



Mt Wilson & Mt Irvine Historical Society

Newsletter N° 29

February 2014

President's Annual Report for 2013

Welcome everyone. Rosa Sage, M.P. has taken the time out from her busy schedule to join us today and, so, on behalf of the Society, I thank her for doing so.

The bushfires have, to my knowledge, destroyed or damaged two houses, several cars and eight or nine sheds in Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine. An awful situation, but thankfully there has been no loss of life. On behalf of the Society, I extend our deepest sympathies to those who have suffered as a result of the fires, and thank all those in the Rural Fire Brigade who worked hard and long to contain and extinguish the fires. The Society will donate \$2000 to the local brigade.

This year has seen a great change to the Society. Mary Reynolds, the driving force behind the formation of the Society in 1996, has now relinquished her role on the Management Committee and will not be involved to the extent that she has been over the past seventeen years, with many of the Society's activities, although I certainly hope that she might be called upon to continue to write and have published articles of interest to our Society.

Professor Ian Jack, our guest speaker for today, will talk about the significant role Mary has played in the Society, however I would like to add my personal very deep appreciation to Mary for her outstanding contributions to the work of this Society, to Blue Mountains history, and for the care and diligence she has brought to the Museum and its exhibitions, publications, public enquiries, tours and archives.

Tim Gow, our Secretary and Treasurer, has provided me with wise advice on many items that come before our Society, but he will not be standing again for the Management Committee in 2014. Tim will be very busy for the next twelve months in managing the building of a new home in Leura. Tim has worked very hard for our Society, especially keeping the accounts in order and co-ordinating all the bits and pieces that went into the making of the Patrick White exhibition. Alice Simpson has also advised that she is unable to continue her work on the Management Committee due to a number of various activities in Sydney and Mt Wilson next year. Alice has done a fine job in taking and producing the minutes of our meetings, including the demanding minutes for the annual general meeting. I thank Alice for her dedication and commitment to the Society.

Contents

The President's Report.....	1
2013 AGM – a celebration of Mary's work.....	3
Local History, Mary Reynolds and the Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine Historical Society.....	4
Morning tea after the AGM.....	8
Reflecting on 2013.....	11
11 November, 2013.....	12
2014 Management Committee.....	18

We have extended the Patrick White display until the end of the year (initially it was to end mid year) [2013]. Once it has been dismantled and stored, the exhibition space in the Turkish Bath Museum will, unless there is a replacement exhibition, revert to showing the purpose, features, and use of the building that were put forward by Ernest Bonney, the architect. In other words, the building itself will be the exhibition.

The White exhibition will remain online on the Society's page on the Mt Wilson website. I'm pleased that the exhibition has withstood the demanding environmental conditions at the Museum during this long display period.

On exhibitions generally, it is pleasing to report that a number of drawings, whose subjects were on Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine, were featured in the inaugural exhibition, 'Picturing the Great Divide: Visions From Australia's Blue Mountains' at the Blue Mountains Art Gallery in Katoomba (see also



Newsletter No. 27, February 2013 for details). Peter Kingston's drawing of 'Yarrowa', Wynstay, Mt Wilson has been gifted to the Society by Mary Reynolds and Ray Harrington's 'The Turkish Bath in Spring' was also gifted during the year. Thank you Mary and Ray for these donated pictures.

The Society published its informative newsletters in February and August and Historical Paper No.14, with an article by Mary Reynolds on the development of sawmilling in Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine.

Our finances, as you can see from the Treasurer's report and audited accounts, remain sound, with no major expenses forthcoming. Our membership renewals for 2013-2014 are starting to arrive and the numbers, so far, indicate a good level of return memberships.

We did not open the Turkish Bath Museum as often as we would have wished this year. Getting sufficient people to do Museum duty has been difficult, nevertheless, we opened when we could throughout the year and I thank all those who volunteered for Museum duty. There can be, from time-to-time, wonderful and unexpected visitors as, for example, when in May this year Heather Woodgate Brennan and her daughter and granddaughter visited the Museum. It turned out that Heather's father's uncle was David Woodgate, and David and his son Jack were gardeners at Wynstay from the 1920s until the 1940s. They lived, for some time, in the Turkish Bath.

Other activities through the year were the fabrication and installation of a new ornate metal gate by Scott Leonard at the road entrance to the Turkish Bath Museum, the maintenance and additions to our web page, a visit in September with a walk along the Avenue and guided tour for the Rolls Royce and Jaguar Car Clubs, and a donation from the Society of \$2000 to the Village Hall restoration project. Thank you to all those people involved in these various projects.

I thank my fellow committee members – Mary Reynolds, John and Zaharah Braybrooke, Fiona Carruthers, Tim Gow, Darrel Conybeare, and Florence Smart for their commitment to the work of the Society throughout the year and to Alison and Matilda Halliday for their fine work in editing this year's Newsletter and Historical Paper.

Des Barrett, President, 9 November 2013

2013 AGM – a celebration of Mary's work

The focus of the AGM, held in November 2013 at the Mt Wilson village hall, was a formal recognition and tribute to Mary Reynolds for all the marvellous work she has done over so many years. Des, as President, showed his appreciation and we were fortunate to have Ian Jack make the formal tribute. He reflected on the role of local history, and historians, and then showed how valuable the work done by Mary has been for the local community and for the wider history of our country and nation. We are delighted to reproduce his talk in this issue.

