



# The Mounts

## The Community Newsletter of Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine



**February 2012**

### Welcome

Greetings to the New Year and an edition of 'The Mounts' of such breadth, interest and influence that Gina Reinhart is wondering how she can get a seat at the table.

Margaret Wickins and Bruce Knott have now moved into their new home at the old Post Office. On behalf of the community, I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their unstinting efforts in successfully running the Waterfall Road Cafe for the last 5 years and to welcome the new owners of *Chimney Cottage*, Stephen List and Rosie Walsh. Running such a high profile venue is no easy task; it is a pity—though perfectly understandable from a financial perspective, given the inherent seasonal and mid-week variations—that the villages no longer have a cafe to feed and water the seemingly growing number of visitors.

The issue of newspaper deliveries to existing subscribers throughout the week has been resolved with the Blackheath newsagency willing to act as a distribution point via Dave the postman.

Many residents regularly attend the Mt Vic Flicks; an interesting recent SMH article is reproduced here which highlights the economic pressure small theatres face.

Now Gina has resolved the newspaper distribution imbroglio to the upper Blue Mountains, perhaps she can turn her attention to regional cinemas? Just a thought.

**Tim Gow** Tel. 4756 2031 or 0412 133 559

e-mail: [seftoncottage@gmail.com](mailto:seftoncottage@gmail.com)

### Community Calendar

<b>February</b>	<b>Fri 10th 9.00—12.00 Bush Care— Sloan Reserve</b>	<b>Sun 12th 3.00pm Mt Wilson Church Service</b>	<b>Fri 17th Bushwalking Group— Wentworth Falls—Valley of the Waters</b>	
<b>March</b>	<b>Sun 4th 9.00am RFS Training Mt Wilson Shed</b>	<b>Sun 4th 9.00—12.00 Clean Up Australia Day, Village Hall</b>	<b>Fri 9th 9.00—12.00 Bush Care—Sloan Reserve</b>	<b>Sat 10th RFS Six Foot Track Run, Jenolan Caves</b>
<b>Sun 11th 3.00pm Mt Wilson Church Service</b>	<b>Fri 16th Bushwalking Group—Lost City, Newnes Plateau</b>	<b>Sat 17th 5.30 pm MWPA General Meeting, Village Hall</b>	<b>Sat 31st 4.30—6.30pm Mt Wilson Village Hall AGM</b>	<b>April</b>
<b>Sun 1st 9.00am RFS Training Mt Wilson Shed</b>	<b>Fri 6th 9.00am Mt Wilson Good Friday Church Service</b>	<b>Sun 8th 3.00pm Mt Wilson Easter Day Church Service</b>	<b>Fri 13th 9.00—12.00 Bush Care—Sloan Reserve</b>	<b>Fri 20th Bushwalking Group—Walk TBA</b>

## MOUNT WILSON PROGRESS ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE NEWS

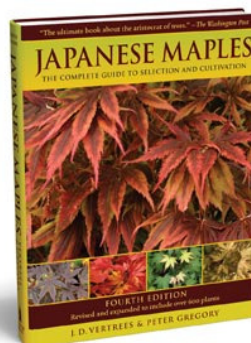
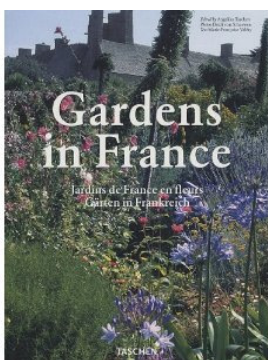
### Coming Events

- Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> March, 2012 9.00a.m. to 12.00 p.m. Clean up Australia Day, meet at the Village Hall
- Saturday, 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2012 at 5.30 p.m. – MWPA General Meeting
- Saturday, 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 2012 at 5.30 p.m. – MWPA Annual General Meeting

### Mount Wilson Leisure Library

Nine gardening books have recently been donated by Rodger and Wai Davidson, wonderful reading and browsing material for all garden lovers, and who in Mount Wilson is not a garden lover? The books are:

- *Gardens in France* edited by A. Taschen. Many private and public gardens are beautifully illustrated.
- *Japanese Maples* by J.D. Vertrees (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed). The first edition was the first definitive text in English to describe the full range of the 300 cultivars now in existence. The second edition published in 1987 includes cultivar introduced since the first edition.
- *Kalmia, Mountain Laurel and Related Species* by R. Jaynes. When looking at this book, you will be amazed at the number of varieties of this plant.
- *Handy Herbaceous Perennials, Vol.11* by L. Jelitto & W. Schacht
- *Peonies* by J. Fearnley-Whittingstall
- *The Hillier Guide to Connoisseur's Plants* by A. Toogood
- *A Photographic Garden History* by R. Phillips & N. Foy
- *Bulbs* by R. Phillips & M. Rix
- *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Trees* by D. More & J. White



The library is open every Saturday morning from 10.00 to 11.00 unless the hall is booked for a function, so do drop in for a browse through the bookshelves. If you wish to come at another time or have books delivered, please contact me on 4756 2162 and this can be arranged.

