



The Mounts

The Community Newsletter of Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine



February 2016

Welcome

Next month - Sunday March 13th, to be precise - marks the 100th year since the consecration of St Georges Church at Mt Wilson. This well loved, important and yet strangely understated touch point for the local community was born from the generosity of two prominent residents - Richard Owen Wynne of *Wynstay* donated the land on which the church was later built in 1915 as a memorial to Henry Marcus Clark by his family, who resided on the property originally named as *Balangra* but renamed subsequently as *Sefton Hall*.

St Georges (formally with no apostrophe, much to the intense annoyance of pedants everywhere) proved a challenge to build as virtually all able bodied men in those years were serving in a monumental war in lands far away. The construction resourcing and materials is a remarkable story, which will no doubt be referenced to in the special Church Service on that Sunday held to observe the centenary.

It will be very sad that Timothy Sterling-Levis will not be in the congregation to perform his long-held role of flicking the Church lights on and off at suitably appropriate points in the service. His recent death has robbed the village of one of its great characters.

All residents are of course very welcome to attend the Centenary service. It is sure to be wonderfully nostalgic occasion that celebrates a beguiling building with an eccentric history that is set in the most beautiful grounds.

Tim Gow Tel. 0412 133 559

e-mail: timsgow@gmail.com

Community Calendar

February	Sun 7th 9.00 am RFS Training Mt Wilson Shed	Sun 14th 3.00 pm Mt Wilson Church Service	Fri 19th Bushwalking Group – Mermaids Cave & Mystery Holes	March
Sun 6th 9.00 am RFS Training Mt Wilson Shed	Fri 11th 9.00–12.00 Bush Care– Wynne Reserve	Sun 13th 3.00 pm 100 Years Church Service	Fri 18th Bushwalking Group – Ruined Castle	Fri 27th 3.00 pm Easter Church Service
April	Sun 3rd 9.00 am RFS Training Mt Wilson Shed	Fri 8th 9.00–12.00 Bush Care– Hay Lane	Sun 10th 3.00 pm Mt Wilson Church Service	Fri 15th Bushwalking Group – TBA

Mt Wilson Autumn Festival

The Village of Mt Wilson is holding its annual Autumn Festival on **Saturday, 16th of April 2016.**

Invite your friends!!

The Autumn Festival this year will have eleven open gardens (see below), artists painting in the gardens, and a market represented with our local nurseries and artisans.

Many thanks to the owners of the following eleven properties for allowing their gardens to be opened to the public (some not open to the public for many years):

Bebeah

Bisley

Breenhold

Cherry Cottage/Clarine

Jalscene

Merry Garth

Nooroo

Sefton Cottage

Wildenstein

Withycombe

Wollemi

Entry into the gardens will be \$8 each, or \$20 for 3, or \$40 for all on via the online booking site (www.trybooking/176738) or \$50 for all at garden gate.

Cool mountain plant nurseries at the market includes Bay Tree Nursery, Friends of the Botanic Gardens, Secret Garden, *Windyridge*, Carroll's of Mt Tomah, Robyn Duffy of Bilpin and more to come!

Paul of Estate Gardening will be there with his high end garden tools as will Scott Leonard of MetalArtGarden with his wonderful sculptures and birdbaths.

And some wonderful artisans including Yoshimi with her origami flowers and Nicole with her botanic themed ceramics.

