

Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine Community Newsletter

Working together for a better
community



February 2010

EDITOR'S NOTES

You will note that the RFS logo has been removed, indicating that this newsletter will no longer include RFS notes. The RFS committee decided they would like to produce a newsletter that will include notices and statistics that may not be of much interest to the wider community, and which appears with greater frequency than this one.

The wet weather has dominated the start of the year both up here and in Sydney. It's good to have the rain - everything in the gardens is growing at an amazing pace, particularly the grass, and it's also good to see that the drought-stricken farms out west are at last getting rain, and there's water in the Darling River. (We used to go out to Cobar and Bourke quite frequently; we had friends on the land out there, so have a particular interest in those regions.) The rainfall figures, in millimeters*, at Withycombe for the last few years were:

2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
781 (30.7)	1108 (43.6)	785 (30.9)	1775 (69.9)	1331 (52.4)	1496 (58.9)

(The figures in brackets are inches, for those who still like to think in those units.) Peter Richey tells me that he measured 1674 mm at Gowan Ross last year; the difference is fairly typical of local rainfall variation. January this year was a fairly normal month—about 100 mm—but February, even though only half-gone, has been the wettest month in the last four years: we have had 260 mm up to now. (That's is not by any means the wettest month on record for this area, which seems to have been February, 1956, when 708 mm rain fell!)

The unfortunate business of the group that got lost in the Wollangambe last month, resulting in the death of a teenager, showed the community spirit in a good light. Diana, collaborating with 'Beth Raines, has written an article about the how the search was run, to draw well-deserved attention to those who helped in various ways.

It is a great pleasure to be able to congratulate **Graham Tribe** on the award to him of an Australia Medal (AM) Judy Tribe has provided with the background to this prestigious award (see p. on p.5). Graham's award was in recognition of his work with the Multiple Sclerosis Society, but he has also contributed greatly to this community through his work as President of the PA. (He was the one who dobbed me into this job, for which I am not sure that I am grateful.)

May I draw your attention to the notice about the wombat project (p. 6). John and Mary Holt have generously provided the funds to support a one-year student study on wombats in the Mt Wilson- Mt Irvine area. It's fairly common to hear complaints about how wombats have pushed a hole through the fence, eaten the vegies or are burrowing under the house. Then, of course, there was the famous case of Molly de Chalumeau, Gourmet Poodle, who was Mugged on the Mountain. But, despite all this, there is actually remarkably little concrete information about how many wombats there are around the place, and what they do. So we have organised this study. We need your input. John and Mary are Patrons of the Natural History Society of South Australia. The main activity of this group is the control of the Moorundie Hairy-Nosed Wombat Reserve. The area is over 5000 hectares of a formerly degraded sheep station, 100km north of Adelaide which the Holts helped purchase. Over 600 wombats live there.

No jokes in this issue—I had a space problem

Joe Landsberg
Tel. 4756 2167

e-mail: jlandsberg@netspeed.com.au

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MOUNT WILSON PROGRESS ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE NEWS

Coming Events

Clean Up Australia Day will happen here as usual in Mount Wilson on Sunday, 7th March. Meet outside the Village Hall from 9.00 a.m. Any assistance you can give between 9.00 and midday would be most welcome. Our villages may appear clean but it is amazing the amount of rubbish that is collected each year, so come along and do your bit for our villages. Bring hat, gloves and sunscreen, in anticipation of the sun shining on the mounts again. Contact Robert Chesney, 4756 2085 or 9488 7024, for further information.

MWPA General Meeting will be held on 20th March, 2010, at 5.30 p.m. in the Village Hall. Drinks and nibbles will follow the meeting, so come along find out what is happening in the village, have your say and socialise with fellow residents.

Mount Wilson Progress Association Committee.

We are pleased to announce that all positions on the committee for 2009/10 are filled with the appointment of Kim Gow. The committee is,

President	Bill Ryan
Vice-President	Richard Beattie
Treasurer	Libby Raines
Secretary	Moira Green
Committee Members	Brian Abrahams, Robert Chesney, Kim Gow, Alison Halliday

New Members

Welcome to Mount Wilson to new members of the Association, Diane and Dennis Banicevic, new owners of 'The Copse'.

Numbering of Properties

It is good to see numbers as well as property names appearing at the entrance to properties. However, there are still many without numbers. Please assist the emergency services by clearly identifying your property with a number. You may need assistance one day.

Cleared Land below the Zig Zag.

