



Mt Wilson & Mt Irvine Historical Society

Newsletter N° 19

February 2009

Remembrance Day 11/11/08

Explanation of image appears on pages 11-12.



Each year since 2004, as November has approached, plans have been made by the local Progress Association and the Historical Society for a service of remembrance at the Mt Wilson War Memorial. Last November the service was led by the Reverend John Gaunt, rector of St George's, with the

community choir leading the singing for a large gathering of residents and visitors. Then the short walk to the Village Hall where morning tea is to be served though first, as has become the

custom, Arthur Delbridge gave a moving account of the lives of two of the soldiers whose names are included on the memorial. These life stories come from the Historical Society's archives as well as from official war records and the personal accounts of family members. (A transcript of Arthur's talk begins on page 10)

Heritage Festival Week

Each year the National Trust of Australia (NSW) organises a major heritage festival with hundreds of events across the state celebrating our rich cultural heritage. The theme this year is *Our Place in Space* and is on from Saturday 4th April to Sunday 19th April with a wide range of activities including star-gazing, discoveries, exhibitions, walks, talks and more. We have a number of catalogues listing Heritage Festival events and would be happy to send these to interested members.

More dates for your calendar:

World Heritage Day on Saturday 18th April and *National Trust Day* on Sunday 19th April 2009

Welcome to new members

Amanda Reynolds-Smith,
Malcolm Smith & family

Update from BMACHO

The Blue Mountains Association of Cultural Heritage Organisations, under the vital and energetic leadership of its president John Leary OAM and secretary Professor Barrie Reynolds, has achieved considerable success with milestones on behalf of its member organisations. These and many other interesting items appear in a new publication, *HERITAGE*, a copy of which is included with this newsletter.

Of particular interest is the recent appointment by the Blue Mountains City Council of not one but two heritage advisors as part time consultants: Christo Aitken & Peter Kabaila. (continued on page 3)

All exhibitions at the Turkish Bath are being updated by our group of volunteers, making use of the new display panels purchased last year. Well worth a visit, and the Museum is open every weekend during the autumn season.

The President's Report

Welcome to another year. The Society's management team held its first meeting for 2008/09 on Saturday 15 November in the Study Centre.

Nine people were nominated for the Management Committee at the Annual General Meeting last October. The allocation of committee roles was confirmed at the first meeting in November. The Management Committee for this year is: Des Barrett (President), Darrel Conybeare (Vice President), Bruce Wright (Vice President), Florence Smart (General Secretary), Anne Mayall (Minute Secretary), Kathy Harrington (Treasurer), Mary Reynolds (Research and Public Officer [ex-officio]), Helen Cardy, Arthur Delbridge, Kathleen Oakes.

On the advice of the Society's Accountant and recommendations from our Treasurer, it was agreed to formally establish a Fundraising Committee. The purpose of the committee is to plan, conduct and manage fundraising activities on the Society's behalf. This will be a non-profit sub-entity of the Society and a sub-committee of the Management Committee. Membership of the Fundraising Committee will be finalised shortly.

It is pleasing to report that the new water tank has been installed and connected at the Turkish Bath Museum and that the Management Committee, at its first meeting, approved the preparation and submission of an application to the Department of Planning, Heritage Branch (NSW Heritage Grants section), for replacement of the corrugated roof and repainting of the four timber louvres on the tower. The roof projects will cost about \$30,000. In addition, about \$550 of the Society's funds will be spent on installing a fixed timber moulded flashing to the bottom of the original entrance door at the Turkish Bath Museum. These measures are necessary to prevent further deterioration of weathered timbers. The grant application is based on a dollar-for-dollar type. Hopefully, we'll be advised of the Department's decision during the early months of the year.

A highlight of our last Annual General Meeting in October was the talk by Emeritus Professor Arthur Delbridge entitled *Our Words: The history of an enterprise*. Arthur provided a very rich and

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detailed narrative on the origin and development of the Macquarie Dictionary. It was fascinating to learn how the Macquarie was conceived and funded, and of the people (Arthur being the *founder*) who were there at the beginning to work on this major enterprise.

For those who could not attend the Annual General meeting, I can report that there is a new exhibition at the Museum called *The Bowen's Creek Road: 32 Years in the Making - A photographic exploration*. This is a small exhibition which tells the story of the origin, development and ongoing concerns over the Bowens Creek road and bridge to the Mt Irvine and Mt Wilson communities.

This year is the International Year of Astronomy and the Society is proposing to open a new exhibition—*A Clear Night Sky*—at the Turkish Bath Museum later in the year.

Another very important activity this year will be the April Market Weekend. This is our major fundraising event and if we match or exceed our efforts last year the Society will again reap a very substantial financial reward.

I look forward to the forthcoming year with its challenges and successes for our Society. I hope you find many items of interest in this *Newsletter*.

Des Barrett
President

Update from BMACHO (continued)

Christo Aitken will provide advice to the council and to the community on matters including development applications, where heritage considerations are needed, and on policy issues. Peter Kabaila been appointed to advise on specific issues. Both consultants may be contacted through council staff.

BMACHO is also sponsoring a lecture series at Wentworth Falls on Saturday 6th April 2009 as part of the National Trust Heritage Week. A flyer advertising this event is enclosed.

And BMACHO will hold its annual general meeting at Wentworth Falls on Saturday 21st March 2009 at 2:00pm with Ian Jack speaking about heritage in the wider Blue Mountains area. Ian's presentations are always full of interest and information.

