



The Mounts

The Community Newsletter of Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine



June 2013

Welcome

There has been a keen sense of anticipation for the long-awaited release of *The Great Gatsby*, not only by local Mounts residents who were of course closely involved with the filming but seemingly across the world. One hundred and eleven residents and friends of Mt Wilson—a wonderful turn out—gathered at The Edge cinema in Katoomba last Sunday for a community event heroically organised by Judy Tribe. The general consensus of the film seemed to be one of pleasant surprise; it was certainly a technical triumph if computer graphics are of interest.

The Bowens Creek Road debacle has taken a turn for the worse with the news that Hawkesbury Council has moved to begin the process of de-gazetting that road. This would have profound consequences for the three affected communities of Mt Wilson, Mt Irvine and Bilpin in the event of an emergency. The respective Progress Associations and Fire Brigades have been extremely active and vocal in lodging their concerns with the Council; the successful conclusion of this development would be greatly enhanced if individual residents could add their voice. Time is very tight—submissions close on 10th June—but a quick email or fax would reinforce the case. Hawkesbury Council's engagement of the local community in this instance has been noticeable by its complete absence; a flurry of correspondence should remind them that the road's closure is a matter of major significance and importance to many people.

Tim Gow Tel. 4756 2032 or 0412 133 559

e-mail: seftoncottage@gmail.com

Community Calendar

| | | | | |
|---------------|---|---|---|--|
| June | Sun 9th 3.00pm Mt Wilson Church Service | Fri 14th 9.00—12.00 Bush Care— Wynne Reserve | Fri 21st Bushwalk Group— Victory Park, Faulconbridge | Sat 29th Second Hand Book Sale & morning tea Village Hall, 10.00 am— 12.00 noon |
| July | Sun 7th 9.00am RFS Training Mt Wilson Shed | Fri 12th 9.00—12.00 Bush Care— Founders Corner | Sun 14th 3.00pm Mt Wilson Church Service | Fri 19th Bushwalk Group— Box Creek Falls, Kanangra Boyd National Park |
| August | Sun 4th 9.00am RFS Training Mt Wilson Shed | Fri 9th 9.00—12.00 Bush Care— Founders Corner | Sun 11th 3.00pm Mt Wilson Church Service | Fri 19th Bushwalk Group— Coxes Rd & Lockyers Rd, Mount York |

You are invited to
The fabulous
Mount Wilson Yulefest
at the Village Hall
On Saturday 13th July 2013 at 6.30pm

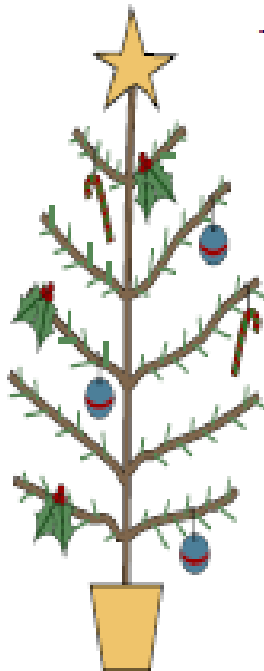
RSVP by 5th July
Adults - \$40, Children up to 14 - \$10
BYO drinks

Make up a table or come along and join in with others

Tickets available from Milba Kirk:

4756 2120 or milbakirk@gmail.com

please make cheques payable to BMCC



To make a donation of goods for the raffle please call

Ron Green 4756 2162

before 27th June

This is a fundraising event for the Village Hall

MOUNT WILSON PROGRESS ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE NEWS

Failing elms to be replaced in The Avenue

Nine of the old and failing elms in The Avenue are soon to be removed by the Blue Mountains City Council to be replaced next winter by 12 very advanced Green Beech trees recommended by the Mount Wilson Progress Association. The trees to go are those located in The Avenue from the corner of Church Lane to the dip in the road outside Withycombe.

The Progress Association has been working with Council on the issue of the old elms over the last 18 months. The urgency for the project was highlighted during the disastrous July 2011 wind storm that did much damage to trees in Mt Wilson including bringing down one of the old elms across The Avenue outside Withycombe.

Council advised the Association in a letter of 23 May that it plans to have the old trees removed this month as part of its 2012-13 maintenance program.

There is a sense of sadness that the famous old trees that are a highlight in the most iconic part of Mt Wilson have to be removed because they are in poor condition; two have suffered lightning strikes, and all are a safety risk. Council appointed an expert arborist, David Galwey of the Melbourne firm Tree Dimensions, to investigate the condition of the elms and is now acting on the professional recommendations to remove the dangerous trees and replace them with the beeches that will complement the other beeches in The Avenue.

