

# **MT WILSON & MT IRVINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.**

Minutes of the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting  
held at the Mt Wilson Village Hall, on  
14th November 2009 commencing at 11.00am

## **Welcome**

Des Barrett, the Society's President and Chairperson, welcomed all members and friends, with a special welcome to John Leary, President of BMACHO and Dr Peter Rickwood, today's Guest Speaker: Professor Ian Jack, President of the Royal Australian Historical Society and Mrs. Jan Jack. Forty one people were in attendance, and a record of the names is kept on file.

## **Apologies**

Suzanne Bassett, Loretta Beatty, Jenny Benjamin, Robert Chesney, Suzanne and Ricananda Daly, Nancy Fox, Moira & Ron Green, Deborah Griffin, Mary & John Holt, Susie Hope, Anne & Jim Hughan, Phil Koperberg, Anne Mayall, Helen Naylor, Malcolm Reynolds, Libby Raines, Maureen & Bill Ryan, Ruth Scrivener, Wendy Smart, John Teulon, Elaine Turnidge, Suzanne Vidler, Louise & Paul Weingott.

## **Minutes**

It was moved by Mary Reynolds and seconded by Bill Scrivener that the Minutes of the 12th Annual General Meeting held on 25th October 2008 and Mid Year Meeting held 27th June 2009 be accepted as previously circulated. Carried unanimously.

## **Chairperson's Remarks**

The Chairman Des Barrett gave a summary of the Society's activities over the last six months:

The Blue Mountains City Council is promising to review and update their database of heritage listed sites for inclusion in the new LEP due in 2011. This Society has maintained a local record to changes of heritage listed sites which will be useful when the next major review is undertaken. We were previously advised that Council would provide local Societies with computers which would have the database loaded and ready to use but nothing further has been heard on this matter. The Management Commitment will keep members informed as more information and progress comes to our attention.

The Blue Mountains Association for Cultural Heritage Organisations (BMACHO) will develop a journal of referenced articles relating to the cultural heritage of the Greater Blue Mountains and neighbouring areas. It is intended that the refereed journal will be published electronically (with a limited number of hard copies to be deposited in the State Library of New South Wales, National Library of Australia, and local libraries) to a

dedicated website, published annually and be free of charge, with the first volume appearing early 2010. There will be an editorial committee comprising among others, Associate Professor Ian Jack and Professor Barrie Reynolds, who are known to many members of our Society, as well as Dr Peter Rickwood (the journal's inaugural editor), who is our guest speaker today.

**The Scrivener exhibition:** The Society has for several months been in negotiation with a number of organisations for the sale of the Charles Scrivener exhibition panels. The Chairman announced that the Senior's Group of the New South Wales Division of the Institution of Surveyors purchased the material for the agreed sum of \$5,000. The Senior's Group travelled to Mt Wilson on Sunday the 6<sup>th</sup> of September 2009 to collect the material (and to present the Society with a cheque), which was packed and labelled ready to go. Des indicated that the material was to be taken to Surry Hills in the city, to the headquarters of the New South Wales Division of the Institution to be set up at that location. It may also travel to other suitable venues around the State. The Society has retained ownership of all the three dimensional artefacts (surveyor's calculator, and various publications) that were originally included in the exhibition. This material remains in storage in the Society's archives at the Study Centre. Should the Society ever feel the need to display the Scrivener material again, then the option to obtain the material on loan will then be negotiated with the Institution of Surveyors.

**Turkish Bath Museum (Roof Sheeting):** As previously stated the Society was successful in obtaining a grant (about \$16,000) for half the cost of replacing the corrugated roof, which has now reached a state of disrepair. Work is due to start in the middle of 2010. In July this year, Christo Aitken, the Blue Mountains City Council's Heritage Advisor, wrote to Design 5 (the Society's Heritage Consultants) to recommend that the roof sheeting should have the deeper (19mm) profile and be of a similar length to those sheets already on the roof. This profile would be more in keeping with the heritage/ aesthetic values of the building. Design 5 advised the Management Committee and recommended that we go ahead with this new material, at an additional cost of \$2,450 (including GST). The Management Committee at its September meeting agreed to the proposal at the stated additional price. The additional expense can, and will be met comfortably, from the Society's bank account. The special corrugated iron profile press for this work is located at Fielders Australia, a firm based in Adelaide.

**A website for the Society:** At a meeting of the Management Committee in September, a proposal to have a website for the Society was received and discussed and it was agreed that we should proceed with this project. The Mt Wilson website is being rejuvenated and the Society has been invited to make use of it. Further work will need to be done in terms of the information that will appear on the site, but as a general guide, topics such as the history of the Society, its aims and objectives, current projects, and an on-line membership application form have all been flagged and supported by the Management Committee. The Chairman stated that suggestions for items to be included on the website would be welcome.

