

THE MOUNTS

Community newsletter of Mt Wilson
and Mt Irvine Dec 2019 Summer



Members of the Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine inspecting the new Cat 9 vehicle

After the beauty of spring, early summer has leapt upon us like a lion. There have been many comments about how beautiful the gardens looked in spring, with azaleas and roses enjoying the dry weather after the rain of early spring. However, the unusual heat with hot winds and soaring temperatures have flattened plants and many trees have dropped leaves. The Gospers Mountain fire still grumbles to the north. It has burnt an extraordinary area of nearly 200,000 hectares and one can only imagine the destruction of wildlife and vegetation.

We must all thank our firefighters, including Beth Raines and David Howell who have been fighting fire at Colo Heights and other areas. People throughout NSW have been supported by many brigades from Victoria. If you have not down-loaded the NSW RFS app 'Fires near me' please do so. It is available on the app store for Apple and Google play for android devices. Just **click on the relevant image below** to download, be aware these apps are free, any Fires near me app that asks you to pay is not the official version.

Apple



Android



Our Brigade does such a great job and it is the duty of all of us to make sure we have prepared our places for the possibility of fire and know how and when to enact our own fire plan.

Let's hope that all our preparations prove unnecessary and that autumn brings cool and wet weather.

THE GOSPERS MOUNTAIN FIRE THREAT TO THE MOUNTS

When might the Gospers Mountain bushfire reach Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine?

That was the question on everybody's lips at the Mounts' community meeting held on Sunday morning December 1.



Blue Mountains Deputy Group Captain Jamie Carter addressed the packed meeting in the Mt Wilson Village Hall. Carter, a volunteer, is the Blue Mountains brigades' representative at the Gospers Mountain fire incident management centre based in the Hawkesbury area where the planning for the on-ground firefighting has been happening. He emphasised no one can make firm predictions about the course of the bushfire. Everything depends on the weather – the temperature, dryness and density of the fuel load, humidity, wind speed and direction, and the availability of firefighting resources. These include helicopters, fire retardant bomber aircraft, firefighters and equipment.

As of the day of the meeting, Carter said it may be two to five weeks before the fire reaches our area. 'You could run a book on it,' he said, 'and it would be anyone's guess.' The fire is currently 12 to 15 kilometres north of Mount Irvine. Local Brigade President David Howell kicked off the meeting welcoming the more than 25 men and women in yellows from brigades across and down the mountains there to hear of our preparations and afterwards to become familiar with the local fire trails and local fire management plans.

Two members of the Singapore Civil Defence Force accompanied the visitors. They had been invited after the NSW RFS Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons had invited his Singapore counterpart to send representatives to see and report back on the management of what has become the greatest area burnt by bushfire in NSW since records have been kept.

The previous record area burnt in the state was with the 1994 fires that swept through about 800,000 hectares. Already in the current fire season more than 2,000,000 hectares have burnt, four lives lost, 700 homes destroyed and many outbuildings.

Lightning a major threat

The Gospers Mountain fire was started by a lightning strike on Saturday October 26 and has now burnt out more than 200,000 hectares. Lightning has started more fires since.

Firefighting access after the start of the Gospers Mountain fire was limited by adverse weather conditions that prevented the specially trained remote area firefighting teams that can be dropped into firegrounds by helicopter from accessing the fire. Strong wind, dense smoke, mist and intense fire too dangerous to approach were also factors affecting management of the fire over the weeks.



When the visiting firefighters inspected the Northern Fire Trail between the east end of Cathedral Reserve and the Old School, David Howell reported visibility was less than 100 metres due to smoke. A sudden wind change cleared the air into the far distance. The photograph (prior page) of the Gaspers Mountain fire taken less than two hours after the meeting from the balcony at Packwood on Mt Irvine Road shows the growing fire moving east and the smoke towards Gosford. That was a clear illustration of how extraordinarily changeable the weather affecting the fire can be. Another Mountains' fire, the Ruined Castle fire, spread further on Sunday 1 December as it approached Katoomba.

Captain Carter and MWMIRFS Captain Beth Raines explained how firefighters would tackle an approach to Mt Irvine, the more likely area to be first affected, and Mt Wilson. The show of strength of Mountains' brigades from as far away as Linden demonstrated others' commitment to our area. Beth in her National Parks and RFB roles along with other MWMI Brigade members have spent many hours firefighting the Gaspers Mountain fire in areas distant from the Mounts such as Putty Road, Colo Heights and Glen Davis.

On the catastrophic day of Tuesday November 13 Beth was with a team at Mellong, Putty Road saving two buildings while about ten others were lost. The wind was blowing embers horizontally onto their yellows and hard hats as the work was done. They were able to retreat safely. Beth turning up looking remarkably relaxed at the community Christmas party on Saturday November 30.