MWPA Meeting with BMCC Management

As part of the Mt Wilson Progress Association's ongoing engagement with the Blue Mountains City Council, MWPA committee members Richard Beattie, Alison Halliday and Ted Griffin met with BMCC General Manager Robert Greenwood, Director City Services Damien Drew and Director City & Community Outcomes Steve Corbett at the council chambers in Katoomba on 6 May. A presentation of the Mt Wilson issues was given a good hearing with an assurance from Robert Greenwood that the directors will get back to MWPA once they have been briefed and that the issues that came up at the meeting will be kept on council's agenda until there is a response.

The presentation is available for your viewing at <http://www.mtwilson.com.au/index.php/mt-wilson-progress-association/about-us/2013-mwpa-presentation-to-bmcc.html> or via the website menu path **Mt Wilson Progress Association > About Us > 2013 MWPA**

Presentation to BMCC—you will need to log in to the site in order to see that menu as its access is restricted to registered residents.

Mount Wilson Leisure Library

On 29th June, there will be a sale of second hand books and morning tea between 10.00 and 12 midday. Please see the promotion further on in the newsletter. Our thanks go to all who donate books but at times there is a need to clear excess books to maintain room on the shelves.

The library is open every Saturday morning from 10.00 to 11.00 unless the hall is booked for a function, so do drop in for a browse through the bookshelves. It is a small but varied collection covering such categories as fiction, biography, history, travel, horticulture.

Unfortunately the library has been closed some Saturdays recently because there are insufficient people to open it. If anyone would like to assist in looking after the library for one hour a month on a Saturday morning please contact me. We would appreciate your help.

New Members

If you are a property owner or reside in Mount Wilson you are eligible to be a member of the Association. If you are not a member and wish to join please contact me. Membership fees make an important contribution to the work of maintaining our village and providing contact with residents through the production of such things as newsletters, the phone book and the website. The more members there are, the more we can do for you.

Moira Green
Secretary

2012 Bushcare Legend Award

Libby Raines was recently honoured with the awarding of the 2012 Bushcare Legend award by the Blue Mountains City Council.

The public ceremony was held in the Megalong Valley on Saturday 13th April.

At the presentation, Erin Hall, of the BMCC's Bushcare team, read the following citation:

"Libby started the Mt Wilson Bushcare Group with Mary Reynolds in 1999, in Sloan Reserve. Since then she has gone on to work in every Reserve in Mt Wilson whilst getting up to 45 residents involved over the years, spreading the message of Bushcare.

By using her extensive knowledge of exotic as well as native plants, she provides advice about the worst weeds to target and why, through the Mount Wilson Progress Association's Newsletter.

She is an accomplished artist providing sketches for the booklet "Bushland Weeds of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine" in 2000 under commission of the Mt Wilson Progress Association. She is active in promoting the Bush Regeneration Teams activities and also other information about Council programs.

Libby has been awarded an OAM for her service to the community and is admired for educating others about the value of bushland, especially the Moist Basalt Rainforest of Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine.

She is a legend in the Bushcare program and an asset to the program".

Unfortunately, Libby was unavailable to attend the event, but her award—the keenly contested Golden Trowel trophy—was accepted on her behalf by Wendy Holland and Michael Sweeney.

A subsequent presentation was made at Wynne Reserve on 10th May during morning tea at the regular monthly Bushcare session. This function was very well attended by locals.

In accepting the award personally, Libby made the following remarks:

"I see this award is a recognition of the Mount Wilson/Mount Irvine Bushcare group. It recognises all the hard work which the group has done in our reserves, roadsides and bushland is over the last 14 years since the group started on 12 March 1999. The village cattle, which used to roam around the village, were taken off the roads in the 1980s and there was a sudden growth of the holly, ivy, honeysuckle and sycamore as the cattle used to eat these plants.

I saw this is a huge problem for the mountain in the future as these plants grew unchecked along the roadsides and in the reserves, especially in the precious rainforest.

The Blue Mountains Council at the time was setting up Bushcare groups in the mountains. The council provided the tools and a representative from their Bushcare staff and volunteers set up their own groups.

Our bush walking groups saw the great job that the Bushcare group was doing along Darwin's Walk at Wentworth Falls. We thought if they can do it there, we can do it on the mountain!

Beth Raines was our obvious leader as she had done an Environmental Science degree at University and had also recently done the weeds course at the Wentworth Falls TAFE.

During the 14 years, 45 members of the community and a few friends have joined us. We meet on the second Friday of each month and have met at least 142 times!

