

Mt Wilson Progress Association Inc and Rural

Fire Service



NEWSLETTER

Working together for a better community

August 2008



EDITOR'S NOTES

The Progress Association was approached by the RFS with the very sensible proposal that we should amalgamate our newsletters, so we have. RFS items are also, of course, of concern to Mt Irvine, and one of the reasons for amalgamating was that the MWPA newsletter has always—at least since I have been involved with it, and I believe before that—been distributed to everyone in Mt Irvine as well as Mt Wilson, so no-one is going to miss out on information.

The matter of a title is still under consideration. We approached Mt Irvine PA and asked if they would like this newsletter to reflect their community, in a general sense as well as in relation to RFS matters, and they will discuss the matter when they have a PA meeting. The title 'Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine Community Newsletter' has been suggested, and seems good to me, but meanwhile what I have here covers the situation, without making assumptions, I think. I have always been happy to include anything that people in Mt Irvine wanted to put in, but this would formalise it. Hopefully, this will all be decided by the time the next newsletter is due (about November).

The weather has been 'interesting' recently—especially if you happen to be a golfer. Freezing winds and temperatures hovering at 5 or 6°C are not conducive to a pleasant round of golf. Actually, I sometimes think they're not conducive to anything much except a good fire and too much time spent watching the Olympics. With no leaves on most of the deciduous trees the Avenue looks a bit stark, but there are quite a few plants that are active in the gardens: early rhododendrons, magnolias (not the grandiflora), camellias and of course the daffodils. It always surprises me that these things flower in the coldest time of the year. The blustery winds caused a bit of mild excitement—or irritation, depending on your point of view—a week or so ago when a large eucalypt came down across the road at the very sharp bend in the Zig-Zag. Some stalwart volunteers with chain saws cut enough out of it to let traffic through, and the Council people got it all cleared up by mid-day.

First Responders will be involved in a rail crash exercise at Clarence on Saturday 16. Apparently there will be a derailment in a tunnel near there, and all sorts of interesting casualties. After that we can rest assured we will be OK if we're in a train crash locally.

I appreciate John Holt's response to my request, in the last newsletter, for contributions. With the Olympics in full swing his piece about the trip he and Mary made to China is not only interesting, but very apposite.

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MWPA COMMITTEE NEWS

Welcome to New Members.

Welcome to Rosemary and David Taylor who have recently joined the Association. They own land on Smith Hill so perhaps we may see more construction in that area.

If anyone who is not already a member and wishes to become one, please contact me at rm.green@bigpon.com or 'Noonameena', Queens Avenue, Mount Wilson.

May I remind Association members who haven't paid fees for the year 2008/9 that they are due. Please send them to Libby Raines of 'Merry Garth' or myself.

Condolences.

Condolences from the Association to Florence Smart and Wendy Smart on the death of their sister/aunt, Wilga Smart last week. Wilga was a former resident of Mount Irvine and member of the Mount Wilson Progress Association.

Annual General Meeting.

This will be held in the Mount Wilson Village Hall on Saturday 20th September at 5.30 p.m. followed by drinks and nibbles. Please put it in your diary and plan to come so that we might have as good a number attending as at the last General Meeting.

Prior to the meeting, at 3.30, there will be a talk given by Rudolf Thomann, a visiting

botanist and environmentalist from Chile. He is on a lecture tour in Australia so we are fortunate that Eleanor Herriott and John Lee are able to arrange his visit to our mountains. Eleanor and John will provide more information soon.

Mount Wilson Leisure Library.

Don't forget that we have a great collection of books in our library waiting to be borrowed by anyone in the Mount Wilson/Mount Irvine area. There is an interesting range of biographies, history, travel, art, Blue Mountains flora, fauna and fiction by such authors as Isabel Allende, Margaret Atwood, John Buchan, Peter Carey, Louis de Bernieres, Sebastian Faulks, Graham Greene, Kate Grenville, P. D. James, John le Carre, Jodie Picoult, Vikram Seth and many more to suit all interests. (See Judy Tribe's book reviews in this newsletter) More books are frequently being added to the collection.