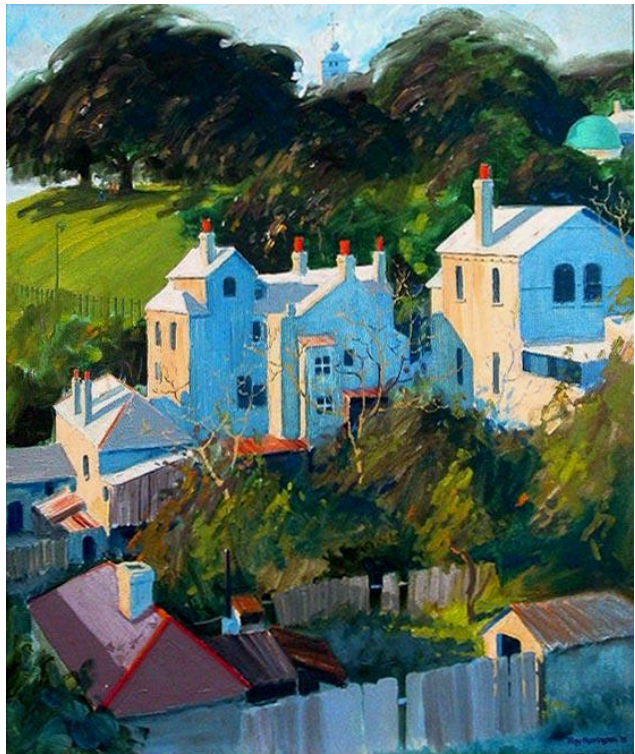
I am stepping down from the BMACHO committee this year and I know the association would welcome nominations from other interested members of our Society. The committee meets monthly at different locations, and has a variety of worthwhile projects on the go at all times. Contact Barrie Reynolds on barrie.r@bigpond.net.au for information.

Florence Smart

* * *

A Clear Night Sky

The clear night skies of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine have long been of special interest to amateur and professional astronomers. We will be mounting a special display in the Turkish Bath Museum featuring a Ray Harrington painting *Observatory Hill* (right) which was entered in the Wynne Art Prize. Ray has generously loaned the painting. We also will have loaned to us for the exhibition John Reynolds' first telescope. Ellis and Mary's son, John, is a noted astronomer who was, for many years, in charge of the Australia Radio Telescope at the CSIRO Parkes Observatory.



Highlights from the 12th AGM

Thirty five members and friends gathered at the Mt Wilson Village Hall on 25th October 2008 for the Society's 12th Annual General Meeting. Des Barrett, continuing as president, chaired a lively and enjoyable meeting; just a few highlights are reported here.

Ian Jack, President of the Royal Australian Historical Society, had brought a very special gift for the Society's archives. It was a great surprise to all when Ian handed over a tall stack of record books, journals and papers all pertaining to the Mt Wilson Public School and dating from its opening in 1890 to when it was officially closed in 1982.

Some delicious examples include 'Observation Book Mt Wilson 6th December 1924', 'Official History of Mt Wilson Public School 1890-1940 NSW Dept. of Education' and the Mt Wilson school magazine *Thinker*, October 1968. There are photographs, admissions records, examination results and examples of students' work. Mary Reynolds accepted this generous donation on the Society's behalf, quite overwhelmed that these valuable and previously unknown items had come to light. They had been carefully preserved by Ian

Jack since the school was closed, and make a very important and welcome addition to our community's social history of the 20th century.

Ellis Reynolds gave a brief introduction and conducted the annual rent-paying ceremony for the Turkish Bath and, as happens each year, the two dollars paid was handed back as a donation by Wendy Smart.

Mary Reynolds introduced the speaker, Arthur Delbridge (below), invited today to speak about his life-long project—the Macquarie Dictionary. Mary spoke very warmly of Arthur's commitment to the Society over its 12 years as generous benefactor, serving two separate terms as president, and as a regular and willing volunteer on all projects.

Arthur titled his presentation *Our words: The history of an enterprise*. He gave a very engaging account of the development and success of the Macquarie Dictionary from when it was first proposed in 1969, just two years after Macquarie University was first established at Ryde, until the fourth edition came out in 2005. The audience was captivated by Arthur's tales of finding funding and a publisher, of selling the concept of the uniqueness of Australian English as distinct from all other versions of the English language used around the world, of collecting and writing the text before the days of computers, and all the steps taken before the first edition was published in 1981. The dictionary, now in its fifth edition, has been highly acclaimed and successful ever since.

The full text of Arthur's presentation is held in the records.

Des Barrett proposed the vote of thanks for Arthur, and the question time continued through an enjoyable luncheon gathering.



Research and History Report

TOURS

Over the past several months there have been five tours conducted by the Society. On 28th May 2008 a large group—the Upper Blue Mountains Probus Group—organised by Brian Lee of Wentworth Falls saw the Turkish Bath and had a walking tour along the Avenue. Brian is the father of Michael Lee of *Far Cry* in Church Lane. I was assisted as usual by John and Helen Cardy. A total of \$280.00 was raised for the Society with some donations as well.

On 20th October 2008 an organisation called Friendship Force brought a group of 32, with some coming from Christchurch NZ, for a tour of the Avenue. Again, John and Helen Cardy and I were involved with \$160.00 raised from this tour.

Led by Kerima-Gae Topp, President of the National Trust Parramatta Branch, three successful tours of the Turkish Bath Museum and Mt Wilson took place in November 2008 raising just over \$1000.00.

Many thanks to Helen and John Cardy, Kathleen Oakes and Florence Smart for helping with the tours and lunches, and to Peter Pigott for conducting walking tours of *Yengo* for the National Trust groups.

RESEARCH

For the second half of 2008 the time available for research has been somewhat restricted due to Ellis's knee surgery, however the following requests have been followed through.

Peter Chin of the Springwood Historical Society wrote requesting information about the Round House at Mt Irvine. Our Mt Irvine members were very helpful in this regard, especially Helen Naylor and Kathy Harrington. I learnt that there were in fact two Round Houses!