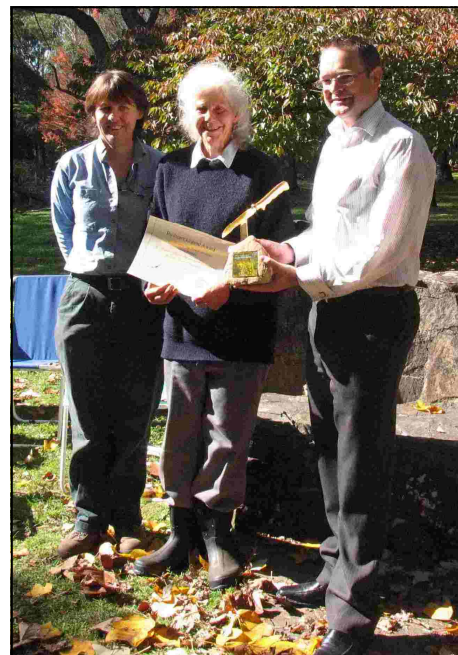
We started working in Sloan Reserve which was infested with huge blackberry clumps, tall holly trees, ivy carpeting the ground and honeysuckle and ivy smothering the tree ferns and growing up the trees. The Progress Association of already done some work there. The charming Valder Bridge and the path had been made and the grove of Coachwood trees had been planted.

Now the reserve is completely different with the Coachwoods and other plantings we have done growing very well.

Over the years we've worked in many areas of the village. Besides Sloan Reserve, we have spent hours in The Avenue, Ferny Corner, Waterfall Reserve, both ends of Galwey Lane, Silva Plana, Queens Avenue, Gregson Park, the Anniversary Walk, several sites at Mount Irvine, Farrer Road and in recent years many hours have been here at Wynne Reserve. Gone now of the great mounds of periwinkle and the many holly trees which infested this lovely reserve.

None of this would have been possible without the help and support of the Blue Mountains Council.

We have had wonderful support from the council. Chris Dewhurst was our first council representative and he guided and taught us so much and helped us during those first hard six years. Truckloads of holly and other weeds were taken to the huge burning pile in the *Wynstay* fields and Chris always took his ute back piled high with weeds. Andy Foster took over for about a year and then Tracy Williams came to lead us in 2007. We appreciate all her help and guidance and her cheerful company. Thank you Tracy.



And so now back to our Bushcare group. So much support, help and hard work has been done over the years.

The backbone of the team during those first years were Beth Raines, Sue and Bruce Gailey, Elisabeth and John Mason, Mary Reynolds, Alison Heap, Paul Gow, Florence Smart, Arthur Delbridge, Suzanne Bassett and Helen Freeman. George and Jane Mayne, Joe and Diana Landsberg and Ron and Moira Green later joined us.

Now we are a small group as age is starting to catch up with some of us. However the faithful few are Jane Mayne, Diana Landsberg, Moira Green, Wendy Holland, Michael Sweeney with Helen Freeman and Barbara Harry coming when they can.

Most of you have been coming here for many years now and we do thank you all for your hard work and help. You have all quietly and efficiently contributed so much to this precious village of ours and to its bushland, rainforest and reserves. Thank you all for joining us today for this special occasion."

All Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine residents congratulates both Libby and the Bushcare group.

Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade

Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade AGM 2013

Despite a chilly wet day, the Annual General Meeting of the local Brigade on 1 June saw the community well represented by residents and invited guests. Brigade guests included District Manager, **David Jones**, **Mick Metcalf** (Group Leader West Sector), **Fred Taylor** (Deputy Group Leader West 2), **Peter Church** (Deputy Group Leader West 3), **Peter Ellison** (Captain Mt Tomah), **Greg Honeysett** (Captain Bell) and **Belinda Honeysett**.

Other guests were **Louise Markus MP**, Federal Member for Macquarie, and BMCC Councillor **Don McGregor** and **Susie McGregor**.

The following Field and Administration Officers have been elected unopposed for 2013/2014:

| Position | Nominee Name |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| *President | David Howell |
| *Vice President | Henric Nicholas |
| *Treasurer | Susie Hope |
| *Secretary | Judy Tribe |
| *Captain | Beth Raines |
| *Senior Deputy Captain | Peter Raines |
| *Deputy Captain (1) | Barry Freeman |
| Deputy Captain (2) | Tim Gow |
| Deputy Captain (3) | David Howell |
| Deputy Captain (4) | Ian Docker |
| Deputy Captain (5) | Peter Dempsey |
| Catering | Deborah Griffin |
| Community Engagement | Kathleen Oakes |
| Equipment Officer | Stephen Dean |
| Fire Trails Coordinators | Peter Dempsey and Vic Zhukov |
| *Training | Graham Tribe |

Those elected positions marked with * will form the executive committee.

The proposed closure of the **Bowen's Creek Road** by Hawkesbury City Council was the subject of much community concern. There was general agreement that the road should remain open. Richard Beattie, President of MWPA, encouraged residents to make submissions to Hawkesbury City Council in response to their gazetted proposal to close the road. Comments on the proposal formally close on **10th June**.

