

THE MOUNTS

Community newsletter of Mt Wilson and
Mt Irvine June 2021 Winter



Sefton in the snow on 10 June 2021, James Douglas

EDITORIAL

We apologise that this issue of The Mounts is late but we are now able to celebrate winter in all its snowy glory. This June long weekend many parts of the mounts are covered in snow and we have some wonderful photos to share thanks to many contributors.

Two mountain projects have recently been announced as recipients of funding via the second stream of the Bushfire Community Recovery and Resilience Fund (BCRRF). The BMCC has received \$250,000 to address issues at Mt Wilson Village Hall (see page 15 for more details). Mt Wilson Progress Association has received \$24,800 for the delivery of a program called Music to Soothe the Soul, a series of music events for the community. This funding is wonderful and neither would happen without the grant application work of locals.

We also owe thanks to angry residents who took the issue of the disgusting toilets in the camp ground to the BMCC (see page 17), with the full support of our local council representatives.

ANZAC DAY 2021



A number of floral tributes were placed on the War Memorial on ANZAC Day and the flags at the Memorial and Founders' Corner were lowered to half-mast.

On ANZAC Day Sam Piggot, grandson of Peter and Anne of Yengo, interviewed Richard Prentice the mounts last WW2 veteran. In recent years, Richard has laid the wreath on Remembrance Day. The interview can be viewed via YouTube here:

<https://youtu.be/Yq6-6OX-5Kc>.





PHOTOS FROM KIRK SAWMILL WALK WITH PETER RAINES

In the Spring issue of The Mounts we mentioned a walk scheduled with Peter Raines to the Sawmill worked by Syd and Albert Kirk. Rosemary Walsh has kindly shared these photos.



UPCOMING CONCERT – AUSTRALIAN BRANDENBURG ORCHESTRA

On Wednesday 11 August the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra will be performing their *Baroque Fusions* concert at Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre, 41 Gardiner Crescent, Blackheath. This special performance is being curated by Principal Baroque Flute Melissa Farrow (right) featuring members of the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra.

The performance will commence at 7pm with a duration of approximately 1 hour with no interval. Tickets are on sale from 9am on Monday 21 June from www.brandenburg.com.au and are priced from \$35.



Baroque Fusions celebrates a blend of Italian, French and German national styles. Featuring Georg Philipp Telemann and Johann Sebastian Bach, two of the most prolific composers of all time and arguably the greatest exponents of the German mixed style, and the music of Vivaldi and François Couperin that inspired them.

Repertoire highlights

Vivaldi Allegro from *Il gardellino*, Flute Concerto in D major, Op. 10 No. 3, RV 428

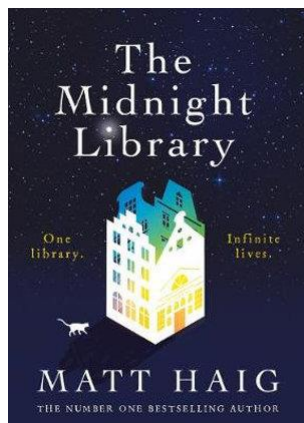
Couperin Selections from *Les Nations*, 'Premier Ordre: La Française'

Bach Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 in G major, BWV 1048

Telemann Selections from *Tafelmusik*, Part 1, Overture in E minor, TWV 55:e1

BOOK REVIEW – THE MIDNIGHT LIBRARY

It is not easy to find a book that is enjoyable to read, has interesting ideas and does not fit neatly into a particular genre – not romance, not crime or thriller, and is not high literature. Just good to pick up and take you away from the humdrum of everyday life. The new book by Matt Haig, *The Midnight Library*, ticks all these boxes.



Nora Seed is depressed: she has lost her job because she does not smile at the customers, she has lost contact with her brother and her cat has died. She swallows a handful of pills, writes a note and then everything changes. So far it all sounds a bit trite but Nora finds herself in a seemingly endless building containing shelves of books as far as she can see. Time has stopped and a woman very like the librarian at her high school seems to be in charge. She has a proposition for Nora which sounds intriguing.

Based on the old idea of what lies down the road not taken, this novel is funny, kind and clever. To say much more would be to spoil the many

surprises for Nora and the reader. The book wears its philosophy very lightly and it certainly provokes thoughts about how to lead a good life and what that may really mean. You come to care about Nora and what is happening to her, and the ending is oddly satisfying.

POEMS FROM CURRENT ARTIST IN RESIDENCE JULIA THORNDYKE

Too Late to Leave

Everyone's new favourite app
showed red flames across the map
bushfire closed in like a trap—
it was too late to leave.

Blackened paws and toasted fur
burnt poles where the gum leaves were
smoke-smudged skies an ashen blur . . .
it was too late to leave.

Blood-red skies on New Year's Eve.
Politicians disbelieve.
Together people can achieve
a world with air that's safe to breathe.

To keep our skies both clear and blue
you know what people have to do:
get rid of dirty fossil fuels
protect the trees like precious jewels
conserve our water, tend the land
at last the people understand

it is a choice we all must make
to save and nurture, give not take
to mend the damage, gain reprieve
there's no plan B—we cannot leave.