Pamela Hubert, a conservation and heritage architect, visited me in July 2008 to gain background on the Gunn Family and its association with the Tulip Tree Tea Room and the property *Cooiwoo*. The present owners, Deborah and Edward Griffin, have been most generous and supportive of the Society.

David Coleby visited in May 2008 to learn more about Edward Jesse Gregson's knowledge of Mt Wilson and its native plants. Using a map drawn by Edward we were able to identify areas around Mt Wilson of interest to David who had been in charge of the nursery of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society for years and only recently retired. The Society sent him a copy of the Ecological Study of Mt Wilson carried out in 1920s. David gave the Society a generous donation.

The second volume of the *Blue Mountains Pioneer Register* produced by the Blue Mountains Family History Society is yet to be published but some time has been spent submitting entries and making corrections in the last months.

WOODEN SIGNS AND OTHER ARTEFACTS

An acquittal report on our use of the \$800.00 grant for the Conservation of 3 wooden signs was submitted to the Museums & Galleries NSW in late August and was accepted. The gramophone associated with the 1920s Workers Club at *Old Wynstay* is now on display in the Turkish Bath Museum.

Remembrance: Springwood district honour roll 1914–1919 by Shirley Evans and Pamela Smith was launched on 2nd August 2008 at the Springwood Sports Centre at a most impressive ceremony involving the Springwood sub-branch RSL Chairman Joe Elkusch, and a World War I re-enactment group from Lithgow following the traditional pattern. Speakers were John Low, retired BMCC Local Studies Librarian, Phil Koperberg MLA and Pamela Smith. Bruce Wright from our committee officially represented the Society. A copy of the book is now in our library.

THE LOWER BLUE MOUNTAINS GARDEN CLUB

I was invited by the Lower Blue Mountains Garden Club to speak on the history of Mt Wilson on Thursday 9th October 2008 at the Springwood Civic Centre. Sixty Club members were present and it seemed to be successful as I was asked if I could come back next year. The Club then very kindly invited Ellis and me to lunch.

HISTORY WEEK

This event is held each year in September and we made every effort to organise a two-day program for 11th–12th September. There were some enquiries but in the end we cancelled. Publicity for such an event is a very important aspect and requires at least one person to be available to promote it. Also visitor numbers last spring to Mt Wilson were much reduced and there are many reasons for this. It is worth noting that Leura Gateway has been in touch with us recently to offer some promotion. The Society certainly needs help with publicity and promotion, and we would welcome any offers or suggestions.

ARCHIVES

This work continues at a slower pace in the last months. Documents associated with the Wynne Family have been accessioned and catalogued by John Cardy and are now in the Mt Wilson Study Centre. Early records of the Mt Wilson & Mt Irvine Bushwalking Group have been sorted by Helen Cardy and are in the Study Centre. Special thanks to Helen and John for their dedication to these tasks and many others as well, not least the carrying and transporting of items large and small. One box of Parents & Citizens' records has been accessioned. This task takes time as it often reveals valuable historical material which needs recording, such as documents related to the now named Marcus Clark Reserve. Photos have been sorted into further categories so that they can be more readily allocated, identified and found. Storage remains a critical problem for the Society, but thank you too to Libby for the allocation of an extra cupboard in the study centre for storage.



DARWIN'S BRAVE NEW WORLD

Late in 2008 the Society was approached by Screenworld Pty Ltd seeking information about the gardens and history of Mt Wilson. 2009 is the bicentenary of Charles Darwin's birth, in England. We are quite sure that Charles Darwin never visited Mt Wilson; however, Peter Hicks, the Location Manager of Screenworld, explained that Mt Wilson represented an English setting which could be used to depict Darwin's home *Down House* in Kent. It was the intention of the film company to make a three-part documentary *Darwin's Brave New World* to be shown on ABC and Canadian Television later in 2009.

Peter, along with two colleagues, sought information about the area and then proceeded to visit various gardens in Mt Wilson to assess their suitability for the film. They had hoped to use the Turkish Bath Museum but were unable to do so as it was too small. Finally the three gardens chosen were *Bebeah* (Ray Harrington's sketch of front gates, right), *Breenhold* and *Nooroo* (photograph, previous page). Filming took place in mid-December.



The Society received a generous donation from Screenworld for its assistance with this very worthwhile project.

OTHER

I would like to acknowledge on the Society's behalf a very generous cash donation received from Kathleen Howard Smith.

It is most encouraging that we have nine nominations for the Management Committee for 2008/2009. I welcome Kathleen Oakes and Anne Mayall very warmly and it is wonderful to have Helen Cardy back on the committee along with the current members. 2009 promises to be very successful. Thank you to Des, and to Florence for her endless energy and commitment and organisational skills and Kathy for her financial expertise.

Mary Reynolds, Research and Public Officer, 18/02/2009

Puzzles of the Past – Richard Wynne

Before this article begins it must be mentioned, so as not to be forgotten again, that its author, Irene Wynne, was also the unacknowledged writer of Historical Paper No.8—Mervyn Owen Wynne: A Life on the Land—which appeared as a supplement to the last newsletter. Irene Wynne is married to Mervyn & Lesley's son Mike.

We—the Historical Society and me—have been very fortunate that a series of accidental contacts came good with information on extended family for Richard Wynne, Mt Wilson.

Years ago I advertised in a Sydney paper and was contacted by Elizabeth Walpole regarding a Henry Wynne from Melbourne and a string of children's names. Not our Henry John, son of Richard, I decided and the information was lost when I changed internet providers. Then a friend, Vicki Brown, spotted a notice in the Genealogical Research Directory: Elizabeth Walpole, Researching Wynne - 1850–1900 Sydney and Dublin 1800–1850 and I was in touch again.