If anyone would like to assist in looking after the library for one hour a month on a Saturday morning please contact me, we would appreciate your help.

### Phone Book

A recent change to the phone book is Debra and Peter Clymo, their Sydney home phone number is now 9331 1621 and mobile is changed to 0488 442 999.

Please keep me informed of changes to contact details. These are immediately updated in the website phone book.

### 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. Membership fees make an important contribution to the work of maintaining our village and providing contact with residents through the production of such things as newsletters, the phone book and the website. The more members there are, the more we can do for you.

**Moir Green (Secretary)**



## Clean Up Australia Day

**Sunday, 4th March, 2012**

**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 Fire Station.  
For further information please phone Brian Abrahams on 4756 2119.**

This is an activity of the Mount Wilson Progress Association Inc.

### Blue Mountains Gazette

Regular readers of the 'Blue Mountains Gazette' will be interested to know that the newspaper will now be available in Mt Wilson on Saturday mornings from the Library(10.00-11.00). Why not borrow a book at the same time? We have been allocated 20 copies only so it will be on a first come best dressed basis.

Those who are not regular readers will find the letters to the editor page a perfect excuse for putting off those wet weather jobs. Copies of the paper not collected during Library hours will still be available outside the Village Hall under the veranda.

Many thanks to Ron Green for organising this community service.

**Peter Dempsey**

**Blue Mountains Gazette**  
Two years running.

Home News Sport Opinion Weather Community Classifieds About Us Jobs Real Estate

Hot Topics: Soccer riots Supermarket wars Elephants for the bush?

**Authority knocks back Aldi Katoomba alcohol proposal**  
Katoomba has reached 'saturation point' with bottle shops according to the state's liquor licensing authority, which has knocked back plans by the town's Aldi supermarket to sell cheap alcohol.

**Arrest made over Blaxland robbery**  
A man will face court over an armed robbery that occurred at Ice Box Liquor in Blaxland on January 10.

**Police to investigate highway after Medlow smashes**  
Authorities will investigate a stretch of the Great Western Highway at Medlow Bath following two crashes in less than a week.

**Ill woman rescued from bushland**  
Woman rescued from the Lower Mountains suffering severe dehydration and high blood pressure after getting into difficulties during a bushwalk.

**Rain fails to keep Australia Day crowds away**  
Glenbrook Park awash with colour on Australia Day as the community comes out to show its support for the annual celebrations. | GALLERY

**Latest News**

- 2:54 PM Westpac to axe hundreds of jobs
- 2:32 PM Brothel owner charged with human trafficking
- 1:15 PM Rinehart fears for safety, court hears
- 12:50 PM Raper has famous boots to fill

Springwood super clinic opens its doors  
Springwood's multi-million dollar GP super clinic is open for business nearly three years after the Federal Government gave it the green light.

### March Dahlia Show

Peter Richey has advised that the scheduled Sunday 11th March Dahlia Show at the Village Hall has been cancelled, due to the abnormally wet summer and resultant poor growing conditions for dahlias.

It is a pity that this cancellation was required as the first show last year was an outstanding success which displayed the extraordinary range and colour of the genus.



Mount Wilson Village Hall Management Committee  
invites you to attend the  
**Annual General Meeting**  
to be held on  
**Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> March at 4.30pm**  
at the Mount Wilson Village Hall

Business will include consideration of reports from the committee  
Plans of the proposed toilet and storage extension will be available

Please join us after the meeting for wine and cheese



(Left) Interior of the Chimney Cottage Tea Room c 1934

(Below) The pergola next to Chimney Cottage, from the same time

Both photos are from the Mt Wilson & Mt Irvine Historical Society's archives.

Whilst the cafe will no longer continue, Stephen and Rosie will still operate *Chimney Cottage* as a B&B.





**www.mtwilson.com.au—The Mounts Website**

We have had some very encouraging feedback from visitors to the website. One recent example was from a person who was preparing for a canyon expedition to the area and looking for information on local weather:

*'I just came across your website while searching for weather information for the Mt Wilson area and am amazed at how beautiful it is. It is very rare to find a community website that is so visually pleasing, uncluttered, professional, up to date, and comprehensive! Whoever it is that designed and/or maintains the site should be commended.*

*I have but one comment regarding the site, that to me seems to be a large omission - no mention of canyoning as an activity for the area. Surely from both a recreational and commercial point of view this activity brings huge numbers of people to the area? From an easy float down the Wollangambe River, to some of the more adventurous treks into the wilderness further north, Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine are a fantastic location for these activities. And there are even many Mt Wilson residents who are active canyoners themselves!*

*Apart from that, I wish to commend you again on such a beautiful website and I will certainly be steering people your way in future'.*

Given the large number of canyoners who visit the area, we agree and see it as an opportunity to warn about the risks and the need to be prepared. We will develop a section on canyoning over the next few months.