First published in *Splash, Slither, Squawk!* SWWNSW anniversary anthology for children, 2020.

How to Move Meenhi*

Touch her, says the Wind. Bother her with sleek caresses,
massage every aching outcrop with persistent care.
Pull the tangled dry twigs from her hair and pummel the tired
sandstone boulders that shore up her resistance.

Wash her, says the Rain. Cleanse every private crevice
and deep limestone canyon with cool pelting drops until she is free
of drudgery and her ridges are covered with fresh green foliage,
flannel flowers bursting open like a thousand pale stars.

Warm her, says the Sun. Open every damp dark
moss-covered place to new light and heat. Dry her ancient
layers of shale and crack wide the steep basalt walls that have held
old knowledge in silence for far too long.

Woo her with words, says the Poet. Enfold her
in a garment sewn of kindness. Wrap a tender lacy shawl
of mist around her ironstone shoulders until she trembles
with desire and tells you every secret she possesses.

*Meenhi – one of The Three Sisters in the Blue Mountains.

This poem first published in *Mountain Secrets* Ginninderra Press, 2019.

Nine tanka

light rain . . .
the old year ends
shedding
all the tears
we held back

+

a rubber band
stretched to the limit—
drought, fire, flood
pandemic
all the world shelters in place

*

in isolation . . .
which room requires
dusting,
which china cup
shall hold my morning tea?

*

this dusty display
in the travel agent's window—
planes grounded, ships
in dry dock, dreams
packed in unused suitcases

*

acrid smoke
from the backburn
my eyes
full of grit, my heart
a pile of ash

*

leaf shadows
on the teak bench
move in tandem
never touching—
social distancing

*

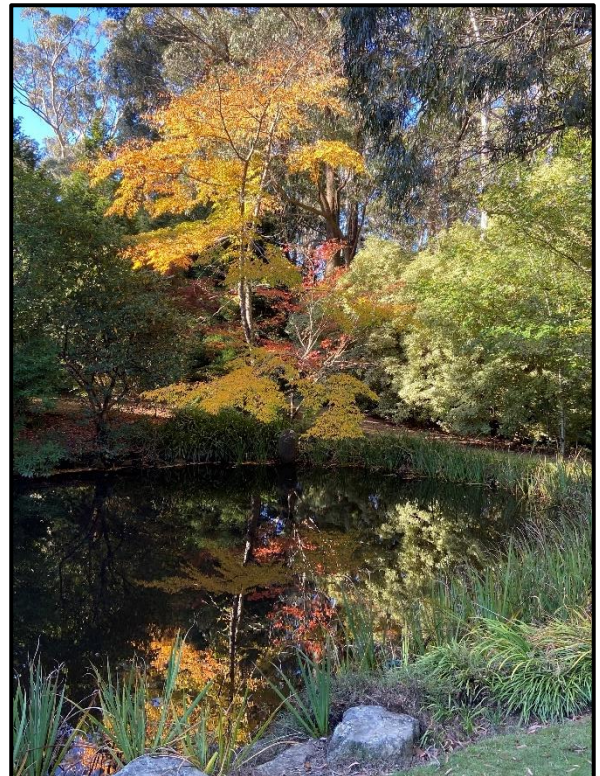
now seventy
my boy cousin recalls
grandpa's chevrolet . . .
beside the thin spoke wheels
shadows of a life I never knew

*

there's gold
still hanging from our maple
in early july—
late sun through slatted
windows laced with hope

*

in a world
of farewells and sunsets
his hand
still clasped in mine
whatever the weather



Autumn colour at Culverden, Sarah Howell

MT WILSON/MT IRVINE LADIES FRIENDSHIP DAY

With the closure of the CWA many years ago, a Friendship Group was formed, primarily so that ladies would not become isolated in the community. The group is still going strong and a roster has been drawn up for the year. We now meet on the second Thursday of the month and catch up with friends and neighbours.

The hostess for the day provides tea, coffee, and something to have with a cuppa, such as a cake, biscuits or slice. The ladies take their own lunch arriving from 12pm and leaving when it suits them or the hostess. We ring the hostess prior to the day to give her an idea of how many will be coming.

We welcome any new ladies, and ladies who may have lived here for a length of time and not known about the group, along with ladies who have left The Mounts. If you would like a copy of the roster or any information, please contact Helen Freeman helenfreeman817@gmail.com



Snowman at the corner of Hillcrest Lane and Mt Irvine Road late on 10 June 2021, Alex Halliday

OLIVER WATTS INTERVIEW WITH PETER RESANCEFF

On 26 May Mt Wilson resident Oliver Watts received the exciting news that his portrait, Dorian Gray (Eryn Jean Norvill), had been shortlisted for Australia's most prestigious portrait award – the 2021 Archibald Prize.

Oli is a successful contemporary artist, lecturer, theorist and curator. His painting was one of 52 finalists selected from over 900 entries and is currently on show at the Art Gallery of NSW as part of the annual Archibald, Wynne & Sulman exhibition.

