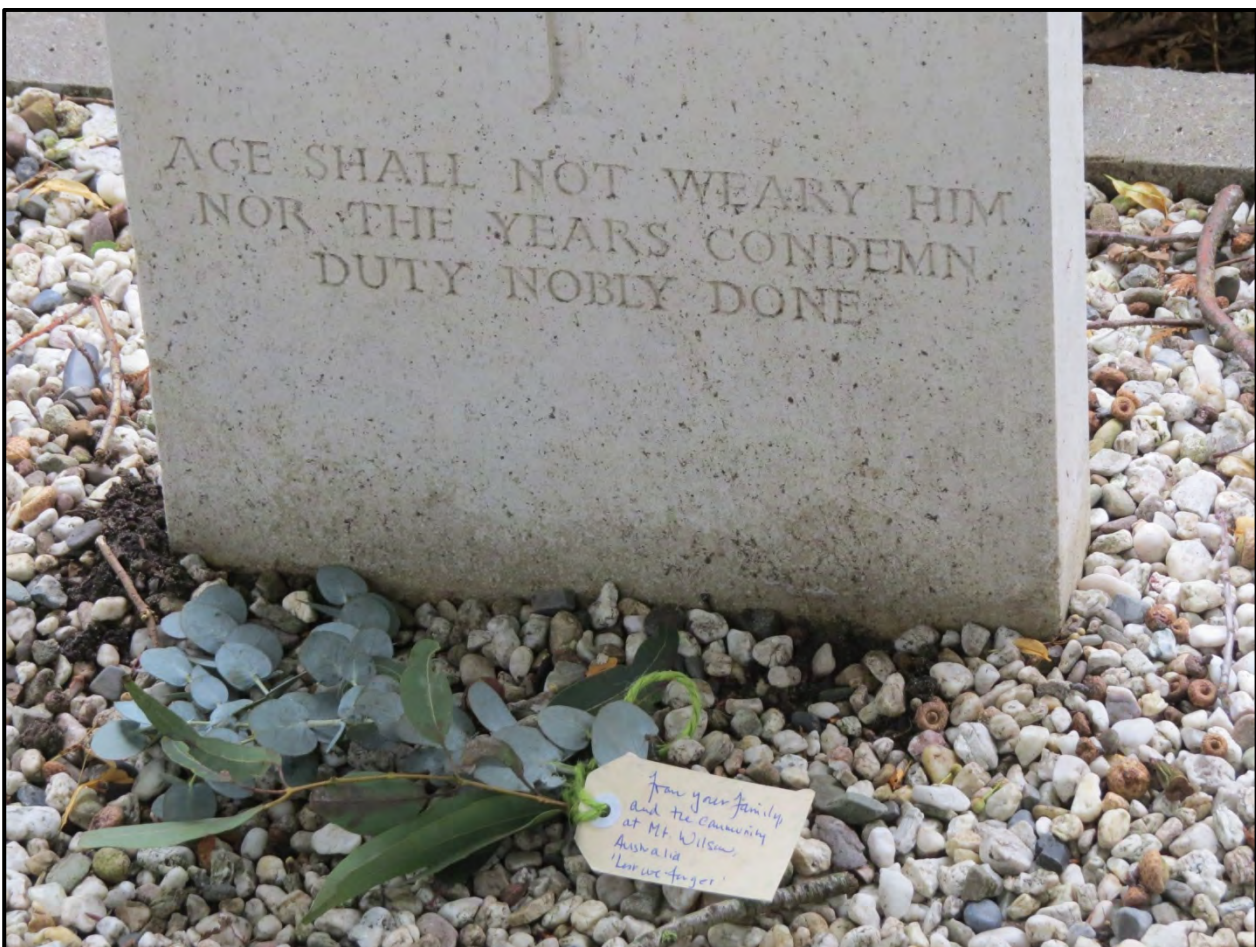
On Colin Smith's headstone is engraved:



This is a slight but significant alteration to the lines of the 4<sup>th</sup> stanza of the 'Ode' by Laurence Binyon. The phrase 'duty nobly done' was used by King George V in his message to the departing British Expeditionary Force in August 1914:

I have implicit confidence in you my soldiers. Duty is your watchword, and I know your duty will be nobly done.

We placed a small offering for Colin Smith, eucalyptus leaves from home.



These RAAF pilots are not alone in this part of the cemetery for we walked past a cluster of memorials to a group of Netherland soldiers with a bronze bust of a commander and the dates 1945-1948. It took us a bit of thought to figure it out...it was the Indonesian war of independence.