The other important event during the AGM was the annual payment of rent for the Turkish Bath. This is a 'peppercorn' rent due to the generous arrangement made by Bill Smart some years ago. This year his daughter Wendy Smart did the family duty and the token rent was signed off under the guidance of the then treasurer Tim Gow.

WYNSTAY
Mount Wilson
New South Wales
Australia

Received from:

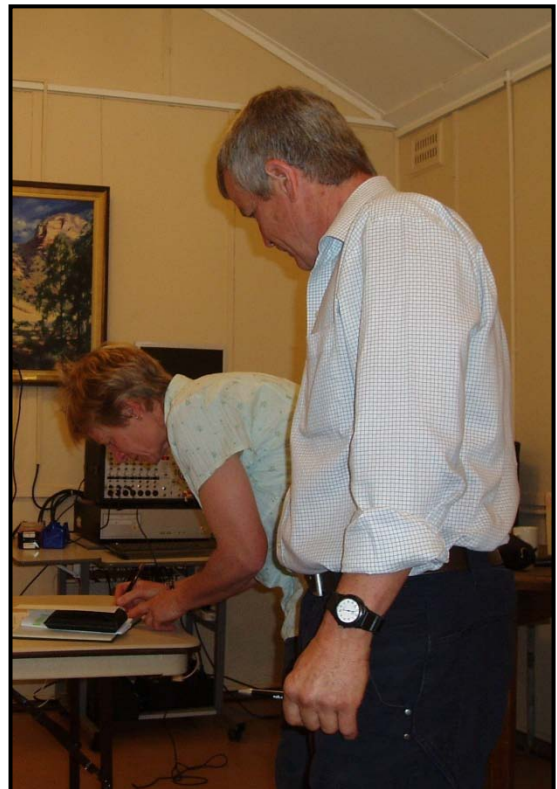
The Mount Wilson Historical Society Incorporated,
the sum of One Dollar, being the rent for the lease
of the Wynstay Turkish Bath House,
and One Dollar for the licence to use the Turkish
Bath House precinct for the ensuing twelve months.

\$2.00 Paid by _____ Received by *Wendy Smart*
The Mount Wilson Historical Society Inc. Wynstay

Position held *Tim Gow* Date _____

1922. LEASED TO THE MOUNT WILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY INCORPORATED FOR USE AS A VILLAGE HIST
HOUSE WAS DESIGNED BY THE SYDNEY ARCHITECT ERN BOWMAN
CONVERTED TO LIVING QUARTERS FOR THE MASONS WHO BUILT "WYNSTAY" HOUSE IN

In reply Mary thanked everyone and then, with true Mary enthusiasm, mentioned her current particular interest, the role of water in the history of the settlement of Mt Wilson. May she long continue to research and provoke us all with her dedication and insight.



Local History, Mary Reynolds and the Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine Historical Society

It is a very great pleasure to come back up to Mount Wilson. It is especially pleasing after your community has again fought off the flames. I had no aspiration this weekend to play Siegfried fighting his way through Wotan's ring of fire to reach Brünnhilde on the Walküre's rock. In any case, you people of Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine have over the years shown that you have more staying power than Brünnhilde and your Walküre's rock is solid basalt. And I am quite sure that you, unlike Brünnhilde, will survive the Twilight of the Gods. Local historians are tough. And local history up here has a tough particularism unlike any other; as have the local historians. Mary Reynolds, whom we are all honouring today, has over the last twenty years earned a place of honour in the halls of historical fame, and I am privileged to be able to join you in voicing my appreciation of her achievements.

But what is this local history which Mary has so much adorned? And why do some of us think that it is rather special among the wide varieties of the discipline of history?



Mary Reynolds and Ian Jack at the AGM

The historical profession has many subsets. Some of these subsets relate to geography, so that we have an 'Asian historian' or a 'European historian'; other subsets relate to time, such as an 'ancient historian', who can, confusingly, be quite young. More refined subsets combine geography and time, so that we have 'early-modern European historians'. Then parallel to these there are a great many thematic categories, such as 'economic historian' or 'religious historian' or the ubiquitous 'political historian'. And these categorisations can, of course, be combined. One may then be both an economic historian and an early-modern European historian, or one might be a medieval historian specialising in religion. And over and above all this, there are also stylistic subsets such as 'narrative historian': narrative endured a longish period in the wilderness, but has now come back into prominence thanks not least to Simon Schama. So there is a pretty complex matrix of subsets, defined by place, time, theme and style.

Few of us remain stuck in just one template from the matrix. In my own case, I came sideways, and late, into local history through my association with archaeologists and with the use of physical evidence. I came to Australia half a century ago; I came out to a tenured lectureship in medieval European history when I was little more than a child. From the start, in the 1960s, I was surprised and rather shocked, to find that most historians in Sydney specialising in the history of Australia paid no attention at all to the physical environment or to the physical evidence. These historians, while very decent fellows (they were almost all men in those days), were very library-bound and didn't seem to own a decent pair of boots: thongs perhaps, but seldom boots. They were most unwilling to go out and see what might be learnt from exposure to

the topographical areas about which some of them were writing; they did not seem to see that there was deep relevance in the environmental context - the landscape, the terrain, the water supply, the micro-climate and the underlying geology. They did not seem to see as relevant evidence the changing forms and sequences and locations of buildings within this landscape.

In my previous existence in Britain and Europe, I had been writing about the agrarian and technological history of medieval Europe and had been using archaeological reports and my own archaeological fieldwork alongside the conventional documentary evidence; I even talked to archaeologists. When I rewrote the history of the woollen industry in medieval Wales, I used not just account rolls and court records, but I also did a detailed survey of the sites and the water-supply for the water-driven fulling-mills which defined the location of the industry as it became mechanized in the late middle ages.

