

MT WILSON & MT IRVINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

Minutes of the 15th Annual General Meeting
held at the Mt Wilson Village Hall, on
5th November 2011 commencing at 11.00am

Welcome

The Society's President and Chairperson Des Barrett welcomed all members and friends, with a special welcome to guests Roza Sage, State MP for Blue Mountains, Lynn Collins, Museums Advisor for the Blue Mountains and Lithgow Councils, attending with his family, and guest speaker Alan Croker and his family. Thirty two people attended the meeting; a record of the names is kept on file.

Apologies

Helen & John Cardy, Carol & Brian Carrigan, Fiona Carruthers, Pam Cave, Robert Chesney, Darrel Conybeare, Arthur Delbridge, Deborah & Edward Griffin, Alison & Alex Halliday, Kathy & Ray Harrington, Mary Holt, Susie Hope, Tom & Carole Hughes, Jan Koperberg, Pauline Michel, Ellis Reynolds, Peter Rickwood, Helen Robbins, Judy & John Teulon, Jim Tzannes & Annie Catling, Louise & Paul Weingott, Irene & Mike Wynne.

Minutes

It was moved by Tim Gow and seconded by John Leonard that the Minutes of the 14th Annual General Meeting held on 20th November 2010 be accepted as previously circulated. Carried unanimously.

Chairperson's Report

The Chairman Des Barrett gave a report summarising the Society's activities wide-ranging activities for the last year, including matters at the Turkish Bath Museum, Mt. Wilson Village tours, acquisitions, exhibition planning, the Society's component of the Mt. Wilson website, finances, research, correspondence and merchandising.

Mary Reynolds, the Society's Research and Public Officer, was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia on 26 January 2011, for "service to the community through a range of historical, environmental and charitable organisations". Des reiterated that all members of the Society joined him in congratulating Mary on her award.

Des commented that several tour groups have enjoyed the 'historical walk' along the Avenue and a visit to the Turkish Bath Museum and lunch in the Village Hall. These booked tours, while an excellent source of revenue for the Society, require much planning, co-ordination, and fine-tuning of the activities on the day to ensure that the events are enjoyed by all concerned. Des thanked those members who committed their time and knowledge to these worthy tours.

Several members of the Management Committee have met to begin the task of entering into the computer information and images held in various archive folders. This project, when complete, will enable quick and efficient access to the huge volume of information stored in our archives. This work is ongoing.

The Society's activities were featured throughout the year in a number of publications: *The Mounts: The Community Newsletter of Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine*; *Heritage: Newsletter of the Blue Mountains Association of Cultural Heritage Organisations*; and the Society's newsletter, *Mt. Wilson and Mt Irvine Historical Society* (with issues published in February and August). The Society also contributed financially towards the publication of Wendy Holland's book on the work of Fred Mann, who established Cherry Cottage Pottery.

Des invited members to view three significant items recently donated to the Society's archive, and displayed at the meeting:

(1) a large timber picture frame containing woven silk postcards from France sent by Sydney G.W. Kirk, Herbert Charles Kirk and Vivian Clarence Kirk to their mother, Mary Constance Kirk (née Marceau), during the years 1916-1918.

(2) a carved timber frame, of approximately the same size as the previous item, holding a large photograph of Athelia Louisa Kirk (1892-1917) and Richard Manning at their wedding held 14th June 1916. Her burial was the first in the cemetery of St George's Church, Mt. Wilson.

(3) a carved timber frame containing a photograph of Mary Constance Kirk and Albert Kendall. Mary was the first daughter and second eldest child of Sydney and Mary C. Kirk. Albert Kendall worked at 'Dennarque' before moving to Camden.

In addition the 1968 book, *Mount Wilson New South Wales: Its Location, Settlement and Development*, by Charles Herbert Currey (1890-1970), legal historian and local resident, was donated by Ailsa Stacey, a niece of the author.

Des gave details of a recent project undertaken on the Society's behalf. Some years ago, the Society received from former Mt. Wilson resident and artist Meg Fromel, the full set of her original linocuts from the 1960s. These linocut images capture scenes of the village and a number of homes and cottages of the time. Society member Nancy Fox has used Meg's familiar images in a new merchandising project for the Society. The linocuts have been reproduced by graphic artist Roselyn Kean as post and note cards. These beautiful prints can be purchased (\$3 each or 6 for \$15) at the Turkish Bath Museum or on-line through the Society's webpage. Original prints are available through Nancy Fox. The prints will be exhibited in the Turkish Bath from November 2011.

In addition to the exhibition of the Meg Fromel prints, two new exhibitions at the Turkish Bath Museum are planned for the future. One is 'A Tale of Two Villages', by Zaharah Braybrooke our Museum curator, on a variety of stories about Mt. Wilson and Mt. Irvine. The other is 'Patrick White at Mt. Wilson', a display exploring a number of themes during his time here with his family in the early 1920s and 1930s. The Patrick White exhibition is

scheduled to open in May 2012. This exhibition will be one of many events being held around Australia commemorating the centenary of the author's birth in 1912. A small, planning team is preparing a number of themes for the exhibition.

The chairman commented on the ongoing development of the Society's website, which is stored within the larger community website of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine. This facility is an outstanding tool for the Society, and over time will developed to house more publications, exhibitions, and to support the purchase our merchandise, on-line.

Des reminded the members that the mid-year meeting had been cancelled due to the destructive winds that hit the Mounts on the 5th and 6th July. He ended by expressing his thanks for the support and dedication of Society members. He thanked the Management Committee: Florence Smart, Mary Reynolds, Tim Gow, Darrel Conybeare, Alice Simpson, John and Zaharah Braybrooke, Helen Cardy, Kathleen Oakes, and Fiona Carruthers, for all their help with the various projects, enquiries, and all the Society's ongoing activities. A special vote of thanks was recorded for Helen Cardy, retiring from the Management Committee. Helen and her husband John will be continuing their valued support for a variety of Society activities.