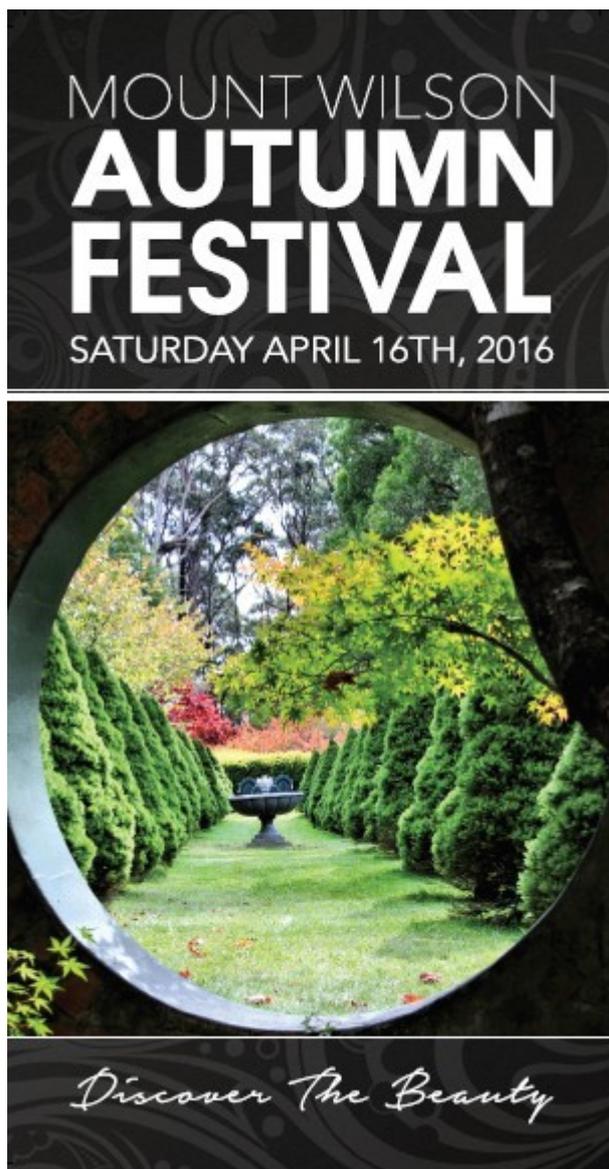
And for the first time Sean of Bilpin Cider will join us - so if you haven't tasted his fabulous local cider yet, here's your chance.

Tickets are available for the gardens online at www.trybooking/176738.

Feel free to invite your friends up for a truly beautiful autumn day in the village and gardens.



The festival raises funds for the Mt Wilson Progress Association to help maintain the beauty of Mt Wilson.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

AUTUMN FESTIVAL, SATURDAY APRIL 16th, 8.30AM - 4.30PM

For eleven garden gates, to supervise parking, to serve food at Village Hall and to help with BBQ.

Shifts of 2-3 hours.

Contact Lorraine Barrett 47562018 (leave message - the call will be returned) or email
lorrainebarrett@bigpond.com

Please note I would like garden owners to be available in their gardens to answer any questions.

MOUNT WILSON PROGRESS ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE NEWS

Coming Events

The MWPA General Meeting will be held on 7 May this year rather than at the usual time in late March. With the end of the construction work on the hall due this month, Easter Saturday on 26 March and the Autumn Festival on 16 April, the change will reduce demands on people's time earlier in the year.

Western Sydney Airport

In December a submission was lodged with the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development. The position of the MWPA is that:

- Aircraft arrivals and departures should not despoil the quiet and solitude of the UNESCO World Heritage Blue Mountains National Park
- All flight paths over the Blue Mountains should be set at the highest practicable altitude
- There should be a curfew as enjoyed by Sydney residents
- Only modern aircraft with the quietest engines should be allowed to use WSA.

Work done in the last quarter

With more summer rain than most of us seem to remember, there has still been more work done maintaining and improving the village by the MWPA's contractors than meets the eye. Our primary contractor, Peter Raines' Mount Wilson Rural Contracting, provided this report on the extensive work completed:

October, November and December 2015: blue top BMCC bins in reserves and picnic areas put out each Thursday and repositioned on Friday.

November 2015: Mow / Slash - Silva Plana, under Lindens Waterfall Road, Queens Avenue, Mt Irvine Road near Davies Lane, Founders Corner, Fire Station; Clean fire-pits for lower part of Cathedral Reserve.