Peter Resanceff, a long-term art collector, friend and admirer of Oli's work took some time out to check-in with him about his thoughts on the famous portrait prize, his recent work and how having a place on the mountain nurtures and augments his creative process.

Peter: Congratulations on your being shortlisted for this year's Archibald Prize, Oli. Where were you when you heard the news and what's the response been like?

Oli: Thank you Peter, that is very kind of you. I found out by email and I found out much earlier than I expected. There is an embargo on telling people which is quite fun. It was lovely to go to the lunch and see all the other artists and sitters. One of my old teachers, although he hates me mentioning it, is Mathew Lynn who lives in Blackheath; I was very happy to be next to him on the wall and we had a good chat. I have received some lovely messages from old friends, some of them in London or in New York, who obviously still check the Sydney papers.

Peter: What is it about the Archibald that you think contributes to its enduring popularity among the broader Australian art-loving public?

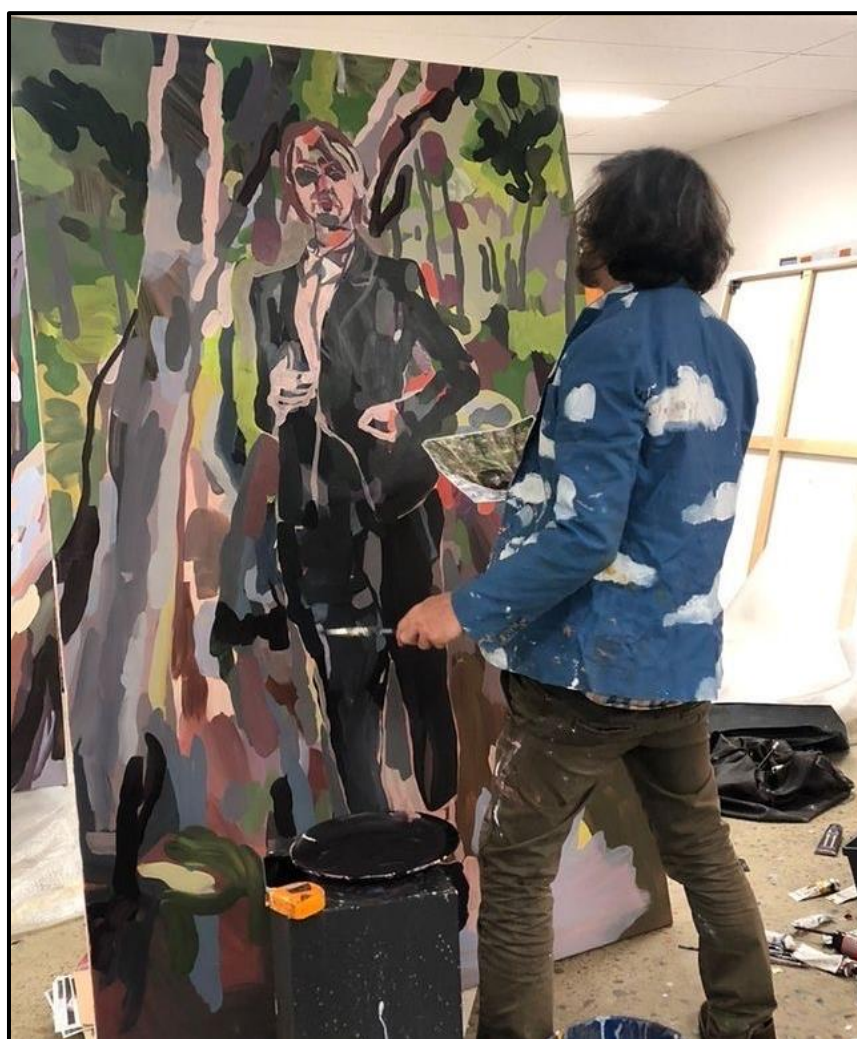
Oli: I have jokingly been describing the Archibald as the Derby. It does seem like a particularly Sydney thing, and I am not sure exactly what the relationship to the prize is from the other states. Obviously, the Indigenous communities like APY and Yirrkala are taking the Wynne prize very seriously. And Vincent Namatjira won the Archibald last year from Iwantja, APY lands. I think that the prize changes to meet the times. It is a very broad mandate to paint a portrait and I think that allows for a bit of play. It seems to be able to respond to the spirit of the time. Having said that, the wonderful exhibition running concurrently with the Archibald at the moment, the 100 years show, is really powerful and I particularly loved the portraits from the 1930s. They seemed really current and very now. So perhaps it is the fact the portrait is always accessible across time. There is an image magic in portraiture, almost like a horcrux in Harry Potter, where we believe a bit of the sitter is in the picture. I think viewers like to respond like that to the picture. Ask it things.

Peter: You mentioned to me that you've entered the Archibald a number of times before. Did you approach your entry to this year's Archibald any differently to your entries in years past?

