



NEWSLETTER

Working together for a better community

May 2008

EDITOR'S NOTES

Most people will, by now, be aware of a great deal of building and construction activity in and around Withycombe. Living in a building site is not my idea of fun, but old houses have to be renovated and (discretely) modernised, while preserving their intrinsic historical interest and aesthetic value. Unfortunately, all this means dealing with the Blue Mountains City Council, which can be a tedious, frustrating and infuriating exercise. Bureaucracy keeps people in jobs and, in our complex world, is clearly essential, but it's difficult to avoid wondering how much of it really serves a useful purpose. Of course we need planning regulations and building standards etc.—in the same way, I suppose, that we 'need' regulations about pile burning—but why must all that involve apparently endless paper-pushing and intransigent prevarication, often about trivia. What contribution does it all make to community well-being and the smooth running of local life? Maybe I shouldn't go down that track!

We have been away for a couple of weeks—just long enough for most of the leaves to fall and autumn to turn to winter. I speculated, in the last newsletter, that the autumn colours wouldn't be great this year, because of the weather patterns, and I don't think they were, but that's a totally subjective judgement. It would be interesting to have a series of photos, taken at standard dates (approximately, depending on weather) from a few standard positions round the village, to see how things change—or don't—over the years. Project for a young person.

Can I encourage you, the readers of this modest publication, to send in contributions. Items like Florence Smart's report on the Autumn Market weekend, and Judy Tribe's on the Mother's Day fundraiser for MS (in this issue) are welcome—that's what the newsletter is for. Also obituaries, notices and local advertisements. Libby Raines often provides us with interesting articles about plants and gardens and some people, occasionally, send in a note, like John Holt's comments about wombats, last time. Not everyone agreed with John, but that's OK. His note sparked some discussion. Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine are quiet communities, but some of you must have something of interest to say—opinion pieces would be good. I am told that some only read the newsletter for the jokes. Well, that's fine, and I'm glad you enjoy them, but there should be a bit more to it than the funnies. In passing, I appreciate the flow of jokes and anecdotes provided to me by Graham Tribe, who has some remarkably vulgar friends! But I enjoy them—so I guess I must also be vulgar. A few of the milder ones are in this newsletter. Thanks, Graham. Keep them coming.

Joe Landsberg

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MWPA COMMITTEE NEWS

General Meeting

The last General Meeting of the Progress Association held on Saturday, 5th April, was well attended and the quorum easily reached, so thank you to all who attended. A number of decisions were made. These included:-

- Annual membership fees for the Progress Association be increased to \$20 and \$10 concession. An option of five year payment is now available. It is considered necessary to increase our resources for much village maintenance for which Council is unable to pay, for example pruning and replacing aging heritage trees.
- The Progress Association enter into discussion with property owners affected by dedicated unmade roads to see if a mutually acceptable agreement can be made, so that access may be made easier for Integral and RFS.
- The Progress Association provide money for the provision of a hearing aid loop for the Mount Wilson Village Hall.

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday 20th September, 2008 at 5.50 p.m. Please put it in your diary now.

Mount Wilson Leisure Library

The library shelves have had an autumn clean up. We took the opportunity of the Historical Society Market Weekend to eliminate books that have not been popular, to make room for other books that we believe will be of greater interest to borrowers. Books have been rearranged to make the library more user friendly so come along and see the collection, borrow and read. Winter is a great time for reading in front of the fire! Library opening times are Thursday 3.00 to 4.00 p.m. and Saturday 10.00 to 11.00 a.m. or at any other suitable time you can arrange with me.

Correction to the Phone Book

Please correct the phone number in your book for Jack Davies and Jill Hoskins. The correct number is (02) 9908 4968. Add to the book Max Ludowici who owns 'Cooinda', Mount Irvine Road, Mount Irvine. His number is 0404 022 665.

Give Way Sign

You may have noticed a new Give Way sign at the intersection of Waterfall Road and The Avenue. This has become a dangerous intersection since the opening of the Chimney Cottage Heritage Café.

Moira Green

VILLAGE HALL JOTTINGS

On the Anzac weekend the Historical Society had hired the Hall for a fund raising market weekend. From the Hall Committee's point of view the weekend has shown just how well some of our alterations and improvements have added to the amenity of the Hall and its grounds. Helen Cardy did wonders with the stove and the stable door allowed good serving access to the patio where a bevy of caterers supplied the public with an array of good fresh food and drinks. It was good to see the front lawn covered with tables and chairs which were usually occupied. The Committee has been working on the Hall grounds as we thought they were under utilised and an eyesore. It is great to see our planning justified by use.

A couple of weeks later we had a successful Autumn work party which tidied and weeded, spread topsoil and regrassed new areas. The store room was reorganised so that we have more room. I would like to thank all those who contributed to that work party, particularly as I was unable to attend.