As a result, when I came to live and teach in Sydney, I was intensely curious about the way in which water was utilized in the early colony in a climate so dramatically different to what the settlers had been used to in Britain.

The settlers had come from lands of ample and often excessive water and had re-established themselves on the driest continent on earth. So I contributed to a census of water-driven flour-mills in New South Wales and combined research in libraries and archives with field-trips throughout the state.

Because of my unorthodox background, I also began to look closely at the Hawkesbury Valley as a farming area in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries which has left for posterity extraordinarily rich remains of vernacular buildings. I remember very well inviting one of my colleagues at Sydney University, an authority on early colonial farming, to come and see the original 30-acre grants still under maize crops as they had been since 1794, to see also the wealth of early cottages and out-buildings surviving in the valley and to get some physical notion of the impact of recurrent flood. But he politely declined and went back to the Mitchell Library.



Undeterred, in conjunction with a gifted young historical archaeologist, Maureen Byrne, I began to run Continuing Education classes in the 1970s, got involved in the heritage movement which led to the Heritage Act in 1977 and finished as a member of the Heritage Council on the one hand and an active member of several local historical societies on the other. I wrote on local history and practised local history. It seemed to me then, and I believe it even more strongly now, that local history was a very special subset of the historical matrix which was not given parity of esteem by most of my fellow professional historians.

'Local' might seem just another geographical subset like 'Asian' or 'American' or 'Australian', but it is much more than geography. Local history is not just history writ small on an artificially constricted plot of land. It creates its own methodology because it has aspirations to be a total history, with a deep comprehension of geology, vegetation, water, communications and

community. It is a manageable history, but at the same time a demanding discipline. It is characteristically a communal effort, so no one person needs to be a sort of daunting polymath. And unlike every other subset of history, it really does call for physical familiarity over a geography over a long period.

Now, it is true that you don't need to be Australian to write Australian history. Some of the best American history has certainly been written by non-Americans, as I know at first hand: my own University of Glasgow produced Sir Denis Brogan, and I was taught there by Esmond Wright. But local history demands something different. The first great work of local history in Australia is a fascinating example. In 1972 Sir Keith Hancock published *Discovering Monaro*, with the sub-title *A Study of Man's Impact on his Environment*. (We must overlook the use of 'man' and 'his' we must not let political correctness prejudice us.)

Hancock was Australian, but he had spent the first half of his professional life in English universities and had made his reputation as the most prominent historian of the British Commonwealth, a principal author of the 28-volume history of World War II and the magisterial biographer of Jan Smuts in South Africa. After he took up his chair at the ANU in 1957, he steadily got to know the entire Monaro with a rare thoroughness, walking, fishing, talking with the local people.

His biographer, Jim Davidson, describes this new phase in Hancock's life as opting for the 'parish pump', a consummation of his involvement with the Canberra region as resident and bushwalker. Note the use of 'parish pump', which is a wantonly pejorative expression. Davidson goes on more sympathetically to talk about Hancock's engagement with the environment, particularly in his vehement opposition to the building of a telecommunications tower on Black Mountain in Canberra. But Davidson, like Ken Inglis in his obituary of Hancock, saw Sir Keith's late work as something of an old man's aberration. The élite of Australian history did not warm to the preface to *Discovering Monaro*. In that preface Sir Keith Hancock discussed his methodology as no Australian historian had done before:

In Monaro, much of my work has been done in the open air. (The chaps from the air-conditioned libraries did not like this.) In the summer [Hancock continues], I have walked in the high country; in the winter, I have walked through paddocks on the tableland. Knowledgeable and agreeable companions (not other historians) have taught me how to use my eyes in both landscapes.

I owe more than I can say to many friends in Monaro who have explained to me how they use the land and how their forefathers used it.

Although *Discovering Monaro* is a watershed work in Australian studies, the academic historians did not take notice for quite a long time. Very soon after the book was launched, I invited Sir Keith to come to the University of Sydney and give a seminar: shockingly only two other members of the History Department turned up, although they would all have come had he been talking about Jan Smuts. But, unlike the historians, some people did sit up and take notice of *Discovering Monaro*. They were the archaeologists, the historical geographers, the environmentalists and the local historians. Here at last was an historian of the greatest integrity and the highest reputation who was prepared to use the advantages of a settled existence, of deep local knowledge, to write a different sort of total history of that area. Not, of course, without a wider context, but with the authority which comes only from having walked your country with both knowledge and curiosity, as Aboriginal people had done for millennia.

Local knowledge does not remove the obligation to know the broader historical context in which local development occurred over time. Nor does it diminish the need to know the documentary and visual sources for every corner of New South Wales which are primarily held by State Records, by the State Library or by Lands and Property Information, which I prefer to think of as the Department of Lands and the Land Titles Office. It is not enough to know one's area: one has to recognise that essential tools to understand it live in the great city collections. But then the

historian who has started with these basic metropolitan tools but wishes to address more specialised issues in a specific place has also got to reckon that he or she simply cannot do without local knowledge and local expertise. The best general histories rely on synthesising really good specialised studies: a wider history of the Sydney Basin or the Blue Mountains or the Central Plains is only as good as the studies of the districts, towns, villages and people which are available for synthesis. And the local studies should be accorded esteem equal to the histories painted with a broader brush.