Oli: I didn't approach it differently; I think they approached me differently. I have even entered a portrait of Eryn Jean Norvill before in 2016. EJ is my most frequent sitter so I just kept working with her really. It was heartening that the trustees were able to see that relationship in the work I think. Usually, I paint friends and other artists, or poets or whoever is around and I feel that the model or sitter brings a lot to the final work.

Peter: Yes, I note that collaboration appears to be a key part of your practice – how does collaboration enrich the creative process and the work itself?

Oli: My work is figurative and not abstract at all. So, in that way I am looking at the long history of figurative art and its ability to tell stories and to represent ideas. By collaborating, especially with actors or other artists, people who understand telling stories, then I think the collaboration can be very rich. They become a cross between artist, dramaturg, model, writer. They bring a sense of gesture and the gaze which is very useful to the finished tableau. Painting is very forgiving at accepting even the most melodramatic gesture! But it can also pick up subtle expressions or the light touch of a finger.



Peter: Would you elaborate on that a bit more – that you often choose to paint an actor in a particular role (such as Eryn Jean Norvill as Dorian Gray), rather than as the person themselves. Why is that?

Oli: I think it makes sense that the painting highlights its making, its artificiality. I am not so interested in the reality of things but more the story or the idea. If you lead with a feeling or an idea and then search for an image of that, it makes sense that in some sense everyone is playing a character. I like that distancing of the painting from reality which might come through appropriating another image or stealing from a play or a book. I like the allusions in my painting to be really open and slippery.

Peter: If I survey your work over the years, I note that it is permeated with the Australian landscape – what role does our unique landscape play and how does this contextualise the meaning of your work?

Oli: I am very interested in the various genres of painting from portraiture to history painting to landscape. It's part of being a painter to approach the genres, and especially in Australia, landscape is such an important part of history and the legacy of image making (for good or ill). In a lot of my work the landscape is a backdrop to the scene. And even if it is by itself I still like to highlight the artifice, the way the image might relate to something you have seen before or a famous image or a feeling. I mean at Mt Wilson for example there are so many wedding photos or autumnal shots on Instagram. As a painter the question is how do I respond to those images? How can I make something interesting of the landscape that is already so imaged?



Peter: You've had a place on the mountain for a number of years now. How does the time you spend on the mountain inspire or affect your creative process?

I think my appreciation of the natural environment has definitely heightened since spending so much time in the mountains. Cutting, digging, mowing, mulching, painting, and drawing are all ways of knowing the land that you can't get in books or through photographs. You have a more immediate connection to the land, the fire, the animals, the smells and the sounds. I think this has affected me quite deeply as I know it has affected other people on the mountain. I expect that that has changed my approach to painting, especially the landscape. The trick now is what stories will I tell of the mountain. What lever do I press down first? There are so many supportive and friendly characters in the mountains too. That was a great surprise. How quickly we felt part of the community.

BLOOMING WARATAHS

The last few waratahs have been planted opposite the old schoolhouse. Like those planted along the Anniversary Walk we were able to purchase them courtesy of a generous community grant from Toyota. The grant was requested to replace those plants burnt by the fires of 2019 and we are most grateful to Toyota. Many of these waratahs have fat buds and they should be flowering in early October. Please walk along the Anniversary Walk, immediately below Wynstay's paddock, and enjoy their renewed beauty.

BUSHCARE UPDATE

Bushcare is held on the second Friday of each month, between 9am and 12midday. It is an enjoyable morning and a great way to learn more about the local native flora including beautiful rainforest trees, shrubs, vines and flowers.

If you would like to join us, please check the calendar on the Mt Wilson Mt Irvine community website to determine the location each month. Volunteers will be briefed on following Covid-19 safety protocols. It is now necessary to bring your own morning tea.

For residents who are wanting to identify and control weeds in their gardens, the booklet *Bushland Weeds of Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine* can be found in the Bushcare section of the community website. The booklet is also available from the MWPA, if residents would like a free copy please contact Sue Woolfenden on 4756 2046.

Everyone is welcome, hope you can join us!

Enquiries:

Mt Wilson contact: Alice Simpson (0414 425 511 or 4756 2110)

Council contact: Tracy Abbas (0428 777 141)

Alice Simpson



Snow at Wynstay on 11 June 2021, Alex Halliday

ZIG ZAG RAILWAY – CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

The efforts of many dedicated volunteers are being celebrated as the Zig Zag Railway gets ever closer to running steam passenger trains once again. Are you interested in joining the team? Most of the volunteers had no railway experience before joining the organisation. Many come from Sydney, the Blue Mountains and the Greater West.

Over the next few months the Railway will be starting training so they are ready to carry passengers late this year. To register your interest in becoming a volunteer, please email volunteers@zigzagrailway.com.au or you can leave a message on 1300 ZIG ZAG – 1300 944 924



MT IRVINE PROGRESS ASSOCIATION (MIPA) PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Mt Irvine Neighbourhood Safer Place (NSP)

The work to bring the Community Hall up to NSP standard is now complete. Final designation is expected shortly, at which time a sign will be erected in front of the Hall.