December 2015: Mow / Slash - Silva Plana, Cathedral Reserve, Founders Corner, Waterfall Reserve, Gregson Park, Sloan Reserve, Happy Valley Picnic Ground, War Memorial, School, Fire Station road edge, Marcus Clark Reserve, Mt Irvine Road under *Wynstay*, road edge from Cathedral Reserve uphill to Hillcrest Lane, Asset Protection Zone and road edges in Wynnes Rocks Road, Asset Protection Zone around picnic shed at Wynnes Rocks Lookout; cut logs and tidy Cathedral Reserve; slash fire break at Cathedral Reserve.

January 2016: Mow / Slash - Silva Plana, Cathedral Reserve, Waterfall Reserve, Gregson Park, School, Fire Station, under Lindens Waterfall Road, Mt Irvine Road under *Wynstay*, Mt Irvine Road near Davies Lane; chipping fallen branches in the Avenue.

David Gunn is now working with Peter allowing more time for the extensive list of projects the Progress Association would like to tackle.

Other recent work included the completion of Project Puddle – resolution of the long standing problem of the expanse of water accumulating after rain between the road and the pedestrian gate entrance to the Village Hall. A small bitumen rise in the gutter and towards the road now abuts the new concrete entrance path encouraging pooling water to travel to one or the other culverts on either side of the entrance way.

Have ideas or comments for the Committee?

Committee members are always pleased to receive input on how the Progress Association can help maintain and improve Mount Wilson. Please don't hesitate to be in touch.

Richard Beattie, President

landrbeattie@bigpond.com

0400 190 909 9252 6440 4756 2070

Alison Halliday, Vice President

alisonhalliday@gmail.com

9389 1848 4756 2060

Libby Raines, Treasurer

merry.garthr@gmail.com

4756 2121

Sue Woolfenden, Secretary

secretarymwpa@gmail.com

4756 2046 0405 537 351

Lorraine Barrett

lorrainebarrett@bigpond.com

9362 8874 4756 2018 0447 647 748

Nancy Fox

nancyfox@gmail.com

9960 2969 4756 2106 0411 251 743

Ted Griffin

tedgriff@bigpond.net.au

9300 6628 4756 2102 0417 088 879

Peter Laving

peter.laving@kumahira.com.au

4756 2004 9904 9344 0425 263 503

New Members: All property owners, their children 18 years and older, residents and former owners with five years residency or more are eligible to join or continue membership of the Association. Please contact Secretary Sue Woolfenden as above if you are not members and wish to join. The more members we have the better we can represent the community.

Richard Beattie

Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade

Apart from a surprising fire in August (winter and only two weeks after snow!) at Wentworth Falls, it has been a quiet season for the Blue Mountains with regard to bushfires. Nevertheless, fires in Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria and now Tasmania, floods in New South Wales, the Northern Territory and Queensland, and severe storms in Queensland and New South Wales have meant that natural disaster has never been far from the headlines.

The fires in Tasmania are particularly sad as there is mounting concern about the environmental impacts to the Tasmanian World Heritage Wilderness, especially fires in the Walls of Jerusalem National Park and Cradle Mountain-Lake Saint Clair National Park. Bushwalking tracks, such as the popular Overland Track, are currently closed.

It is predicted that fires will continue at least till the end of February. Crews from all over Australia as well as from New Zealand have flown in to help. As the fires are in rough country the crews are those trained for remote area firefighting and have included Vic Zhukov from Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Brigade.

Your Home is Your Castle...well, no, actually, it is an onion.

CSIRO scientist, Justin Leonard, is the expert most likely to be called in by the authorities to examine houses affected by bushfire. He has recommended that homeowners in bushfire prone areas need to consider their property as an onion with several layers – the outmost layer being the local setting; the next layer are the conditions 100-200 metres from the properties boundaries; coming closer to the house residents need to consider the vegetation type and slope between the boundary and the house and then finally the area immediately surrounding the house.

