
holes with rock and remove fallen trees, but we hope that the Blue Mountains City Council will be able to do more on the road and relieve us altogether of that burden. (pp27-28)



The bridge over Bowen's Creek before it was destroyed in the recent floods.

Editor's note: These photos were not part of Morley's original history.

Caring for the Community Mt Wilson Progress Association and the Sights Reserve Trust in the 1920s & 1930s

The battle for reasonable roads

Unlike the Mt Irvine Progress Association which can trace its foundation to the year 1905, the Mt Wilson Progress Association lacks documentation to confirm its early beginnings. When studying the valuable source, *The History of Bilpin* by Meredyth Hungerford in search of the story of Bowens Creek Road Meredyth refers to Mr George Valder of the Mt Wilson Progress Association in 1922 along with Mr Harold Morley of Mt Irvine approaching the Colo Shire concerning Bowens Creek Road and its upgrading. (Work had been carried out by local residents of Mt Irvine on this road since 1908.

As diverting as the story of Bowens Creek Road is, it has been told in the Mt Irvine History some years ago . The story today is by no means complete as the Bowens Creek road continues to frustrate the two communities of Mt Irvine and Mt Wilson through the failure of authorities to make it a viable alternative route from Mt Irvine and Mt Wilson.)

Thus 1922 is the first recorded date to be found with reference to the Mt Wilson Progress Assoc. The main resources available are correspondence and other documents kindly donated in 1994 by Mr William H. Smart of Wynstay, Mt Wilson. The first Minute Book commences in 1939 (continuing to 1964). Some correspondence does refer to issues back to 1929 but it is rather fragmented and not continuous. Keeping this in mind a picture emerges of this small community

determined to survive and to protect its means of communication and transport, the roads, trees and environment. In a letter dated 31 October 1929 addressed to G.A Valder Secretary Mt Wilson progress Association from the Blue Mountains Shire Council Lawson states:

Binding of the rough section of road through the village of Mt Wilson –the engineer estimates a cost of 60 pounds. The Council will contribute 30 pounds provided the Association contributes 30 pounds.

Mt George Valder wrote in reply:

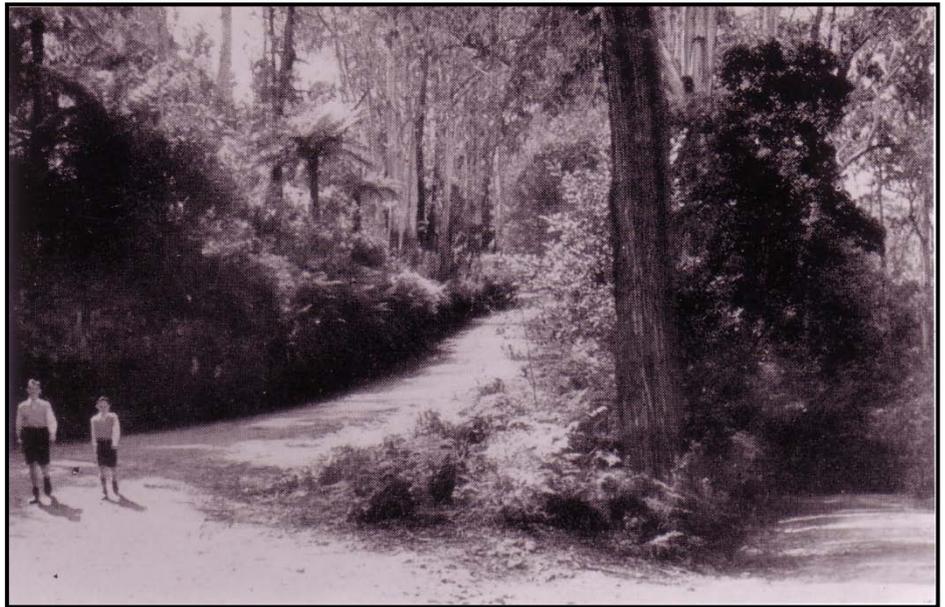
I suggest you reply that we will agree to contribute 30 pounds from the Local Improvement Rate as this is the purpose for which the rate was agreed to. [the Local Improvement Rate was estimated to bring in 153 pounds per year]

Confusion occurs here as to who was the secretary of the Progress Association for on November 14 1929 Colonel R.O Wynne, also Secretary of the Mt Wilson Progress Association, was writing to the Blue Mountains Shire Council:

[describing] the Avenue as disgraceful and the Zig Zag too in a deplorable state. It had been years since the Council did any work on it. A few years ago local residents did work in binding the Zig Zag and part of the Avenue [cost 100 pounds]. We had asked that water tables be kept clear and the surface be leveled off. It was not done. Residents are saying they will discontinue paying the Local Improvement Rate.

