

The Mounts Winter 2022

Community Newsletter of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine



Snow on a gate in winter 2015

EDITORIAL

Autumn has slipped by with more rain than any of us wished for or needed. However, the last days of May have seen some bright colour and perfect days of brilliant sky and cool temperatures. Gardens have gone a little haywire with roses pretending it is spring, grass growing like a summer lucerne crop and large patches of swamp land. Nevertheless, winter will embrace us with its cold breath and dark days and may all of you enjoy sitting by a fire and reading a good book, preferably with a glass of wine.

We have survived the visitor invasion and most people have been enjoying the colour and not dumping too much rubbish. The campground has been full to bursting but the noise is usually switched off by 9pm. The BMCC really does need to rationalise its camping policy. Apparently after the tragic deaths from the landslip our camping ground was not only free, as always, but the only one across the mountains that was open.

I am sure the whole community sends their thoughts and sympathy to Nancy Fox on the death of both her parents.

BUSHCARE NEWS

The Mt Wilson Bushcare Group spend a few hours together each month helping to reverse the damage done to the environment by invasive weeds in bushland in Mt Wilson. During this time, we carefully remove weeds and encourage native plants to grow, using the principles of bush regeneration to guide our work.

Volunteers will be briefed on following COVID safety protocols. BMCC provides all equipment, including gloves, secateurs, spade, herbicide, kneeling pads etc. Please bring your own morning tea. Those interested should check the calendar on the Mt Wilson Mt Irvine community website to determine the location each month.

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 native flora including beautiful rainforest trees, shrubs and flowers.

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 02 4756 2046.

Everyone is welcome, hope you can join us!

Enquiries:

Mt Wilson contact: Alice Simpson (0414 425 511 or 02 4756 2110)

Council contact: Tracy Abbas (0428 777 141)

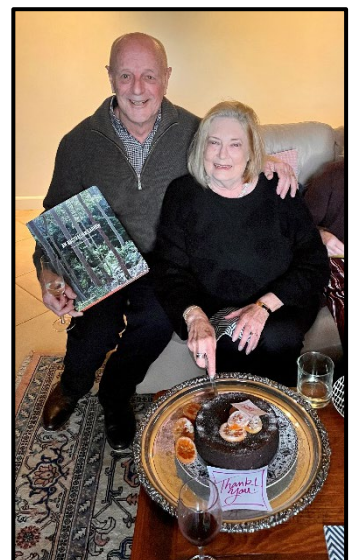
Alice Simpson

THE OLD SCHOOL FAREWELLS THE DEANS

The Old School Committee has farewelled two of its longest serving members.

Stephen and Margaret Dean (right) have been instrumental to the running of The Old School, and its predecessor The Mount Wilson Study Centre, for some 14 years. The Committee is very grateful for their dedication to the preservation of The Old School buildings and their contribution to the administration of both The Study Centre and The Old School.

An informal function was recently hosted by Anne de Salis and Martin Barge to mark the occasion and to allow the members to thank them for everything they have done (picture below). At the same time, Robert Green was welcomed as a new member of the Committee.



We have commenced the process of selecting the next group of participants in our Artist in Residence programme. We will provide more information about that as it becomes available in coming months.