Elizabeth wrote: 'I have had great difficulty getting any information about my Henry Wynne. He turned up as the father of my ancestor Amy. She was the 7th child of Henry and Mary Ann Callaghan who married on the 17th August 1867 at 4 Royal Terrace, Nicholson Street, Fitzroy, Victoria. There were a further four children after Amy. It has been suggested that Henry was already married and was waiting for his first wife to die. I have been unable to find any information to confirm this but it could have been in Ireland. Also I'm unsure when he came to Australia. He gives his parents names as John and mother Anne Doyle and birth place as Dublin. He died in 1876 aged 49 leaving his poor wife with all those children, the youngest (Ruth Amelia) being 1 year old. In his [Henry's] will one of his executors was a John William Wynne, Slater of Woolloomooloo. My father always said that we were related to the

Richard Wynne that gave the money for the Wynne Landscape prize and I gather this is the person you are following up'.

I received a copy of Richard's will in which he named three nieces and one nephew. Two of those nieces mentioned were the youngest children of Henry and Mary: Maria, wife of Walter Best Naunton and Ruth Amelia, who Richard noted in his will as living with him in Sydney at the time of writing. My father-in-law, Merv Wynne, had also mentioned a family rumour - Henry had been married twice. Not knowing then that Richard had a brother, we dismissed this as gossip as it was impossible for Richard's son, Henry John, to have been married twice.

Lina Moffitt, who wrote the book *Danero* about the Neich (Richard's wife's) family of *The Bath Arms Inn*, Burwood (NSW), forwarded an email to me from Janie Webb regarding the Mt Wilson Wynnes mentioned in the book.

Janie sent me the following information: Amy Wynne, 7th child of Henry, married James Fairnie and their only child Edward John Wynne Fairnie married twice. One child (of eight) from the first marriage, Phyllis Irene, married Leslie Cooper and their son, Kenneth is my father. Elizabeth Walpole is my grandmother's half-sister from the second marriage.

Janie wrote: 'When checking Callaghans in Tasmania (Henry married Mary Ann Callaghan, daughter of convicts Jeremiah and Hannah) I happened to check departures from Tasmania to Melbourne and found a Henry Wynne travelling to Melb about the same time. A further check found a convict record that tied in with the shipping record and also mentioned the same information as on Henry's death certificate. I am going to follow this up'.

Janie certainly did follow up and amazingly produced the following information from convict records:

*Henry Wynne - Male. Age-19. Document ref 1. TR5, p59. Number 4422.
Trial place - Dublin. Trial date - 08.04.1884.
Crime description - Felony lead. Sentence - Transportation 7 years. Where tried - Dublin, City.
Height - 5'1½". Religion - Presbyterian. Read or Write - Both. Married or Single - M. Children - [Illegible]. Statement of Offence - Felony 2 stole lead for Mr Cotter at Dublin for tools, 2 months.
Surgeon's report - Good. Trade - Slater. Native Place - Dublin.
Remarks. M or W (Mother or Wife) Katherine/Katherine/Kathleen.
Father - John. Brother - John Edward. Brother - Richard (Sydney Emigrant)*

As Janie wrote: 'Bingo'.

Meanwhile John Fairnie had contacted the Mt Wilson & Mt Irvine Historical Society through Mary Reynolds. He is brother to Elizabeth Walpole and has written a biography on his father, Edward John Wynne Fairnie, for the Deakin University section - Biographical Index of Geelong and The Western District of Victoria. He too was looking for and offered information linking his grandmother, Amy Wynne, with Richard Wynne of Mount Wilson/Sydney.

*The children of Henry Wynne and Mary Ann Callaghan;
Jane Wynne b 1854 d Collingwood 1867
Richard Henry b 1856 d 1912. Married Mary Jane Snook. 11 children
Jeremiah Callahan b 1858 d 1927. Married Mary Ann Doherty. 3 children
Married Jane E Naghter. 1 daughter
Thomas b 1860 d 1860
Hannah Helen b 1861 d 1939. Married Robert Ward Barry. 5 daughters
Mary Ann b 1863 d ?. Married Henry John Barry. 7 children
Amy b 1866 d 1927. Married James Fairnie. 1 son (who married twice)
Married John Daniel.*

*Edward John b 1868 d 1946. Married Minetta Cox. 3 sons (all infant deaths)
Elizabeth Jane b 1871 d 1875
Maria b 1873 d?. Married Walter Best Naunton. 2 children
Ruth Amelia b 1875 d?. Married William James Lindsay.
All children were born at Collingwood. Victoria.
Henry Wynne died on 10th July 1876, Gipps Street, Collingwood, Victoria.
Cause of death - malignant disease of the liver.
Buried in the Old Melbourne Cemetery.*

The quest now is to find information on the other brother, John Edward, and to find out if 'my nephew, Richard Edward Wynne of Dublin, and his married and only sister (whose name I cannot recollect)', as mentioned in Richard's will, were his brother John Edward's children or the children of his brother Henry, left behind when transported to Tasmania and whose names were illegible on his convict records.

I think it opportune to write of the Wynstay Wynnes in this paper too.

Richard Wynne's father, John, was a slater in Dublin when Richard was born c.1822. Richard Wynne arrived in Sydney from Liverpool Immigration Depot as a free immigrant aboard the Sir Charles Napier in 1842 aged nineteen. His immigration papers state his trade as 'bricklayer' and his father's trade as 'shingler/stater'. Two years later Richard advertised in the Sydney Morning Herald for work as a slater/shingler. By 1885 Richard had established business premises in Pitt Street, Sydney, and was trading as a slate merchant. His business flourished and expanded in 1866 Sands lists him as an 'Importer of building materials, cement and corrugated iron'.

