



The Mounts

The Community Newsletter of Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine



August 2015

Welcome

One of the joys, or otherwise, on living on the Mounts is the seemingly never-ending tasks of managing exuberant weed growth and preparing the property for the next fire season. Some good news is presented in this edition that may well help both long-standing and more recent landowners; the Mt Wilson Progress Association and the Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine RFS have independently devised schemes aimed at assisting those who feel overwhelmed by these two challenges.

The MWPA's offer of providing free weed identification and remedial advice to individual owners from a qualified horticulturist should be of great assistance as there has been many recent advances in weed control, built on the back of long practical experience. Many hitherto aggressive and difficult to control weeds can now be relatively easily managed with suitable environmentally-friendly chemicals and practices.

In a similar vein, the RFS is offering free property inspections and advice for owners as to how to best prepare for the upcoming fire season. It is often very surprising how relatively minor changes can significantly improving a property's defences against a fire attack. A fresh, and non-judgmental, set of eyes can often be of great help to those who may feel otherwise swamped about where and how to start.

Both organizations exist to help: it would appear folly not to take advantage of their experience and advice.

Tim Gow Tel. 0412 133 559

e-mail: tmsgow@gmail.com

Community Calendar

August	Sun 2nd 9.00 am RFS Training Mt Wilson Shed	Sun 9th 3.00 pm Mt Wilson Church Service	Fri 14th 9.00—12.00 Bush Care— Hay Lane	Fri 21st Bushwalking Group— Waterfall Circuit, Woodford to Hazelbrook
September	Sun 6th 9.00 am RFS Training Mt Wilson Shed	Fri 11th 9.00—12.00 Bush Care— Silva Plana	Sun 13th 3.00 pm Mt Wilson Church Service	Fri 18th Bushwalking Group— Mount Banks & Banks Walls
Sat 19th 5.30 pm MWPA Annual General Meeting	October	Sun 4th 9.00 am RFS Training Mt Wilson Shed	Fri 9th 9.00—12.00 Bush Care— Gregson Park	Sun 11th 3.00 pm Mt Wilson Church Service

Village Hall Jottings

You will have noticed that the building works haven't started yet at the Village Hall. The plans within Council on the best way to manage the process have changed from going out to public tender, then having City Services (the Council's in-house building section) complete the works and now back to going out to tender as City Services have a lot of other work to complete.

The time line Council has sent me for the works is:

- Develop and approval of Request for Quotation (RFQ) July 2015.
- RFQ in the market August / September 2015.
- Council approval of preferred tenderer October 2015.
- Engage contractor November 2015.
- Potential commencement date late November to December.

To fulfil the requirements of the Community Building Partnerships grant the work needs to be completed by March 2016

I will keep you informed as I hear from Council

Judy Tribe

MOUNT WILSON PROGRESS ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE NEWS

Coming Events

Annual General Meeting – Saturday, 19 September 2015 at 5.30 p.m. at the Village Hall.

Reliable mobile phone and data service to come to Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine

The Federal Minister for Communications Malcolm Turnbull announced on 25 June a new mobile phone and data transmission tower is likely to be built at Mount Tomah to improve service to Mount Wilson, Mount Irvine and the Bells Line of Road and about 500 other "black spot" areas around Australia.

When the service will be available has yet to be announced but the government says its roll out will be over the next three years. This is a vitally important development for our communities because it should not only provide good reception for mobile and data services throughout the villages but also be of tremendous assistance for emergency communications where local two-way radio contact for fire, ambulance and police communications is often poor or non-existent.

Both the Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine progress associations actively lobbied for our mobile service to be made effective. A working group with Henric Nicholas and Brian Carrigan from Mount Irvine and Graham Tribe and Richard Beattie from Mount Wilson prepared submissions and lobbied for the villages to have reliable, up-to-date phone and data communications both for everyday use and especially during our all too frequent emergencies. Whether it has been the tremendously dangerous and damaging 2011 wind storm, the 2013 State Mine Fire or the all-too-many bushwalker rescues, emergency services radio communications haven't worked well or at all. Reliable phone contact could literally make all the difference between life and death, or saving or abandoning a home facing oncoming fire.