Joe Montano, Chair, The Old School Mt Wilson

REQUEST FOR IMAGES - PIANUI

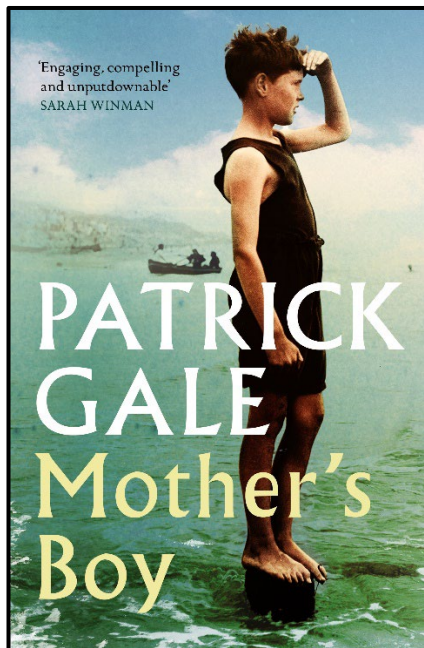
Robyn and Michael are the new owners of 281 Mt Irvine Rd and are hoping to preserve/restore the Painui homestead if we can. They are requesting anyone with images or floorplans of it in earlier incarnations to contact us – robyn.gordon@kobras.com.au or phone 0412 515 179.

SMOKING CEREMONY

On 25 March a smoking ceremony was held a Wynnes Rocks. Future ceremonies are planned, keep an eye on your email for details. Thanks to James Douglas (left) and Rosie Walsh (right) for the photos.



BOOK REVIEW – MOTHER’S BOY



Patrick Gale’s new novel is *Mother’s Boy*. The title may seem a bit bland but it is true to the underlying story of Laura and her only child Charles. Their relationship is loving, reticent and mutually protective. The novel explores the details of lives of poverty and stoic acceptance, and the impact of both world wars on the people of Cornwall.

The book opens with a vivid scene on a ship being attacked during WWII, it then takes the reader back to the early life of Laura. She is in service in a big house when she falls in love with the handsome Charlie. They marry and then WWI intervenes. Charlie returns a broken man and Laura has to find the strength to support her family as a washerwoman.

Her son Charles is clever and learns how to defend himself against bullies at school and his growing knowledge of who he is and what he wants from his life.

Charles trains as a coder, enlists in the navy and begins to write poetry. The book is based on the facts of the life of Charles Causley and Gale fills in the gaps and secrets in Causley’s life with sympathy and lovely descriptions of landscape, ambiguous friendships, and the pain of being a reclusive and talented young man.

This story is a delicate merging of fact and fiction and it is a great companion to the poetry of Charles Causley.

ELEANOR DARK AND DR DARK’S CAVE

The other day I mentioned Dr. Dark’s cave and the author Eleanor Dark (right in about 1945, photo by Max Dupain) to a friend. She replied that she had never heard of her, and that made me think that the writer needed more recognition today

Eleanor Dark is best known for her work *The Timeless Land*, a novel about the hardships of that first settlement of Sydney, and the conflict between whites and Indigenous Australians. Her other works include *Storm of Time*, *Lantana Lane* and *The Little Company* as well as stories, essays and poetry.

She was born in Sydney in 1901 and married doctor Eric Dark, a general practitioner, in 1922. They lived at Varuna in Katoomba for most of her life, except for moving to Queensland for a short period in the 1940s. Questions were being asked about them in parliament. Dr. Dark was a socialist and in Menzies time there were scares about Russia and



communism. The Darks were watched by ASIO and during one period they went to Monville in Queensland to escape attention. There were lots of false rumours about Dr. Dark sending messages to the Japanese and the Russians.

In 1940 they followed the expedition Governor Phillip sent in 1789, led by William Dawes, to find a route from the Nepean through the Blue Mountains. They succeeded where the Dawes expedition had failed.

In the forties, during the war, people were fearful of the Japanese. The Darks dug an air raid trench in the garden at Veruna. They loved bush walking and used to spend time at what came to be known as Dr Dark's cave, off the Mt Hay road. They hauled furniture and mattresses down the cliffs of the canyon, and here they had a summer and a winter cave. They dammed the creek and made a swimming pool. They planted potatoes, pumpkins and boysenberries. When they could not remove a big boulder a friend brought some gelignite and blew it up! The locals thought they were very eccentric!

The cave was their peaceful escape from all the rumours and they called it Jerrekellimi after the family: John, Eleanor, Eric and Mike. The gorge they named Werringerong.