All this came powerfully to my mind as I read through the publications of your Society over the 16 years of its existence. Although I have, of course, read your Newsletters, Occasional Historical Papers and Research Reports as they came out over the last 16 years, I had never before had the occasion to read them all right through at a sitting. Perhaps some of you have not done so either. If you have not, I strongly recommend the undertaking. For you have, more than most comparable societies, managed to put your explorations into a permanently valuable form. These publications are absolutely indispensable for any future historian of Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine. Your newsletter and papers are full of shapely articles, with exhaustive footnotes; the publications are also full of unique matter preserved by oral transmission or by the very rich archival and photographic collections of the Society. And they are informed also by exemplary use of central government records.

Now, many people have contributed to this achievement, not least your Presidents from Arthur Delbridge to Des Barrett, and many of those who have lived hereabouts, including clans like the Smarts, the Gregsons or the Kirks. But the name which is most prominent from Newsletter no.1 until the present day is Mary Reynolds.

The positions held by Mary are revealing in themselves. Mary was your founding Public Officer and she was the first Project Director for your all-important restoration of the Turkish Bath. From 1997 until 2005, she served as Secretary, and once she relinquished that demanding post, Mary became Research Officer until she finally and reluctantly gave that up in April of this year. Donna Buang was almost as central to the Society as the Turkish Baths, for Ellis Reynolds was your Treasurer from 1997 until, I think, 2007, while daughters Julia and Sue make recurrent guest appearances as willing helpers. As well as holding key positions in the Society for its entire existence, Mary has been an indefatigable communicator. Her recurrent reports to the Society of all that had been going on in relevant research each year make fascinating reading, because her role as queen bee in your archives gave her a central understanding of the significance of everything that was happening. When Applecot and then Wyndham were burnt down, it was Mary who travelled to Killcare on the Bouddi peninsula of the central coast in 2004 to interview the Gregson sisters, Meg Fromel and Helen Warliker, and then wrote an important account of the conversations in issue 11 of your Newsletter.

After the Society was successful in obtaining a grant to do proper title searches on all the original portions in Mount Wilson, articles flowed steadily from Mary's pen, combining local expertise with government records. These articles gave for the first time accurate details and interpretations of the early history of what had seemed familiar and straightforward sites. She was also exceedingly generous to people like me who were from time to time commissioned to trespass on the heritage of the mountains, and who needed to know more about things like the properties owned by William Hay or the Wynnes or the Stephens extended family. And when I sent Mary the text of the Mount Wilson section of my Heritage Study of Blue Mountains City, I received exemplary and courteous corrections to things which I had quite simply got wrong or out of kilter. And despite Mary being the perfect lady, as Ellis was always the perfect gentleman, I think that the Reynolds took some legitimate pride in the superiority of their knowledge, while I thought that their polite list of corrigenda was everything I should have hoped to receive from a first-rate local historical society.

Mary's articles were independently important. I remember particularly her revelations about the real date and purpose of the Turkish Bath in Newsletter no.6 and her superb piece on Dennarque when it was Wildflower Hall in Newsletter no.20. I recall too with affection how her 1998 speech

on Mount Wilson's postal facilities was published in a 3-page version in Newsletter no.4 the following year, and then in 2011 was transmuted into a full-scale, 14-page, beautifully illustrated article in the new Blue Mountains History Journal. After her retirement from all formal offices this year, she published a fascinating research article on the local Progress Association in the last issue of your newsletter.

Another outstanding contribution made by Mary over the years is the long series of obituaries. None of us ever wants to have to write an obituary for a valued colleague, but all historians find obituaries, past and present, a very necessary source of local information, giving insight into personalities as well as deeds. Mary is a simply splendid memorialist and some of her longer notices fill a major gap in the knowledge of almost all of us. This is because she has known these people personally, known their values intimately and assessed them thoughtfully and charitably. This collection of obituaries, principally by Mary but also by other good local writers, is a vital research resource, the Mount Wilson equivalent of the Springwood Historians' biographical dictionary of the lower mountains. It might be a useful enterprise of your Society to bring the obituaries all together in alphabetical order in a separate publication available electronically.

The August 2013 Newsletter bodes well for Mary's continuing productivity now that she is free of tiresome positions pressed upon her by her Society, while she can enjoy the honorary life membership bestowed on both herself and Ellis in 2006. This current issue of the Newsletter contains not only her important research on the Progress Association and the Sights Reserve Trust, but also a charming recent photograph of Mary offering her usual invaluable assistance to visiting members of the Woodgate family at Wynstay. Mary is indispensable.

I speak for everyone in the area when I thank Mary unreservedly for a lifetime of dedication to understanding this very special place, to ensuring that the writings, photographs and drawings which enshrine its unique history are preserved and maintained in a way that future generations can use to the full. Mary is an exemplary local historian whom I admire immensely and I look forward eagerly to her continuing work.

Ian Jack, 9 November 2013

Morning tea after the AGM





Reflecting on 2013

The Society in 2013 lost three fine people who, in their different ways, played a notable role in the life of the Society and made significant contributions. Probably current residents would not be aware that Hazel Hawke, as Chairman of the NSW Heritage Council, in September 1997 opened the Turkish Bath Museum. It was a glorious early spring day and Wynstay glowed with warmth and hospitality, as did Hazel Hawke with her gracious charm and her capacity to draw all involved together. For us this opening was a special achievement; and for Bill Smart, the owner of Wynstay who, along with his late wife Jane, had made it all possible. There were many others on that day participating in the pleasures and the joy. Four or five adorned the kitchen providing a delicious lunch. At least two of those are with us still: Helen Freeman and Helen Cardy. In the Turkish Bath we had a display of the art of winners of the Wynne prize in previous years curated by Graham Whale. Remember that Richard Wynne the founder of Wynstay, had established the Wynne Landscape and Sculpture Prize in his will in 1895. From the tributes Hazel Hawke received following her passing in 2013 we are very much aware of the remarkable person she was in Australian public life. Her presence here in 1997 in this small but vibrant community is all the more significant and makes the conservation and partial restoration of the Turkish Bath Museum recognised on that occasion an outstanding achievement.