The following web site has useful information concerning NSP’s:

<https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare/neighbourhood-safer-places>

Safety on Mt Irvine Road

Residents continue to experience “near misses” on Mt Irvine Road. This week a large truck towing a wood chipping machine rounding a corner near Zircon Creek, wedged a resident’s car between the truck and the “chipper” and the railing. Fortunately, the car and truck managed to stop before a serious collision occurred. Careful manoeuvring by the car driver avoided any damage.

In an earlier incident, in which I was a passenger travelling towards Mt Wilson, a large Endeavour Energy truck with a “cherry picker” mounted on its tray, came around a corner completely on the wrong side of the road. Somehow, with heavy braking by the car driver and a desperate manoeuvre by the truck driver, another serious collision was avoided.

These are examples of other's experiences along Mt Irvine Road.

As a result of follow up discussions with Endeavour Energy they have committed to properly brief their drivers on how to safely drive along Mt Irvine Road. They also agreed that, where a smaller vehicle accompanies the larger one, the smaller vehicle will take the lead to warn oncoming traffic. This arrangement seems to be working. When private contractors are involved, fruitful discussions such as these might not be possible.

I strongly urge all residents to always keep on your side of Mt Irvine Road and limit your speed to less than 50 kilometres per hour. This reduced speed increases the trip to Mt Wilson by less than two minutes. You might also choose to pass this information onto your visitors.

Council Updates

Weeds

The project to eliminate banana passionfruit from Painui Gully has been completed with great success and follow up of regrowth and further germination will be done. Funding for this was obtained under the Regional Land Partnerships Program, together with funds contributed by Council. We thank Council for their investment in these projects and continue to work with Council to undertake such work to attack weed infestations in other areas Mt Irvine.

Roads

Mt Irvine Road has deteriorated considerably following the recent heavy rains. One lane, below Taihoa, is now closed due to the complete breakup of the surface and subsidence. RFS cones are placed around this danger point to warn motorists, and following representation to Council, they placed warning signs. I have confirmed that there is a "work order" in place to rectify this situation. Although the anticipated completion date has passed, I have been informed that the necessary work will take place shortly.

You will also have noticed that large sections of the road surface have now deteriorated to gravel. I am in continued discussions with Council regarding the state of the road and will continue to seek Council's commitment to properly upgrade it.

New Mt Irvine Fire Station

The sites analysis conducted by our local brigade has been forwarded to the RFS District Office as input to their deliberations. The Progress Association has received no further information from the RFS on this matter.

Grants.

Thanks to Cheryl Dubois for her perseverance in obtaining a grant to make and distribute bird nesting boxes through the burnt areas of Mt Irvine.

Once again, thanks go to Carol Carrigan for her considerable efforts in obtaining another grant to provide a fridge/freezer and a dishwasher for Mt Irvine Hall. Carol and Brian organised their installation and they are a fabulous addition to our Hall.

Thanks also to our local RFS Brigade who obtained a grant for a new concrete water tank for Mt Irvine. This tank is now in position at the northern end of Mt Irvine Road.

Allen Hyde

MT WILSON VILLAGE HALL GRANT

The 2021 Mt Wilson Village Hall Advisory Committee AGM was held on 17 April in conjunction with the MWPA General Meeting. What was expected to be an uneventful meeting (with less to report due to COVID-19) was dramatically changed with news that morning that the Bushfire Community Recovery and Resilience Fund (BCRRF) had approved the grant application for \$250,000 to build a new kitchen and associated facilities at the Hall.

This was the culmination of representations first made to the BMCC by the Committee when the Hall was re-opened in 2003 with Ron Green as Chair and pursued by Judy Tribe during her ten years as chair to March 2020. Following the Gospers Mountain Fire of 2019, Judy once again highlighted to the BMCC in the After Action Review, the inadequacies of the kitchen particularly when supporting emergency operations. The AAR was then followed up with a major submission by the Committee to BMCC in May 2020 requesting BMCC to appoint an architect so that plans for a new kitchen and associated outdoor area could be prepared and costed. This being a necessary first step in obtaining funding. Nothing happened until November when the Commonwealth and State Governments announced the opening of the competitive \$25m second stream of grants under the BCRRF. From then on things moved at high speed. BMCC gave permission for our Committee to make a grant application and Patrick Williams (BMCC Properties and Commercial Services) appointed architect Simon Hearn to work with the Committee to prepare preliminary plans. A number of Council Officers were involved in the grant application, including Kathy Fox (BMCC's Community Buildings Liaison Officer and our point of contact with the BMCC) who is a delight to work with and provided considerable assistance.

One of the many criteria which we had to satisfy was to demonstrate that the project had broad community support. We had no problems with this one, with strong letters of support being provided by the Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade, the Mt Wilson Progress Association, The Old School Mt Wilson and the Blue Mountains City Council. Our thanks to David Howell, Nancy Fox, Joe Montano and Patrick Williams respectively.