This cleared section of land is owned by National Parks and Wildlife, sometimes used by Council, recently by Integral. It is not a dump site although it

has the appearance of being one at times. Garden waste and other rubbish have been left there and have built up to be a fire hazard and an eyesore to the entry to the mountain. BMCC has agreed to clear the site and place a more secure barrier across the entrance. The previous chain has been repeatedly cut and removed. Please do not dump your green waste or anything else on this site and please ask people employed by you not to do so.

Reporting to Blue Mountains City Council

The committee, particularly Richard Beattie, reports to Council problems in Mount Wilson that require maintenance. If you notice something requiring attention, e.g. fallen trees and limbs too big for chipping, potholes, drains and culverts in need of cleaning, etc., you can report it to Council's Customer Contact Centre on 4780 5000. Sweeping of kerbs and gutters is on a schedule to be done twice a year. The more individual contacts made, the faster Council may respond to your committee's requests. Perhaps that is a little too optimistic but it is worth a try.

BMCC Kerbside Services

The autumn Household Collection Service will be on Monday 8th March and Green Waste Chipping will be 15th March. Check the BMCC website for details, www.bmcc.nsw.gov.au.

Mount Wilson/Mount Irvine Phone Book

Please note the following correction to the phone book:

Lynne and Neville Whan – 4756 2105
Please keep me informed of corrections and changes.

Mount Wilson Leisure Library

Don't forget that the library is open every Saturday morning from 10.00 to 11.00. If you wish to come at another time, please contact me on 4756 2162 and it can be arranged.

Join the Mount Wilson Progress Association Inc.

If you are a property owner or reside in Mount Wilson you are eligible to be a member of the Association. If you are not a member and wish to join please contact me.

Moira Green
Secretary

SERVICES TO THE MOUNTS

There was good general interest and support for the suggestion in the November *Newsletter* for the community to have a list of contact details of contractors and suppliers who have been found to be satisfactory and are willing to come to Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine. To kick the initiative along **Richard Beattie** has agreed to receive nominations for the list which he would keep updated and make available to anyone asking for it. To establish the list Richard will email members of the community for whom we have email addresses to invite nominations of suppliers and contractors with their contact details. If your email address is not in the Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine Phone Book and you would like to contribute to the list please advise Richard at mwmcontractor@gmail.com

If you have work you believe could be most easily and least expensively done by asking a contractor to

work at various properties while in the area then also advise Richard. He already has water tank cleaning as work he is hoping others will see merit in asking a contractor to come in to do.

Richard has also said that, three or four times a year, he would be prepared to send out by e-mail (only) the list of contractors and suppliers. The website committee chaired by Graham Tribe is exploring the idea of putting a list of interested contractors/suppliers on the Mt Wilson website, for which there might be a nominal charge to help cover costs. It might also be possible to allow people who have used a particular contractor to endorse them on the website or for the contractors, with the customers' agreement, to list their satisfied customers in the Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine area.

However, these ideas are for the future.

VILLAGE HALL JOTTINGS

The year has started off well with its first meeting on Sat 20th February when we welcomed another new member to the Committee - Ted Griffin. We also have a new Secretary as Beth Raines has stood down after serving over six years in that position. We all know the heavy load Beth is carrying as RFS Captain and in other projects she is involved with so we both wish her well, particularly as Captain for her second term and thank her for the great work she has done as Secretary. We are delighted that Beth is staying on as a member of the Committee.

Helen Freeman has stepped forward as our new Secretary and we certainly wish her well in this position and thank her for taking it on.

Although we have had a slow time over December and January some things have been happening. Removable fly curtains have been placed on the three kitchen doors and callico covers are being made for 30 of the arm-less chairs so that they can be protected when the Hall is used as an emergency centre and soot covered firefighters have to be accommodated and fed there. We are also keen to upgrade the kitchen as soon as Council fixes the roof which is supposed to happen "early this year".

Our Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday, 20th March in the hall commencing 10am and there will be a significant proposal placed before that meeting concerning Stage 2 of the restoration of the building. As this will affect the long term amenity of the Hall and the community which owns and uses it we would ask that you will consider coming to the AGM so the matter can be debated fully and the decisions taken will have the support and backing of the community. The Committee's proposals will be distributed before the meeting for your consideration.

Whilst we are talking about dates, there will be a working bee in the Hall grounds on Saturday 10th April commencing 9am. We would appreciate all the help we can get to do some pruning, remove some trees which are no longer serving their purpose and generally tidy up the property.