On 28 November 1929 a letter addressed to R.O.Wynne Mt Wilson from the Council and signed by the Shire Clerk H.E. Maiden stated: In reply to yours of 14th Instant I advise it is proposed to spend 25 pounds on the road through the village’.

So much for the Local Improvement Rate. Those who have lived in Mt Wilson surely would find the contents of these letters ringing with a familiar theme and in a curious way rather comforting.



The Zig Zag in the 1930s. Note the distinctive mode of dress for boys in 1930s.

Throughout the decades before World War II and after 1945, the issue of road repairs was a constant theme for those living in Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine. The local Government authority before 1947 was the Blue Mountains Shire Council stationed at Lawson. Many letters were written to this Council either by R.O Wynne as Secretary or George Valder as Secretary. It is some times difficult to know who held this position at the time. In 1935 an appeal was made to their local member J .Hamilton Knight, for money from a special grant from the State Government for work on roads giving access to Mt Wilson, especially the Zig Zag into Mt Wilson. An approach was even made to the then Premier Bertram Stevens who of course would have been familiar with Mt Wilson having stayed at Wildflower Hall [now Dennarque] in the early 1930s. This reply came from the Premier’s Office dated 6 June 1935:



The Avenue outside the School
c. 1920

Dear Sir

We wish to acknowledge your letter of the 5th instant, addressed to the Premier, relative to the question of repairing the Zig Zag approach to Mount Wilson, and to say your communication is being brought specially to the notice of Mr Stevens.

Yours faithfully
A Welch
Private Secretary

R.O. Wynne
Hon. Secretary
Mount Wilson Progress Association
MOUNT WILSON.

In October 1935 however the Blue Mountains Shire Council received a detailed reply from the Department of Local Government which indicated a refusal of funds for the Zig Zag at Mt Wilson. It appeared these funds were only to be used on roads into settled areas. Not to be defeated, Colonel Wynne and George Valder attempted to organize a deputation to the Minister for Works in November 1935. In February 1936 the Minister wrote to Colonel Wynne 'I shall ascertain the position in this matter' [!] In September 1936 the Blue Mountains Shire Council had some cheerful news. The Shire Clerk was Pedder Scrivener, a son of Charles Robert Scrivener of Mt Irvine and he wrote to R.O Wynne as Secretary of the Mt Wilson Progress Association announcing that 500 pounds has been allocated tentatively to culverting and surfacing 50 chains of road at Mt Wilson and on the Zig Zag shaping, reforming, gravelling, and improving the hairpin bend and existing culverts. Pedder Scrivener could not say when the work would start!

On 3 March 1937 R. O Wynne received a letter from the same Council stating that the Council had decided to grant five pounds towards gravelling work required and a further five pounds towards improvement of the sharp corner mentioned and that the services of a maintenance man would be made available! Ten pounds was a far cry from the 500 pounds suggested in September 1936. However the maintenance man was a step forward. Joe Webb held this position for some years from c. 1948 to 1951. The late 1930s saw a constant struggle to have the roads maintained and useable. Remember that tar sealing was not on the agenda.

It is interesting to note that the Blue Mountains Shire Council at Lawson covered every area in the mountains except Katoomba and Blackheath which had separate Councils. Another feature of the correspondence from the Council of those times was that every letter carried at the bottom

of the page these words 'Mountain Holidays For Health and Happiness'; tourism was seen as significant.

More on roads: from about 1946 onwards the letter writing to Council was very consistent, either by G. Valder as secretary or W. E. Probert of Shasta Lodge as secretary. One quote is sufficient to illustrate. In August 1946 Pedder Scrivener the Shire Clerk wrote that:

The engineer reported that there were some very rough sections on the Mount Wilson Road and that the bends could be improved by the use of explosives. A local truck and a couple of men could probably be arranged for and that the cost would be from 80 pounds to 90 pounds.