In the last quarter it was disappointing to find that Council has not included Stage 2 of the Hall redevelopment in its draft Capital Works Program for 2008-2012. The Committee has lodged an objection to the draft program and that objection is now under review. One of the reasons for not regarding stage two of the Redevelopment as of high priority was stated to be the availability of a toilet with wheelchair access in the RFS centre. I regard that suggestion as particularly uncaring towards those confined to wheelchairs and have let them know that the RFS facilities are considered irrelevant to the Hall's needs

The objections will be considered by Council in late June and I may need to call on the community to have the draft amended to include Stage 2. I will make that decision in the next two weeks and, as the little man said,

That's all folks

Ron Green

MAX COLLARD

Max Collard, a distinguished architect who worked in Sydney and Canberra, died in March. He was in his late 90s. Among his notable works are the Menzies Library and the School of Earth Sciences building at ANU; also Russell Building, which is part of the ACT defence complex. Collard designed many public buildings in Sydney and was instrumental in the creation of Sydney's iconic El Alamein Fountain in Kings Cross. He was well recognised professionally and was a founding member of the Contemporary Arts Society. When he retired he and his wife Joan lived at Withycombe, which they renovated and restored to the original style. They also enjoyed the garden and its trees (there are about 80 tree species at Withycombe). Gary Ghent bought the property from Collard sometime in the mid-1980s*

*I am not sure of dates. Withycombe has had a remarkable number of owners over the (approximately) 130 years of its existence; we have a list somewhere but it is currently AWOL.

I am indebted to Richard Prentice for bringing this to my notice and sending me a copy of Collard's obituary (SMH, Wednesday March 12), written by his daughter Joanne.

Ed.

DO YOU WANT A TRAILER, OR SOME TREES?

Metal, 2 wheeled 7 ft* **trailer**. Registered. \$500.
Contact Wendy Holland at Wollangambe, Farrer Rd West. Tel. 47562094

Richard Prentice has some fine **trees** at a stage suitable for transplanting—cherries, maples, confers... Available free. It would be a pity if they had to be destroyed. Contact him at 'Clarine', Queens Avenue. Tel. 4756206.

*That's pre-metric measure, in case you've forgotten, but I suspect most of the readers of this newsletter are old enough to have a good idea about the length of this trailer.

In passing...

A man got onto a bus with both of his front pockets full of golf balls and sat down next to a beautiful (you guessed it) blonde. The puzzled girl kept looking at him and his bulging pockets.

Finally, after many such glances from her, he said, 'Its golf balls'.

Nevertheless, the blonde continued to look at him for a very long time, thinking deeply about what he had said.

After several minutes, not being able to contain her curiosity any longer, she asked

'Does it hurt as much as tennis elbow?'

From the radio (via Peter Richey)

A man has three dolls:
His daughter is his baby doll
His mistress is his barbie doll
And his wife is his panadol

Community diary

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

Services in **St Georges Church** every 2nd Sunday at 3pm (June 10, July 8, August 12, Sept. 9)

RFS Brigade: AGM on June 7 at 1030 am

AUTUMN MARKET WEEKEND

The Historical Society's fundraising committee organised a three-day Market Weekend in April and are happy to report that it was a great success both financially and as a new event involving the whole community. We were the happy recipients of a great array of donated items to sell as well as supplies for the cake and jam stalls, all adding to the festive atmosphere and goodwill that carried right through the three days. Thank you to all those who donated goods and especially to those tireless souls who joined the catering team. At least a thousand people called in for hot food and drinks and Devonshire teas with scones freshly made on the spot, taking advantage of the first sunny days we had seen in at least three weeks. The Village Hall provided an attractive venue with colourful tables and chairs on the lawn served directly from the kitchen and patio area.

Over the three days fourteen separate stall-holders hired tables from us at a daily rate, offering an incredible variety of wares, with prices ranging from 50cents to several hundred dollars - and everything in between! The RFS Brigade and the Self Realization and Meditation Centre both did a roaring trade from their stalls and the community library added to the overall success by offering hundreds of books at low, low prices, fulfilling many a bargain-hunter's wildest dreams.

We feel sure that all the other businesses in the area also benefited as we gave out the local map and directions to all the open gardens and local sites. And our catering standards didn't provide much competition for the Chimney Cottage Heritage Café; there were so many mouths to feed.

We are very happy to be able to give such a positive report and are already looking at ways of making it even better next year.

Florence Smart

MOUNTAINS IN MAY FOR MOTHER'S DAY.....AND MS RESEARCH

What a fantastic weekend it was. Altogether more than \$25,000 was raised for Multiple Sclerosis research.

I think we became more aware of the importance of that research hearing both Susie's daughter Kathy and Stephen Papadopoulos speak with honesty and humour about the impact of MS on their lives, while enjoying the concert Toni Powell gave in St George's Church and being thankful that although MS is having an impact on her mobility and stamina it is not affecting that wonderful voice and also that being in a wheelchair doesn't stop Jim Conway performing amazingly on his harmonica. It was an inspiration for us all.

People with Multiple Sclerosis are more likely to be diagnosed in their early adult years, often a vital time for establishing their career and starting a family. Three out of every four people diagnosed are women. There are over 18,000 people in Australia diagnosed with MS.