Section 44 declaration

Action was underway that Saturday at Mt Irvine following a Section 44 declaration with the start of heavy plant moving in to upgrade the villages' fire trails. A big tritter machine used in forestry work, a bit like a vertical lawn mower, was cutting back overhanging vegetation on the trails. On Monday, bulldozers and graders were expected in to make good and easily accessible tracks for firefighting vehicles. 'Please drive with special care as this equipment is with us,' Beth said. 'You'll know who'll come off second best on our narrow roads if you run into one of the big trucks with a dozer on its trailer.'



In the event of a serious bush fire and a section 44 declaration under the Rural Fires Act, extraordinary powers are available to prepare for and fight a fire. The power includes the authority to enter private land and clear vegetation as part of preparations to prevent the spread or fight a fire.

The senior RFS officers made clear the serious fire situation across NSW meant resource allocation of aircraft, personnel and equipment had to be driven by wherever was the most urgent need. Regardless, Captain Carter assured the meeting we can rely on the best available resources should the fire seriously threaten the communities. This RFS headquarters resource allocation management includes the strategy of preventing the Gospers Mountain fire moving south towards Mt Irvine and Mt Wilson.

'It's a time and space issue that would be helped by more rain,' Carter said. The reason: the fire, if it does arrive, is likely to approach the Bilpin area before our area so a preventative measure like backburning down into the local valleys around the villages would not start, all things being equal, before the Bilpin situation was under control.

Once the fire crosses Bungleboorie Creek to the north of the villages that would be a trigger to strengthen the firefighting capability in our area. The reason for the extent and severity of the many current fires in NSW is because of the prolonged drought. Moisture levels in the ground have dropped to very low levels and as much as two metres deep in some areas. Long established eucalypts are dying in northern NSW districts Captain Carter has visited.

Property owners' responsibilities

The Brigade's Street Coordinators team Bruce Kerridge, Brian Carrigan, Alice Simpson, Johanna Renton, Ann Pigott, Deb Griffin, Janet McDonald, Barbara Howes and Judy Tribe each stood, introduced themselves to the meeting and outlined their areas of responsibility. Area 5's Street Coordinators, Alex Halliday and Mary Roberts were sent their apologies with their area outlined by Acting Community Engagement Officer Richard Beattie. Our local Federal Member of Parliament Susan Templeman attended the meeting and commended the Brigade being the only one in the Mountains with such an RFS community engagement function.

Richard emphasised the critical importance during a fire emergency of community members advising their street coordinators on whether they are at their property, intending to leave or come to their homes. Communication being critical to saving lives and property, Richard recommended residents purchase one or more of the small powerpacks that can be used to recharge phones and tablets multiple times should landlines and electricity be cut while the mobile network remains working.

As the meeting concluded, two important action items were raised.

Be prepared. Beth Raines said unlike the 2013 State Mine Fire that threatened the Mounts and saw two homes burnt at Mount Irvine, the Gospers Mountain fire is allowing plenty of time for properties to be very well prepared for facing the bushfire. Only property owners can be responsible to ensure no locks on gates prevent access for firefighters and the many steps taken like gutters cleared of leaves, grass short, windows and curtains drawn and closed, internal doors left closed, that there

is a pre-fire agreement whether one or more occupants leave, stay or come to the property to protect it.

Remember: 'Your property – Your Responsibility'

Write, email to demand a second access to the Mounts

Elizabeth Montano reminded everyone that with only one road in, one road out for us **NOW IS THE TIME** to write to the authorities reminding them of this and the need for Mt Irvine Road from Bowens Creek to Bilpin to be re-established for emergency vehicle access. Only serious emergencies seem to lead to action by local, state and federal governments to address potentially catastrophic emergency situations. Letters and emails should be sent to:

Blue Mountains City Council

Mayor Mark Greenhill mgreenhill@bmcc.nsw.gov.au

Ward One Councillors

Don McGregor dmcgregor@bmcc.nsw.gov.au

Kerry Brown kbrown@bmcc.nsw.gov.au

Kevin Schreiber kschreiber@bmcc.nsw.gov.au

Staff – Council CEO Rosemary Dillon rdillon@bmcc.nsw.gov.au

Hawkesbury City Council

Mayor Barry Calvert barry.calvert@hawkesburycouncillor.com.au

Interested councillors

Sarah Richards sarah.richards@hawkesburycouncillor.com.au

Peter Reynolds peter.reynolds@hawkesburycouncillor.com.au

Paul Rasmussen paul.rasmussen@hawkesburycouncillor.com.au

Danielle Wheeler danielle.wheeler@hawkesburycouncillor.com.au

Mary Lyons-Buckett marylyonsbuckett@hawkesburycouncillor.com.au

Rural Fire Service District Office

Rob Vincenz, Acting District Manager Blue Mountains Rob.Vincenz@rfs.nsw.gov.au

Government

Susan Templeman, Federal Member for Macquarie, which covers both The Hawkesbury and Blue Mountains Susan.Templeman.MP@aph.gov.au

Trish Doyle State Member for Blue Mountains

bluemountains@parliament.nsw.gov.au

NSW Parliamentary Secretary for Emergency Services Ms Melanie Gibbons.