Treasurer's Report

Annual financial statements for the year ending 30/06/2011 including the Auditor's statement had been circulated with the business papers prior to the meeting.

Treasurer Tim Gow reported that the Historical Society finished the 2010 -2011 financial year in a very sound position with an accumulated surplus of almost \$44,000. The major expense for the year was for the essential roof repairs for the Turkish Bath. Despite very generous funding of some \$15,000 from NSW Department of Planning, the shortfall of an additional \$12,000 was met fully by the Society.

Tim went on to note other key points for the year including:

- The substantial decline in donations from \$3500 to \$1600, however donations for the first three months of this financial year are already \$3000.
- Tour income to the Turkish Bath increased significantly from \$1600 to \$4000
- \$1700 for the joint creation and development of the Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine Community Website. There is strong evidence that this website is attracting increased number of visitors to, and interest in, the villages. The reality is that it is virtually mandatory for any group with a public profile to have a presence on the Web. Income received from the Mt Wilson Progress Association from local commercial activities that benefit from the website will be distributed to the three community major groups that underwrote this development and will enable the Society to maintain a presence on the Web for close to zero cost on an ongoing basis.
- \$500 donation to St Georges Church at Mt Wilson. The committee confirmed this will be an ongoing annual contribution in recognition of the church as a significant historical landmark and a resource that the Society regularly utilises in our fund raising activities.

Tim noted further that additional minor expenditure is planned in the coming year and beyond for ongoing maintenance and improvement of the Turkish Bath and its surrounds. This remarkable building is firmly at the centre of the Historical Society and warrants care and attention that befits its place in our community and beyond. The Committee is looking forward to working with Mr Lynn Collins, Museum Advisor to the Blue Mountains City Council, on ways to improve presentations at the Turkish Bath.

Four future projects mentioned elsewhere will have an impact on the Society's finances in the short to medium term: the Meg Fromel linocut prints, Fred Mann Pottery book, the exhibition celebrating the centenary of Patrick White's birth and Mary Reynolds' book on the history of Mt Wilson. Tim noted that projects such as these can be difficult to manage: underestimation of costs, overestimation of revenues, and difficulty in meeting timelines, containing scope or allocating resources. The Society's approach to these challenges is to select projects that are important to the Society's aims and objectives whilst having a good chance of being cost neutral, and a better than good chance of being cash positive, under very conservative financial, time and resource assumptions. Adverse financial risk to the Society is managed by formulating a business case based on high quality products at reasonable prices that can support correspondingly high sales margins.

The initial success of the Meg Fromel linocuts, having already recovered the setup and printing costs of the initial print run, has reinforced some important lessons for the Society and places us well to be in a position to receive a positive income stream from all four projects for many years

These projects, or indeed most of the day to day activities, would not be possible without the very generous support – financial or otherwise - from the Society's membership or from interested community members, both past and present.

Members' ongoing interest and contributions are greatly appreciated and recognised.

It was moved by Tim Gow, seconded by Robin Leonard and carried that the financial reports be accepted as circulated.

Research and Archive activities.

Although Mary Reynolds expressed her regret that family issues had taken much of her time over the past year she still was able to report that work has continued on accessioning and cataloguing important materials from the Society's archive, and that new material and documents come to hand from time to time. The Society was successful in obtaining a grant of \$2200 from the NSW Government, through the Royal Australian Historical Society, enabling the Society to engage Elspeth Callender as editor to review and organise the extensive body of research which Mary has put together over the past 15 years. Elspeth and Mary are making good progress on this project and it is planned that by mid 2013 this material will be prepared for publication as a history of Mt Wilson.

Mary particularly thanked Kathleen Oakes for her ongoing support with accessioning and cataloguing.

State member Roza Sage was invited to address the meeting. Ms Sage spoke warmly of her interest in the heritage aspects of the region. She expressed her appreciation for the work of the local Society and offered support should it be needed.

Confirmation of Management Committee 2011 - 2012

Eight nominations had been received for the management committee for 2011- 2012, so the committee was confirmed as: Des Barrett, John Braybrooke, Zaharah Braybrooke, Fiona Carruthers, Darrel Conybeare, Kathleen Oakes, Alice Simpson and Florence Smart, with Mary Reynolds continuing ex-officio as Research and Public Officer.

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

Guest speaker Alan Croker

Florence Smart introduced invited speaker Alan Croker, founder and principal of Design 5 Architects, a Sydney firm specialising in conservation, adaptive re-use and related new work. Alan gave a most interesting and enjoyable illustrated presentation about restoration and conservation works at the Turkish Bath, *Wynstay* stables and the original 1875 cottage that have taken place over the last 5 years. He had graphic 'before' and 'after' photos illustrating how the buildings have been carefully restored, always with the guiding principles of doing as much as necessary but as little as possible. As supervising architect on these projects Alan worked closely with the team of builders at the Sydney Restoration Company, who share his passion for adhering to the Burra Charter and re-using materials wherever possible while ensuring that these buildings which date from 1875 - 1890 are good for another century. Alan also showed images and spoke about a recent conservation project where the homestead at *Exeter Farm*, at Glenwood in north western Sydney was brought back from ruin. This project resulted in Design 5 Architects winning the National Trust 2011 Heritage Award for Conservation of Built Heritage under \$1 million.

Following general discussion the Chairman Des Barrett proposed a vote of thanks to the speaker, and invited everyone present to share lunch and conversation to celebrate another successful year.

Florence Smart
Acting secretary