Recently, the Police and National Parks and Wildlife Service have developed a brochure about preparing for walks in the Blue Mountains. Given the number of search and rescues we experience, we have added a link to the brochure in our section on walks.

The weather station on the Mt Wilson fire station has been on the website weather page for about two months now and it has become a very popular page. The data has been accurate except for the rainfall reporting, which is ironic given the opportunity it has been given by the high rainfall over the last couple of months. We have been puzzled by the weather station only reporting about half the amount others have recorded, and we have checked all the electronics and the buckets which collect the rain.

Finally, Joe Landsberg has come to the rescue. An edited version of his comments are:

"The business of measuring rainfall is much more complex than seems likely at first glance and 'true' rainfall is the amount of water that hits the ground.

In general wind speeds and air turbulence increase with height and the 'catch' of a standard design rain gauge will fall as its exposure height increases. Quite simply, the eddies that characterise turbulence blow raindrops across the gauge. There are no clear rules about the reduction because wind speeds and turbulence vary enormously, depending on the topographic situation, so you can't apply a standard correction factor. Tall trees in the immediate vicinity of a gauge - as at the fire station site, I think - will reduce wind speeds but they're also likely to make the air flow more turbulent. Things will also change with wind direction and from one rain event to another - things like drop size affect response to turbulence."

So there you have it. Joe is working on solutions to this problem which include possible wind-shields and mounting the rain gauge in a different location. Given the rain we have experienced this summer, we'd like to have a reasonably accurate measure of the rain which has fallen, don't you think?

Each week we receive some email queries from visitors to the website. We get about 2 per week, but this varies a little from season to season as you would expect. Sometime we get compliments such as the one at the beginning of this article, but people usually ask for some information. The emails are routed automatically to Tim Gow via the generic email address

[info@mtwilson.com.au](mailto:info@mtwilson.com.au) The typical questions include when is the best time to visit Mt Wilson? When is the best time for walnuts at Mt Irvine? How do I book the Mt Wilson Hall? How do I organise a wedding at Mt Wilson? Can we camp at Cathedral Reserve? What accommodation is available? When are gardens open? We seem to have a good response to the answers and we get positive feedback from people who have visited.

The most heavily visited sections of the website are the pages on Accommodation, Gardens, How to get here, and Weather.

Do you have any suggestions on material you would like added to the website? Please let us know.

**Graham Tribe**

## **Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade**

### **CAPTAIN'S REPORT**

We have had relatively few incidents but have been doing plenty of training and maintenance. Since November 2011, the Brigade has attended nine incidents:

- 1 x car accident
- 4 x Community First Responder calls
- 1 x rescue
- 1 x oil spill
- 2 x trees over roads

December training saw 20 members gather for Station Officer training and fire trail mapping. Each armed with Aeroguard and a GPS, groups went to Mount Irvine and mapped Danes Way West, Honeymoon Cottage Spur, Morleys Creek Trail, Knight Brown trail, Kookootonga Trail, and Scriveners Pass. This information will be put on the website showing the location of fire trails.

Five of our Brigade members assisted at a rescue at Bell where an injured person was stretchered out of the bush for approximately 2km. Graham Tribe and Vic Zhukov removed fallen trees which fell over the fire trail during the July wind storm to allow emergency vehicles in to the track head, while Peter Raines walked in with other RFS, Police Rescue and Paramedics to the injured walker. Tim Gow and Beth Raines joined them to assist with the carry out.

In rescues of this sort, six people carry the injured person in a stretcher along the walking track, negotiating trees and shrubs, fallen timber and rock ledges. Two further groups of six people wait 100 – 200m up the track to take over from the first who in turn leap-frog ahead. A paramedic stays right behind the stretcher group monitoring the patient, while another team of rescuers bring up the rear carrying equipment such as First Aid kits, oxygen kits and other rescue gear. Where there is a steep section, the stretcher is passed up the line from person to person. Generally these jobs are done in poor weather conditions unsuitable for a helicopter rescue. The Police and Ambulance are always very grateful for the professional help supplied by the Blue Mountains RFS.