The Yulefest will be on Saturday 3rd July and the Melbourne Cup Luncheon on 2nd November. Information about those events will be distributed in the usual manner later in the year.

Ron Green.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

Last month our community was involved in a mammoth attempt to rescue the party of six which was lost in the Wollangambe. It was tragic that one of the party lost his life but that does not take away from the considerable effort put in by both our own and the wider community.

Blackheath/Mt Victoria, Medlow Bath, South Katoomba, Katoomba/Leura and Wentworth Falls, Hazelbrook, Linden, Warrimoo and Glenbrook/Lapstone joined our RFS brigade in the search. Members of our brigade involved in the search were Beth Raines, Libby Raines, Diana Landsberg, Luke O'Hearn, Ian Docker, Barry Freeman, Stephen Dean, Peter Raines, Peter Dempsey, Col Fullagar and Vic Zhukov.

Other agencies involved in the Search and Rescue were the Police Rescue Squad, the Ambulance Service. So there was quite a lot of co-ordination and organising to do. This was not made any easier by the presence of the media, which was very intrusive at times.

On the Wednesday the RFS side of the search was run by Peter Church, our West 3 Co-ordinator, but on the Thursday our own Beth Raines took on the Commander's role – and acquitted herself very well – though she admits it was a steep learning curve. Well done, Beth.

Of course all these people had to be fed and the station kitchen was run by Margaret Richey, Julie Townend and Moira Green (with Kathleen Oakes and David Howell helping in the Station). Graham and Judy Tribe and Florence Smart turned up with extra food and Susie Hope and Owen Haviland offered accommodation for both the waiting families of the lost walkers and anyone else who needed it, all of which was very generous. On the Thursday the catering was done by the Salvation Army, with the help of St Vincent de Paul – making our little station kitchen look very small.

Finally, when it was all over and everyone else had gone home Kim and Tim Gow turned up to clean the station and Barry Freeman took on the cleaning of the vehicles.

I think it was an amazing effort and demonstrates just what a special community we have.

Diana Landsberg

THINGS AFFECTING COUNCIL AND EMERGENCY SERVICES (see also pages 5 & 6).

The Progress Association would like everyone to note of the following, which can help ensure that the services we get up here are as good as possible:

Letter boxes

Letter boxes should be placed on the edge of the road, so the postman can drive up to the box and put the mail into it from his vehicle window. It should be at the correct height and should not have rocks around it which limit vehicle access or can damage cars. A lot of local people deliver mail and notices and—like the postman—find it irritating to have to get out of the car to deliver mail, especially when it's wet.

THE BIG EUCALYPTUS ON MOUNT WILSON

From time to time people ask me about the big eucalyptus trees which form the tall wet forests on the top of Mount Wilson. In our rich basalt soils these trees grow to a huge size, towering majestically above the rain forest.

Eucalyptus oreades, the blue mountain ash, is a tall, straight tree with a slightly cream trunk beneath the bark which falls away in long strips. It tends to grow in the more sheltered areas, at the bottom of the Zig Zag, below the rocks at du Faur's rocks, and there are breath-takingly beautiful stands of *oreades* on the Mount Irvine Road between the two Farrer Roads.

Eucalyptus viminalis, White or Manna Gum or Ribbon Gum are the tall, elegant, smooth, white trunked trees beside the road near the top of the Zig Zag. Mount Wilson is the only mountain home of these magnificent trees. They do not grow on Mount Irvine or Mount Tomah. It sheds its bark in long narrow strips, almost to the base of the tree and the trunk beneath is very white.

Eucalyptus cypellocarpa, locally known as the Yellow Gum but also known as the Mountain Grey Gum, is a tall, robust tree with a greyish white trunk beneath the peeling grey bark, and there are many in the tall forests and scattered about the village.

Eucalyptus blaxlandii or Blaxlands Stringybark, is a large, handsome tree with very thick, rough and furrowed fibrous bark on the trunk and large branches. It is found (not very many) scattered about in the tall forests on Lambs Hill and Farrer Road, and we have one, very large tree at Merry Garth.

Eucalyptus fastigata, Brown Barrel, is a large tree, widely distributed on Mount Wilson, Mount Irvine and Mount Tomah. The bark is rough and fibrous but not as thick or furrowed as the *blaxlandii*. The Giant Tree was a *fastigata* and there are many large trees in Hillcrest Lane and Cathedral Reserve.