Visiting times are Thursdays 3.00 to 4.00 p.m. and Saturdays 10.00 to 11.00 a.m. or at any more convenient time to be negotiated with me. If anyone is interested in joining the roster to look after the library during these times please contact me. It is a wonderful opportunity to have a quiet hour of "compulsory" reading.

Marcus Clark Reserve.

The Committee is presently researching signs to identify flora within the Reserve so there should signs of progress in this regard before too long.

Moira Green

SUPPORT NEEDED FOR MT WILSON CHURCH

St George's Church in Mt Wilson relies on the generosity of its community for its continued survival. Libby Raines will generously open her superb garden, *Merry Garth* to the public on **Saturday 11 October** from 10am to 4.30pm in order to raise funds for the church. The garden will be showing off its peak spring colour with the flowering cherries in particular expected to be in full bloom.

Entry fee will be \$5 with children under 12 being admitted free. There will be stalls selling all manner of country produce, cakes and gifts, and a barbeque will offer a sausage sizzle all day. A light lunch of sandwiches and slices will be available as well as Devonshire teas. All proceeds from the day will be donated to St George's.

Libby Raines, an accomplished water colourist has also kindly donated a raffle prize of one of her botanical paintings featuring fuchsia "Swing Along". Tickets are \$2 each and are available from Jenny Benjamin (4787 1571), Libby Raines (4756 2121), or Sarah Howell (4756 2091). The raffle will be drawn at *Merry Garth* on 11 October.

Without sufficient funds to support our minister and the running of the church, St George's could close which would be a sad loss to the Mt Wilson community. So come along to enjoy the beauty of *Merry Garth* in spring and support St George's and the community at the same time.

VILLAGE HALL JOTTINGS

Quite a lot has happened at the Hall since the last issue of this newsletter. The Committee applied for and received a grant from the Federal Government under a "Working Together to Manage Emergencies" Program. Our intention was to make the Hall fully self contained to meet any emergency which might occur in our area. We have been working towards that goal since the new Committee was appointed four years ago and this grant of \$16,000 has gone a long way towards meeting it. The main aim was to get a back-up generator to ensure electricity is available in case of an outage in our area during an emergency.

To achieve this we had to do a considerable amount of work to rationalise the electricity usage in the Hall. Consequently, the old, noisy electric heaters are gone and under-floor gas heating has been installed. The old light fittings with two 500w bulbs and the remainder with 300w bulbs (and fittings which are no longer made) have been replaced with low energy "bulbs". This has saved us the need to go to three-phase wiring and has allowed a much smaller generator to be installed. Whilst the generator has not yet been installed it is expected shortly and the rest is up and running.

As all this work was being done the Committee funded the installation of ceiling fans by Council. These are reversible, with three speeds.

The big event for the quarter was the Yulefest which many thought was the best yet. Instead of hiring a caterer the whole evening was arranged and presented by local talent. The food was beautifully prepared and presented. Self catering resulted in a net profit of some \$2,275. On behalf of the Committee (and no doubt the community) I would like to thank Judy Tribe who was the organiser of this event and the chief chef. I would also like to extend our thanks to Judy's small army of helpers, each of whom did much to make the evening the success it was. The event will held again next year on the first Saturday in July (4th) so please make a note of the date in your diary.

Finally, the Committee will again hold a Melbourne Cup luncheon and more information will be sent out closer to the date.

Regards for now and thank you for your support.

Ron Green

MT WILSON TO BILPIN BUSH RUN

The 13th "Willy to Billy" bush run will be held on Saturday 23 August starting at Silva Plana Reserve, Mt Wilson and finishing at Bilpin Community Hall. A representative of new corporate sponsor, Bendigo Bank will start the race at 10 a.m. sending an expected 200 runners off on the 36km run over fire trails and private properties to Bilpin.