Bruce Gailey, an ex-resident of Mt Irvine, was quite rightly recognised in *The Mount Newsletter* after his passing in July 2013, Bruce's involvement and participation in the Historical Society should be acknowledged too. He and Sue were loyal and constant workers from the Society's foundation. Whether it was a working bee or the need for someone to be on duty at the Museum, Bruce and Sue were there. Some may not know that Wynstay was opened in autumn and spring from 1995 to raise funds for the restoration of the Turkish Bath; and it was necessary to roster volunteers to take care of the grounds and to serve tea and scones each weekend. It was an amazing task when one looks back at the years from 1995 until 1999 when Bill Smart passed away. Bruce and Sue Gailey were always involved. Bruce was always the 'quiet achiever', for example on special occasions such as the memorable Scrivener exhibition held in Mt Irvine in October 2001 to commemorate the Centenary of Federation and the outstanding work of Charles Robert Scrivener, the first Commonwealth Surveyor and the grandfather of Bill Scrivener. Bruce was responsible for much of the technical work involved in setting up the hall for that marvellous exhibition which brought surveyors from all over the State and from Canberra. Whenever there were technical difficulties Bruce Gailey provided the solutions. The early years of the Society owe him and Sue a special debt.

Another loss for the Society in 2013 was that of John Holt. He too was rightly recognised in the *The Mount Newsletter*. The Historical Society also feels strongly and is very grateful to John for his generous support and interest in its activities over the many years he and Mary have been members. The society has been most fortunate in having a core of members who have been loyal and consistently very generous and always there when fund raising was the central objective.

Mary Reynolds

TURKISH BATH MUSEUM – CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Turkish Bath Museum is at the heart of the Historical Society. In her farewell speech, Mary Reynolds pleaded for this to continue. If you would like to volunteer so the Museum can be open for visitors and so everyone can learn more about the history of the two mountains, please contact Des Barrett by email to historicalsociety@mtwilson.com.au. Autumn is popular time for visitors and we hope, with your help, the museum can be open every weekend.



Des Barrett,
Mary
Reynolds
and Robert
Chesney



Tim Gow, Ian Jack
and Michael
Pembroke

11 November, 2013

The first line on our war memorial is the phrase 'lest we forget', obviously referring to the list of names below. We also repeated this phrase 'lest we forget' this morning in the poem or hymn known as 'The Recessional'. This phrase originally referred to the possibility of people forgetting the sacrifice of Christ¹ and it has since taken on a wider significance. The poem, and its inscription on war memorials, assumes that forgetting is inevitable and perhaps there are many reasons for forgetting about wars: they belong in the past; to remember is to remember the horror, the bloodshed and the terrible losses; for WWI there are no people still living who fought, so memory lives on at second hand or in documents; it is part of human nature to forget; and perhaps the only way to continue after such suffering is to try to forget. Against the desire and inevitability of forgetting, this community comes together every year to not only recall all of those who fought but also to focus specifically on two people. It is through the particular details of a person's life that we may stem the tide of forgetting. As always I am grateful to the families who have remembered and shared their memories so that I can say something about two people from the Memorial. I hope that the reiteration of these memories contributes a resistance to the pull of forgetfulness.

Alfred Thomas Osborne Mann was born in April 1891 in Sydney (Paddington) His parents were Flora Helena (nee Farrell) and James Elliot. He had an older brother James Furneaux and a younger brother Frederick, as well as two sisters, Eva and Esme.²

The association of the Mann family with Mt Wilson began with the purchase of Dennarque. After the death of Merewether, the first owner of Dennarque, it was sold to Flora Helena Mann in 1894, wife of James Elliot Mann, 'for her separate use' the land title states—a curious comment. As Mary Reynolds noted it appears that Flora Mann was the sole owner as records in the following years refer just to Mrs Mann and her children³. His family refers to him as 'Alf' and it seems as though this is how he was always known (Rodgers, 187).

It has been necessary to discover some of the details of the life of Alfred through a variety of sources, including his family, some of whom are here today and I very much appreciate their input. It is tempting to speculate about the young Alf, he seems to have slipped through his school life without making much of a mark. Perhaps he was overshadowed by his older brother⁴ or perhaps he simply lacked the taste for academic study. Alf went to St Aloysius primary school but the school's records for that time are sketchy or, in the case of Alf, non-existent⁵. We know nothing about his early pre-schooling; St Aloysius takes boys from 3rd grade. From St Aloysius Alf went on to St Ignatius' College or Riverview as it is more often known. Both schools focused on the Ignatian tradition of education⁶; that is, the Jesuit mode of Catholic scholarship.

There is very little information about Alfred's life at Riverview⁷. He did not sit for any public examinations and he did not win any academic prizes. However he did appear in a number of dramatic productions. In 1905 (then aged 14), he appeared in the chorus for the college musical, *The Mikado* and in 1906 he was in the chorus of *The Gondoliers*. In 1907, he appeared in *Utopia Limited* and in 1909 he appeared with Bob Macken (also killed in 1916) in a performance of *Furnished Apartments*. In 1910 he was in the football team (town)⁸.