With regular input from local community groups, the RFS and the two progress associations, our federal local member Louise Markus was comprehensively briefed on how better communications are vitally important for the villages. Louise has literally been a tower of strength for us on this issue effectively lobbying her senior colleagues making the final decisions on where to allocate the limited funds for the national project to achieve better mobile phone connections. Thank you Louise! Your advocacy and support for reliable communications for Mount Irvine and Mount Wilson is very much appreciated.

Graham Tribe and Richard Beattie also met in May with Paul Fletcher, the Parliamentary Secretary to Minister Turnbull. Paul had a leadership role in the decision-making process on the tower location allocations and was well informed about the particular dangers and threats faced by Blue Mountains communities. He recognised that despite the small populations of our two villages there was a compelling case for the operations and safety of the communities for there to be reliable mobile phone communications.

A Mount Wilson gate

What's so special about this picture? It's just a simple Mount Wilson gate standing in the winter light. It's even more special because of the fence on either side. The answer: the area is now weed free after what was once the scene of a massive growth of invasive ivy with roots creeping into the public land and seeds being scattered hither and yon in the bush by birds.



Last season's good weather with plentiful rain followed by warm, sunny days has seen an explosion of weed growth on private and public property in Mount Wilson. The Bush Care Group, now with only a small number of volunteers, can't keep the weed infestation under control in the bush and open public area.

To prevent the situation getting completely out of control, the Progress Association is offering the opportunity for assistance with weed removal on private property.

The Association will be pleased to organise and would be able to pay for a qualified horticulturist to identify weeds on your property. Weeds migrating from private to public property have become such a long term and entrenched problem the Progress Association Committee has decided the weed identification service could be provided at no cost to property owners. Removal costs to be paid by owners will depend on the amount of work required. Inquiries to Alison Halliday at alisonhalliday@gmail.com or on 9389 1848.

The aim of this project is to safeguard the beauty of Mount Wilson and protect our street trees which can so easily become smothered by weeds. Success will make it a realistic outlook for our volunteers in the Bush Care Group to keep the bush and public areas free of the ivy, hollies, honeysuckle, blackberry, jasmine, periwinkle, agapanthus, radiata pines and laurel that if left unchecked will take over and become unstoppable infestations. That has already happened with the likes of Patterson's Curse and now all too many other uncontrollable imported pests.

Street trees

The Progress Association on behalf of BMCC is responsible for the selection, planting and general maintenance of street trees in the village. Our most recent major street tree project has been the replacement of the failing elms in The Avenue adjacent *Withycombe*. It was an extended project working with council, an arborist and tree fellers. After a number of years new green beeches have been planted and they are doing well with their first summer and autumn being so favourable for a strong start. If you have suggestions for street tree planting or necessary maintenance please contact Alison Halliday.

Peter Raines to take on BMCC maintenance work

Peter Raines will take on the maintenance work for MWPA as agent for BMCC at Mount Wilson looking after the street trees, verges, reserves, Silva Plana, the walking tracks, putting out the rubbish bins and much other work. We are very fortunate Peter has been able to take on the work previously done for so many years by the late Alan Gunn.

Horticulturist and arborist Micah Fink, who has provided regular services for the MWPA with our responsibilities for BMCC, has also agreed he will continue with us on work, as Peter will do, to make Mount Wilson look well kept, trimmed and terrific. Thanks to Peter and Micah for agreeing to do this very important work to help keep Mount Wilson's public areas in tip top shape.

Looking for work for your router?

The Progress Association needs more wooden signs like these to mark and identify walking tracks. If you have a router and would like, or learn, to make the signs we will pay for the materials: timber and paints. Please contact Peter Laving 4756 2004 or at peter.laving@kumahira.com.au



Membership

We are pleased to welcome Katherine and Alexander Montano as our newest members of the Progress Association. All residents and property owners and their sons and daughters 18 and over are eligible to join the Association. Thank you to all those who have already paid their membership fees for 2015/2016. Outstanding fees can be sent to Libby Raines or Sue Woolfenden.

Finally, a very warm, if belated, welcome to the new residents of the *Post House*, Dean Fordham and Roger Pfund.

Richard Beattie President MWPA
Sue Woolfenden Secretary MWPA

Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade***Resilient Australia Award....But there's more!***

A video starring members of the Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine RFB has been made to advertise the 2015 Resilient Australia Awards. It is now available on the Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/MtWilsonMtIrvine>

NRMA Grant

NRMA makes grants for up to \$5,000 available to community groups for projects that help ensure community safety and resilience. The brigade has been successful in obtaining a grant for \$3,695 for equipment (display board, signage, table throw and lapel microphone) for community meetings and providing information during emergencies. Our thanks go to NRMA for their initiative in encouraging communities to be safer, stronger and more confident.