This annual event is the major fund raiser for both the Bilpin and Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Brigades and the volunteer contributions of members from both brigades is a key part of the event's success. Funds raised from the proceeds go towards valuable Brigade activities such as the provision of extra equipment including such items as mobile phones for vehicles, computers, GPS equipment, station improvements and ongoing general administration expenses.

All entry fees for the bush run are donated to the Bilpin and Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine RFS. As well as being a fund raiser, the Bush Run provides valuable training experience for the Brigade members who work on the day. The nature of the run and the territory covered provide communication and logistics challenges similar to those faced by fire fighters at real incidents.

Already members of the community have been involved in the preparation for the Bush Run including clearing the fire trails, planning for the scones, tea and coffee for the runners' breakfasts, and staffing of the start and the first five drink stations along the way. It's not too late to be involved. If you would like to help at the start or any of the drinks stations, please contact me on 4756 2091.

Sarah Howell

KIDS SAY THE DARNDEST THINGS:

The spinal column is a long bunch of bones. The head sits on the top and you sit on the bottom.

A scout obeys all to whom obedience is due and respects all duly constipated authorities

Mount Wilson Leisure Library

Do you need some fireside reading for the cold winter nights? There some great books in our library, so why not come along and have a look. Here are a few examples:

William McInnes: *A Man's Got to Have a Hobby, Long Summers With my Dad*

A tail-end baby boomer, William McInnes recalls summer holidays that seemed to go on forever.

In William's writing you can hear his father speaking, listen to his mother singing, and his sisters and brothers talking in the yard.

This is a book about people who aren't famous but should be. It's about cane toads and families, love and hope and fear, laughter, death and life. Most of all, it is a realistic, down-to-earth book by a man who had a great time growing up. His warmth and humour come through on every page.

William McInnes is one of Australia's most popular stage and screen actors. His leading roles in *Sea Change* and *Blue Heelers* have made him a household name.

Kim Edwards: *The Memory Keeper's Daughter*

Compulsively readable and deeply moving, *The Memory Keeper's Daughter* is a brilliantly crafted story of parallel lives, familial secrets, and the redemptive power of love.

This stunning novel begins on a winter night in 1964, when a blizzard forces Dr. David Henry to deliver his own twins. His son, born first, is perfectly healthy, but the doctor immediately recognizes that his daughter has Down syndrome. For motives he tells himself are good, he makes a split-second decision that will haunt all their lives forever. He asks his nurse, Caroline, to take the baby away to an institution. Instead, she disappears into another city to raise the child as her own.

The Memory Keeper's Daughter, is a #1 New York Times Best Seller

Kim Edwards grew up in Skaneateles, New York, in the heart of the Finger Lakes region. She received a Whiting Writers' Award in 2002. She is currently an assistant professor at The University of Kentucky

Anita Brookner: *Hotel du Lac*

In the novel that won her the Booker Prize and established her international reputation, Anita Brookner finds a new vocabulary for framing the eternal question "Why love?" It tells the story of Edith Hope, who writes romance novels under a pseudonym. When her life begins to resemble the plots of her own novels, however, Edith flees to Switzerland, where the quiet luxury of the Hotel du Lac promises to restore her to her senses.

But instead of peace and rest, Edith finds herself sequestered at the hotel with an assortment of love's casualties and exiles. She also attracts the attention of a worldly man determined to release her unused capacity for mischief and pleasure. Beautifully observed, witheringly funny, *Hotel du Lac* is Brookner at her most stylish and potently subversive.