Richard and Mary Ann Neich were married on 23rd July 1857 in the Church of St John Baptist, Ashfield. Mary's family owned and operated *The Bath Arms Inn* on Parramatta Road. Five sons were born:

Richard Augustus, Burwood: 1858 – 4th January 1862
Henry John, Windmill Street, Sydney: 7th June 1859 – 22nd January 1898 (Mt Wilson)
Charles Emanuel, Sydney: July 1861 – 17th November 1861
Albert, Burwood: September 1862 – 12th January 1869
Richard, Concord: January 1865 – 20th January 1869

The two youngest sons died in Italy (typhoid) during the 1868–1969 round-the-world voyage the family had taken on the *Parramatta* of London.

Sydney was growing as were Richard's business interests and he took an active role in his community, sitting on the bench with a Magistrate and others on the Police and the Water Police Court. He had a leading role in campaigning for Burwood to become a Municipality in 1873. Elections were held the following year with Richard subsequently elected as the first Mayor of Burwood.

Richard heard about and explored the re-discovered country on Mt Wilson and bought six allotments before 1875. The area he chose covered one of the three basalt hills which crown Mt Wilson and came to be known locally as Wynne's Hill. A lookout was also named Wynne's Rocks. An east west rail link was established and the Mt Wilson platform opened in May 1875. Richard was the first to build a residence on the mountain and he bought more country surrounding his original purchases to become the largest single landholder.

The Wynne family established a magnificent estate over a fifteen year period which they called *Yarrawa* with an imposing gateway with battlemented basalt walls, gatekeeper's lodge, cottages, gardens, stables and a Turkish bath with a mile long circular walk around the crown of the property. The stables bear two sandstone testimonials to time: Mt Wilson founded 1875 and RW 1890.

Mary Ann, Richard's wife, was born in Burwood on 23rd December 1836 and died of abdominal cancer in 1889. Richard organised a Wynne family vault at their church, St Thomas's Anglican, Enfield, and also gave recognition to her life with a glorious stained glass window on the eastern wall of the church. The dedication beneath reads:

In Affectionate Remembrance of Mary Wynne, died July 21st 1889. Beloved wife of Richard Wynne.

The vault also carries inscriptions:

Beloved children of Richard and Mary Wynne. Two little children on their ... home to Australia ... taken to Angels by their ... to Heaven

with dates and names of their young sons.

Australia's financial depression years, which began in the 1890s, so affected Richards's business interests he altered his will in October 1894 leaving everything to his three year old grandson, Richard Owen, not trusting the health of his own son Henry John. He also gifted money to charities, family and one thousand pounds to establish the Wynne Art Prize for *landscape painting of Australian scenery in oils or watercolours or figure sculpture by an Australian sculptor* to be awarded annually.

Richard Wynne 'Gentleman', as was written on his death certificate, died aged 73 on 15th June 1895. He entrusted the Perpetual Trustee Company on Hunter Street, Sydney, to manage his affairs until his grandson turned 21.

Richard and Mary's son, Henry John, had married (at *Havilah*) Marian Cecile White of *Havilah*, Mudgee, on 18th March 1891. They had two children: Richard Owen, born at *Throsby Cottage*, Mossvale, 12th June 1892 (died 6th April 1967, Katoomba); and Dulcia Marian born at Ashfield on 2nd May 1894 (died 6th May 1977, Chiselhurst, Kent, UK).

From an early age Henry John was an excellent shot and horseman. At fifteen years of age he rode alone from Hartley to Mt Wilson to inspect the country his father had just purchased. He was a bright lad but had recurring illnesses.

He was educated in Sydney and received many primary school book prizes and, following his 21st birthday, sailed to England and enrolled at the Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester as a residential student. He studied agriculture, chemistry, bookkeeping, mathematics, physics and veterinary science and was awarded first prize in vet science and estate management.

Returning to Australia, Henry joined a group of horsemen that eventually became known as the Sydney Lancers. He rode escort for Lord Carrington, Governor of New South Wales, and competed successfully in events such as tent pegging.

Following his marriage he became a Magistrate sitting at the Moss Vale Courts and owned a beautiful jumping horse, Shannon. When Henry was in residence at *Yarrawa* he helped the Mt Wilson community prepare for, as well as participated in, cricket and tennis matches, picnics and parties.

He died at *Yarrawa* on 22nd January 1898, from the chronic kidney disease, Brights, aged 38. His widow, Marian, married Gregory Mcalister Matthews on 6th May 1902 and moved to England where the children were educated. Marian and Gregory had one son, Alister.

Irene Wynne
October 2008

Do you have any interesting stories, anecdotes or information regarding women of the Wynne family associated with Wynstay? Please contact Irene Wynne. PO Box 246, Roma QLD 4455, Ph/Fax 0746 23 33 25, Mobile 0428 241 392 or email at irenewyn@yahoo.com.

Remembrance Day (continued)

Here is a transcript of Arthur's talk:

Who are or were the people whose names are engraved on our war memorial? What can we know of them that throws light on how they came to go to war? What did it mean to them and to their families? These are questions that take some probing into the written and printed records that have been left for us and others to read.

I am grateful for the access I have had to these records, and grateful too that so many of them have been given to the Historical Society, and so, helping the community to know its own history. For me the Society's archives have played a vital role yet again. Particular thanks are due to Mary Reynolds for her tireless work on these records over the last 12 years or more—she is a true historian. Thanks also to John and Helen Cardy who continue to spend many hours regularly maintaining the files and boxes for easy access in the village Study Centre. And my thanks to Florence who keeps me sane, and does the typing and fixing.

And today I must thank particularly those members and friends of the Society who, in the case of the two men whose lives we are hearing about today, have helped us understand their stories. In particular I welcome Helen Naylor and members of her family, including Andy Yeates, who has been writing his grandfather's history and has allowed me to use it for this talk. Andy has also brought Robert Morley's war service medals, including the Military Cross.