The second person I am talking about today is the one of the two women recorded on the War Memorial. You would not necessarily know there are women recorded as no first names are engraved there, just initials. They both served in WW11. I spoke about Margaret Gunn in 2010; she was Alan Gunn's aunt. Today I want to talk about P.J. Knight Brown; whose full name was Patricia Joy. The registry of her birth, listed several times for some reason, also gives her second name as 'Joyce'<sup>4</sup>. I want to digress for a moment and to give a very brief summary of the earlier history of Mt Irvine for those of you who may not be familiar with it. Much of the following information comes from *The History of Mt Irvine*, written by locals and published in 1997 by the Mt Irvine Progress Association. My thanks to Helen Naylor for lending me her copy; and for talking to me about her early memories of Pat.

In 1897 C.R. Scrivener (the surveyor), Basil Knight Brown, Harold Morley and Charles P Scrivener camped near Bowens Creek on 20 June 'to run a traverse line of the mountain'<sup>5</sup>. Basil Knight Brown was a New Zealander, his father being a journalist.



*Basil Knight-Brown 1878-1968.*

On 1 July they were informed of 1000 acres being confirmed as a conditional purchase from the Lands Board. Sections of the land were divided between the three men with each having a permanent fresh water spring on their chosen lot. In 1897, after graduating from Hawkesbury Agriculture College the three friends came to Mt Irvine and started to clear their blocks. There is a detailed description of just what this entailed in *The History of Mt Irvine*<sup>6</sup>, this chapter written by Paul Jeffries, in 1907.

The first woman to come to live at Mt Irvine was Lucy Knight Brown who came to look after her son Basil while the house at Painui was being built, it seems that she came before the rest of the family who arrived in 1901. She lived in a humpy and cooked over an open fire. Life was primitive, and it must have been very busy.

In 1912 Basil married Julia Holden and built Cooinda next to Painui, where his sister Elizabeth established a guest house. Apple orchards and vegetables were grown by

everyone but there were problems with the codlin moth. Then the Knight Brown family established a dairy. Jersey cows were used, the separated milk going to feed pigs and the cream taken to Bathurst by rail from Bell station, and later to Hawkesbury Agriculture College twice a week after the Bowens Creek Road opened<sup>7</sup>. Helen Naylor thinks they sent about 15 cans away. After WW11 beef breeds were introduced, vealers being raised by the Jersey cows.



In 1920 a school opened at Mt Irvine, closing in 1932. The building was destroyed by fire in 1957. Six years later the Village Hall was built on this site. In 1924 a telephone exchange was installed at Kookatonga. It was moved a couple of times, due to fire, and the manual system closed being replaced by an automated system and it went underground in 1986.



Pat Knight Brown was born 28 May 1916. She had two brothers Herbert and Noel (pictured right). The latter was in the RAAF, having trained in Canada, and was shot down over the English Channel in 1943. His story has been told by Arthur Delbridge<sup>8</sup>. Her brother Herbert was known as 'Bill' and he lived on the family farm 'Cooinda'.

Pat went to Mt Irvine school<sup>9</sup> and then as a boarder to Wenona. She left school at 15 years, after the intermediate certificate year; she may not have gained her intermediate certificate. She returned home to help on the farm. Helen remembers her having long dark hair and being very attractive. Pat was more the friend of Helen's sister Joan, and they often went riding together<sup>10</sup>.

The Mobilization form shows that Pat enlisted under her maiden name, Knight Brown, and her service number was NF437601. Her middle name is Joy. She





enlisted into the Australian Women's Army Service, known as AWAS. There is a later alteration to her surname, changing it to Angus. Curiously after getting married there is no change to her next of kin being her father.



Pat (circled) at Mt Irvine School

She enlisted in 1942 and her age is then given as 26. She gives her usual occupation as 'home duties', and does not list any particular skills or training. Her father is given as her next of kin, and her address is 'Painui, at Mt Irvine, via Bell'<sup>11</sup>. Her religion is given as Church of England. She signed the Oath on 8 October 1942.

On her initial classification form she gives her hobbies as 'reading, music, sport – tennis, swimming, riding.' There is a note added which comments that she 'reads two books per month.' Her preference (presumably for army service) is given as 'motor driving – cars and utilities'.