ElectorateOffice.Holsworthy@parliament.nsw.gov.au

KEEP YOUR COMMUNITY STREET COORDINATOR UPDATED ON YOU BEING AT YOUR PROPERTY, PLANNING TO LEAVE OR RETURN DURING BUSHFIRE EMERGENCIES. CONTACT DETAILS FOR EACH COORDINATOR ARE ON THE NEXT PAGE. YOU MAY WISH TO PRINT A HARD COPY OF THE NEXT PAGE.

Richard Beattie

Mount Wilson/Mount Irvine RFB Street Coordinators for Gaspers Mountain Fire, November 2019

Area	Location	Street Coordinator	Mountains Phone	Mobile	Sydney	Email
	Acting Community Liaison Officer	Richard Beattie	4756 2070	0400 190 909	9252 6440	landrbeattie@bigpond.com
1	Mt Irvine	Bruce Kerridge Brian Carrigan	0412 979 649 0418 294 968	0412 979 649 0418 294 968	NA 9969 3253	bdkerridge@gmail.com brianandcarolc@yahoo.com.au
2	Mill Rd, Wynnes Rocks Rd, Mt Wilson Rd, Hollyridge, Noonameena	Alice Simpson Johanna Renton	4756 2110 NA	0414 425 511 0408 675 804	9958 8810 9974 3096	asimpson7@bigpond.com jetrent5@bigpond.net.au
3	Queens Ave, Wyndham Ave, The Avenue (Breenhold to Milparra), Hay Lane.	Ann Pigott Deb Griffin	4756 2002 4756 2102	0428 281 236 0417 995 825	NA 9300 6628	ann.pigott@yahoo.com debgriff@bigpond.net.au
4	Church Lane, The Avenue (Fernhill to Mt Irvine Rd), Waterfall Rd, Wynstay	Janet McDonald Barbara Howes	4756 2043 4756 2167	0410 565 018 0417 667 579	9151 2209 9387 2604	jmcdonald@level22.com.au barbara@teamhowes.com
5	Mt Irvine Rd (Wollartukkee to the Old Mill), Davies Lane, Galwey Lane, Hillcrest Lane, Beowang, Shadforth Rd, Lambs Hill	Mary Roberts Alex Halliday	4756 2138 4756 2060	0412 542 510 0412 204 953	9518 4200 9389 1848	marycroberts35@gmail.com alex.halliday@bigpond.com
6	Farrer Rd East & West, Smith's Rd, Field Selection	Judy Tribe	4756 2096	0410 632 096	0410 632 096	judithtribe@gmail.com

REPORT FROM THE MWPA PRESIDENT

Many have been working hard to make the mountain prepared for summer. Peter Raines and family are back from a wonderful holiday travelling as far as remote places in WA and he has been busy on the fire breaks and other areas. At the AGM we reported on subjects as varied as water use and drones. Please continue to be sparing with water drawn from bores and springs as they are drying up. Waterfall Creek has stopped running, an indication of the long dry period.

The sub-committee investigating how we may improve facilities during the autumn period has been meeting under the guidance of Nancy Fox and working with BMCC on long term solutions to a problem which is now felt by everyone who lives in the Blue Mountains. We hope to install the cairn celebrating the 150th anniversary at the eastern end of the Anniversary Walk in the near future. In 2020 there will also be a new phone book for all of us who still find a paper version essential. These will be available from Sue Woolfenden.

The MWPA welcomes Matt Mason of Sefton Cottage to the committee bringing it up to the full capacity of eight people. Please feel free to contact any of the committee members about anything that concerns you.

I would like to thank all the committee members for working so hard during 2019, with special thanks to Robbie for his marvellous money management and Sue for secretarial help well beyond what is reasonable.

I wish everyone on Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine a happy, healthy and peaceful 2020.

Alison Halliday

APOLOGY

We apologise to both Richard Beattie and Richard Prentice for any confusion after wrongly attributing the photos and text concerning the meeting of the Split Window Kombi Klub in the spring edition. The material was submitted by Richard Beattie.

CHRISTMAS PARTY FILLED WITH THE JOY AND FUN OF THE SEASON

Free raffle tickets handed to every one of the more than ninety locals, guests and soon-to-be owners in Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine made for the nosiest raffle draw at the community Christmas party on Saturday evening, November 30.

Such was the turn-out, good wine, plentiful beer and wonderful range of cocktail plates brought along, the Mt Wilson Village Hall was variously a ruckus, quietly buzzy with chat or, briefly, dead silent when the tallest, loudest man in the room, Duncan Peppercorn, called for quiet.

That moment was the start of the draw for many, many prizes from wines to potted plants donated for the occasion. There being so many draws conversation became irresistible and louder. Duncan's loud voice was supported by the nearly as loud call out by Bruce Arnold until the table was cleared.