Understanding the bushfire characteristics of these areas is essential information for knowing what modifications or preparations you will need to put in place to decrease the risk of losing your home in a bushfire. You and your property are only as resilient as the weakest link and a house built to the most stringent bushfire standards, but with flammable shrubbery and trees growing right next to it, is as vulnerable as an older, less bushfire-proof house that has a large cleared area around it.

Property preparation, however, is only half the package. A well-prepared house is effectively useless if the person living in it does not have a carefully thought-through plan for what to do when a bushfire threatens. Justin gives the following top tips for bushfire resilience:

1. How well you plan to behave in a bushfire is even more important than how well you prepare your house for a bushfire.
2. Think of yourself and your house as being at the centre of an onion; each layer around you needs to be bushfire-ready.
3. Look at the area in which you live and work out how this will affect the potential severity of a bushfire; are you at the top of a steep slope? Is it densely forested?
4. Have a clearly defensible space around your house; avoid shrubbery around the edges of the house, trees overhanging the house remembering that retaining certain trees on your block can act as an effective wind and radiant heat break.
5. Have a detailed plan about when to leave, but have an equally detailed plan about how you will cope if you can't leave; how will you actively shelter in your house, how will you get out if your house burns down, and where will you escape to?

6. Bushfire severity is an open-ended scale; while we can't say how bad it can get, we can decide the point at which it's no longer safe to stay. This threshold should be uniquely considered for each location and personal circumstance.
7. Always have back-up plans, because the original plan may not be possible; if the wooden deck outside your front door is burning, can you go out the back door?
8. There is no guarantee that fire fighters will be able to get to you or your property, so you have to work on the assumption that they can't.
9. If you're in a bushfire-prone area, resilience is a constant process. Never sit back and think you're totally safe; always look for the things you can do to reduce your risk, these steps are often synergistic with improved lifestyle, like installing a (bushfire resistant) water tank.
10. Houses and things can be replaced. People can't.

Kathleen Oakes
Community Engagement Officer

Bowens Creek Fire Trail Update

Since our last report in the December 2015 newsletter, there has been some small progress made. As foreshadowed in the last update, David Howell, Barry Freeman and I made a presentation in December to the Blue Mountains Bush Fire Management Committee (BMBFMC). This presentation reinforced the submissions made earlier last year to the BMBFMC seeking its support for BMCC and Hawkesbury City Council (HCC) in making a joint bid to the State and Commonwealth governments for funding to restore the route (currently impassable at several points on the Hawkesbury side) to fire trail standard for use by emergency vehicles.

Our presentation particularly noted the interjurisdictional aspects of this project which requires us all to work closely with our fellow Brigades in the Hawkesbury (who also see this fire trail as strategically important in their firefighting efforts) and Hawkesbury RFS District.

Following that presentation Blue Mountain RFS District is liaising with Hawkesbury District to gather further information on the significance of the route as a fire trail for The Hawkesbury and whether it has been formally recorded on its fire trail list (it has been on the Blue Mountains side of Bowens Creek).

Once its formal status is established we (and the BMBFMC) will be better placed to demonstrate the strategic significance of the route for both local government areas.

I've resumed discussions for the year with Louise Markus MP's Office and am waiting to get her perspective on the work being done by BMCC and HCC on their joint bid. I will also shortly be following up on both Councils for their advice on that work and with Trish Doyle, our State MP.

In the meantime, if you haven't emailed or written to local MPs, relevant Ministers and the local Press (all contact details are on the community website), please do so. It is very important that we keep this issue alive and in the "Constituents' Letters pile" of all the MPs who can influence this. And if you have written and received a response, can you let us know? We've already seen some responses which appear to consider this a roads issue. It isn't. This is about emergency services and the need for infrastructure to help the RFS, Police Rescue and NSW Ambulance to do their jobs in this challenging physical environment.