Letters or emails should be addressed to:

Mr Peter Jackson
General Manager
Hawkesbury City Council
PO Box 146
WINDSOR NSW 2756

or

council@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au

or Fax 4587 7740

The meeting passed a motion putting in place a policy which requires operational members to attend an incident, Hazard Reduction or training, initially at least once every two years, and later once per year. Members who are unable to meet these requirements will be classified 'Reserve' and will need to attend two training sessions in a year to get back to being operational again. The purpose of the motion is to ensure that the Brigade has crew members who know their role and the equipment in order to perform their function without putting other crew members at risk. The goal is to have all active operational firefighters participating in enough activity to stay current with skills and equipment.

Captain Beth Raines presented her report to the meeting:

Captain's Report

The Mt Wilson / Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade has had another busy year, attending incidents, doing pre-incident planning, conducting training and improving information and communications with the Community.

We have attended 56 incidents (up from 33) this past 12 months – that's over one per week, sometimes two on the same day, and even a few where there are two incidents at the same time.

The break down for these is:

- 25 Motor Vehicle accidents
- 14 Community First Responder Calls
- 5 trees down / storm damage
- 5 fires
- 4 rescues
- 3 oil spills

The most unusual call out was to assist police near Holly Lodge, Bells Line of Road, near Bell – where we were asked to wet the road down to allow Police to run a series of skid tests on the corner to add weight to their (and our) argument to RTA that the corner is unsafe and needs resurfacing. The RTA's response has been to put a new sign up.

Although there weren't any fires of significance nearby, there were approximately 12 lightning strikes between Newnes Plateau and north of Mount Tootie. In all cases remote area firefighters from NPWS were deployed and extinguished the fires. We were lucky but have to be prepared for the day when it is too dangerous for direct firefighting and we have to concentrate on property protection and interface firefighting. This is where what you do (or don't do) plays the biggest role. If you care about your property you have to prepare it so it is able to survive by itself. The reality is that the Brigade can't be everywhere, and I and the other Crew Leaders definitely will not be sending our friends into a property that is dangerous and not adequately prepared. Have a plan, revise your plan, practise your plan, discuss your plan with your neighbours and the Brigade. As the RFS advertising campaign says: 'planning to make a plan is not a plan'. Kathleen ran a hugely successful session on Bushfire Survival Plans aimed at Brigade members and their families and with the development of 'places of last resort' at *Bisley* and *Hawthorn*, there will be further sessions for community members.

This year has been a year of a number of disappointments and frustrations:

- the communications tower at the Mount Wilson shed is irreparable
- we haven't been able to progress at all with our shed extensions at either Mount Wilson or Mount Irvine. The only positive thing is that at least we are getting interest on our term deposits while we wait, and wait!
- we have watched while Hawkesbury City Council have done nothing about a road that has gone from driveable with a small two wheel drive car, to negotiable by experienced 4WD drivers to a washed away road – all in a matter of 15 years. Our communities demand that the Bowen's Creek Road be repaired and reopened.
- because of the state of Bowen's Creek Road we have had to cancel the Mt Wilson to Bilpin Bush Run. This has been a hugely successful event for the last 17 years, a wonderful joint exercise with Bilpin Brigade, and the Brigade's largest organised fundraiser. There is the possibility of organising a similar event but it needs a super keen person with the time and energy to make it happen – any takers?

Now for some positives:

- We have initiated a new fundraising project, the Photography and Art Exhibition – the second of which will be held on the weekend of 26th & 27th October. A huge thanks to Tim and Kim, Graham and Judy, and Bev and Phil Woodman who just made it happen.
- We have conducted a number of other projects over the year. David Howell has been undertaking a survey of water sources and we hope to come close to completing the project shortly. We are also in the process of figuring the best way of presenting and storing this information, perhaps using the website and downloading to tablets or iPads for each truck.
- Pete Raines has been busy with David Gunn doing fire trail maintenance. The Northern Fire trail has had the gutters cleared and a couple of new culverts put in, and there is still some repair work to be done after the torrential rain in February. Kookootonga Fire Trail and Knight Brown fire trail are on this year's 'to do' list, along with a hydrant system for the Mt Wilson Station.

The Community Protection Plan project stalled because Mount Irvine wasn't included in the original pilot project but at the insistence of the Brigade (and with most of the work to be done by Brigade members) we hope to get the project back on track. Ross Kelly and Brian Carrigan have agreed to lead this with start-up help from Graham, Stephen, Kathleen and myself. The distance between vegetation and properties needs to be mapped, along with slope and a detailed survey of all fire trails.

Henric Nicholas is having one of his wishes realised – he believes that whole and extended families should join up as active members and this past year we have seen the Woolfenden and Montano families complete their training, and Hugh and Emmy Nicholas undertake training. All new members will be fantastic additions to our great Brigade. Stephen Dean, Ted Griffin, and Michael Sweeney are currently undertaking Advanced firefighting; 14 people attended the First Aid Course in February, and several members are doing the chainsaw training or reassessment today. Deputies have taken on the responsibility of running at least one training session, and every second month our Brigade joins up with Mt Tomah and Bell Brigades and West 3 for a combined training session.