Photos courtesy Andrew Woolfenden

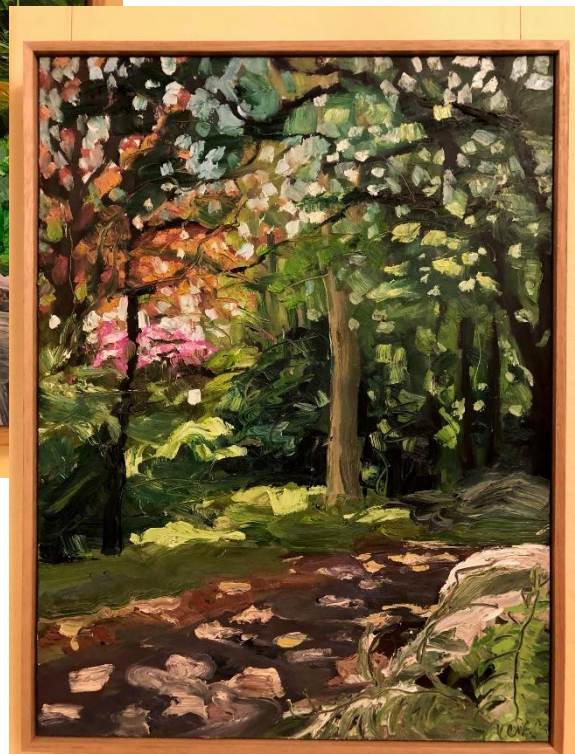
With perhaps more new and recent owners of properties coming to the Christmas party than there have been for many years, it was a great opportunity for introductions. New neighbours huddled in get-to-know-you talk while others with a little more time in the villages got into discussion with people they had not met before.

Formalities were quickly covered early on with David Howell, President of our fire brigade thanking everyone for attending and offering special thanks to Sue

Woolfenden and Robyn Scrivener for the organisation, Elizabeth Montano, David and Sarah Howell, Ted Griffin, Robyn Hyde, Mark Bancroft and Anne de Salis helped with decorations, and the many who brought plates of the wide variety of cocktail food.

Leisl Mott, who has been artist-in residence at the Old School in Mt Wilson, spoke about the extraordinary welcome she had during her four weeks in the community. The opportunity to visit and paint in the area led to her creating a body of work that did her and our beautiful environment proud. Paintings like these (below, images courtesy Richard Beattie) she completed were hung in the Village Hall at the time of the party and during the RFS briefing on the Gospers Mountain fire the following morning. The paintings are for sale and will be shown in an exhibition at the Rex-Livingston Art + Objects Gallery, 182-184 Katoomba Street, Katoomba. opening on Saturday 14 December 2019 and showing for four weeks. Leisl's artist-in residence time at the Old School in Mt Wilson was sponsored by the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre.

Richard Beattie





BOOK REVIEW: *SUMMER TIME*



We all recall the summers of our childhood – a season where time seemed to stop except for the interruptions of Christmas and the new school year. I remember camping in the foothills of the Snowy Mountains on the beautiful Moonbar river, complete with hoards of flies and the black snakes. As an adult there were the endless days of surf, sand and lots of reading. In their new book, *Summer Time*, Antonia Pesenti and Hilary Bell come together to distil the essence of the Australian summer by offering equal doses of nostalgia, humour and joy.

Hilary Bell captures moments of waiting and of high energy fun, from the swoops of the protective magpie, to sausages sizzling, from the 'mizzie bites, itchy and

pink' to the ever-present heat. Each event has its own four line poem capturing the time, the animals and birds, the holidays and the thrill of swimming in pools and the ocean.

As in the best picture books there is a synergy between the words and the pictures. Antonia Pesenti's images capture summer with close ups of wrinkly skin from too much time in the water, spider's webs in the dark corners of holiday houses, to pictures that sprawl across the whole two pages as children wait to dive in yet again, hair turns green from chlorine and swimming costumes get baggy and worn.

Each double spread focuses on an aspect of time passing from eternity to seconds, hours, evening and weeks, and back again to eternity. Time is elastic, and compressed, as the days of summer pass but there is always the knowledge that summer will return and it will all be done again.

Their previous books, *Alphabetical Sydney* and *Numerical Street* had a similar combination of delightful text and evocative images. Get *Summer Time* to make up the trilogy of a special series for children and those who remember what it was like to be a child in an Australian summer.

Alison Halliday

BOWENS CREEK EMERGENCY VEHICLES ACCESS ROUTE: AN UPDATE

Since our last update, we have been working with Trish Doyle, State Member for the Blue Mountains, on bringing this issue to the direct attention of the NSW government. While we have had to divert our resources to prepare for the potential impact of the Gospers Mountain Fire on our mounts, we are also preparing for a meeting with Melanie Gibbons, Parliamentary Secretary for Emergency Services, at which we will highlight the importance of taking a more strategic perspective on the significance of this route for both RFS Districts and the two State Electorates of Hawkesbury and Blue Mountains.