She was given an aptitude test before formal enlistment, in six categories: general, verbal expression, number, space and form, mechanical, and routine clerical. The report was:

above average performance in test of general intelligence. Fair performance in test of routine clerical speed and accuracy. Below average performance in other tests. Capable of a fair degree of training in mechanical work of a non-specialist nature. In view of test results, and driving experience suggest best placement in normal MT (motor transport) work.<sup>12</sup>

The enlistment form indicates that she is willing to be vaccinated and inoculated, seeming to imply that she had not been so previously. Her medical examination classifies her as fit for 'Class A1', signed 23 August 1942. It notes that she has a 'gridiron incision and a midline incision'. She is described as having black hair and grey eyes, and her height was 5 feet 5½ inches. She was taken 'on strength' and soon after was posted to Duntroon where she served as a Group 11 driver, meaning that she was allowed to drive cars or sedans but not trucks or lorries.

Her Service and Casualty form makes for rather more interesting reading. In February 1944 she is charged with disobeying 'a lawful command given by a superior officer', and she is fined 10 shillings<sup>13</sup>.

Six months later her maiden (enlistment) name is changed to Angus. She married Roy Angus, an army lieutenant. They were married at St Luke's Anglican Church, at Lindfield/Roseville<sup>14</sup>.

On 23 November of the same year she is charged with the 'Offence: failure to appear at the place of parade appointed by her CO'. She was given as punishment '14 days CB [confined to barracks] by CO'<sup>15</sup>.

Only 2 weeks later, in December she is charged with the 'Offence – Neglect to the prejudice of good order and military discipline [on] 30.11.1944. She was 'admonished by I.C.A. RMC'<sup>16</sup> [Royal Military College].

Pat was discharged in 22 December 1944. The reason given is a rubber stamp 'At own request on compassionate grounds.' She had served for 820 days, 8 October 1942 to 4 January 1945, she was then 28 years of age. She did not serve outside Australia and was awarded no 'medals or decorations'. On 11 August 1947 her 'gratuity' was checked<sup>17</sup>.

She and her husband lived at Victoria Barracks, in Paddington, Sydney. They had two children, Robert and David. Pat developed cancer, and died quite quickly, in 1954. After her death Roy, who Helen Naylor described as a 'lovely fellow', moved to Perth. Both sons came to the Mt Irvine centenary. Unfortunately I have not been able to find out anything more about them.

Alison Halliday

---

<sup>1</sup><http://www.epitaphsofthegreatwar.com>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.airforce.gov.au>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.rafmuseum.org.uk>

<sup>4</sup> Registry of births deaths and marriages, NSW

<sup>5</sup> *The History of Mt Irvine*

<sup>6</sup> Ibid pp42-50

<sup>7</sup> History of Mt Irvine p29 and p30...early building of Bowens Creek Road and bridge

<sup>8</sup> Historical Soc. Newsletter No 13 March 2006

<sup>9</sup> History of Mt Irvine p20

<sup>10</sup> Photo of Pat Knight Brown Mt Irvine History p23

<sup>11</sup> Official Service Record

<sup>12</sup> Ibid

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

<sup>14</sup> Helen Naylor

<sup>15</sup> Official Service Record

<sup>16</sup> Ibid

<sup>17</sup> Ibid

**Objectives of the Mt Wilson & Mt Irvine Historical Society Inc**

*Membership is open to all who accept and support these objectives.*

1. To make a substantial contribution to the account of Australian history by promoting the study of aspects of the Mt Wilson & Mt Irvine districts and their communities, especially in terms of their:
  - cultural history
  - exploration history
  - settlement history
  - Aboriginal history
  - industrial history including agriculture, horticulture, the timber industry, mining and tourism.
2. To conserve, preserve and protect the heritage and heritage values of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine.
3. To set up and maintain a museum in the Turkish Bath building to house the collection and to serve as a centre for its public display and for the Society's educational programs and research.
4. To maintain close links with other societies and associations in the local communities and beyond by way of meetings, functions, newsletters and occasional historical papers.
5. To lend support to like-minded societies or associations, where possible.

[www.mtwilson.com.au](http://www.mtwilson.com.au)

For further information contact the Historical Society by email to  
[historicalsociety@mtwilson.com.au](mailto:historicalsociety@mtwilson.com.au)

This newsletter was edited by Alison Halliday; layout by Matilda Halliday.  
Feedback is always welcome to [alisonhalliday@gmail.com](mailto:alisonhalliday@gmail.com) or phone 02 9389 1848