Meeting with State Member Hon. Trish Doyle

As she promised at the brigade AGM, Hon. Trish Doyle, our local State Member, met with members of the brigade to discuss issues of importance to the safety of our community. She was accompanied by one of her advisors as well as local Councillor, Sarah Shrub. The two main issues discussed were the building of the extension to the Mt Wilson Station and, in particular, the Bowens Creek emergency access route. Both politicians expressed strong support for community aims and made some useful suggestions. We are awaiting a decision from the Hon. Niall Blair, Minister for Lands and Water, regarding the native title claim on land for the extension. The Bowens Creek emergency access route crossing a number of jurisdictions will require further discussions. Elizabeth Montano is on to it!

New Members

Are you interested in finding out more about your brigade? Are you interested in finding out more about how to protect your home? Graham Tribe and Joe Montano are planning a familiarisation or 'Welcome Day' for residents interested to know more about the role of a rural fire brigade in an isolated, heavily forested area. On this day Graham and Joe will cover what the brigade does, the sort of incidents we respond to and how we operate both in and outside of emergencies as well as tour the station and show the equipment. Joining the brigade doesn't necessarily mean climbing aboard a truck. There are plenty of other roles in areas such as Station Officer, Community Engagement, Equipment Maintenance, Catering and Radios. There is no obligation to join, but if you are interested Graham and Joe can explain the process, the training and complete all the paperwork while at the station. The training available will also help if you don't want to be operational but just want to know what to expect and how to protect your property better. If you're interested please contact Graham Tribe on 0417 942 096 or gtribe@bigpond.com or Joe Montano at joemontano@bigpond.com.

Get Ready Weekend

Cross out your diary for Saturday and Sunday 12-13th September and make time to prepare your property for the coming bushfire season. As I write this we have a crew at Wentworth Falls assisting with fighting the fire on the cliff line there and we had another crew patrolling there the previous night. If this is what is happening in August what will the bushfire season (still two months away) be like? Not sure what to do? Then take advantage of your brigade's offer to visit your home and give personalised advice on the best way to prepare your home for bushfire.

If you would like a free property inspection and bushfire advice from members of your brigade contact Kathleen Oakes (4756 2199 or k.oakes@bigpond.com) and state your preference for a visit on Saturday or Sunday morning or Saturday or Sunday afternoon, 12 -13th September. Get Ready for the Bushfire Season!

**Kathleen Oakes
Community Engagement Officer**

St Georges Church

St Georges Church was built in 1915 by the Marcus Clark family in memory of Henry Marcus Clark, who died at *Sefton Hall* in 1913. Services were previously held in the village school.

The land for the church was part of the Wynne Estate and was donated by Richard Owen Wynne.

The clearing of the tall timbers which grew on the land was done using a bullock team and cross-cut saws with strict orders not to damage the existing tree ferns. Today, the church is still surrounded by these magnificent three hundred year old specimens.

The church was consecrated by the Church of England 's Archbishop of Sydney in January 1916.

Since that time, services have been held regularly at 3.00pm on the second Sunday of each month. The Rector was based at Mount Victoria until the 1960s when Mount Wilson became part of the Parish of Blackheath along with Hartley and Mount Victoria. There are also occasional baptism, wedding and funeral services, as well as the Christmas Carol Service.



The Churchyard; photo courtesy of Phil Woodman

The church is constructed of fibro -the new "wonder material" imported from England at the time. Painted wooden battens cover the fibro joints. By 1976, the fibro had become very stained and mouldy in some areas due to the very damp mountain weather. The church was repainted at that time and has been repainted twice since then. The fibro on the inside was sealed in 2008. There have been repairs to leaks in the roof, cracked fibro and sinking piers over the years. The windows were restored in 1996.

Last November, we restored by sanding, oiling and painting all wooden panels, battens and window architraves. In the Spring, the floor will be sanded.

At present, we have a problem with borers in the soft wood of the pulpit floor and in the panelling behind the pulpit. This also will be repaired shortly.

Many members of the community feel that St Georges is an important and valued part of our village., but it attracts very few families to our monthly services. We would be very pleased if you could join us at our monthly services.