We continue to try to engage directly with both Blue Mountains City Council and Hawkesbury City Council to get momentum on the restoration of The Hawkesbury side of the route.

It is ironic that the Gospers Mountain fire with its current impact on The Hawkesbury and potential for significant impact on the Blue Mountains has diverted our attention from this campaign when, if this route was available to the RFS, it could play a significant part in containment lines work (through back burning activities) to prevent this fire having an impact on the Blue Mountains.

Elizabeth Montano, Executive Committee Member, Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade

SUMMER VISITORS

Middle English

Sumer is icumen in
Lhude sing cuccu
Groweþ sed
and bloweþ med
and springþ þe wde nu
Sing cuccu

Modern English

Summer has arrived,
Loudly sing, cuckoo!
The seed is growing
And the meadow is blooming,
And the wood is coming into leaf now,
Sing, cuckoo!

And welcome to the koel (below left) and channel billed cuckoos (below right) as they call across the land.



ARTIST IN RESIDENCE PROGRAM – WHAT NEXT?

Over the past two months, the Artist in Residence (AiR) program has welcomed two visual artists to the Mt Wilson Old School and Cottage.

In October, LeAnne Vincent set the pace by offering a wonderful workshop for participants to learn the art of cyanotype, a photographic printing process using found objects to produce beautiful cobalt blue prints (see photo next page). Judging by the output and participant's comments, the session was a great success.

Many of us also met LeAnne at the wine and cheese Open Studio to hear her explain the history of cyanotype and the possibilities which she was exploring in this art form. She loved her time in the Mounts and the AiR experience, and wistfully remarked that she wasn't expecting quite so many interruptions in this isolated place!

In November, we were lucky enough to welcome established landscape artist, Leisl Mott who was kindly hosted by Ray Harrington & Robyn Scrivener. Leisl ran several plein air workshops for budding local artists or anyone wishing to try their hand at capturing the essence of our landscapes in a medium of their choice.

Leisl, like LeAnne, enjoyed the RFB Maintenance Night dinner at the fire station but not the 'catastrophic' fire day which had her fleeing the Mounts. Thankfully she came back to complete a body of work ready for an exhibition at Rex Livingstone's gallery in Katoomba during December.



We were lucky enough to see a preview of her outstanding exhibition in the Village Hall during the Community Christmas Party.

Our next residents will be established musician Emily Granger and a recognised modern composer Tristan Coelho. They arrive in Mt Wilson just after Christmas for a month and will be welcomed by Mary Holt.

They are working on composing and recording a piece for Emily's upcoming album based on the sights and sounds of the Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine area and we are hoping that they will want to showcase their work at a concert for the community so that we can enjoy the glory of Emily's harp.

Watch out for an email giving the details!

In February 2020 we have a couple of emerging composer/musicians who fashion ethereal soundscapes from field recordings, vocals, electronics, zither, and sampled percussion and piano. Amelia Besseny and Cooper Bowman form the Newcastle duo 'Troth and they will be hosted by Sarah Howell.

During their Mt Wilson residency (25 January to 21 February), they plan to create soundscapes based in the beautiful natural surroundings with the help of locals participating in a hands-on field recording and music-making workshop.

Then in March, the first of our writers arrive at the Old School. Mandy Beaumont is an emerging artist working on a novel for which she has a book deal in 2022 Mandy plans to hold a writing workshop for us with several proposed topics planned.

There is something for everyone to enjoy in the forthcoming AiR summer program. Looking forward to seeing you there.

Judy Tribe

WELCOME

We are delighted to welcome the following new residents who came in 2019. Please let Sue Woolfenden (secretarymwpa@gmail.com) know if you have not yet received your welcoming package. For the interest of the community we have included the name of the property and information, where possible, about the previous owners. Apologies if any one has not been included. It has obviously been a time of significant change and we hope that all the new residents come to love Mt Wilson, enjoy its peaceful beauty and join the Progress Association and any of the other organisations that are at the heart of the community. If you want to know anything just ask or explore the community web site.