In 1947 the Council of the City of Blue Mountains was created covering from Lapstone to Mt Victoria and including Bell, Mt Wilson, Mt Irvine and Mt Tomah. In February 1948 the Progress Association proposed that the new Council take over the maintenance of the roads in Mt Wilson at the rate of ten pounds per year to be used at the discretion of the Association. This what the Council decided:

Council had made provision in the 1948 estimates for expenditure on maintenance works as follows :

Maintenance unpaved roads 100 pounds
Maintenance unpaved paths 20 pounds
Maintenance drains and culverts 30 pounds

The present arrangement for maintenance in this area is that a patrol man attends to the whole of the Mt Wilson-Mt Irvine District and the funds provided are just adequate to meet this labour, and small plant and material costs. The above money has to be spread over the whole year...

From the subsequent correspondence it is apparent that these sums were not meeting the needs of the community so there followed deputations and much discussion over the Town Improvement Rate and its inadequacies. Finally an approach was to the Minister for Public Works and Local Government in the State Government. Curiously the State Government referred the matter back to the Local Council that is, the newly created Blue Mountains City Council. The struggle continued into the 1950s.

The patrol man Joe Webb, mentioned above, was responsible for the entire Mt Wilson-Mt Irvine District. He was well known and respected among the locals. His basic tools were a bicycle and a shovel to maintain the roads. His accommodation was in the Turkish Bath at Wynstay where he stayed from about 1948 -1951. In 1951 the BMCC wanted to remove him and to alter the system of repairs. Although Joe's task was impossible there was considerable opposition to his removal. The local community had grown quite attached to him as he was a cheerful man and willing. In 1952 a Roads Committee of the Progress Association reported fully on the state of roads and lanes:

Prolonged neglect was causing damage to vehicles with deep ruts, pot holes, and outcrop of rock from road foundations; drivers were being forced to break traffic rules of keeping to the left; especially along the Five Mile from the Bells Line of Road. Pedestrians in Mt Wilson faced the hazards of loose stones and possible twisted ankles. In the copy of this detailed report: In Mt Wilson Second Ave [Queens Ave] and /or Wyndham Ave. which carries a large volume of local and tourist traffic is in a state of extreme neglect especially from the Zig Zag to Wyndham. Wynnes Rocks Road has deep ruts and pot holes, large outcrops of basalt foundation dangerous to pedestrians and vehicles. Du Faurs Rocks Rd. rough with deep ruts. Church Lane one section sealed with bitumen; large depression fronting Withycombe (filled from funds from the Progress Assoc)

The Mt Irvine Progress Association added its voice to the above, identifying sections of the road from Mt Wilson to Mt Irvine with specific names: for example—Ferney Hill; Campanella Hill;

Arkinstalls; Opal Creek; The Long Saddle; Picnic Point; Birdsnest Creek; and Touri. The road was described as badly water-worn with numerous outcrops of solid rock on the surface as well as stone ballast protruding above badly worn gravel surfaces. Were there any positive results from these reports? In the years 1952-1953 Edward Jesse Gregson was the Secretary of the Mt Wilson Progress Association and there is a wonderful set of his correspondence with the Council, the NRMA, the Federal member, Roy Wheeler and the State member for Hawkesbury, Bernard Deane; some written in pencil and on brown paper! One has to admire the tenacity and persistence of Edward Gregson. Among the arguments presented by Edward Gregson and recalling that this is 1952-3 were The replies from the Council are equally absorbing, signed by Pedder Scrivener the Town Clerk. It does appear that some positive results did emerge but were painfully slow.

Founders Corner or Founders Wood

In April 1930 Colonel R.O. Wynne Secretary of the Mt Wilson Progress Association and George Valder listed as the Treasurer had written requesting a small park area at Mt Wilson to be a Memorial Park. The Blue Mountains Shire Council at Lawson was pleased to grant the request; H E Maiden was the Shire Clerk. Later in April 1930 the Shire Council wrote to Major R.O. Wynne re the 'proposed park' at Mt Wilson:

The Blue Mountains Shire Council will give a free hand to effect improvements to the Park Area providing 45 feet of roadway is left on the eastern side and a sufficient area for rounding off the corner at the telephone pole.