We had a crew of four – David Howell, Peter Raines, Stephen Dean and Graham Tribe - assist with a hazard reduction at Stockyard Gully, Mt Tomah with Michael Sweeney helping with the blacking out the following day. It is always good to be able to help out other Brigades especially when they have helped us out in the past. This year we have been assisted by Brigades from South Katoomba, Medlow Bath (twice), Blackheath / Mt Victoria, and West 3 at the hazard reductions that were completed at Mount Irvine and Wynnes Rocks Rd. We have a number of hazard reductions to be completed but are waiting for Hazard Reduction Certificates, burn plans, approvals and mitigation trail work to be completed.

The Brigade's involvement with the Ambulance Service continues. We are well supported by paramedics from Lithgow Station conducting monthly training, including some paediatric training soon – just in case! Kathleen and I recently attended an exercise with paramedic trainees. It was challenging with realistic scenarios involving tractors, chainsaws, motor bikes, trees and chemicals, all with live casualties and bystanders who really got into acting the part.

It is with sadness that we farewelled Suzzane Daly and little Sunny from the mountains. Suzzane was a core member of the Brigade, Secretary for a number of years, and was one of the Community First Responder team. She is missed. Other departures from our community include Diana Lauzi and Vic Zhukov. Rest assured Vic will be back – he is just taking time out travelling (riding) around Australia!! Diana leaves the Brigade with our thanks and best wishes.

Thanks to the great Executive – your combined skill and knowledge usually leaves me feeling pretty inadequate. To the Deputies, training officers, catering, community engagement and equipment teams, thanks for all your work and for taking some of the pressure off me. Special thanks to Moira and Kim as they are taking a step back – as opposed to standing down.

Beth Raines
Captain

POPULAR MISCONCEPTIONS

As part of a series of articles designed to increase community understanding of the RFS, this edition deals with the issue of Hazard Reduction prescribed burns in the Blue Mountains National Park and its impact on the safety of our villages.

“So long as the Brigade does lots of hazard reduction prescribed burning in the National Park around the villages we will be safe from bush fires.”

The answer to this misconception lies in the work done in the CSIRO in the 1960s by A.G. McArthur. He developed the “McArthur Meter” to predict fire behaviour (flame height, rate of spread, and the distance ahead of the main fire spot fires could occur) given weather, fuel and topographic conditions. This meter is still in use today and all crew leaders in the Brigade have a McArthur Meter in their pockets.

We can use the Meter to predict spotting distances around Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine. For example, on a day of severe fire conditions with a 30kph NW wind, a fire can jump two kms ahead of the main fire. So if a fire is burning on the far side of the Wollangambe River, with enough wind it can spot straight into the village, jumping right over the fuel-reduced slopes which can extend up to 5 kms from the village. This means that each individual property must be prepared in case burning embers land on it from a fire which is burning across the river.

In the Victorian fires of 2009, over 70% of houses lost were as a result of ember attack rather than direct flame.

Given the above, I hear you say – so why do we do any back burning at all if the fires are just going to jump over fuel reduced areas. Well, we can't predict the winds when a fire happens. If there is no wind or just a breeze, then spotting will not be a problem and the hazard reduced areas will serve to slow or stop the fire. But of course we can't tell what the conditions will be when next a fire threatens the villages, so it is very important to:

- Keep doing hazard reductions AND
- Prepare all properties for a bush fire which may jump the fuel reduced areas on a windy day.

David Howell

2012-2013 Bushfire Season – a record breaking season

The latest *Bushfire Bulletin*, the journal of the NSW Rural Fire Service, provides some interesting statistics on the last bushfire season.

January 2013 was the hottest month on record for NSW and saw some of our worst bushfire conditions in years. For the first time since ratings were introduced, NSW experienced 'Catastrophic' fire danger ratings in forested areas including the Illawarra/Shoalhaven and the Southern Ranges.

Over the two week period from 7 – 21 January 2013 more than 650,000 hectares were burnt and over 10,000 fire fighters from various agencies, including the NSW Rural Fire Service, were deployed. There were 41 Section 44 fires (these are major fires) declared in that same period. Fortunately, there was no loss of life although 57 homes, 149 outbuildings, 1,700 km of rural fencing and thousands of head of stock were lost, mainly in the Coonabarabran area.

Over that fortnight the NSW Rural Fire Service communication and social media systems recorded the following:

| | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| NSW RFS website | 8.7 million views |
| NSW RFS Facebook | 27.6 million impressions |
| NSW RFS Twitter | 15.5 impressions |
| Bushfire Survival Plan | 55,000 downloads |

The Emergency Alert System went into action on 7 January and 784,000 text and 224,000 fixed line messages were sent to areas with a 'Catastrophic' fire danger rating for 8 January. It took so long to send these messages that some did not arrive till 4.00am the next morning – a problem that will hopefully be solved before next season. The 'Fires near Me' app was the most popular app during January with 150,000 downloads and used over 750,000 times.