These are the main, large eucalyptus which dominate our tall forests. There are others: *E. dives*, Broad Leaved Peppermint, *E. piperita*, the Sydney Peppermint and *E. sclerophilla*, Scribbly Gum along the Five Mile, *E. gregsoniana* (named after Jessie Gregson of Yengo) which is a Mallee Snow Gum found on the hill-sides where there is low heathlike scrub such as out near the Bogey Holes.

Libby Raines

MT WILSON STUDY CENTRE

The school building and teacher's cottage in Mt Wilson were originally built in 1890 and 1891 respectively. For almost a century a one teacher school operated, but as time went by there was difficulty in enrolling the required number of pupils.

After several years of non-use, the Mt Wilson School was officially closed in 1987 by the Education Department and a new body was established by the Ministry of Education known as the Mt Wilson Study Centre Council, responsible for the management of the property. The school became known as the Mt Wilson Study Centre. The Council was to facilitate adult educational activities and to encourage scholarly and artistic pursuits. Preservation and maintenance of the Centre in case there was future need for the buildings to revert to a school was also part of the Council's responsibility.

The original Council was chaired by Dr Ellice Swinbourne, a former Principal of Nepean College of Advance Education. Original Council members were from University of Sydney, NSW Board of Adult Education, Ministry of Education and five local citizens including Libby Raines who has recently retired, and Alan Gunn, still a Council member. Later chairmen included Gary Ghent, Huw Evans and presently Michael Pembroke. The efforts and contributions for over 10 years from the Centres inception, of the late Dickie Williams (Withycombe Cottage) and late John Wellings (previously from NSW Board of Adult Education and Ministry of Education) were highly appreciated and deserve special acknowledgement.

The Centre was endorsed as an official Bi-Centennial Project, and received a grant, initially of \$50,000, with a later addition of \$25,000. All monies were applied to the restoration of the buildings and grounds and equipping the school for study groups.

On 29th October 1988 in Mt Wilson Study Centre was officially opened by the then Minister of Education Mr Terry Metherall.

The village of Mt Wilson had been classified under the Heritage Act in 1977, and in November 1990, the school and teacher's cottage were specified under an Interim Conservation Order 920 under section 26 of the 1977 Heritage Act

Since I joined the Council in 1997 the use of the facility by study groups has declined, but short term rentals have continued to provide funds enough to maintain these historic buildings. We have overcome an additional overdraft needed to replace the roof and sections of the buildings decayed by borer. We no longer have 'official' Council members, instead the Council now consists of local people, with Margaret Dean now undertaking Libby's previous role of handling bookings. I am retiring as secretary / treasurer at our next AGM in March and we are looking for a willing replacement, or even interested new Council members. *Can anyone help?*

Jane Mayne

Secretary / Treasurer - Mt Wilson Study Centre

Graham Tribe AM

It was wonderful news to hear that Graham Tribe was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the 2010 Australia Day Honours list. The citation was for service to community health as a promoter of research into multiple sclerosis and through executive roles with MS Australia.

He joined the MS Society of NSW in 1973 as a Board Member when asked to join the MS movement by a work colleague, whose father-in-law started the MS Society in Australia. He was the Chairman of MS NSW on two occasions. In 2005 when the NSW and Victorian MS Societies merged he continued on to the Board of the new organization which is called MS Limited. He was also Chairman of the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Australia (MSA) Board from 2001 until 2009, as the Society grew and developed its national identity. In 2004 a separate group was set up for the promotion and funding of MS research, called MS Research Australia. Graham was a driver in that process and has continued on that Board. During his time the Society has grown from a very small organization to one which has gross revenue of \$65 million annually and with subsidiaries having additional gross revenue of \$50 million annually. This enables it to provide \$35 million annually for support and services to people with MS and research funds to find a cure for MS.

Back in 1973, he was assured it would take up no more than one night a month of his time! Over the years he has spent considerably more time than that promoting the work of the MS Society in various ways, but he always says that he has gained so much from meeting wonderful people and seeing the role that the MS Society is increasingly being able to play to help those with MS and their families.

As a community we congratulate Graham for this well deserved recognition of his service. We in Mount Wilson also benefit from Graham's community service for which we are very appreciative. He was on the Progress Association Committee for seven years, five of those as President. He continues to assist the Progress Association and is active in the Rural Fire Service and other community activities.