- Katherine Allam - Koojanup Park – Miss Egan passed away some time ago
- Michael and Anne O'Neill – Overcote - Graham Over passed away, Susanne Over sold
- Mahn England and Sally Banfield - Tree House – Anne Mayall moved away
- Ivan Srejber and Robin Bell – Wollemi – Marilyn and Peter Laving sold
- Peter Resanceff and James Douglas – Sefton Hall – settle early December – Peter Anderson and Robert Nicol sold
- Nicole and Ian Lorenzo – Pinnaroo – sold by Robbie and Alice
- Jane and Tony Hutt (adult children Denali and Elliot) – Bisley – Graham and Beverly Thompson sold
- Kate Wasson & Mark Croft – Touri – Sara Sernac sold

In late 2018 the following people also joined us:

- Welly Firmanto and Bruce Dowton – Stonehaven – Lumsden family sold
- Sally Meaton and Karl Whitehead – vacant land in Farrar Road
- Maria Johnson and Robert Green – Wollangambe – Wendy Holland sold
- Heidi Piggott Irwin and Sean Irwin – built in Mt Wilson Road

MT WILSON AND MT IRVINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Historical Society held its Annual General Meeting on Saturday 16th November in the Mt Wilson village hall. Attendance was low, based on total membership, as has been the case for a few years now. However, numbers were higher than the previous three years which was very gratifying. Sadly we have lost some very valuable members and supporters who have passed away in recent months, John Leonard - one of our first society members who made an incalculable contribution; Milba Kirk - the society's last treasurer and lifelong resident of Mt Wilson; Professor Ian Jack – notable historian and one of our greatest supporters; Keith Raines – owner of the beautiful MerryGarth and long-time society member; and Ruth Scrivener – great supporter and seemingly eternal resident of Mt Irvine.

We were very pleased to also welcome two good friends and guests this year to the AGM - Jan Koperberg from BMCHAO and Suzanne Smith from the Kurrajong & Comleroy Historical Society. The outgoing committee were thanked for all their efforts during the year. Malcolm Reynolds was the elected president for this year and the committee members for 2020 are Zaharah Braybrooke, Helen Freeman, Des

Barrett, and John Braybrooke and hopefully, if he can be persuaded, Peter Raines who offered to join the committee prior to the AGM.

There were many positive and helpful suggestions made during the meeting to assist in raising our profile and promoting our objectives throughout the local community as well as some very encouraging offers to assist in future fundraising ventures. The society discussed at length the future of the society and the positive discussion during this meeting bodes for the future. However, it remains very apparent that the society still desperately needs more local support to be sustainable.

It has been very dry for several months now and the bushfire season has hit early and hard. Inevitably, this has reduced the numbers of visitors to the Mounts over the spring period including any visitors to the Turkish Bath Museum. The Museum was opened throughout the spring as usual. However, as in recent years, it could not be opened every Sunday in that period due to insufficient volunteers to cover the roster. Currently the museum is only being opened on the days when it can be covered by a willing volunteer. In addition to the formal openings however, there were a few additional interested groups who were keen to visit which Des Barrett very ably co-ordinated.



The north side windows and door of the Turkish Bath Museum is in need of repainting so the society has arranged a licensed painter from Blackheath to undertake this work. He was highly recommended by the Blue Mountains Historical Society

and it is hoped this work will be completed in the next few weeks.

The society would also like to thank Helen and John Cardy for their generous donation of some wonderful photographic archival material. This contains, among other items, various photographs of the exterior and interior of the Turkish Bath House and we are most grateful for this wonderful donation which will become part of our rich archival collection.

If anyone is interested in becoming a member of the Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine Historical Society we would love to hear from you. Please contact me either by phone or email so I can tell you more about the society and send you a membership form: malcolmreynolds1961@gmail.com or ph 4754 2886 or 0402 891 941