Average temperatures across Australia came in at 28.6° Celsius, 1.1° Celsius above normal. A new record was also set for the number of consecutive days the average maximum daily temperature for Australia exceeded 39° Celsius – seven days between 2 and 8 January 2013, almost doubling the previous record of four days. Sydney recorded its hottest day on record at 45.8° Celsius on 18 January. Of the 112 locations used in long term climate monitoring, 14 had their hottest day on record during the summer of 2012/13 – the largest number in any single summer.

Record temperatures were not only set in Australia but throughout the Southern Hemisphere. Large parts of southern Africa recorded their hottest January on record. Hotter temperatures were also recorded in large parts of Argentina, Chile and Brazil while temperatures in parts of Patagonia were more than 4° Celsius above normal in January.

Now is the Best Time to Do a Pile Burn

The cooler months are the best time to do a pile burn as conditions are more comfortable for physical activity, there are no leeches and the bureaucratic requirements for an approval are less onerous. Strangely enough, the restrictions that are now placed on the burning off of garden waste are mainly an attempt to control pollution rather than ensure fire safety. In the Blue Mountains pollution control is the responsibility of Blue Mountains City Council (BMCC) and generally pile burns are not allowed.

After community consultation, the BMCC has granted certain outlying areas (including Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine) approval to conduct pile burns as long as certain conditions are met. Oversight of this process has been handed to the Blue Mountains District Office of the NSW Rural Fire Service in Katoomba. It is vitally important that these conditions are abided by as failure to do so could see the withdrawal of this concession. During the non-bushfire period (usually 1 April to 30 September) the process, in brief, is as follows:

- Give your neighbours and District Office (4784 7444) at least 24 hours' notice of your intention to light up. District Office hours are 9-5, Monday to Friday. You can advise District Office of up to a week of days if you are unsure of exactly which day will be the most suitable for a pile burn.
- On the day of the burn advise District Office that you are lighting up and when you have put out the pile burn (do not burn overnight). There is a requirement for a responsible adult to be present at all times, an adequate water supply to be available and the pile must be 20m from the nearest residential building.
- Ensure that your pile burn abides by the document *Standards for Pile Burning*, available from www.rfs.nsw.gov.au, District Office or Kathleen Oakes. In brief, material must only be vegetation from your property, the pile should be no greater than 2m in length or width and must be no greater than 1.5m high, material must be dead and dry and no logs over 150mm in diameter.

You can also do a pile burn during the bushfire season but then you will need to apply to District Office for a permit which can take up to two weeks and requires an inspection of your property. It is easier and safer to do it now.

Your local brigade will do their best to protect properties in the event of a fire but they cannot be everywhere. You need to give your property the best chance of surviving on its own and being able to protect you and your family. Even if your brigade can get to your street, if they have to choose between properties, crew safety dictates that they will have to choose the better maintained and safer property to protect. So, please, give us a break – along your boundary, around your house and water supply and through your property entry.

Kathleen Oakes
Community Engagement

Ask the Neighbours

Neither sleet, nor hail, nor raging antechinus shall stop this roving reporter getting the latest scoop, Tim. And, contrary to the expectations of those who think this column is a bit of a joke (laughing with me or at me?), I have some REAL assistance for those in our community fighting the good fight against the artful antechinus.

As some wise bloke whose name I can't recall right now once said: to wage a successful war, one must know one's enemy. So, I have spent the last month Tim information gathering, analysing and strategizing. MI5, the CIA and ASIO have nothing on the brains' trust I've gathered together to crack this particular dilemma.

The Maynes report success with their Magnamail high frequency anti rodent devices. Two months with nary a peep out of those pesky perambulators. This is in stark contrast to the experiences of the Teulons, who have found the Jaycar version not up to scratch. The Tribes tried electronic anti-rodent devices years ago without success.

The conclusion to be drawn from this, Tim? It's obvious. The Maynes' antechinus THINK they're rodents and reacted to anti-rodent devices accordingly. The Teulons' and Tribes' antechinus, on the other hand, are smarter. They know they're not rodents but cute furry little natives. They scoff at anti-rodent measures. They wave their ear muffs in victory over their small furry heads.

So, "what's our strategy?" I hear you ask. We must mount a campaign to convince antechinus that they are, in fact, rodents. I have petitioned the Australian Museum to change the classification of the enemy. No longer will they be known amongst the sock-and-sandal wearers as belonging to: Species: Stuarti (that's the brown ones, Tim) Genus: Antechinus Family: Dasyuridae Order: Dasyuromorphia Subclass: Marsupialia Class: Mammalia Subphylum: Vertebrata Phylum: Chordata Kingdom: Animalia (who said writing this column would not broaden my education?). They'll just be called *Mus musculus domesticus* (that's a brown mouse, Tim). Although by the time we're through with them they'll be **formerly** domesticus.