**Digitising the photographs in the archives:** The Society's archives holds over two thousand photographs. The Management Committee believe that they should eventually be digitised and stored electronically, so that they can be accessed more readily by researchers and members of the Society. The Management Commitment has agreed to approach the Powerhouse Museum with a view to getting practical, hands-on assistance for the skills and use of the equipment required to undertake this task. As well as the practical assistance, there will be matters of copyright, issues that might be associated with accessing on-line photographs and fees that the Society could charge for the use of the image collection, to be considered. The Management Committee has requested that the Powerhouse Museum send an expert in these matters to Mt Wilson so that a day can be spent demonstrating and addressing all of these and other matters. As you would appreciate, with so many images in our collection, this will be a very long-term project, but hopefully, the Society might soon secure a grant to purchase expertise in transferring our photographs to a digital format.

**Summary comments:**

Des Barrett reported that the Society has had another busy year. As Kathy Harrington shows in her Treasurer's Report, the Society is in good shape financially, and Mary Reynolds has, once again, attended to the many requests relating to our history and related matters. Florence Smart, our Secretary, has once again undertaken the Herculean task of receiving and addressing the many notices that come to the Society. Through its general membership, and hard-working and dedicated Management Committee the Society has had, I believe, a remarkable year, including a number of highlights: a grant for the replacement of the roof at the Turkish Bath Museum; the sale of the Scrivener exhibition panels; a successful April Market weekend; the publication of our *Newsletter*; the publication, launch, and midyear talk by Michael Pembroke about his book *Trees of History and Romance: Essays from a Mount Wilson Garden*, with a Foreword by Peter Valder and botanical illustrations by Libby Raines, two people known to just about everyone at this meeting today; the new displays at the Turkish Bath Museum, one section of which acknowledges this year as the International Year of Astronomy, and the role that Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine have played for astronomers to view the night sky; our visitors to the Museum; and our input to the many issues that arise for the community generally.

The Chairman thanked Dr John Reynolds for the loan of the astronomical telescope and other material for the International Year of Astronomy exhibition, Ray Harrington for the loan of his painting of Sydney Observatory for the exhibition, to Michael and Gillian Pembroke for hosting such a wonderful gathering at 'Hawthorn' for the launch of Michael's book, to all those members who gave their time to the Market weekend festival, to all those who have provided their time for Museum duty and to Robin and John Leonard for hosting a lunch at 'Sylvan Close' in August to show appreciation for our Museum volunteers. Des also expressed his appreciation for the work done throughout the year by Florence Smart, Mary Reynolds, Kathy Harrington, Helen Cardy, Darrel Conybeare, Arthur Delbridge, Anne Mayall, Bruce Wright and Kathleen Oakes who served this year on the Management Committee.

## Treasurer's Report

Annual financial statements for the year ending 30/06/2009 including the Auditor's statement had been circulated with the business papers prior to the meeting. At year end the Society had a credit balance of \$46,730.87. Kathy Harrington presented summaries of income and expenses to the meeting and asked for questions.

**The Fundraising Subcommittee** maintains a separate bank account and the income for the year ending 30/06/2009 was reported as \$5,741.00. A donation to the Society of \$3,700 was reported leaving a balance at yearend of \$1,784.49.

It was moved by Ellis Reynolds, seconded by Graham Tribe and carried that the financial reports be accepted as circulated.

## Research Officer's Report

Mary Reynolds presented an illustrated report to the meeting, and copies of the full report are available to members on request. Following are a few highlights from Mary's interesting and informative presentation:

**Archival material and Cataloguing:** The minutes, documents and other items belonging to the Mt Wilson Group Sights Reserves of the Blue Mountains and fascinating old books and other items from the Knight Brown collection have all been accessioned and catalogued due by Kathleen Oakes and John Cardy. Alison Halliday borrowed the first Minute Book of the Sights Reserves dating back to 1930 and was so delighted with it that she has promised an article for a future newsletter. Documents collected in 2008 are being accessioned to a computerised database by Kathleen Oakes

**Images:** Accessioning photos is a slower undertaking as it has to be done by hand. Photos taken or given to us in 2008 are still being accessioned. The Society has applied to the Power House Museum for some assistance in this area and we are hopeful that it will be provided in a suitable form that will be more efficient.

**Acquisitions:** The Society has received from the estate of Wilga Smart some very valuable articles written by MacLeod Morgan in the journals of the Royal Australian Historical Society and the Australian Society of Genealogists.