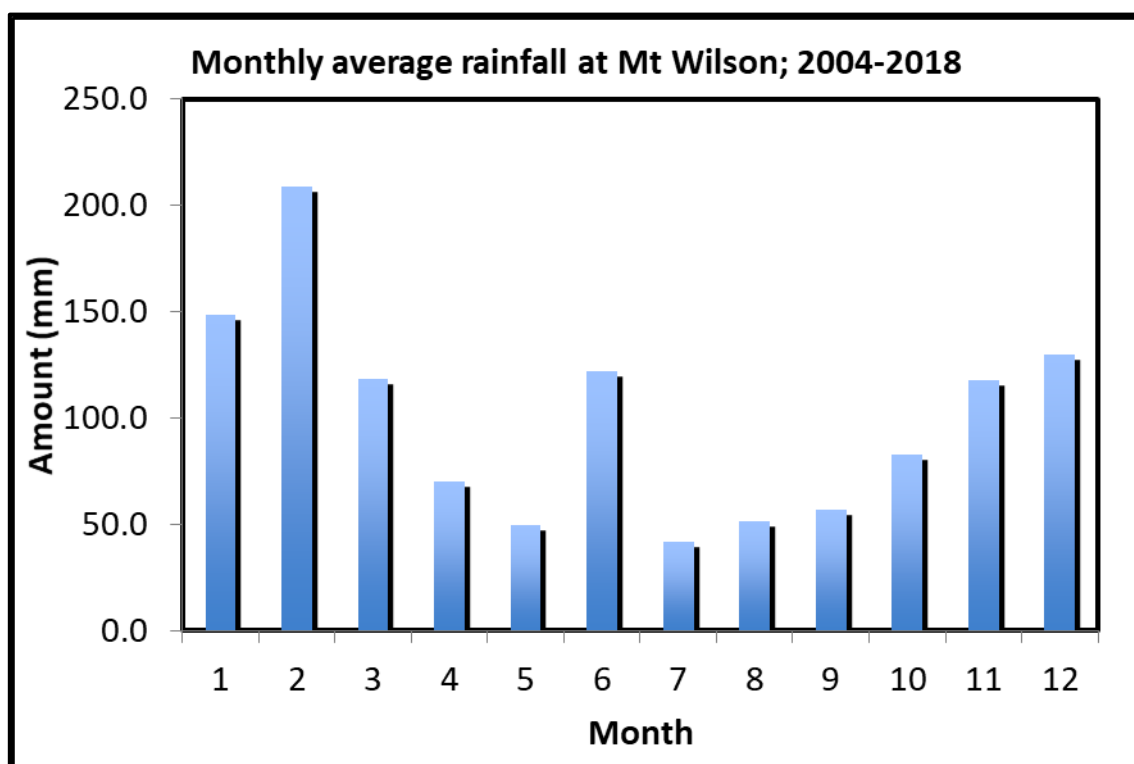
Malcolm Reynolds

RAINFALL AT MT WILSON

The recent rain — we got more than 80 mm on September 16, 17 and 18 — has been mightily welcome for gardens and, importantly, because it has been enough to wet the bush fairly thoroughly and so postpone the high fire danger periods we expect to face this coming summer.

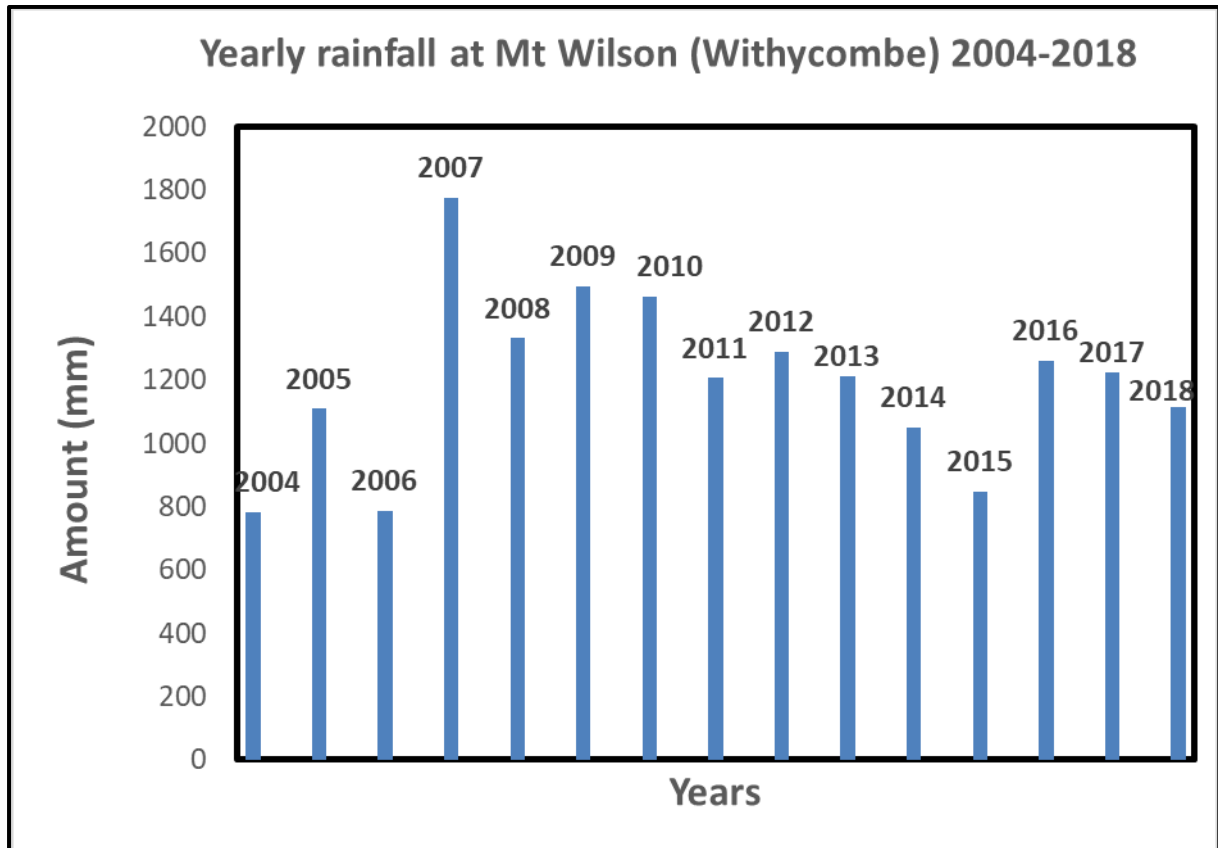
I have kept daily rainfall records at Withycombe since 2004 and also downloaded the Met Office records for Mt Boyce. They provide a check on our data, and because there is a very long run there—going back to 1887, with a fairly big gap, for some reason (WWI, I suppose?), between 1911 and 1924—you can pull out all sorts of interesting trends, records etc. However, our 15 years seem to reflect long-term patterns and trends quite well, so we'll stay with those.