And some inspiration for winter meals:

Ian Parmenter: *L-Plates*

Southern Holdings: *The Great Australian Pumpkin Recipe Book*

Women's Weekly: *Soups*

Women's Weekly: *Italian Cooking Class Cookbook*

Tess Mallos: *The Complete Middle East Cookbook*

The Good Cook: *Vegetables*

Judy Tribe

WEEDY SYCAMORES

Libby Raines sent me this note from the local Bush Care newsletter about sycamores in the Jenolan Reserve . She comments that "many of the Sycamores in Mt Wilson have been removed by property owners when they realised the damage they can do. However, there are still people planting them and landowners who don't see the problems... The same problem applies with *Acer negunda* (common maple)"

'The Jenolan reserve is under threat from a number of weeds, most notably an expanding infestation of Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*). Initially spreading from individual ornamental specimens planted over 100 years ago, the Sycamore infestation now covers nearly 50 hectares of the Reserve.

Sycamores invade natural bushland and compete aggressively with local species. Being deciduous, they form dense canopies in spring and summer that shade the forest floor and prevent germination of native species, leading to a virtual monoculture of Sycamore trees over time. This is significantly reducing biodiversity, habitat and (degrading) native habitat...'

CHINA – A VISIT TO THE SOUTH-WEST

Despite having travelled to many places on the planet, China never ranked high on our 'must visit' list, primarily because of constant reports of excessive pollution and environmental degradation. However, early this year we received a brochure from a well-known horticulturalist detailing a garden tour to the south-west. It was illustrated with stunning photos of flower-covered mountains and snow-capped peaks, so we decided to organise our own tour to the province of Yunnan.

Yunnan is 1500 km from Beijing; a long way from the capital and Shanghai and their heavy industrial areas. It is described in the Lonely Planet as having some of the most magical and diverse scenery in all of China and is home to over 2500 varieties of wild flowers and plants. So with completely open minds, and prepared for a variety of extremes, we flew to Kuming.

Kuming, a city of a million people, was full of surprises. During WWII it was the termination of the famous Burma road which, from Lashio in Burma, 1000 km away, brought in supplies for the Nationalist Army fighting the Japanese. Our first class hotel, situated on the Green Lake, provided a base for several side trips. The city is a vibrant place with eight lane streets through the CBD and very wide footpaths. There are parks and trees in abundance and, despite whole avenues of mature trees, a massive tree-planting programme everywhere. This is the norm throughout the province as people are very conscious of the results of massive deforestation in the western areas. To travel on 8-lane highways with centre hedge plantings – all clipped – for hundreds of kilometres was an extraordinary experience. The surrounding countryside is covered in ENORMOUS horticulture sheds, where it seems all the vegetables and flowers for China are grown.

Yunnan is home to a third of China's ethnic minorities who, despite government efforts, have retained their identity. A visit to a theatre where the history and culture of these people is extremely well displayed, was of great interest. These minorities, being only 8% of the population, have special dispensation to allow more than one child per family otherwise they will eventually be swamped by the Han people (the other 92%). In many places they still wear their very colourful clothing and would, in the time of Mao Tse-Tung, have offered a great contrast to the universal drab grey jackets of the masses.

Kuming airport was extremely busy and sitting in the departure lounge became very trying, with loud, non-stop announcements of departures and arrivals, particularly when our flight was delayed 4 hrs (a common occurrence, world wide, nowadays). It was curious, on all flights, to see the miniscule amount of cabin baggage carried, which must be part of the discipline of Chinese travellers. We flew north to Lijang, a town of delightful cobbled streets, wooden buildings, canals and gardens. This was what one imagined China was 50 years ago. Splendid parks encase the town, which houses good restaurants and night clubs.

Taking a car, with guide and driver, we set out on a 200 km journey to the north through forest reserves, where we visited the famous Tiger Leaping gorge on the first bend of the Yangtze River. The Yangtze, 6300 km long, is the world's third longest river, starting near Tibet and ending near Shanghai on the East China sea. The Tiger Leaping gorge, 16 km long, is one of the deepest in the world. We took the easy way and were carried out of it in chairs by porters. It was tough work for them and my heart won over my pocket with a generous tip. The Three Gorges dam on the Yangtze is the world's biggest – it has been estimated that when full it will slightly affect the tilt of the earth on its axis – and will produce the electricity of 18 nuclear power plants.