Elizabeth Montano
On behalf of the Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade

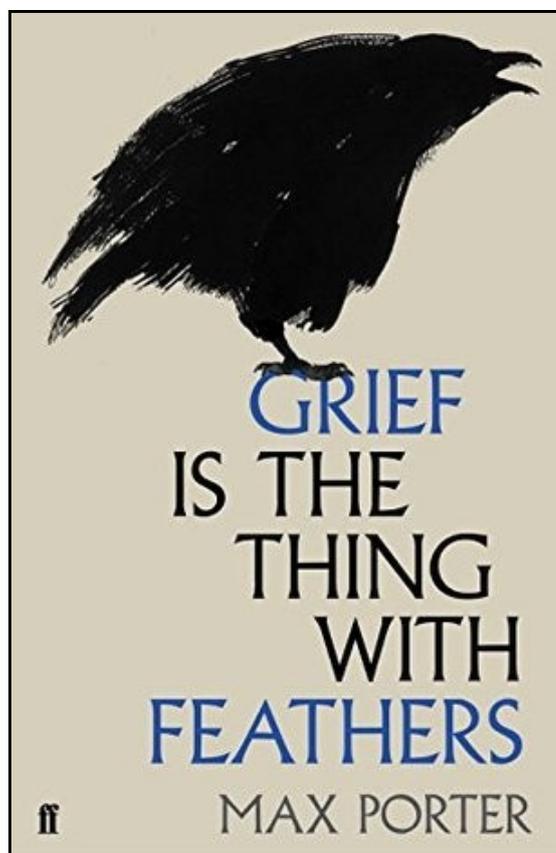
Book Review - Grief is the Thing with Feathers by Max Porter

Those who study language and child development used to think that metaphor was not recognised very early in development but this has changed. Consider, for one small example, the nursery rhyme of 'Round and round the garden'. This delightful game + rhyme combines anticipation, tickling and language entirely as metaphor: garden, bear, and movement are all imagined as one thing being another.

The marvellous first book by Max Porter, *Grief is the Thing with Feathers*, combines metaphor and the small realities of life to present a quite wonderful presentation of grief. A man and his two sons have lost their wife and mother, due as we slowly discover, to a stupid accident. Into the house and their lives comes a cynical, wild and disruptive crow. About half the narrative is from the bird's point of view in rhyme, stream of consciousness and biting dialogue with whoever may be listening. The broken family is aware of the crow, how can they not be, and as they existence become entwined with that of the bird, they find him both reassuring and awful.

It is the writing that is so compelling; ranging from poetry to broken prose to short and simple sentences. The emotional content is sometimes almost overwhelming but there is always, even if very faint, a recognition of life continuing. Love and loss are partners, co-existing in the arc of life and reflected in analytical and creative work; this is an explanation and exploration of what it is to be human, and how we may live with and through grief. Embedded in the whole book are references to Ted Hughes and his poem about the anarchic crow in the collection of the same name. I have never read a book quite like this one. It is not self-indulgent or whimsical but extraordinary, very tough and compassionate.

Alison Halliday



Vale Timothy Sterling-Levis**August 13th 1943 – December 14th 2015**

Most long term residents of Mt Wilson will remember the familiar sight of Timothy travelling around the leafy lanes and The Avenue of Mt Wilson riding his 1940's Villiers motorized bicycle. Timothy's mother, Meryl, fell in love with the village when as a teenager she came to stay at *Wynstay* with her school friend, Jane Wynne (Smart). However, it was not until Timothy was about eighteen months old that his family purchased the small parcel of land in Applecot Lane which Meryl named *Cleaves*.

For some time this "residence" was merely a converted garage and many of Timothy's photographs feature his early years spending time there with family and friends. When he was about twenty, there was an opportunity to purchase a house in Sydney which was about to be bulldozed and transport it in sections to the property. (Not sure how they moved it around the Zig-Zag?) By this time, Timothy was quite an adept handyman who was able to rebuild the structure on site where it still stands today.