On 22 October, twenty-six RFS personnel and eight staff from National Parks and Wildlife Service conducted a Hazard Reduction burn between Waterfall Creek and the Southern Fire Trail. This burn was essential for the protection of the moist rainforest on the southern slopes of Mount Wilson. If a wild fire were to burn up these slopes, it would destroy the existing rainforest and cause major erosion and biodiversity loss. Unlike dry sclerophyll forest, rainforest tree species are unable to regenerate after fires. Mature trees are killed and any fallen seed would have to germinate and grow, taking many decades for these seedlings to grow into trees while competing with other more

vigorous species, unstable slopes and possible future bushfires.

The area that was successfully burned in October was dry sclerophyll forest which is adapted to fire. Many of the species there such as hakeas and grass trees need fire to germinate. The heat and smoke produced by a fire burst open seed pods and stimulate flower and seed production. There are strict guidelines about how often an area is allowed to be burnt and how often an area should be burnt. Some species need a certain amount of time to establish before they begin to produce seeds whilst other species grow and produce seeds quickly and then die. The timing of hazard reductions is determined to suit the requirements of various species and to maximise biodiversity. Although the burnt areas may look unsightly, it is much better to hazard reduce relatively small areas, slowly and gently. A wild fire will burn out vast areas with a great intensity and reduces wildlife survival rates. The wet summer means that this area and the one below the Zig Zag are regenerating quickly. The Wynnes Rocks Road and Knight Brown Fire Trail hazard reductions are waiting for the weather conditions to improve before a similar hazard reduction can take place.

**Beth Raines**  
**Captain**

### **Brigade Training Update**

The new training year is under way. A wide range of courses are available during 2012 and several members of the Brigade have signed up to keep their skills levels up. But we need more people.

In particular we need new members to join the Brigade and do the basic Bushfire Firefighting course. As older members of the Brigade retire, it is essential that we replace them with new, trained members. Joining the Brigade teaches you useful skills for protecting your own property, and is a fun way to get to know all the members of your community.

Existing members who have done the Bushfire Firefighting (BF) course are recommended to consider the Advanced Firefighting (AF) course. This is an interesting course which covers fire behaviour, map reading, communications, and detailed weather knowledge.

A Village Firefighting (VF) course will be held locally at Mt Wilson this year if there is sufficient interest from local residents. This course covers structure fires as well as bush fire-fighting.

We also would like to encourage members to do one of the truck driving, chainsaw or first-aid courses. These are all areas which are useful skills to have on your own property as well as helping out your local Brigade.

For further information on any of the training opportunities during 2012, please contact Graham Tribe



### Weed Control in Mount Wilson Reserves

One of the many lasting memories of my childhood holidays at the cottage at *Merry Garth* was lying in bed and hearing the tinkling of cow bells. In those days, and up to the late 1980s, cattle wandered around the village roads and lanes and Reserves, keeping the grass short and the branches of the avenue trees above head height. They also ate all the soft new growth of the holly trees, ivy and honeysuckle which had seeded in the bush, thus keeping the weeds small.

The cows were of mixed breeds, very placid and many of them wore bells attached to leather collars around their necks so their owners could find them in the bush.

When the cattle were taken off the roads (mainly for safety reasons and insurance), the young holly trees, ivy, honeysuckle and other environmental weeds suddenly became a problem in the village as the plants grew large and started to seed. The grass grew too all around the village, hence starting the need to lawn mowing the Reserves.

Blackberries were always a problem and during the 1970s and 80s, the council, under the guidance of Bill Smart, waged a campaign against this noxious weed. Huge clumps were removed from all the Reserves and road sides. Blackberry picking became an activity of the past.

The maintenance of our Reserves was transferred from the Department of Lands to the Council during the 1980s and the members of the Mt Wilson Sights Reserve Trust who has looked after the Reserves so well, with a very small government budget, were retired.

This proved to be a very good move for the village, as the Mt Wilson Progress Association was able in 1992 to set up a general maintenance program for the Reserves with the Blue Mountains City Council using a local contractor.

Over the years, this arrangement must have saved Council many thousands of dollars and much work has been done.

We are able to decide what work needs to be done, where it needs to be done and how often. The program includes mowing and slashing, organising the garbage collection each week, planting and watering new trees, maintaining the village walking tracks and some tree work.

We were able to restore the three main village walking tracks—Waterfall Walk, the Du Faurs walks and the Happy Valley and Cathedral Creek tracks, with a dollar for dollar arrangement with the Council, so new steps were made and new signs installed.

Alan Gunn and his sons have been our main contractors since 1992. We are very grateful to Alan, Stewart and David who have done this work in all weathers for us for so long. The Progress Association pays for Alan for the work and then are reimbursed by Council. The work is done (weather permitting) when needed and the garbage arranged for pick-up each week.