Attached to this letter is a list of Rhododendrons in Founders Wood. 17 are listed : 1. Yengo Pink 2. Wynstay White, 3. Wynstay white 4. Sa John Moor 5. Perspecium 6. Boule de Fer 7. Wynstay Pink 8. Atropurpleum 9. Pink Pearl 10 Pink Pearl 11. Madame J, Moser 12. M.J. Moser 13. Wynstay White 14. James Mason 15. James Mason 16. Yengo Wine Red 17. Yengo Pink. Today those plants are nowhere to be seen having been replaced over the years by more substantial trees. In May 1930 a letter written by F.A. Draper from the School House Mount Wilson to R.O.Wynne of Wynnstay [sic.] submits a tender price of 40 pounds for 'grubbing and clearing the block of land opposite the Wynnstay Lodge.' Fred Draper, who worked in Mt Wilson for some years, was one of those characters remembered particularly by the generation of the 1920s,30s and 40s.

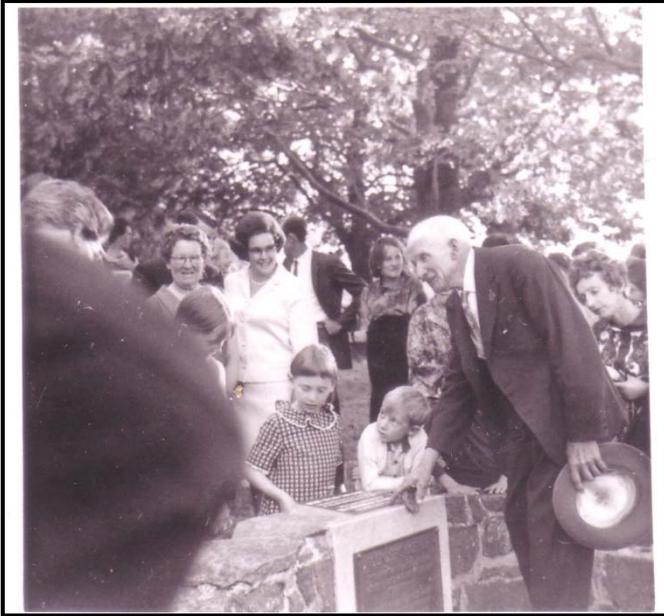
The impression has always been that the land making up what we call to day Founders Corner on the corner of the Avenue and Mt Irvine Road was a gift from Colonel R. O Wynne of Wynstay from land that was part of Portion 64 which belonged to the Wynne family from the time it was first purchased by Henry John Wynne in 1880. However after studying the correspondence dating from 1930 to 1932 from the Mt Wilson Progress Association the story is not quite as clear cut. In fact the park area came from part of a public road fronting Portion 64. This is the notice in the NSW Gazette after the Lands Department gave final approval for the Park to be created in March 1931. the notice appeared in the Gazette 3rd July 1931:

That part of public reserved road of variable width within portion 64 within the following boundaries: commencing at a point on the southern boundary of portion 64, being the southern extremity of the western side of the reserved road within that portion; and bounded thence by the north- western boundaries of such road.

Then followed the exact measurements in degrees for the above. On 29 January 1932 the following notice appeared in NSW government gazette:

Reserve No. 62,978 at Mount Wilson, area 2 roods 26 perches, notified 16th October 1931 for Public Recreation:- Miss Helen Gregson, Messrs. Edward Jesse Gregson, Sydney William George Kirk, Frederick Farrell Mann and Richard Owen Wynne. (p. 31-11,497).

These were the Trustees of the Sights Reserves appointed by the NSW Government at the time. through the Lands Department, the Minister being J.M. Tully and the Governor Philip Game. On 10th February 1932 a letter from H.E. Maiden at the Blue Mountains Shire Council was sent to R O Wynne Hon Secretary. Progress Association Mt Wilson confirming the 'gazettal of the Trustees for the Reserve No.62,978 at Mt Wilson.'