We have just been through a very dry spell, although not unprecedented. The graph of monthly averages shows that rainfall in the winter months is generally lower than in the summer, although the June average, for the years we're looking at, is slightly anomalous, pushed up by 2005 (239 mm), 2007 (347 mm) and 2016 (249 mm). On the other hand June 2004, during the so-called Millennial Drought, only got 6 mm. June 2008 was completely rainless, as were July and August 2012 and August 2013, through to mid-September that year, when we had 36 mm. After that there was virtually nothing through October, setting things up for the State Mine Fire. In 2018 total rainfall for June, July and August was only 85 mm, but this year we've had a total of 152 during those months: 68 mm in June, about 50 mm during the first week of July, then nothing but a few small showers that didn't wet the ground, until 21 mm on August 29, followed by another dry spell until September 16.



The yearly rainfall graph shows fairly typical variability, with totals ranging from 781 in 2004, 785 in 2006, almost 1800 mm in 2007 and down to 848 mm in 2015.

Total rain for the current year, so far (January to August), has been 646 mm. The recent falls bring it to about 720 mm. This is quite a bit higher than in those dry years (2004, 2006 and 2015) when the January to August totals were 358, 532 and 450 mm respectively. But, as everyone is aware, the coming summer is predicted to be unusually dry.



The average annual rainfall at Mt Wilson from 2004 to 2018 has been almost exactly 1200 mm (about 47 inches, for anyone still nostalgic for the old units). You can't see trends in the annual graph, but when I plotted annual totals for Mt Boyce, from 1955 to 2004, and put a trendline through the scatter, it showed that the underlying trend is down—things are getting drier by, on average, about 10 mm per year.

Joe Landsberg

FREE!

Free to a good home - Sanyo TV wide 50 inch - works perfectly well - Call Nancy 4756-2106.

BUSHCARE

Tracey Abbas from BMCC and Alice Simpson have led another successful year of Bushcare. A small but committed group of volunteers have once again met on the second Friday of each month from 9 am to 12 noon in an effort to halt the spread of

weeds in our reserves and bushlands. Thanks to everyone who came along this year.

The group worked at Sloan Reserve, Wynne Reserve, Ferny Corner, Gregson Park and Silva Plana. A highlight this year was the wonderful support given by volunteers from KPMG who spent a morning planting in Sloan Reserve. Thanks to Alexander Montano for organising this.



Participating in bushcare is a great way to learn about the native flora in our villages and the best methods of removing unwanted weeds. It is a lovely way to become familiar with the natural areas in the village and to witness the rainforest plants emerging after invasive weeds are removed.

MWPA have copies of Libby Raines wonderful booklet *Weeds of Mount Wilson*.

If you have misplaced your copy please contact Sue Woolfenden on 4756 2046. This is free to all residents.

The next Bushcare is on Friday 10th January 2020 at Queens Avenue opposite Windyridge. If you would like to be involved please come along.

Sue Woolfenden

REMEMBRANCE DAY 2019



There was a smaller number of people on the clear bright Monday at the War Memorial but they proved to be in good voice. The service was led by Tim McIver who is the minister at St Georges Church. We are most grateful that he comes every year and he gave a moving introduction about the sacrifice of all those on the War Memorial. Christopher Carey played the trumpet for the last post and reveille and Ted Griffin accompanied the singing on his flute. Richard Prentice laid the wreath on behalf of all the community and Alex Halliday took care of the raising of the flag.



We then walked to the Village Hall and listened to a talk about Thomas Joseph O'Rourke which included mention of the difficulties of research when so little is certain about an ex-service man from WWI. The talk included a brief history of the building of the War Memorial a 100 years ago. We are fortunate that our mountain forbears had the foresight and determination to build this site of remembrance. The text of the talk will be placed on the community website under the Historical Society section where you can read all the other Remembrance Day talks that have been given over many years.

We then all enjoyed a cup of tea and much chat. Thank you to everyone who came. This is an annual service and everyone is very welcome.

We have applied for a Federal grant to re-gilt the WWII lettering and re-build the boundary fence. We should have the results of this by autumn 2020.

Alison Halliday



FEEDBACK AND AUTUMN EDITION

Your feedback and comments are always welcome, please send to themounts2786@gmail.com.

The closing date for the Autumn edition of The Mounts is **21 February 2020**. Please send submissions in Word format to themounts2786@gmail.com. Images of local events, wildlife and flora are also welcome.

Contributions from members of the community are always welcomed – this is *your* newsletter. The email address for queries and contributions is themounts2786@gmail.com.