WILLIAM HILDER GREGSON



I'd like to begin by reading from the Roll of Honour, in the Australian War Memorial, Canberra:

Gregson, Sgt William Hilder, 7th Field Coy, Australian Engineers. Killed in action, 14th November 1916, aged 39. Son of Jesse and Catherine Maclean Gregson, husband of Grace Gregson, native of Waratah NSW.

In the library of the Historical Society there is a Gregson family diary of some 150 pages, written by hand, from which we learn that William was born in Newcastle, that his father Jesse had come to New South Wales from England to seek his fortune. Here, among other things he discovered Mt Wilson, through his friends the Merewethers of

Dennarque in Church Lane. Jesse Gregson bought a property and developed both house and garden here and from 1880 onwards never missed spending a summer at *Yengo*, his mountain retreat. 'Yengo,' he said, 'was to me and to all the children a place we were always glad to come to and always sorry to leave.' He generally came to *Yengo* with his wife and children early in December each year and remained till early April. In 1870 he had married Katie Maclean. The diary says that the two boys of the family, Willie and Edward, 'amused themselves exploring the adjacent rock country, cutting tracks to favourite places'.

The boys were sent to school at All Saints College at Bathurst. The mother's diary notes that 'both my boys owe almost everything of their reverence for all that is good to the teaching they received and the example they saw at All Saints'. Both in turn served as head boys at this school and went on to Sydney University and 'in due course' graduated. Willie, Bachelor of Arts in 1898, Bachelor of Engineering in 1901 and, Edward, Bachelor of Arts in 1903.

Over the years the family travelled quite extensively around the world. While they were in America, Willie went off to find work in Canada as a draughtsman. He and his brother continued to travel widely—Italy, Switzerland, the Rhine area, France and eventually England. In 1912 Willie married, and a daughter was born in June 1914. Meanwhile he had gained

professional qualifications as a licensed surveyor, working mainly with mining companies. At the outbreak of war he joined a rifle club and before long enlisted for military service, serving in the 7th Field Engineering Company. Three months later he had gained two stripes as a Corporal, and his unit sailed from Sydney for the Great War beyond. The 7th Engineers took up foreign duties first at the Suez Canal and from there in March 1916 to France. The Unit was soon directly engaged in the great, long and terrible Battle of the Somme. In all the literature of war that name strikes dread—for all the carnage, ineptitude and sheer waste of life. (In which for the British Army alone, there were 150,000 men killed. The very first day of this battle, 1st July 1916, saw the death of 20,000 British soldiers.)

Siegfried Sassoon

The General

"GOOD MORNING; good-morning!" the General said
When we met him last week on our way to the Line.
Now the soldiers he smiled at are most of 'em dead,
And we're cursing his staff for incompetent swine.
"He's a cheery old card," grunted Harry to Jack
As they slogged up to Arras with rifle and pack
.
But he did for them both by his plan of attack.

From this point Willie's military record becomes sparse and uncertain. It is clear that he was wounded in action in November 1916, but his casualty report is filled with uncertainties:

18th November, 1916: Wounded in action.

27th February, 1917: Now reported wounded and MISSING.

3rd August, 1917: Previously reported wounded and missing, and now reported killed in action.

That's the official record, but the family diary gives more detail. 'On the Somme, six months passed over, but on 14th November 1916 he was reported "wounded" during an attack on Le Sars – from that time he was lost sight of, and though every possible enquiry and search was made for him, both from here and by relatives in England, nothing more was ever heard of his state. A year later his grave was found and reported by the military authorities, AND HIS IDENTITY DISCS RETURNED TO HIS WIDOW'.

This is the direct account from the family diary, but their undoubted grief is not expressed or mentioned. Not a word on the hopeless difficulty of realising what had happened, of achieving some sort of acceptance of the bare announcement of his death. No 'closure'. That's a rather fashionable word for an old idea meaning some final acceptance of a long felt loss. But the diary contains no expression of the family's grief that Willie is gone. It's beyond words.

What I find most touching about this story is that Willie's decision to enlist must have been so hard to reach. It is not like the stories of young fellas, enlisting for the adventure of it, or getting away from the hum drum of life in an office or on the farm. We hear such stories, but here was William in his mid-thirties, married, with a young daughter, doing useful work, yet volunteering for army service, doing his duty for his country. And then missing and dead at age 39, and his widow left with his identity discs; facing post-war life in a country impoverished by the war, and with his name now on our war memorial.

Only a small photograph of Willie could be located (previous page), but Meg Fromel (Gregson) did find some notes and sketches tucked inside one of her father's diaries. Her father, Edward Jesse Gregson, had also served in the

First World War and, at some later time, found his son Willie's grave and his name on a memorial in France and drew a sketch of the memorial (page 1) and a map of the location. His notes say:

Memorial to our fallen comrades, erected at Tara Hill, between Pozieres and Albert, Somme. The cross and base is made from oak and stone taken from the ruins of a church at Martinpuich & inserted in base are four wooden tablets on one of which your brother's name is inscribed. The design is by Lieut. Cartwright MC, 7th Coy. & was erected by the boys of the Coy. The memorial stands about 12 ft high and is a very solid bit of work.

Britannia standing with trident in her right hand holding out a laurel wreath over Willie's name.

The British Lion at her feet.

RONALD MORLEY MC

The other name I chose from the war memorial for today's presentation was Ronald Morley whose name is accompanied by the letters MC for Military Cross. I soon discovered that a life of Ronald Morley is now being written by his grandson Andy Yeates who is here with us for this commemoration today. He has kindly sent me a draft copy of his work in progress. Andy is writing a very full and fascinating account of his grandfather's life, including the long and arduous time in the Great War. Naturally I suggested that he might like to give the paper today but he asked me to carry on with it and it is with great pleasure that I make constant use of his knowledge about Ronald Morley, not only for his time as a soldier but also the time that he spent very happily in Mt Irvine and Mt Wilson.