In summary the Mt Wilson Village Hall Emergency Facilities Project comprises:

- Expand kitchen facilities to enable the provision of up to 80 meals in one session (hall seating capacity), and 300 in shifts during emergencies
- Improve safety and conditions for volunteers involved in meal preparation
- Extend and refurbish covered outdoor areas to supplement indoor seating capacity
- Install sufficient outdoor lighting to enable safe access and night use of the Hall
- Install a generator (20kVA 3-phase diesel) with adequate capacity to power the hall during lengthy power outages
- Replace fencing to create additional access points for food transport and emergency vehicles

The BCRRF summarized the basis for awarding the grant as:

Blue Mountains City Council (\$250,000): Mt Wilson Village Hall Emergency Facilities Project. The village hall plays a central role in community life - and in emergency management. Recent experience in the Gospers Mountain fire highlighted functional issues affecting practical operation and volunteer safety. This project will address these issues.

The project is now a BMCC project. The BMCC owns the Hall, is the recipient of the grant and our Committee is a sub-committee of the BMCC constituted under s355 of the Local Government Act. The project is being managed by the BMCC's Infrastructure Design (ID) team which includes Simon Hearn as architect. The ID team has to deal with a multitude of issues

before the DA application is ready for lodgement (funding deed with BCRRF, final design, planning controls, heritage, fire rating and costings). As part of this process plans will be exhibited to the community for comment and the Committee will provide feedback to the ID team.

This project provides a rare opportunity to make the Hall fit for purpose for generations to come. It will also enhance the streetscape of the Brigade/School House/Village Hall precinct. When it comes to cost, it is quite possible that more money will have to be raised to provide the best outcome. The grant must be expended by end June 2023 so we are assured that the project will proceed.

My thanks to all who were involved in our successful grant application, including the members of the Committee; Andrew Mitchell, Judy Tribe, Helen Freeman Beth Raines, Steve Woolfenden and Megan Wood.

Ted Griffin, Chair, Mt Wilson Village Hall Advisory Committee

SOME HISTORY OF BELLS LINE OF ROAD OVER MT TOMAH AND THE USE OF BOWENS CREEK ROAD AS AN ALTERNATIVE FOR LOCAL TRAFFIC

In December 1945, following the end of the war, work recommenced by the Department of Main Roads and gradually gained momentum. Following a serious investigation to find a suitable route, in November 1946 a large cutting on the west side of Mt Tomah was commenced. From here the Department of Main Roads tells the story:

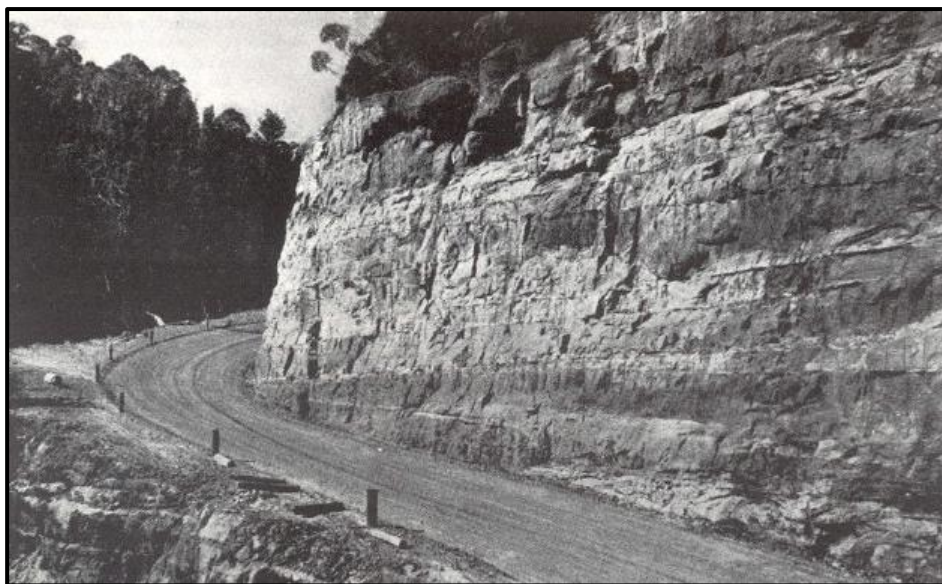
"The determination of route on this section needed courage when one viewed the huge ravine to be filled, and the formidable cliffs which had to be cut down the mountain to provide access between Mt Tomah and Mt Bell. Located under this cliff was the existing road, which had to be kept open to traffic, and which was in the path of most of the debris to be brought down from the excavations above.



Construction of the Mt Tomah cutting underway during 1947. (Department of Main Roads)

In February and March 1947, exceptionally wet weather was experienced, and it was found advisable to close the road to through traffic and, to make matters worse, a portion of the old road subsided. At the end of March weather conditions improved slightly, and some traffic was allowed through, but by April work on the large cutting had reached a stage

when the lower road was being continually blocked by operations on the new road above, and it was impossible to ensure that large boulders did not roll onto the old road; the danger of damage to passing vehicles and of injury to drivers was so serious that the old road was closed until the new formation could be available for traffic at the end of May. 'Road Closed' barriers were therefore placed at North Richmond



Mt Tomah cutting in 1950, showing completed earthworks and base course laid.
(Department of Main Roads)

and Bell, although for light traffic there was an alternative route from Bilpin through Bowens Creek, Mt Irvine and Mt Wilson. By July 1947, the construction of the base course through the Mt Tomah cut was completed and work was pushed ahead east of Mt Tomah to Bilpin. Above,

During 1947 construction of a deviation around Kurrajong Village was completed and between Cut Rock and Kurrajong Heights an abandoned alignment was reconditioned and used as a traffic detour during reconstruction of the road. The massive reconstruction program was finally completed in June 1949.