As we travelled further north the rhododendrons and azaleas appeared, and what a majestic sight they were – covering the valleys and hills as far as one could see. By now we were 50 km from the Tibetan border and the end of the still snow-capped Himalayas. We were fortunate to have clear skies and no pollution.

All the towns we visited had large Chinese medicine shops, with small sections devoted to western medicine. Chinese medicine plants are extremely important and often very expensive. High in the mountains there are camps where, in extremely harsh conditions, the locals spend all day looking for rare mushrooms which sell for \$50 each.

Further north we saw the origin of the mighty Mekong river, which eventually passes through Vietnam, Laos and Thailand. It is vital for the livelihood of over 200 million people. There is talk of possibly damming it and one can appreciate the enormous repercussions this action would have. Water is indeed a world-wide problem. At the modern town on Shangri-La we used the cable car to ascend over 4000 m – using cylinders of oxygen. It was extraordinary to see rhododendrons flowering on top of the mountain.

Returning to Kuming we flew east to Guilin, situated on the Li river. Surrounding the city are extraordinary limestone outcrops – cone-shaped mountains. Taking a cruise on the river to Yangshuo the scenery was wonderful; anyone who has seen the movie 'The Painted Veil' will appreciate the experience. At Yangshuo we attended a 'light and sound' show on the Li river, which was splendid. We discovered later that the director was to be in charge of the Olympic games opening ceremony.

This is just short account of our trip. We would list the positives as magnificent scenery, friendly people, great parks and gardens an excellent guides and drivers. The negatives: very little birdlife or wildlife (we are spoiled at Mt Wilson), difficulty with the food in most places and abominable toilets away from the cities.

Go again? Perhaps, someday.

John Holt

STREET NUMBERS SAVE LIVES

A recent call to the RFS Community First Responders highlighted the need for clear and complete identification of properties in Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine. Most of our properties are identified with the name of the property on the mail box and for locals this is usually sufficient. However, in a case where emergency services are responding to a '000' call, the location of the call's origin is identified to the dispatcher through Telstra's caller ID system. This uses street names and numbers, not property names. Valuable time can be wasted while the ambulance, First Responders, police or fire brigade work out which street number corresponds to which property name.

Each of our fire trucks and First Responders has now been provided with a list showing both street address and property names, but it would help to speed up the process if every property were to clearly display the number of their street on their mail box in addition to the property name. Your recent council rates notice will show your number.

Barry Freeman

COMMUNITY DIARY

Note the 'Willy to Billy' Bush Run on Saturday 23 August. (See Sarah Howell's note on p. 3.)

Merry Garth will be open on Saturday October 11 from 10am to 4.30 pm to raise funds for St Georges Church. (See the note on p.2)

Note **Bushcare** every 2nd Friday of the month, **Bushwalk** every 3rd Friday

Services in **St Georges Church** every 2nd Sunday at 3pm (August 12, Sept. 9; Oct. 12, Nov. 9)

Mad Wife Disease

A man was sitting quietly reading his paper when his wife walked up behind him and whacked him on the head with a magazine.

'What was that for?' he asked. 'That was for the piece of paper in your pants pocket with the name Laura Lou written on it,' she replied.

'Two weeks ago when I went to the races, Laura Lou was the name of one of the horses I bet on,' he explained. 'Oh honey, I'm sorry,' she said. 'I should have known there was a good explanation'

Three days later he was watching sport on TV when she walked up and hit him in the head again, this time with the iron pan, which knocked him out cold.

When he came to, he asked, 'What the hell was that for?' She replied...'Your horse called.'

Think about this one:

If somebody has a bad heart, they can plug this jack in at night as they go to bed and it will monitor their heart throughout the night. And the next morning, when they wake up dead, there'll be a record.'

From the Department of Social Services, Greenville, South Carolina

'Your food stamps will be stopped effective March 1992 because we received notice that you passed away. May God bless you. You may reapply if there is a change in your circumstances.'