Alf had two other interests at school. He seems to have had an early interest in aircraft as one of his classmates wrote about 'his drawing aeroplanes on the margins of his books during class and then making model planes which he would launch from the main building into the Quadrangle' (Rodgers 187). He had also shown a keen interest in astronomy, helping Fr Pigot, first director of the school observatory, in making careful drawings of sun spots (Rogers 188).



Alfred Mann (top row, far right) in the football team (town).



Photo by]

"UTOPIA LIMITED." THE FLOWERS OF PROGRESS.

[Hall & Co.

Second Row—Lord Dramaleigh, Sir Bailey Barre, K.C., M.P., Capt. Sir Edward Corcoran, K.C.B., R.N., Capt. Fitz-Battleaxe.
(B. Veech) (A. Mann) (E. Lenehan) (A. Malone)

Front Row—A "Guard." Tarara. Prince Zaro. King Paramount. A. "Guard."
(T. Wilkinson) (E. O'Halloran) (H. McArdle) (G. Ward) (J. Deery)

We know little of his life between leaving school and enlisting, a period of about four years. He seems to have studied architecture (Rogers 187). At that time architecture was studied at Sydney Technical College. This was before there was a university architecture course available in Sydney⁹. Architectural students usually worked during the day, at an associated job, and went to Tech. at night. Our own Historical Society archives note that after leaving school Alfred worked for a short time at Dalton Brothers, merchants and importers. I have not been able to verify this information, and I do not know if this was associated with his architectural studies or quite separate¹⁰.

He sailed for England in 1915 on the 'Orontes' with his younger brother Fred, and Fred's friend Gilbert Hughes. It was not unusual for young Australian men to travel to England to enlist; it is possible that they thought they would see action sooner by enlisting there; or they may have thought they were more directly serving the 'mother-land' by so doing. In England Alfred joined the Royal Naval Air Service. At the beginning of WWI the Royal Air Force did not exist; the predecessors of the RAF were the RFC (Royal Flying Corp, existed 1912- 1918) and the RNAS (Royal Naval Air Service, existed 1914 -1918). The RAF was founded in 1918, toward the end of World War I, by merging the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Naval Air Service.

By 1915 he was at Officers training school in Camberley¹¹.

His father was listed as the next-of-kin, giving his address as care of the Bank of NSW, Threadneedle Street, London¹². Alf's father James stayed at the Rembrandt Hotel during WW1 to be near his three sons (Alfred, Fred and Furneaux) who had enlisted with the British forces.¹³

Alfred's rank was Flight Sub-Lieutenant, serving in the Royal Naval Air Service having enlisted in the UK on 6 November 1915 (Rodgers 187). After training at officer's training school in Camberley, England he was appointed a temporary Flight Sub Lieutenant¹⁴. Various training courses followed, including an engineering course at Fishguard, a gunnery course on HMS Excellent and a short sea course on HMS Penelope. He underwent basic flying training at Redcar and further training at Cranwell. He was confirmed as a pilot on 19 September 1916 (Official War Record, England War Archives, Rodgers). He was described as a 'steady keen pilot [and] v[ery] good officer'¹⁵.

He was in one of two planes that returned from the Schleswig-Holstein raid (Rodgers 187). He was killed on 29 November 1916; while flying a Sopwith plane.

'Killed in aeroplane accident in France 29.11.'16'. The record also gives a fuller explanation:

Report and Finding of Court of Enquiry into the above fatal accident. The Cause of accident was due to the Pilot attempting to loop the loop after having done so once successfully allowing a/c [aircraft] to get into difficulties from which he was unable to extricate it. 8.1.17 Father to be informed in the sense of last paragraph of finding of Court of Enquiry.¹⁶

He is buried at Luxeuil (also known as Luxeuil-les- Bains) Communal Cemetery, plot number 9¹⁷. The site is described 'In the Military Plot near the West end are buried four Naval airmen of the detachment which preceded the Independent Air Force.'¹⁸

There are at least two lasting consequences of Alf's death.

First, in 1922 his father James Mann, presented to Riverview Observatory the 'Cooke' telescope as a memorial to his son, (Rodgers 188). Lieutenant [sic] Alfred Mann, who attended the College with his brothers in 1905-1910 and was killed at Luxeuil, France in 1916. The 'Cooke 7-inch refracting telescope was imported by H.W. Fitchett of Melbourne and at that time was the third largest privately-owned refractor telescope in the country and was capable of useful research. The second owner was Dr. W.E. McFarlane of Irvinebank, Queensland. Riverview has had it now for 90 years and it is still in use.

Second, as Arthur Delbridge noted 'this death [of ATO Mann] in the family was undoubtedly a heartfelt motive with Flora for her donation of a portion of Dennarque land as the site for the war memorial—our war memorial.¹⁹'

Photographs of Alf in uniform may be found in the Historical Society Newsletter article 'Remembrance Day 2007' in issue No 17, February 2008.

The life of **Leslie Wilfred Le Messurier** has three sources, and rather than make his life into a neat sequence I am going to look at each of these sources and examine what each tells us about Les (at the request of his daughter he is referred to as Les in this memoir).

He was first mentioned to me by Jan Hurrey²⁰. Jan now lives in Queensland and she contacted me several years ago and while we were talking she mentioned an experience from her childhood.