Peter Raines

“A MATTER OF GREAT URGENCY”

Some good progress was made this month in solving the perennial problem of inadequate public toilet facilities in Mt Wilson during the busy autumn and spring seasons.

Following consistent lobbying by Mt Wilson Progress Association (MWPA) over a number of years, a motion was carried unanimously by Council last month to both improve cleaning services and to investigate the upgrade and renewal of existing toilet facilities.

Over the 2021 autumn season, Mt Wilson experienced an extraordinary number of visitors, a number that continues to increase each year. According to the community vehicle counter, on the five mile and making modest assumptions about the number of people per vehicle, there were 10,000 to 15,000 visitors per weekend this autumn. Not only are these numbers an issue for resident amenity, traffic-noise, and litter but this year, the volume of visitors caused the limited public toilet facilities to be completely overwhelmed with serious concerns about sanitation.

This season, MWPA received many complaints from residents and visitors who had experienced the shocking state of the toilets or who had visitors avoid the toilets completely and use the bush or nearby properties.

Dr Lorraine Barrett of Nooroo made a strong case in support of public hygiene stating the toilets “are a significant public health hazard” and continued, “we have insufficient toilets... and the

facilities generally have no provision for hand-washing. The possibility of serious illness cannot continue to be ignored by Council”.

Council acknowledged that negative feedback on Mt Wilson reflects poorly on the Blue Mountains as a whole, and the complaint was quickly addressed by Councillors Kerry Brown and Kevin Schreiber who raised a motion for the Council meeting on 25 May 2021. The motion was carried unanimously.

The minutes of that meeting state that the issue has been ruled by the Mayor to be “a matter of great urgency” and that, the Council has been instructed to urgently consult with the Mt Wilson Progress Association and commit to an ongoing schedule for:

1. Increased pump outs and cleaning of public toilets, including an all-day cleaning service during the peak periods;
2. Provision of an agreed number of portaloos during peak seasons;
3. Maintenance and upgrade of existing toilets to meet public health standards and community expectations including hand washing facilities; and
4. Urgent assessment of high use sites followed by prompt investment from grants and/or council rates income for instalment of permanent toilets.

Councillor Brown also used her contacts to put the matter on the front page of The Blue Mountains Gazette (right) on 26 May giving the matter much-needed publicity. Ironically, on the day the photograph was taken, the Silva Plana toilets were closed due to there being no available water.



Council did provide extra cleaning services for the last weekends of May but autumn is behind us now and the village is quiet again. MWPA will however do its best to ensure that the Council maintains its current momentum and honours its commitments.

We will update the community as and when any developments occur.

James Douglas, Mt Wilson Progress Association

BETH RAINES RECEIVES AWARD

In March, Beth Raines received a Blue Mountains Local Woman of the Year Award in recognition of her hard work for the region especially in her role as Captain of the Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade.

On the right, Beth receives her award from Trish Doyle MP, MP for Blue Mountains and NSW Shadow Minister for Women. Photo Blue Mountains Gazette.



MARCH RAINS

The March rains turned Silva Plana into a lake, made the waterfall gush and caused flooding across the region.



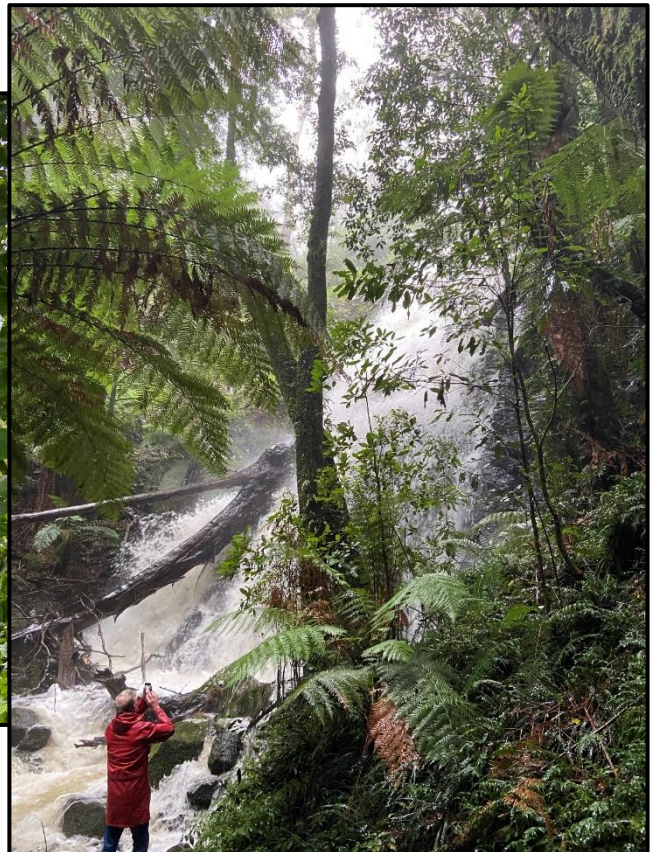
Flood water rush through Culverden on 21 March, Sarah Howell