Other contractors are also used; Peter Raines has done much of the work on the walking tracks and he does the big tree work. Micah Fink now works one day a month, mostly spraying the weeds and doing tree work. Chris, who works with Alan Gun, and Tim Gow have and will continue to help when needed. We are very fortunate to have such a great team of strong, willing and able men to work with and for us in the village.

During the 1990s, the Blue Mountains Council set up and organised many Bush Care groups around the mountains. These groups are volunteers who see a need to preserve the bushlands near their homes. A Council officer helps the groups, providing tools and knowledge. The groups usually meet once a month.

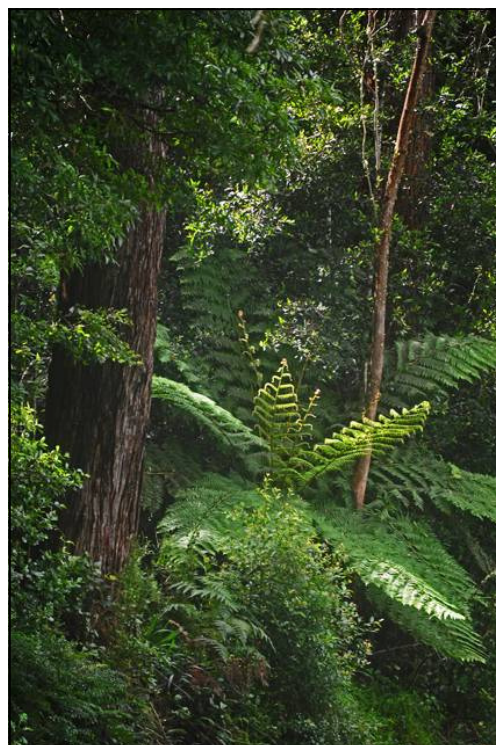
The Council also has their own paid Bush Care teams who work all through the mountains removing weeds from Council owned property.



In March 1999, the Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine Bush Care Group was founded mainly by members of the Bushwalking Group who has seen some wonderful work done by the Bush Care volunteers along Darwin's Walk at Wentworth Falls. We thought if they can restore that beautiful area, we could do it here at Mount Wilson. Beth Raines, who has completed the necessary courses at University and TAFE, was our leader and Chris Dewhurst from Council came out each month with tools and a truck to take away the huge amount of weeds we collected. Bill Smart and later, Wendy Smart, let us use the *Wynstay* field to make huge bonfires of prickly holly trees.

A small group of us, with Tracy Williams from the Council, still meet on the second Friday of each month to try to keep on top of this weed problem, which could if neglected, take over our unique and precious bushland and Reserves.

Each year, the council Bush Care team spends at least 400 hours at Mt Wilson. They work deep in the Reserves removing sycamore and holly trees and all the small environmental weeds which grow up each year from the seeds dropped by the many birds who feast on the plants growing in our gardens.



How can I help? How can I care for this magnificent bushland here on Mt Wilson you may ask?

Do join us each second Friday of the month from 9.00—12.00 if you can. The work is not difficult now and it is most rewarding to see the difference after a few hours of weeding!

In your gardens, keep the ivy from growing up the trees. It damages the trees but it also seeds there and the birds spread the seed.

Consider removing hollies, sycamores and *Acer negundos* from your garden. These plants cause huge problems in our rich soil with their prolific seeding.

Remove honeysuckle from your garden—it smothers the trees and shrubs and romps above and beneath the grass. It will, I can assure you, cause you endless problems in your gardens and it is a disaster in the bush.

Do take care when you are planting, to think about the environmental weed problem and not plant trees and shrubs which will produce a lot of seed.

And lastly, do go out and enjoy our wonderful rainforest and bushland Reserves. We are so fortunate that we can walk around the village without the fear or hassle of traffic. Use the walking tracks, lanes, back roads and fire trails and take time to observe the many birds and learn more about our unique and beautiful bushland that surrounds us.