Jan was a young girl living at Sefton Hall, daughter of Les Clark, while Les lived at Sefton Cottage and worked at Sefton Hall. She remembers him as being very kind to children, and she was upset that he and his wife had no children. So she wrote a letter to the fairies asking them to bring a baby to his wife Isabel, and eventually, after two letters, a baby arrived, and was called Dawne. At this time Jan had whooping cough so she could not visit and she was bitterly disappointed at not being able to see the baby immediately. However Isabel carried Dawn outside so that Jan could see her from a safe distance.



Isabel, Dawne and Les Le Messurier c 1942

Les worked at Sefton Hall for about 12 years and after the war he returned to work at Marcus Clark's store in Dubbo. Each Christmas Jan got a letter from Isabel and years later when Isabel died her daughter Dawne continued the correspondence. Jan commented that this connection was not surprising as anyone who had worked at Marcus Clark kept in touch with those they had known there. Recently Jan added that she remembered Les as a kind and gentle man.

After hearing this story I decided to take Les as one of the two men to talk about on Remembrance Day, 2013, The delay of a year or more, after first speaking to Jan, was due to the difficulty of finding his war record. Do not have a name with several possible spellings when searching official sites!

The official individual war records are rather different for WWII than those of WWI. There seems to be less personal detailed information and rather more 'form-filling' by the record keepers²¹.

Les was born on 12 April 1912 at Gilgandra.

The 'Mobilization Attestation Form' shows that he enlisted on 19 January 1942 then aged 29 years and 8 months. Physically he was 5 foot, 6 inches tall, of fair complexion with brown eyes and hair. By 13 May 1942 his permanent address is given as 140 Morts Rd, Mortdale.

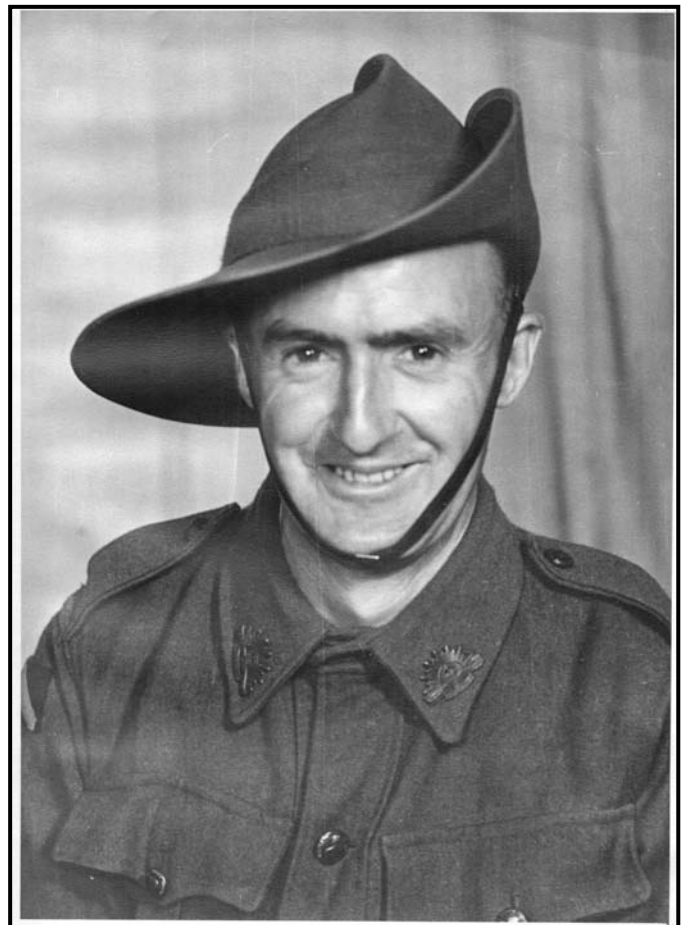
His occupation is given as gardener and caretaker. On a checklist he is shown to have no office skills (typing, shorthand, keep accounts) and could not drive or cook. His army number was N346865; he did not make a will before enlisting.

He had been married on 2 July 1938, to Isabel Ella and he had a young daughter, Dawne. At the time of enlistment his address is given as Sefton Hall, Mt Wilson and his employer, Marcus Clark Co. Ltd, of Central Square, Sydney.

Les served in Australia and overseas in New Guinea, the latter from 2 May 1945 to 19 December 1945. In total during the war he served for 1334 days, in Australia for 1102, and overseas for 232 days. He was initially part of the CMF (Citizens Military Force), (13 May 1942 – 15 July 1945) and was then transferred to the AIF (16 July 1945 – 5 January 1946). He served in the 18th Australian Field Ambulance.

My third source is from his daughter Dawne (she who arrived with the help of the fairies!)²². Dawne began by confirming the correct spelling of his name and saying that her father was known as Les. Dawne was 12 years old when they left Sefton Hall to move to Dubbo where Les continued to work for Marcus Clark.

Les was born in Gilgandra²³ and married Isabel Brook on 2 July 1938. Before the war he did odd jobs in Dubbo, such as wool washing²⁴ and gardening before moving to Sefton Hall after they were married. Isabel had worked as a dress maker before her marriage doing alterations. Dawne was born 30 July 1940, she had no siblings as her mother nearly died having her; in the hospital at Leura.



During the war Dawne and her mother lived in Manly where they rented a place they shared with Isabel's sister Ethel and her son who was a companion for Dawne. When Le Messurier was transferred to Townsville they moved and stayed with Isabel's mother's family on a farm between Molong and Orange.