During autumn, as a fund raiser for the church, Devonshire teas were served at *Merry Garth* when it was opened for the Australian Open Garden scheme. Unfortunately, it was a very cold and wet weekend. Helen Freeman and Helen and John Cardy made and served teas and hot soup and we were able to raise \$580.00 for St Georges. Thank you to the Helens and John; it was a great effort, especially in such inclement weather.

On Sunday 13th March 2016 at 3.00 pm, we will be holding the one hundred year anniversary service to celebrate the centenary of St Georges Church.

We do hope you will be able to join us on that day.

Church Wardens - Libby Raines, Graham Thompson, Moira Green.



"A land of droughts and flooding rains..."; posted on the Ku-ring-gai Bush Fire Brigade's Facebook page, 1st August

Mt Wilson & Mt Irvine

Spring Art Festival - 10th & 11th October 2015

Photography and Art Exhibition Bev Woodman is very busy putting together a wonderful show for the Photography and Art Exhibition. She has networked widely and has quite a few entries from landscape photographers and painters of the beautiful areas surrounding us as well as art works of our village streets and gardens. It promises to be an exciting exhibition to come and visit.

Creative walks and workshops with expert photographers doing both landscape and garden sessions. Details and booking information will be out shortly.

Gift Shop: bags, cushions, note books, cards and more printed with images of our area

Photography and Art book sale: The book sale was so enjoyable at the Autumn Festival, we thought a Photography and Art book sale would be great. So look at your bookshelves and leave any you have for the sale at the Mt Wilson Fire station

Open gardens and delicious food

**Put the date in your diary and ask your family and friends
for a wonderful weekend filled with art and photography events**

Some photos of the heavy snowfall of July 17th.





Ask the Neighbours

I was appalled and disgusted, Tim. So, appalled and so disgusted that I had to read it three times to fully comprehend the depravity of it all. I thought Mrs H (you know who I mean) was such a genteel and refined woman. From across the ditch; yes but, nevertheless a woman of delicate sensibilities.

And yet, in the last edition of this august publication (except it was in June), she brought to the whole readership's attention, news of that disturbing scientific research regarding the unnatural (or is that too natural?) mating habits of antechinus. And Tim, don't think you're getting off lightly here. You published it. And all this time, I thought they were tap dancing in the roof space.

Onto more refined matters, Tim. Or should I try out your soon-to-be-title: Senator Tim? The push for RAATS to go national is moving inexorably forward. With our new name – *Elizabeth's RAATS* - now registered with the Electoral Commission and candidates ready to nominate in several key Electorates and for winnable Senate spots (remind me to do those background checks, please), our next step is to publish the RAATS Manifesto.

So, what do we at RAATS really stand for? We know we're not a one issue party. We have a proven track record of disliking more species than just the frisky antechinus. Lyrebirds, wallabies, wombats.....leeches. We don't discriminate. They're all in our sights (or, sites???).

But, how do we further broaden our appeal to voters who are not fortunate enough to live and/or work in God's own country (aka Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine)? If a voter hasn't experienced the trauma of dug up plants and eaten through wiring (not to mention the sounds of, what we now know are, illicit relations in the roof), it is understandable that they won't appreciate the urgency of the De-populate (the antechinus, etc) or Perish imperative. Voters might even think these species are all cute and cuddly. We'll have time to educate them to the contrary once we've gotten into electoral power and start our intense media campaign to demonise all our enemies, Tim.

What's that, Tim? A focus group. That's it. We'll survey, we'll workshop it; we'll run a draft manifesto up the flag pole to see if it flies. And then, based on what we think will be politically achievable and populist, we'll prepare a principles based Manifesto.

So, Neighbours – fellow Mountaineers - Men and Women of Mt W and Mt I - the question for this edition is, what burning political issues do you think RAATS should adopt? How do you feel we can best bring RAATS – err, Elizabeth's RAATS – to national prominence. What will get those voters out of their comfy chairs and down to the polling booths (apart from the fines); keen to vote early and often.

And on a genuinely serious note (for once) – has anyone worked out how to deter the lyrebirds? They're getting very bold. Just the other morning, the Boss saw one with martini glass in claw shaking an olive tree from its roots, presumably desperate for a finishing touch olive or two. Should I set out some distracting hors d'oeuvres along with the silver cocktail shaker? Don't snigger, Tim. This is a serious matter. I am both shaken and stirred...to action!

Elizabeth Montano