**Libby Raines**

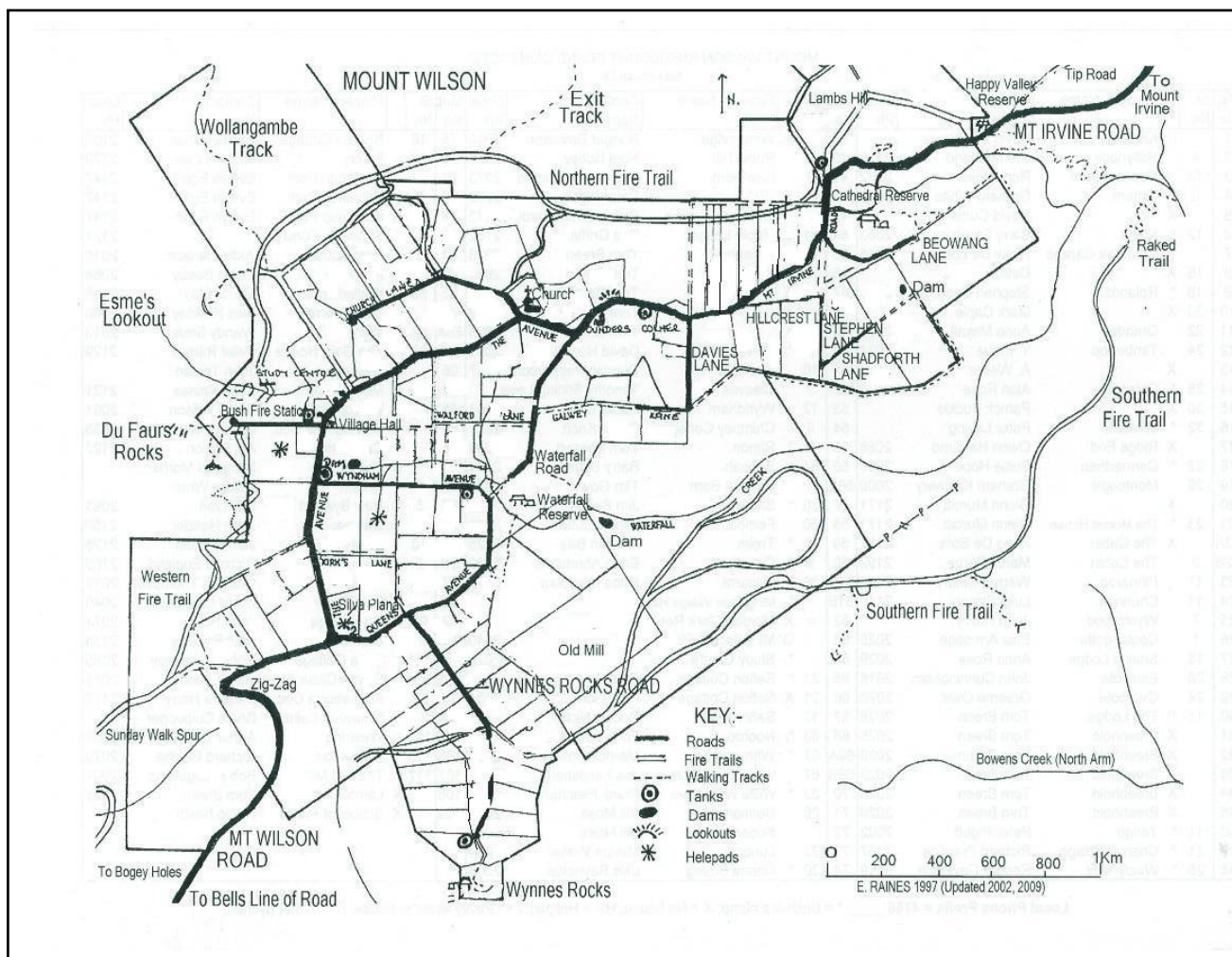


### Keeping our fire trails accessible

As you know our villages are surrounded by fire trails for access by fire trucks, something we all value in emergency situations, fires and canyon rescues.

Keeping the trails clear is a big job. Firstly any obstructions, such as fallen trees, blocked culverts or other problems, which would hamper access by fire trucks, have to be located. Then a working group can be sent out for restoration and repair work to be completed.

**You can help with this enormous job.** If you enjoy walking, why not walk one of the many local fire trails? If you see any problems, call Peter Dempsey on 4756 2199 or put a note on the blackboard outside the Mt Wilson Fire Station.



To get you started here is the Mt Wilson map showing the Northern Fire Trail, the Western Fire Trail and the Southern Fire Trail.

Note there is also a large network of fire trails at Mt Irvine!

If you would like more information, or some maps of the fire trails, log onto the Mt Wilson website [www.mtwilson.com.au](http://www.mtwilson.com.au) then follow the menu path **Rural Fire Brigade > Mitigation > Water Supplies and Fire Trails** and follow the prompts. (You need to be a member of the RFS in order to access this menu path.)

Alternatively, call Peter Dempsey or Beth Raines for further information.



### Mount Vic Flicks

For 25 years, Ron Bayley has screened films in his much-loved small cinema in the Blue Mountains.

But retirement is nearing and Mr Bayley fears it may be time to sell up before the digital revolution pushes him out.

Mr Bayley's Mount Vic Flicks, in Mount Victoria, is one of hundreds of independent cinemas across the country that will need to phase out the old 35 millimetre film projectors to make way for digital technology in the next few years.



*Ron and Diane Bayley outside their cinema, Mount Vic Flicks, which they have owned for 25 years.*

"This is going to be tough for country cinemas because most won't be able to afford to go digital," Mr Bayley, 67, said.