**Library:** The Society's Library has been fortunate in receiving a copy of the fascinating book by Michael Pembroke, '*Trees of History & Romance*' with the charming illustrations by Libby Raines, generously donated by Michael and Gillian. The Society purchased a copy of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Volume pre-1930 of the Blue Mountains Pioneer Register published by the Blue Mountains Family History Society for \$30.00. In this volume are descendants of the Sloan Family who owned Bebeah for so many years as well as further details of the Wynne family.

As there were 2 copies of the following documents in the archives so one copy of each is being placed in the Library: The Notebook of Eccleston Du Faur plus news cuttings related to Art and the Blue Mountains from the Mitchell Library donated by Irene Wynne.

An Australian Genealogy covering 6 generations in the female line of descent by Carol Liston now Assoc. Professor of History at the University of Western Sydney. This document gives considerable detail of the Kirk ancestry. Another document now in the library is '*Mount Wilson: The Significance of its Present Cultural Landscape*' by Helen L. Wood. 1988 donated by Des Barrett.

**Research:** Alison Halliday has taken over from Arthur Delbridge presenting the talks on Remembrance Day. We are deeply indebted to Arthur for the five he has carried out this task so professionally and with such a depth of knowledge and understanding. Alison sought some assistance from me and our archives for the two people she selected to speak about; John Busby and Sydney William George Kirk.

Mary commented on the passing of Noellie Mclean in late September 2009, saying that Mt Wilson has lost much of its close connections with its past and its history. A full tribute to Noellie will in the next newsletter.

The Turkish Bath visitor numbers were down a little this Spring due to poor weather but we received 27 the day the National Trust visited Mt Wilson recently. Special thank you to Robin and John Leonard for that luncheon in August and to our roster volunteers and Julia Reynolds for her coordination of the Roster.

Finally Mary expressed her appreciation to the Management Committee for all its good work.

### **Fundraising Subcommittee Report**

Florence Smart, convenor of fundraising, reported on the success of the second annual market weekend held in April, the Society's major fundraising effort. Additional tables were hired out to a variety of vendors and it is anticipated that this aspect will expand further in future years.

The sale of food for the hundreds of visitors who come for the market and for the Autumn colour in the village is an important part of the weekend event, and much appreciated by visitors. This basic food service does not take business away from Chimney Cottage Heritage Cafe which also recorded its busiest weekend. The food service accounts for around half of the total income from the weekend. Florence expressed thanks to Helen and John Cardy and their team of helpers for their great effort.

The subcommittee was pleased to donate \$3,700 to the Society's account. Plans for a similar event next year are under way.

### **BMACHO**

John Leary OAM, President of the Blue Mountains Cultural Heritage Organisation gave a short address to the meeting bringing congratulations to the Society for its more than a decade of worthwhile initiatives. A copy of John's full report is held on file; following are a few highlights:

The Royal Australian Historical Society is taking a major role in coordinating activities planned for 2013 to commemorate the 1813 crossing of the Blue Mountains. BMCC is setting a planning committee chaired by the Mayor.

BMACHO is still pressing Council to establish a Heritage Advisory Committee. The delay is frustrating.

A series of community meetings has been organised to bring the Liberal, Labour and Greens spokespersons on Heritage to the region in the coming months. All local Societies will be invited to participate.

### **Confirmation of Management Committee 2009 - 2010 and thanks to retiring members**

As 7 nominations had been received for 9 positions, the management committee for 2009 - 2010 was confirmed as: Des Barrett, Helen Cardy, Anne Mayall, Kathleen Oakes and Florence Smart. Mary Reynolds is also continuing ex-officio as Research and Public Officer. Des thanked retiring members Arthur Delbridge and Bruce Wright for their many years of service and their outstanding contributions to the Society's development and success. A copy of the full presentation is held in the Society's files.

As is usual practice the Committee will appoint members to executive positions at the first committee meeting.

### **Guest Speaker Dr Peter Rickwood**

Florence Smart introduced Dr Peter Rickwood, Senior Research Fellow at the University of NSW. Peter Rickwood has been bringing groups of senior students to this area since 1980, to study the volcanic geology of the region. The meeting was treated to a fascinating illustrated account drawn from more than 20 years of research on the terrain and geological formations in the area. There were also samples of rocks and zircons available for viewing. The presentation sparked lively discussion and a full transcript of Dr Rickwood's talk is available on request.

Des Barrett proposed the vote of thanks. The meeting then closed and a light lunch was served.

Florence Smart  
Secretary