After the war Les returned to Mt Wilson, working for Les Clark at Sefton Hall. The family left there in 1952 so Dawne could go to high school and Les became a greenkeeper at the Mudgee bowling club. Mr Mace had been the teacher at Mt Wilson and he was transferred to Mudgee, living in town. The Le Messurier family moved into Mr Mace's house; his wife having died. In 1954 Les moved back to Dubbo to work as a 'collector' at Marcus Clark. Dawne remembers this move was for her mother's health as she had suffered from severe hay fever while in Mudgee. Being a 'collector' meant that he collected the lay-by payments in the Dubbo area. He then became a salesman in the furniture department. The store was taken over by Waltons and Les retired from that business. He was diagnosed with cancer and died three weeks later; at Dubbo on 25 March 1982, aged 69.

Les had two brothers, Harry and Bert. He loved sport and was good at cricket, tennis and roller skating. While at Mt Wilson he helped to set up the two ant-bed tennis courts on Silva Plana. He played tennis there and at Sefton Hall and Dennarque.

References and Notes

Rodgers, James *To Give and Not to Count the Cost* 2009 Lane Cove NSW: Saint Ignatius College, Riverview

All photographs of Alfred Mann courtesy Riverview Archives, Saint Ignatius' College, Riverview.

¹From the poem 'Recessional' by Rudyard Kipling composed on the occasion of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897.

² Except where otherwise indicated information for Alfred Mann is sourced from the archives of the Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine Historical Society

³Ms Fleur Herscovitch, recently made a life member of the Society, is the great granddaughter of Flora Mann, her grandmother being Esme Burfitt, Alfred's sister, and her mother Esme Herscovitch. So Albert Mann is Fleur Herscovitch's great uncle.

⁴Even his own entry in the Riverview history of its pupils who died during WWI begins with detail about Furneaux and his younger brother Frederick (Rodgers, 187)

⁵: Information from the school archivist of St Aloysius

⁶The website of St Aloysius states: 'The College aspires to assist and support parents in the formation of their sons in the Ignatian tradition of education, producing *'men for others'* who are balanced and motivated, integrating spiritual maturity and academic excellence with a rounded social and physical development; men of competence, conscience and compassion.'

⁷ Much of the following information about Alf at Riverview comes from Riverview School archivist, Catherine Hobbs]

⁸During the early 1900s sporting teams made up of country boarders would play against boarders from the city.

⁹Sydney Technical College web site (Dictionary of Sydney).

¹⁰ Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine Historical Society records

¹¹ Detail of service from Australian Society of Aero Historians:

MANN Alfred Thomas Osborne; FLT SUB-LIEUT RNAS; of Randwick

and Mount Wilson NSW; s/o J E Mann of Sydney NSW; Born: APR

1891; Died: 29 NOV 1916 France; Bd: Luxeuil-les-Bains Communal

Cemetery France, Grave 9;

British War Medal (B.W.M.)

Victory Medal (V.M.)

1905-1910 Educated Saint Ignatius' College (StIg) Lane Cove, Sydney StIg

1914 Left for England AWM 140

1915 At Officers Training School Camberley England StIg

1915? Initial training at RNAS Redcar LB/PRO*

06 NOV 1915 Temporary FLT SUB LIEUT RNAS "N" Course AWM 140, LB

06 DEC 1915 Fishguard "E" Course AWM 140

03 JAN 1916 to HMS *Excellent* "G" Course AWM 140

29 JAN 1916 to HMS *Penelope* sea Course AWM 140

23 MAR 1916 to Redcar AWM 140

25 AUG 1916 to Cranwell AWM 140

25 OCT 1916 Confirmed in rank 6/11/15 AWM 140, LB

25 NOV 1916 No 3 Wing RNAS AWM 140, LB

29 NOV 1916 Died France aeroplane accident AWM 140, Hob* p.10

29 NOV 1916 Died following raid on Schleswig-Holstein StIg

16 DEC 1916 Court of Enquiry found a/c crashed following loss of control during aerobatics (Australian Society of World War I Aero Historians Inc).

¹² Official war record from National Archives, UK

¹³Helen Burfitt, email, 5 August 2013

¹⁴ Official war record from National Archives, UK

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Commonwealth war cemeteries

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ From report on Fred Mann by Arthur Delbridge in Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine Historical Society newsletter, 2007

²⁰ Jan is the granddaughter of Marcus Clark who built Sefton Hall

²¹ Le Messurier's war record is from the National Archives of Australia

²² I had several phone conversation in 2013 with Dawne

²³ Official war record

²⁴ Verbal account from Dawne of Isabel's recollection

2014 Management Committee

The Management Committee for this year is: Des Barrett (President and Secretary); John Braybrooke (Treasurer); Zaharah Braybrooke (Turkish Bath Museum roster co-ordinator); Pauline Michell, with Alison and Matilda Halliday producing the *Newsletter*. Mary Reynolds is also on the management committee, and even though she has now left Mt Wilson (living at Wentworth Falls), she will still be able to come to the meetings, thanks to Pauline. The next meeting of the Management Committee is scheduled for Saturday, 17 May.

I suspect that it will be a relatively quiet year for the Historical Society, with our main activity concentrating on the Museum and the occasional booked tour of the Village, although I suppose there will be various Great War commemorative events/articles during the year (and beyond).

Des Barrett



Members are welcome to join the committee during the year, for details please contact Des Barrett by email to historicalsociety@mtwilson.com.au.

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

This newsletter was edited by Alison Halliday; layout by Matilda Halliday.
Feedback is always welcome to alisonhalliday@gmail.com or phone 02 9389 1848