"I think this is going to wipe out in one fell swoop the entire lot of country cinemas."

The vice-president of the Independent Cinemas Association of Australia, Benjamin Zeccola, is far more optimistic.

Mr Zeccola said the association was very close to striking a deal with the major studios in the US by which they would pay independent cinemas a subsidy, known as a virtual print fee, to help cover the costs of the transition to digital.

The fee would be paid to cinemas from the savings the studios make from lower freight costs and greatly reduced production costs, Mr Zeccola said. The major cinema chains have already negotiated a similar fee.

"We don't want to see a single screen close," Mr Zeccola, who is also the executive director of Palace Cinemas, said.

He had no doubt that without such a fee, independent cinemas would struggle to survive.

"But we are pretty confident that it [the fee] will be up and running by April," Mr Zeccola said.

The transition to digital would benefit the studios because it would cut their costs dramatically but it would also be better cinematically.

"Digital is definitely higher quality and looks exactly as the filmmaker intended," he said.

But for Mr Bayley and his wife, Diane, using their retirement savings for new technology is not a risk worth taking.

"The film distributors are more interested in DVDs these days ... Look at what they did with *Red Dog*. They released that on DVD just before Christmas," Mr Bayley said.

"They are killing the goose that laid the golden egg ... If we find someone to buy it [the cinema] we will probably sell."

**Reprinted from The Sydney Morning Herald, January 30th, 2012**

## **DO IT NOW - Prepare Your Property**

While we experience one of the wettest summers in living memory, it is easy to forget that bushfires are a very real part of life in the mountains. Almost certainly, we will get a bushfire through the Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine area in the next 10 years. The key to safeguarding property is preparation – **now**. The time for property preparation is not when a bush fire is approaching our villages. Take advantage of the current low threat and use the time to ensure your property is ready for the inevitable.

### **Truck access to houses during a bush or house fire.**

The Pumper and Cat 1 tanker need the following clearances to fit down your drive:

- Height – 3.5m minimum (4m is better to allow for any overhanging branches)
- Width – 4m minimum (5m if there are curves or overhanging vegetation)

### **Water supply to truck and house during a bush or house fire.**

The quickest and most effective water source to fight a fire on your property is a direct connection to your water tank.

- If possible have a water tank at the same level or higher than your house with a dedicated pipe from the tank to the area adjacent to the house. Ideally the pipe should be 50mm or 100mm diameter ending in a Storz fitting for quick access by a truck.
- If your tank is below the house or a long way from it, you should provide a fire pump to deliver water which can be used by a truck parked next to the house.

### **Construct a fire break around your property and ensure a fuel-reduced zone around any buildings.**

- Clear a track between the bush and the house and garden. This can be used to stop the fire or as a point to light a back burn towards the fire. An area of burnt land between your property and the bushfire works as a buffer.
- Look around your house and buildings. Trees and shrubs may have grown too big over the years. Imagine them on fire. If they are too close to buildings, they will act as flame throwers, putting your house at risk. Now is the time to remove or trim them back.

### **Safe property defence**

- The number one priority of a strike team leader is crew safety. If an under-prepared property poses an unacceptable risk to crew members, they will not be put in there.
- The team leader's objective is to save the most assets with available resources. If an under-prepared house is going to need three trucks to defend it, while the next three houses have been prepared, have connecting gates, have fire pumps and fuel reduced zones around the houses, the crew leader will choose to set up his crew defending the three houses, being a more effective use of resources.
- Working with your neighbours to make your area safe and easy to defend, will increase the chances of having crews at your place if resources are stretched during a bushfire emergency.

### **Prepare for ember attack**

Fill any gaps under floors and in eaves to ensure embers cannot enter your house. Most houses lost in a bush fire are due to ember attack, often some distance from the fire front or after the fire front has passed.

**Preparation of your property now means you avoid putting yourself, your property or fire-fighters at risk during a bushfire emergency.**

**Peter Raines, Deputy Captain**

## Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine Historical Society

### The Red Admiral – Patrick White at Mount Wilson

In 2012, the Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine Historical Society will celebrate the centenary of Patrick White's 28 May 1912 birth date by holding a year-long exhibition at the Turkish Bath Museum at Mt Wilson.

Patrick White spent his formative years as a young child at Mt Wilson in the 1920s and 1930s; the exhibition will highlight the impact of both the Australian natural environment and the influence of working class and wealthy society individuals and families that were to strongly shape him for the remainder of his life, as an individual and as a writer of international acclaim.

The story of Patrick White and his family at Mt Wilson in the 1920s and 30s (the so-called 'Golden Age' of Hill Station life in Australia) is rich in historical interest, and yet, remains well hidden to most people.