Although deaf from birth, in his early years with the loving tuition of his step-father, Peter Legh, Timothy learned to diagnose any mechanical fault with an engine or power tool by feeling its vibrations. This also assisted him in being able to enjoy dancing in the Village Hall by sensing the beat of the music coming to him through the floorboards. On his 40th birthday, the village residents rallied to give him a surprise birthday party and everyone turned out to mark the occasion. He was thrilled and danced the night away!

Tim, as we all knew him until about twenty years ago when he said he preferred to be known as "Timothy", was always ready to lend a hand to anyone who had a project underway. A very strong man, he would help move rocks, cut up fallen trees with many of his collection of chainsaws, or climb high ladders to put nails in a roof. He just loved being involved. Being part of the Mt Wilson community was very special to him and the sound of his bike arriving was an indication it was time to boil the kettle.

He also enjoyed coming to meetings and special occasion gatherings such as Christmas in July, as long as someone was able to write him a note as to what was being said. He was a member of the congregation and often attended the service at St Georges Church and would quietly sit through sections he could not follow. For some years he mowed the church grounds.

From school, and for over fifty years, he was a highly regarded employee of Hunter Douglas, makers of venetian blinds, and rose to the rank of leading hand. He was so skilled at maintaining their machinery that at one time the company sent him to Brisbane for a couple of weeks to supervise the setting up of a new factory.

Farewell, Timothy, we will miss your happy, smiling face.

Judith Teulon.

ATN

Well Tim, they said we'd never be able to do it. The critics said "Why change a winning formula by moving into the already crowded lifestyle content space?" "Because it's there!" we said. That and the fact that the pre-publication sales of "RAATS in the Rotisserie" – the gourmet approach to eating your way through all those garden pests (as featured in our last column) - shows that the good burgers (bad joke definitely intended) of Mts Wilson and Irvine are OVER that deep and meaningful quest to find RAATS' political manifesto and looking to paddle in the shallower end of the entertainment pool.

So, ta dah! Here we are.

Careful observers will see we have a new name. With attention spans getting shorter by the day, we will now be known as "ATN", the column formerly known as "Ask the Neighbours".

We're a little bit food column. We're a little bit gardening column (Tim, how's that beard coming along? We all know that gardening hosts look more credible, not to mention organic, with copious quantities of facial hair). We're a little bit country and a whole lot quirky with bags of information you never knew you needed to know.

However, unlike KFC and TBL, we'll never forget our roots, regardless of how many makeovers we do in desperate attempts to keep our market share. So, we'll still be asking the neighbours the burning questions of the day - and, no doubt, still sitting by the computer/ phone/ carrier pigeon roost waiting for audience feedback which never comes. Sob!

Our inaugural ATN question for the year is: What unexpected things have grown from seeds you've planted? Here at ATN Central, we sowed "mixed lettuce" seeds only to find some of the resulting greenery a tad too bitter for our delicate tastebuds. Having decided that this was a crop which needed to be voted off the Island, I pulled the offending material out, only to find (and here's the big reveal, Tim) – CARROTS! Yes, folks. Sweet, both literally and figuratively, carrots.



And with ATN now being a hip and happening blogging phenomenon, on your immediate right is the proof!

So, dear Readers, please let us know about those unexpected quirky, amusing, baffling or intriguing results of your labours (see below for terms and conditions of entry*).

See Tim – we've combined food, gardening, country, quirkiness and a visual element all in the one question. But, how can future ATN editions top this? Has this been ATN's finest moment EVER? Have we peaked before the ratings season has even started? We won't know until the next edition of (*queue irritating sound effect*)ATN.

*ATN T&Cs: Please note that no confessions about the production of unexpectedly errant children will be accepted and all stories, photos and intellectual property submitted for publication will become and remain the sole property in perpetuity of ATN Productions, a Subsidiary of Bread and Circuses (Cayman Islands) Limited.

Elizabeth M
Lifestyle Editor

Suggestions, comments or contributions warmly welcomed!