At every occasion, we must refer to them as such. The words "native species" must never pass our lips, Tim. Even in the privacy of our own homes - the walls do have ears, Tim. Or, should I say the roofs (or is it "rooves"?) have ears!

Speaking of roofs/rooves, our next piece of the intelligence puzzle relates to the differences in musical tastes of the various colonies of antechinus around the mountains. The Tribes report that the colony in Farrer Road West dance around a, presumably very small, Maypole in their roof space. They would, of course, do that to medieval English folk music. In previous columns, I have reported that antechinus have been heard tap dancing to Broadway Show tunes in Queens Avenue roofs/rooves.

As we cannot identify one particular musical genre which appeals to all antechinus groupings, we can surmise that, when bombarded with genres of very different styles to those they prefer, antechinus may decide to just up and leave. It's just like shopping centres which play classical music to deter teenage vandals. Using this approach, the Tribes might try some death metal music. My musical consultants (not that they themselves are particularly musical, it's that they consult on music) tell me that when played at maximum volume, death metal is "really sick". I think that means it's really good. So, Graham and Judy, fossick through that music collection of yours and spin that disc. For those of us with the Broadway boogying variety, why not some punk music? A little Johnny Rotten might just do the trick. Or, we could play Glee soundtracks backwards.

And then there's the food. There has been wide range of antechinus dietary preferences revealed in our research, Tim. Again, let's mix it up for them. They like your electrical wiring? Go solar. Think of the worst meal you've ever cooked – and do it again. Leave it outside for our furry friends as a gesture of goodwill. For me it was the Veal Marengo I made many years ago – before I found out that a clove of garlic was only one segment of the thing I bought labelled "garlic". I can tell you – no one who attended that particular dinner party had a cold for a year. They didn't make any new friends either. But you can't have everything, can you Tim?

Having devised our overall strategy, Tim – with more detail to follow in future editions - we need to establish our organisational model for mass community engagement and implementation. Well, the Boss and I have just finished our Bush Firefighting assessment for the RFS. Inspired by the discipline (and uniforms), I think we should form the Rural Anti-Antechinus Training Service (RAATS). No Yellows for us, though. We'll wear camouflage gear. Our Units will constantly play recordings of our preferred taxonomical description of the enemy and carry a wide range of music CDs, which we will deploy in accordance with our new "reverse the music" tactic. Our Catering Officers will not supply muffins, slices or tasty casseroles. They'll prepare concoctions which will make resident antechinus decide they'll NEVER come back to THIS restaurant. Hopefully, they'll post negative reviews in the Antechinus media panning the chefs, the venues and the music of the mountains, giving all of our establishments a big "thumbs down". Or, as antechinus don't have thumbs, a big 'tails down' rating. Then, they'll all leave us for Bilpin – where the food is trendier and the music is more "easy listening".

When can we workshop this? Tim? Tim? Are you still there?

Elizabeth Montano

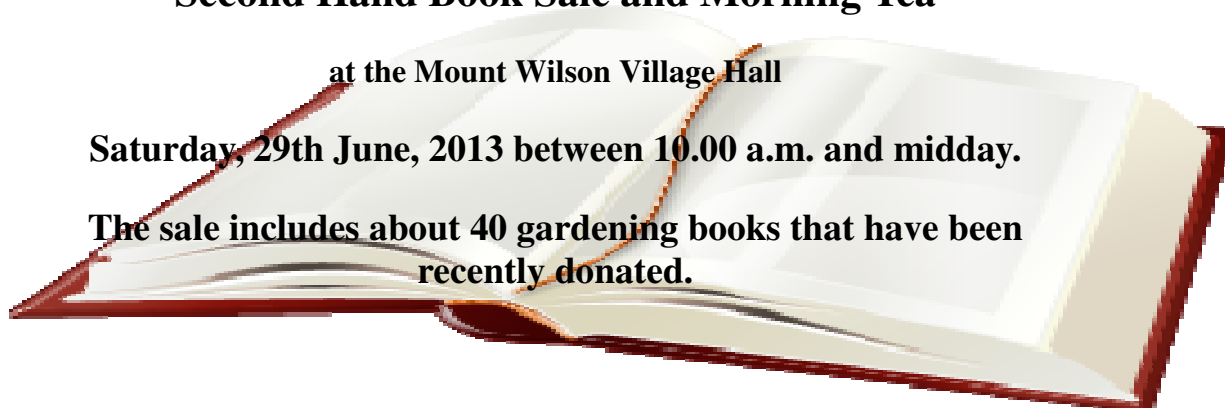
Mount Wilson Leisure Library

Second Hand Book Sale and Morning Tea

at the Mount Wilson Village Hall

Saturday, 29th June, 2013 between 10.00 a.m. and midday.