Here is a poem by Eleanor that I found in a biscuit tin in the cave.

Ann Pigott

If you should in passing by
Come on Jerrekellimi
Very welcome you would be
Boil your billy, make your tea
By the fireplace drink and rest
Dry your shoes and warm your feet.

But Oh gentle stranger pray
The polite requests obey.
Break no bottles, chop no trees
Tins in the fireplace please
If you these requests fulfil
May good luck attend you still

May you hear the lyrebird's song
Echo from Werringerong.

But if not may all your packs
Make all blue bruises on your backs
May you for all your many sins
Bang your heads and bark your shins.
And at last in sorry plight
Be chased by bunyips through the night.

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE – JENNIFER KEELER-MILNE

The Mounts have been very fortunate to have the artist Jennifer Keeler-Milne as the artist in residence in the Old School House during May. Jennifer is well known for her work in charcoal, her drawing skills and her evocative oil painting. All her work reflects a deep interest in the natural world, and she has relished her time at Mt Wilson. She also runs a drawing school, Dare to Draw, where she imparts the knowledge that she has gained over many years of thinking about and making her own art.



On Sunday 15 May she held a community workshop where we all made a concertina (or accordion) sketch book. Jennifer very generously not only guided our sometimes clumsy efforts, but she also brought along a selection of her own concertina books, from tiny ones reflecting a world of leaves or fungi to larger ones with a variety of subjects: traditional Japanese women or bonsai plants. She encouraged us to consider the subjects which we might like to put in our own books.





She has loved her time here and has greatly enjoyed meeting locals and being part of the community.

THE JOLLY WOMBAT

We have finally launched our coffee van and would love it if you could let the community know we are open weekends and public holidays offering fresh ground coffee, home baked treats, toasted sandwiches, cold drinks and homemade soup. Gluten free and vegan options.

We have EFTPOS for those without cash.

Located along The Avenue next to the Village Hall. Looking forward to meeting more of the community! Joanne & Lauren Keep



MORE MUSIC TO SOOTHE THE SOUL

Following the success of the first concert in the Music to Soothe the Soul series featuring Sydney Philharmonia's Chamber Singers and VOX, the next concert is scheduled to take place in St George's Church on **Saturday 25 June at 3pm**.

Notturmo is a trio comprising Simon Martyn-Ellis (guitar), Melissa Farrow (flute), and Karina Schmitz (viola). All are luminaries of the Early Music scene, regularly appearing with ensembles such as Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, Orchestra of the Antipodes, and the Australian Haydn Ensemble.

The program features French and Italian music from the late 18th and early 19th centuries drawing its inspiration from the salon concerts, or soirees of that period featuring small ensembles such as Notturmo.

An initiative of the Mt Wilson Progress Association, the Music to Soothe the Soul series of concerts is funded by the Bushfire Recovery and Resilience Fund for communities affected by the Black Summer bushfires of 2019-20. Performances are free and available only to residents of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine and their immediate families.

Mark your calendars now. You will receive an email requesting your RSVP nearer to the concert date.

Future concerts include The Muffat Collective on 20 August, Castalia Vocal Consort on 29 October, and Emily Granger and Tristan Coelho on 4 March 2023. All will take place in St George's Church, Mt Wilson.

Sarah Howell

UPDATE FROM YOUR RURAL FIRE BRIGADE

Even when we've had relatively few callouts, there's never a quiet time for our Brigade.

Ten members successfully gained their Bush Firefighter (BF) qualification on 2nd April. They are: Alexander Moffatt, Mike Farmer, Sonia Walker, Jessie Bancroft, Mits Delisle, Brett Ainsworth, Benjamin Shepherd, Andrew Cameron, Finn Cameron and Oli Watts. Congratulations to all and thanks to all Brigade members who assisted with their training and assessment days.



We have some more potential BF candidates who couldn't attend this recent course. We're hoping to run another one in the 3rd quarter of this year, with dates still to be finalised. So, anyone who's thinking about coming on board as a BF, let us know.