The project aims to heighten awareness of the formative years of White's life in an easily accessible and understood manner. The exhibition has been specifically designed not to be an academic treatment of his literature, nor does it require an understanding or appreciation of White, or his works.

The goal is to foster a recognition of a vital influence on White that has previously been ignored, or misunderstood, for many years, despite the amount of research undertaken on the most famous and renowned Australian author.

The exhibition will be in the form of a series of framed A1 sized posters designed by Jess Delbridge who is now a Mount Wilson resident and graphics artist by profession.

The title of the exhibition is taken from the pen name White used as a ten-year old. His first published pieces were about Mt. Wilson. The 'Red Admiral' was his favourite butterfly.

Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir A C. CVO, the Governor of NSW, has graciously consented to open this Exhibition on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2012 in the Mt Wilson Village Hall at 11.00a.m.

The Governor was so interested and keen to visit Mt Wilson that she rang Mary Reynolds personally on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> January to arrange a convenient date. In the initial invitation the dates proposed were not suitable for her as she would be overseas. Mary felt very touched by her kindness, her enthusiasm and her charm.

Following the opening of the Exhibition, the Governor and Sir Nicholas Shehadie will join us for lunch and later a tour of *Withycombe* (which was Patrick White's parents' holiday home from 1922 to 1937 until it was sold to the Church of England for ten shillings) will be arranged with the kind consent of the current owners Merrick and Barbara Howes, and Joe and Diana Landsberg.

Historically the visit of the Governor of NSW to Mt Wilson is of special significance for our small but vibrant community. Last time a Governor of NSW visited Mt Wilson was in 1930s as guests at *Wildflower Hall*, a guest house but now *Dennarque*. They were Sir Philip Game and Lady Game.

In order to raise funds for the exhibition, the Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine Historical Society is hosting an Open Gardens weekend on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> April.

Three beautiful gardens – *Withycombe*, *Sylvan Close* and *Bisley* - that are seldom open to the public will be featured. Many thanks to the garden owners—Joe & Diana Landsberg, and Merrick and Barbara Howes, John and Robyn Leonard, and Graham and Beverley Thompson—for supporting this project so enthusiastically.



Near the front gate of *Withycombe* is a tree which still carries, albeit very faintly, the initials PW carved into its trunk some ninety years ago.

The combined entrance fee to the three gardens is \$20.00 per adult; children are admitted without charge. Tickets are available at the entrance of any of the three gardens.

The gardens will be open from 10.00am to 4.00pm.

Food, drink and toilet facilities are available on the weekend from the Mt Wilson Village Hall.

Additionally, the Mt Wilson Turkish Bath Museum will be open in conjunction on both days (\$5.00 entrance fee additional to garden entry) where the full display of the beautiful Meg Fromel prints is currently being exhibited.

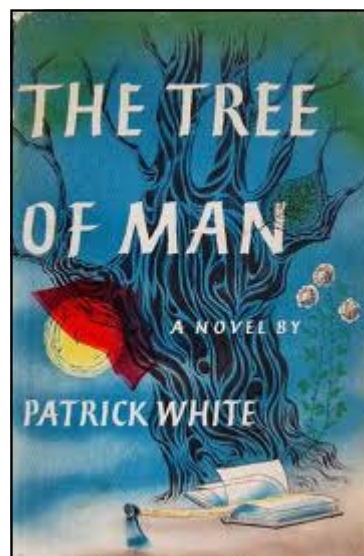
A small team comprising Alison Halliday, Des Barrett, Fiona Carruthers, Mary Reynolds, Peter Dempsey, Rachael Kohn and Tim Gow is overseeing the project. We have been very fortunate in being able to access the time and skills of Bernadette Brennan and Susan Lever from Sydney University and the Association for the Study of Australian Literature. Their expertise and knowledge of White's literature has been invaluable in establishing links between his work and the Mount Wilson environment, buildings and people.

Work to date is progressing very well; the text content is in its second draft. The next major activity is to select accompanying images for the charts. Fortunately, the Historical Society has an abundance of really interesting photographs from which to choose.

The planning for the filming of the 30 minute accompanying DVD is also well underway under the very capable coordination of Fiona and Rachael. The filming of the Mt Wilson environs, and the interviewing of Libby Raines, Peter Valder, Mary, Susan and Bernadette at *Withycombe*, along with the renowned Patrick White biographer, David Marr, is scheduled for 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> February.

In David Marr's biography of White, Marr recorded "[Mount Wilson] was the one place in Australia he dreamed of returning to one day".

It is hoped that this exhibition will be a timely, informative and enduring record of White's time here.



**Suggestions, comments or contributions warmly welcomed!**