The sale includes about 40 gardening books that have been recently donated.



**Come and browse through the borrowing collection and sale items
and enjoy morning tea.**

Free Trees!!

The following seedling trees— ranging from 30 cm to 2 metres—are available from *Cherry Cottage* for the digging:

Acer palmatum

Acer davidii

Acer campestre

Picea abies

Yew

Dogwood (Chinensis cross)

And a few others....

Contact Richard Prentice on 47 562 067



Thanks to the efforts of the Mt Wilson Progress Association in general, and to Peter Raines and David Gunn in particular, the walking track at Waterfall Reserve has now been reopened.

Its recent closure has underlined the popularity of the walk; it is an easily accessible loop walk of great natural beauty.

BMCC Chipping and Clean-up Services

BMCC chipping and clean-up services are changing from 1 July 2013. From that date, residents will need to book with the Council before placing materials in front of your house.

According to the Council, the new booked service allows the resident to tailor kerbside chipping and clean-up services to meet their needs. Every household can have two services per year. You choose which service you want and when you want it from either:

- Two clean-ups per year (four cubic metre limit per collection) or
- Two kerbside chipping services per year (four cubic metre limit per service) or
- One clean-up and one kerbside chipping service per year (each with a four cubic metre limit).

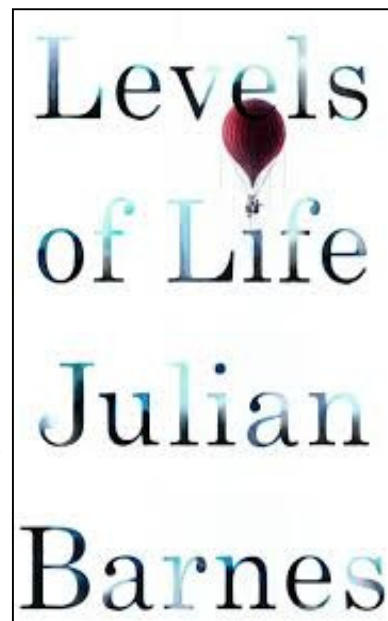
To quote the BMCC website, the new service will be "flexible, timely, environmentally friendly and efficient".

BOOK REVIEW FOR JUNE 2013

Sounding the deeps and skies...

Julian Barnes has never written a dull word and his newest book, *Levels of Life*, follows this trajectory. His earlier works were playful, exasperating and engrossing; loved by most and successfully annoying a few. His last two works have been more succinct, exploring the emotional life of mature men and women. *The Sense of an Ending* was a work of fiction which showed no mercy to its central character, a man of limited self knowledge and ignorant of his own and others emotional lives.

Levels of Life leaves the comfort of fiction for three essays which at first reading seem to have little in common: the earliest flights in hot air balloons, the extraordinary magic of photography, and the loss of a spouse. All explore the sudden shock of unexpected and totally new perspectives on individuals, and the compromises people make in their lives when faced with such events. The early balloon flights gave the aerialists views of the earth that had been, 'til then, unimaginable. Suddenly people could fly, and the risks, and subsequent dangers, did not prevent the most extraordinary feats from being attempted. Barnes comments that 'aeronautics and photography were scientific advances with practical civil consequences' and in the second essay he focuses on the career of prosaically named Fred Burnaby who undertook several balloon flights and also fell 'hook, line and sinker', in love with the greatest actor of his time, Sarah Bernhardt. In the third and last essay Barnes removes all metaphor and disguises to give a searing yet touching portrayal of his own marriage and his disintegration on the sudden death of his wife. Here it is all emotion, no flights of fancy or using photography as a lens through which to view the world, but only a painstaking and carefully honest exploration of death, grief and any small possibilities of hope in a future alone.



Barnes makes style and structure seem both unobtrusive and easy and in this small book he uses both to give a linked meditation on what are the really important things in any life and how a life should be lived so as to remember and value those things. This is a book to give equal time to reading and considering, and for encouraging readers to wait for the unexpected breeze.

Alison Halliday

Ray and Kathy Harrington are exhibiting some of their best works on the walls of Lithgow Library during the month of July.

The Library is of course located in the main street of Lithgow, and is open 9.00 am—6.00 pm weekdays and 9.00 am—12.00 pm on Saturdays.

Ray and Kathy will be hanging their artwork on 1st July and the exhibition will run all month.

It is highly recommended that you drop in to see their extraordinary range and skill after you have done the shopping!

Congratulations to Lithgow Council for promoting such an excellent use of public wall space.

Suggestions, comments or contributions warmly welcomed!