If being an operational fire fighter isn't your bag, then, as we've said before, there's a wide range of jobs to be had in YOUR Brigade. We're very happy to talk to people about how they can participate and what might interest them.

On the Mt Wilson Station extension, despite rain delays, work is well and truly underway. Check it out next time you're at the Station or stop on by and have a look. It's very exciting to see it finally all happening. And, importantly, we have many Brigade members involved in the project. As the extension is being undertaken by our Brigade (not the Council/RFS as is usually the case), the Project Manager, Architect, oversight groups (monitoring the build and the spending of grant and Brigade funds), the Brigade Executive, IT working group, hose pole winch designer (!) and interior designer are all Brigade members. Truly a team effort.



Work is still ongoing on preparations for the new Mt Irvine Station, which the RFS will undertake.

Maintenance nights (every second Friday starting at 4.00 pm with some Covid sensitive mingling from about 6.00 pm) have continued with a wide range of jobs being done, mainly at the Mt Wilson station – recently, we've checked portable pumps, we've repainted equipment from the trucks to identify them as ours (we use green and red stripes on our rake hoes, rakes,

brooms and other useful gear – everyone wants to do painting!) and done more truck maintenance checks as well as kept the station tidy.

Our monthly training continues (held first Sunday of each month- 9.00 am to noon) with a range of activities including some navigation/ map reading exercises recently. We had a West Sector training day at our last training session held on 1st May. We train with other brigades from West Sector, including Mt Tomah and Bell Brigades, every three months or so. This time, we went to Mt Tomah Botanic Gardens to do a familiarisation visit to see where hydrants are and generally get the lay of the land in case we are called to help them. That was followed by some exercises practising on site. While all our training sessions are useful and interesting- getting to train with other brigades is particularly rewarding.

Brigade members would have seen more WHS material coming around, such as information sheets on common causes of accidents around stations. Please take a few minutes to look through these. Apparently (according to our RFS WHS experts), while members are very used to considering safety matters when out on trucks doing jobs, that isn't always the case when at the station.

And just a reminder, with the cooler months upon us, pile burns are allowed subject to notifying Fire Control and neighbours – it's easy to notify Fire Control on-line.

Our Brigade Annual General meeting is to be held on 4 June with Notice of meeting and supporting papers coming out very soon (as at time of writing). We hope as many members as possible can attend.

Well, that's another general round-up for this edition of The Mounts. See you around.

Elizabeth Montano, Member of the Executive, WHS Officer

MYSTIC DANCES AT THE OLD SCHOOL

Emily Granger, a former Mt Wilson Artist in Residence, and other members of her trio joined with prominent Australian composer Ross Edwards to workshop his new composition to a very appreciative audience at the Old School.

Composer Ross Edwards discusses his new work with Jonathan Henderson (flute)



Ross was commissioned to write *Three Mystic Dances* especially for the trio - Emily (harp), Jonathan Henderson (flute) and James Wannan (viola) - supported by donors from the community. Inspired by the music of Erik Satie, Edwards' pieces are slow, quiet and repetitive – designed as musical objects of contemplation for our uncertain times. The trio departed Mt Wilson immediately for Melbourne where the work was premiered at the Melbourne Recital Centre and received a glowing 4 ½ star review:

Overall, their performances were almost impeccable, engaging and even quite stylish. Limelight 27 April 2022



Emily Granger (harp), Jonathan Henderson (flute), and James Wannan (viola) workshop *Three Mystic Dances* in the Schoolhouse in the presence of the composer, Ross Edwards.

FEEDBACK AND SPRING EDITION

The Mounts is edited and compiled by Alison Halliday and Matilda Halliday. Your feedback and comments are always welcome, please send to themounts2786@gmail.com.

The closing date for the Spring edition of The Mounts is **Friday 12 August 2022**. 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.