Ronald Morley's brother Harold, older by ten years, was one of the three original pioneers who came to Mt Irvine with two friends, Charles Scrivener and Basil Knight Brown, in 1897 after graduating from Hawkesbury Agricultural College. Charles Scrivener senior had surveyed a way to Mt Irvine from Bilpin and the three young men walked across this infamous gully to take up three parcels of land and begin the settlement that is now such an important and beautiful part of our community.

Andy writes that as a schoolboy, through his teenage years and into his twenties Ronald spend many happy times at *Irvineholme* with his brother. 'Days were filled with hard work on the farm and shooting, bush walks, horse riding and tennis. In the evenings Harold and Ronald talked and laughed and sang favourite songs. The two brothers were strong and fit and photos show them as exceptionally striking young men. Ronald revelled in the Mt Irvine and Mt Wilson community and social life. He was well known in homes in the district and it is said that he loved to turn any occasion into a bit of a party.'

There is a connection too with the Gregson family. On one occasion when passing through Mt Wilson, Ronald became seriously ill and the Gregson family insisted that he should stay at their home to be looked after. It turned out that he was suffering from pneumonia and he spent weeks in Mt Wilson, and then back at *Irvineholme* being nursed back to health. Harold Morley was convinced that his younger brother's life was saved by the kindness of the Gregsons and the doctors whom they brought in to Mt Wilson to attend him.

Ronald enlisted in 1915 in the 4th Battalion which was shipped to Alexandria for basic training. While here he met by chance Pedder Scrivener, brother of Charles Scrivener of Mt Irvine. These two met again in 1918, and in their letters home both men spoke about being overjoyed and emotional at so unexpectedly finding a familiar face.

Sent to Gallipoli in November 1915, some time after the famous landing, Ronald thankfully survived, and the Battalion returned to Alexandria before seeing action again in France. For most of 1916 and into 1917 Ronald's Unit continued fighting in France. It was a long period of unbroken war service. Early in 1917 he was promoted to 2nd Lieutenant before

being sent to England for training as an instructor in the handling of deadly gas. Ronald was then made a full Lieutenant and in February 1918 he rejoined his Battalion in France.

Within months he became involved in an operation for which he was later decorated with the Military Cross. From this point I have taken up the story from Andy's book about his grandfather's life.

A significant component of the Australian strategy was the use of small raiding parties which would carry out raids into and behind enemy lines. Generally the raiding parties consisted of one officer accompanied by around four to six other soldiers (or 'ranks' as they were known at the time). These raids were highly dangerous to the parties carrying them out and as a result the standard *modus operandi* was for the raids to be carried out under cover of darkness.

It was decided to extend the raids to include daylight raids. Enter one Lieutenant Ronald Morley who on 5th July 1918 had re-joined his battalion at the front line from field hospital. The daylight raids were to follow a similar methodology as the night raids. However the significantly increased risks of such stealth sorties without cover of darkness would have been well recognised.

The area near Strazeele where the raid took place was open farm country, gently undulating and with some hedges and trees. Visibility in the area was excellent. We know this from Peder Scrivener's firsthand account of the action, which Peder observed from an artillery viewing platform at some distance from where the action took place. (Isn't it remarkable that these two young fellas from Mt Irvine would find each other twice in this war.)

In the middle of a summer's day on 11th July 1918 Lieutenant Ronald Morley and four other ranks left their lines and moved towards the German lines at a distance of some 200 metres using the cover of hedges and ditches. As Ronald set out on the mission, he would have been acutely aware that if he or his comrades were seen, they would most certainly have been cut to pieces by German machine guns which were positioned to their front.

According to Ronald's account, the Germans did not have a sentry posted, and they were sleeping in the warmth of the summer's day. As a result of these factors and the skills and daring of Ronald and his men, they were able to storm and surprise a trench and take prisoners without disturbing German troops nearby.

At this point, the raid had already been an outstanding success and the group would have been well justified in returning to their lines with their prisoners. However Ronald decided to take advantage of their situation. He told one of his men (he only had four!) to take the captured prisoners back to the Australian lines. The balance of the raiding party proceeded to the next trench. Here the Germans were also taken by surprise however they did fire on the Australians at close range and, according to Ronald's account, the Australians had to 'get busy' with hand grenades which forced the Germans to quickly surrender.

The outcome of the raid was that without an Australian casualty, the five Australian soldiers captured thirty one prisoners, took four German machine gun positions and enabled the Australian line to be advanced by 250 yards. All of this in broad daylight against the Prussian Guard: elite soldiers who were the pride of the German military.

Later on 22nd July the Major-General commanding Ronald's Division approved the award of the Military Cross for 'conspicuous gallantry and leadership'.

After the war in early 1919 Ronald was in England as part of military decampment and in accordance with an invitation received from the Lord Chamberlain, he attended Buckingham Palace on the morning of Saturday 29th March to receive his Military Cross decoration from King George V.

Obituaries

The Passing of Peter Benjamin December 21st 2008

Peter and his wife Jenny have been longstanding members of our Society and frequently attended meetings. They and their young children had a long association with Mt Wilson from staying in the flat at *Windyridge* in the 1970s and 80s. In those days *Windyridge* was owned by Fred and Hanny Huber, two charming Swiss Germans.

To maintain links with Mt Wilson, Peter and Jenny joined St Georges Church, coming each month to the service and, today, Jenny is a church warden. Both Peter and Jenny have worked very devotedly to raise funds for the church.

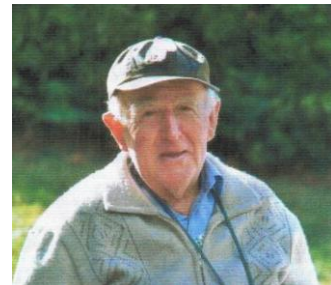
Peter will be especially remembered in the Society for his generous offer of a water tank for the Turkish Bath Museum—an offer we were unable to take up for technical reasons but which we deeply appreciated.