THE WOMBAT PROJECT

The project will be carried out by a student called Nicki Selles, from the University of Western Sydney. The idea is to (i) document reports of wombat activity in the area and (ii) at a number of sites, monitor wombat activity at their burrows. (It would be nice to get an estimate of populations, but I don't think this will be possible.)

We're not sure yet how the project will develop, but for a start, will anyone who has active wombat burrows on their property and/or who has some sort of problem with wombats (making holes in fences, eating vegetables, burrowing under the house...) and who is willing to be interviewed by the student, please let me know. I will then put her in touch with you so she can gather as much anecdotal information as possible.

She will then select a few sites where there are active burrows and devise some sort of surveillance procedure, hopefully using infra-red triggered video cameras to record wombat comings and goings.

She will also do some spotlighting surveys in the area (assisted, I am told, by her fiancé).

Any suggestions will be welcome; please contact me if you're prepared to help. Start date will probably not be for a month or so.

Joe Landsberg

CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY



Sunday, 7th March, 2010

9.00 a.m. till 12.00 noon.

Your assistance for all or part of this time would be appreciated.
Meet at the Mount Wilson Village Hall to decide areas of preference.
You will need: gloves, sun screen and hat
Collection bags will be provided and a rubbish skip will be located at the hall.

For further information please phone Robert Chesney on
4756 2085 or 9488 7024

This is an activity of the Mount Wilson Progress

Garbage

Please use your recycle bins. Recently 3 village garbage bins were full of cardboard which went to the tip instead of being recycled. Please make sure, when the bin is placed at the roadside, that there is enough height above the bin for the truck to lift and empty it.



DARREL & LEITH CONYBEARE

Darrel was introduced to the mountains as a small boy, regularly holidaying with his family at Wyndham. It was there that he acquired a skill of distinct rarity in children today, that of milking a cow.

He attended North Sydney Boys High, as had his judge/lawyer father, brothers and one son. Studying Architecture at Sydney University he graduated with First Class Honours, the University Medal and a Travelling Scholarship, which he used to study at the University of Pennsylvania.

In 1963 Darrel married Leith Creed, whom he had first met when they were architectural students. They subsequently had three children, all born in the USA.

After travelling around Europe and working in London, they flew to Philadelphia in 1964 to live as foreign students while Darrel completed two Master's degrees in Architecture and Civic Design.

Graduating from the University of Pennsylvania in 1966, Darrel worked as Urban Designer for Marin County California, a place very similar in beauty to the Mt Wilson / Mt Irvine area.

The next move was to Los Angeles, to the office of Charles Eames in Venice, California. Darrel worked for Eames as a designer / architect for the next three years before the family returned to Australia in 1970.

Darrel then worked for Urban Systems on the City of Sydney Strategic Plan, prior to commencing his own practice, now known as CM Plus, with emphasis on master planning, urban design, landscape, interior and industrial design.

In 1986 the firm was commissioned to prepare designs for the forth-coming bicentenary to upgrade Macquarie Street and Circular Quay. At that stage there was little in the way of quality street furniture, such as seating, bus stops, signage, framework and railings. The firm designed many of the necessities for the upgrade.

Recommended to the World Bank for its international expertise in university master planning, CM+ was selected to design the masterplan for a new university in Botswana, now built. Recently the commission of a new town outside Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam to accommodate 35,000 people was won through competition.

In 1983, Leith enrolled in Architecture at the University of Technology, gaining First Class Honours in 1989. She then completed a Dip Arts in Italian and a Master of Arts in Renaissance Studies at Sydney University and taught at Sydney University and the College of Fine Arts at the University of New South Wales for several years. She has acquired considerable experience as an editor.

They bought Mt Irvine properties on Bowens Creek Road in 1986 from Gwen (Scrivener) and Ed Artlett; Many Trees in 1989 from Betty Clarke, and their home at Taihoa in 1993, also from Gwen Artlett and her sisters.

As to their thoughts of living in Mt Irvine/Mt Wilson area: 'a place still unspoiled, with a true sense of community, a unique retreat from the madding crowds and frenetic life in Sydney. A place of great beauty, almost spiritual in nature.'

Who among us would disagree?

John Holt

Property names

Please have a sign with your property number on your gate or gate post. This is essential for emergency services. Neither people nor property names are given when emergency services are called out—only the property number. It can be impossible to find you if your property number is not on your gate or gate-post, and even if you are found, the search can waste a great deal of time.