'Lake' Silva Plana, Elizabeth Montano



'Lake' Silva Plana on 21 March, Sarah Howell



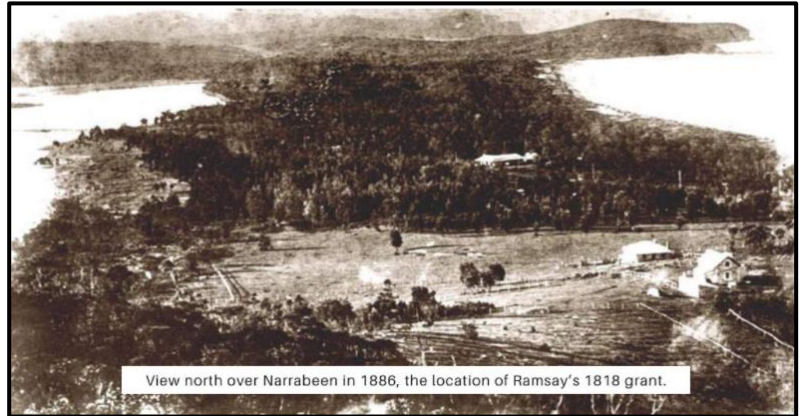
The waterfall gushing on 21 March, Sarah Howell

GROUP CROSSED BOWEN'S CREEK IN 1795

Ramsay Street is a short street running off Pittwater Road between Collaroy and Narrabeen. While some residents may be aware of the source of its name that certainly would not be the case for the general population. It could so easily have been different.

The street is named after John Ramsay a very early local farmer. In 1818 he was granted 410 acres, the land running along the coast from today's Collaroy to the mouth of Narrabeen Lagoon.

Prior to moving to Narrabeen, Ramsay had successfully farmed a smaller 50 acre plot at The Ponds, near today's Rydalmere. He had been granted it in 1791 and his neighbours included Matthew Everingham and William Reid. Ramsay and Everingham were ex-convicts who had been transported on the *Scarborough* in the first fleet so they conceivably met on the voyage. Reid had also come out with the first fleet, as a seaman on the *Sirius*.



In 1795 – 18 years prior to Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth – Everingham suggested to his two neighbours that they attempt to find a route over the Blue Mountains.

The small party set out from Parramatta on 30 October 1795, heading up the Grose River. Although ridiculously under-equipped they made amazing progress. Their exact route is uncertain but it appears that they crossed Bowen's Creek, managed to ascend Mt Irvine and then proceeded westward on the ridges, reaching Mt Wilson. They had come very close achieving the crossing. The worst was behind them and they could see clearer land to the west. However, they had run out of food and made it back to the Hawkesbury with great difficulty.

If the party had been just a little better prepared, John Ramsay would be known to every primary school child in NSW and he may have had a Blue Mountain's town named after him rather than a small street in Collaroy.

Richard Mitchell

MT WILSON PROGRESS ASSOCIATION (MWPA) PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It's a cold start to the winter but there are some lovely photos on Instagram of the gardens covered in snow! And the colours this past autumn were indeed glorious.

The MWPA has had a busy time working with BMCC, National Parks and the various other government bodies on a range of projects ranging from improvements to toilet facilities to tracking and monitoring wild animals on the Mounts.

As many are aware we have been successful in a number of grant applications and will soon be announcing the dates of our Stonewall Building Workshop and our Concert series. All will be free to residents of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine.

We have also been working to replace the signs which were vandalised on Mt Wilson Road and are receiving a new visitor information sign which will be erected near the fire shed. The input we have provided on the condition of the roads will hopefully expedite some of the repairs which have begun.

We held a MWPA General Meeting back in April which was well attended. I think we were all eager to see some friendly faces and enjoy a glass of wine together. Welcome to the new owners who attended and for those that have just arrived – please save the date for the MWPA AGM which will be on 11 September 2021.

The Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine telephone book is being reprinted shortly so please check your details on the website or email Sue Woolfenden, our secretary, at secretaryMWPA@gmail.com.

Stay warm and feel free to contact any of the members of the MWPA (on the website) if we can be of assistance.

Nancy Fox

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## FEEDBACK AND SPRING EDITION

Your feedback and comments are always welcome, please send to [themounts2786@gmail.com](mailto:themounts2786@gmail.com).

The closing date for the Spring edition of The Mounts is **Friday 13 August 2021**. Please send submissions in Word format to [themounts2786@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:themounts2786@gmail.com).