Community-spirited people are invaluable in small villages like Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine. Without them these villages could not survive. Peter was such a person. The Society extends to Jenny and her family our friendship and deepest sympathy over the loss of Peter.

(written by Mary Reynolds)

Ron Naylor of Mt Irvine

Ron Naylor passed away on 30th January 2009 after a long and difficult illness. He and his wife Helen have been associated with Mt Irvine since its early days as Helen's father, Harold Morley, was one of the original three pioneers who settled there in 1897. After his retirement from work at the *Sydney Morning Herald* in 1982, Helen and Ron built a home and garden at *Booralee*, Mt Irvine, and spent their retirement years very involved with the community and its activities. Ron loved the natural world at Mt Irvine, enjoying the lovely garden filled with native and exotic shrubs, flowers, fruit and vegetables as well as the birds and animals.



Ron was awarded life membership by both the local Rural Fire Service and the Mt Irvine Progress Association; he walked for a number of years with the bushwalking group and was a strong supporter of the historical society from when it first formed.

He is dearly remembered as a warm, friendly, kind man with great humour and a twinkling smile. St George's Church was filled with family and friends on February 4th when a memorial service was held to honour Ron's life. His children and grandchildren spoke with

great warmth and love of the wonderful family life Ron and Helen had provided for them, and of Helen's strength in caring for Ron in his difficult last years.

The Society sends it sympathy and friendship to Helen and her family.

(written by Florence Smart)

Wilga Smart

On 2nd August 2008 the Society lost another fine member who had dedicated herself since the formation of the Society to its welfare and progress and in spite of ongoing health problems never lost her enthusiasm for it or withdrew her support.

Wilga was trained in horticulture and landscape design and had joined the family nursery business by the time our father bought land on Danes Way at Mt Irvine, and the nursery at Carisbrook began to be developed. She continued as a propagator before setting off overseas in 1967. In her diaries she described this travel as making the big break with home and that it showed her there were other lovely places on earth apart from Mt Irvine which was where she'd thought she wanted to live and die. After 2 years in America she travelled on to London and lived there happily, enjoying a new career as a medical secretary and later developing a strong association with St Mary's Anglican Church in South Kensington.



Wilga renewed her interest in gardens as she volunteered at restoring St Mary's wonderful old garden, winning the church garden competition several times with the Chelsea Garden Guild (photograph above). She loved living in London and travelled in Europe, loved Turkey and Greece, all over England and Scotland. In London she had her pick of churches and cathedrals for services and choral concerts which she adored. She had many favourite haunts among historic buildings and gardens, and was invited to a garden party at Buckingham Palace to meet the Queen.

Then at Christmas time, 1996, Wilga chose, at 73, to come home to be near her family and old friends. She stayed with Bill at Wynstay before moving to seniors' accommodation at Lindfield. She and her cousin Gwen James remembered and recorded more of the history of our Pymble ancestors. Wilga never lost her gift for writing; in 2007 she and Gwen wrote a paper for publication by the Ku-ring-gai Historical Society about the early houses built and lived in by the Pymbles. Our grandparents' home at 27 Merivale Road is still standing. Wilga wrote about it and although I had never been there I could just picture it all.

Her final move was to Archbold House in Roseville. She loved her room there and was very well cared for. She had the morning sun, a walk-out to a lovely patio and garden, she

had her pot plants AND she bought a little laptop and learned to use it for emails and her writing. For her, this was a new way of overcoming the challenges of declining vision and mobility. She remained absolutely strong in her faith, cheerful and accepting of her declining health and completely in charge of her life.

On 11th August 2008 Wilga's funeral service was held in Mt Wilson at St Georges Church. We used many of her own notes to tell about her life. Her final wish was to be buried in the Mt Irvine cemetery on Danes Way Mt Irvine. There she rests.

(written by Florence Smart)

Objectives of the Mt Wilson & Mt Irvine Historical Society Inc

Membership is open to all who accept and support these objectives.

1. To make a substantial contribution to the account of Australian history by promoting the study of aspects of the Mt Wilson & Mt Irvine districts and their communities, especially in terms of their:
 - cultural history
 - exploration history
 - settlement history
 - Aboriginal history
 - industrial history including agriculture, horticulture, the timber industry, mining and tourism.
2. To conserve, preserve and protect the heritage and heritage values of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine.
3. To set up and maintain a museum in the Turkish Bath building to house the collection and to serve as a centre for its public display and for the Society's educational programs and research.
4. To maintain close links with other societies and associations in the local communities and beyond by way of meetings, functions, newsletters and occasional historical papers.
5. To lend support to like-minded societies or associations, where possible.

For all information and bookings contact Mary Reynolds ('Donna Buang', Church Lane, Mt Wilson, NSW, 2786) on tel (02) 4756 2006, fax (02) 4756 2176 or email mary_reynolds@internode.on.net

A Word from the Editor

I'd also like to say a special goodbye to the lovely Wilga who wrote the first ever feature article – *A Tour of the Turkish Bath* – for the Society's first ever newsletter in August 1997, back when we were simply the Mt Wilson Historical Society. As I recall, Wilga convinced me that, yes, I could edit and I reminded her that, yes, she could write. And after much deliberation and mutual encouragement and sleepless nights ... we pulled it off. Here are her introductory words, now a bit of history themselves:

This first newsletter for the Mt Wilson Historical Society offers greetings to all readers, including those already acquainted with the Society's affiliation with the Turkish Bath on the Wynstay estate and to our many new friends hearing from us for the first time.

Thanks Wilga.

Elsbeth Callender