What is impressive about the formation of this Recreation Reserve is the patient and painstaking way those concerned pursued their objective and the trustees appointed, all in their individual ways, were great contributors to this local small community. Little wonder in 1968 when the Centenary of Mt Wilson was celebrated that Sydney William George Kirk, the eldest of the seven brothers and one of those original trustees unveiled the plaque placed in Founders Corner to commemorate the European founding of this community.

Sydney Kirk to the left Dorothy Scrivener and Jane Smart . The young girl is Wendy Smart. On the far right is Helen Gregson, [Helen Warliker]who passed away on 31st October 2012

Mary Reynolds

A Mount Wilson pilgrimage

At the beginning of May this year [2013], while on a trip to Australia from my home in Scotland, my daughter Cally and I went on a trip to the Blue Mountains. Our goal was a visit to the Wynstay Estate, in Mount Wilson, which has connections to our family through the two gardeners, David and Jack Woodgate, who lived and worked at Wynstay from the 1920s to the 1940s.

When I was a child, my dad (Ted Woodgate) occasionally referred to relatives who went out to Australia from our home town, Eastbourne, in Sussex on the south coast of England. He seemed to know little about what happened to them, and instead fantasized that they had taken up sheep farming and become very wealthy.

David or Jack Woodgate in the newly created Italian Garden [apologies for the condition of this image Ed]



I knew nothing more until a few years ago, when information was passed on to me by the wife of a cousin who had done some family research. I learned that dad's uncle David Woodgate, and his son Jack Woodgate, worked on my grandfather's market garden in Eastbourne just after the First World War. Dad, a teenager at the time, worked with them.

At about that time David's daughter by his first wife married an Australian soldier and moved to the Sydney area in Australia; David, his second wife Naomi, and Jack decided to join them and emigrated around 1920. Some time after they were settled in Australia, both David and Jack were employed as

gardeners at Wynstay by Richard Owen Wynne, who was then doing a lot of work on the estate and having the big house built. The information I have suggests that David and Jack built the various areas of hard landscaping, the Italian Garden and the walled garden with fountain. Some years later David retired to Granville, while Jack stayed on as head gardener. Jack had married Ivy Gill, who came out from England in 1929, and they had four children. They lived at Wynstay until the early 1940s.



Cally and Sophie with Mary Reynolds at the Turkish Bath

After leaving Wynstay. Jack took a number of other jobs, going on in the early 1960s to become gardener at the beginnings of the Botanic Gardens in Wollongong, where he worked until his retirement. I have seen a photo of Jack as an elderly man, and he looked very like my dad, also a gardener to the end of his life. There are a number of descendants of David and Jack now living in the Sydney and Wollongong areas. I hope I'll manage to meet some of them one day.

I was intrigued by David and Jack's story and as I regularly come out to Australia to visit my daughters, Nicky in Perth and Cally in Canberra, I wondered if we might be able to go and see Wynstay. Cally contacted Mary Reynolds at the Historical Society, and Mary very kindly agreed that we could have a look around. Cally and I, along with Cally's baby daughter Sophie, took a cottage in Leura and headed over to Mount Wilson. It was mid May, and beautiful sunny autumn weather, just the right time to go! We were met by Mary in Mount Wilson, and she took us first to the Turkish Bath Museum.

This was particularly interesting to me, as Mary told us that the Woodgates lived in the Turkish Bath which had been made into accommodation, and a lot of the fixtures and fittings they would have used were still there, including the stove and the highly decorated blue and white toilet! There was even a photo of David on the wall. We were taken on a tour round the garden, seeing the main house, stables, the old original houses and the garden landscaping. While we were wandering around, we were introduced to a member of the Wynne family, Helen Robbins, a charming lady who was tackling the weeds. Everything was deep in autumn leaves, and looking very lovely. The trees were particularly impressive, especially the enormous conifer, Lawsons Cypress I think; we walked into its cathedral-like interior and Mary told us this had been used as a wedding venue in the past.



Mary rounded out our visit by kindly giving us tea and cake at her house. It was lovely to meet Mary and altogether a delightful afternoon. We were very grateful for the opportunity to see Wynstay.

Heather Woodgate Brennan

Correction: In the February 2013 Newsletter, in the Remembrance Day 2012 article, Scrivener was at times misspelt. I apologise for this error. Ed

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.

www.mtwilson.com.au

For further information contact the Historical Society by email to
historicalsociety@mtwilson.com.au

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