In both the northern and southern hemispheres, the incidence of MS increases the further the person spent their early life from the equator. For example, the incidence of MS in Hobart is about twice the prevalence in Sydney and about seven times the Townsville prevalence.

It is a very variable disease which affects each person with MS differently. A person with MS has a high degree of uncertainty in their life, never knowing when they will be affected by the disease and just how it will impact their life journey.

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MS Research Australia (MSRA) aims to better understand the cause and treat MS, to predict and prevent MS and to propagate cell repair and regeneration. MSRA facilitates activity in areas where Australian researchers can have greatest impact in worldwide research and often links potential sponsors and donors with specific research priorities or projects.

Funds for this research are from many sources including government, corporate, foundations and individuals. A Research Investment Fund is being built, sufficient to support the research strategy at a level of over \$3 million per annum for a sustained period (10 years). MSRA ultimately hopes to increase research funding from Australia to over \$10 million per year.

It is a fantastic effort that Foundation 5 Million (F5m) has already raised over \$1.8 million towards its goal of adding \$5 million to the pool of funds for MS research.

In 2008 MSRA will fund over \$2 million for MS research through a wide range of projects:

12% for Applied and Social Research, focused on better treatments

The **MS Life** study continues to look at the quality of people's lives with MS, and provides ongoing improvements to therapeutic practices.

32% for Genetics and Epidemiology:

The **Ausimmune** study on the environmental influence on MS to verify that increasing latitude coincides with increasing incidence of MS, measuring a multitude of risk factors, including sun exposure, Vitamin D levels and childhood infections. Australia is the best country to do this research because of our large latitude spread and homogeneous population.

ANZgene is a major gene mapping and gene expression project to predict, treat and prevent MS, with emphasis on identifying genes that influence relapses. This is a collaborative project between Australian & NZ scientists.

MS Gene Bank pooling DNA samples from five national collection sites with over 2,000 samples. In early 2008 genetic analysis will proceed to identify genes for MS susceptibility.

56% for Neurobiology including pathology, stem cell research, virology, immunology, proteomics:

MS Brain Bank was established in January 2007 at Sydney University to collect, store and distribute MS-afflicted tissue donated by people with MS. The human tissue will help researchers identify the cause of MS, disease markers and improve treatments.

A major study of the **connection between Epstein Barr Virus and the onset of MS.**

A record of eight new **Scholarships and Fellowships** were facilitated by MSRA from early 2007 around Australia, including two prestigious Betty Cuthbert Fellowships. This is double the number from 2006 and equal to the total initiated in the five previous years combined.

And it's good to know that 94 cents of every dollar raised goes directly to MS research.

So thank you all for helping to fund this research into understanding the cause and developing a cure for Multiple Sclerosis.

If you would like more information about MS research: www.msra.org.au

June 1st to 7th is MS awareness week

Judy Tribe

Australian humour

This is a selection of questions about Australia, from potential visitors. They were posted on an Australian Tourism Website. The answers are the actual responses by the website officials, who obviously have to deal with more of this sort of stuff than they need.

From Sweden. **Q:** I want to walk from Perth to Sydney - can I follow the railroad tracks?

A: Sure, it's only three thousand miles, take lots of water.

From the USA. **Q:** Can you give me some information about hippo racing in Australia?

A: A-fri-ca is the big triangle shaped continent south of Europe. Aus-tra-lia is that big island in the middle of the Pacific which does not... oh forget it. Sure, the hippo racing is every Tuesday night in Kings Cross. Come naked.

From the USA. **Q:** Which direction is North in Australia?

A: Face south and then turn 180 degrees. Contact us when you get here and we'll send the rest of the directions.

From the USA. **Q:** Can you send me the Vienna Boys' Choir schedule?

A: Aus-tri-a is that quaint little country bordering Ger-man-y, which is...oh forget it. Sure, the Vienna Boys Choir plays every Tuesday night in Kings Cross, straight after the hippo races. Come naked.

From the USA. **Q:** I have developed a new product that is the fountain of youth. Can you tell me where I can sell it in Australia?

A: Anywhere significant numbers of Americans gather

From the USA. **Q:** I was in Australia in 1969 on R+R, and I want to contact the girl I dated while I was staying in Kings Cross. Can you help?

A: Yes, and you will still have to pay her by the hour.

(The apparent bias towards—or against—the USA is accidental)

The elderly Irish virgin.

In a tiny village on the Irish coast lived an old lady, a virgin and very proud of it. Sensing that her final days were rapidly approaching, and desiring to make sure everything was in proper order when she died, she went to the town's undertaker (who also happened to be the local postal clerk) to make proper 'final' arrangements.

As a last wish, she informed the undertaker that she wanted the following inscription engraved on her tombstone: 'BORN A VIRGIN, LIVED AS A VIRGIN, DIED A VIRGIN' Some time later the old maid died peacefully. A few days after the funeral, when the undertaker/postal clerk went to prepare the tombstone the lady had requested, it became clear that the one she had selected was much too small for the wording that she had chosen. He thought long and hard about how he could fulfil the old maid's final request, considering the very limited space available on the small piece of stone. For days, he agonised over the dilemma. But finally his experience as a postal worker allowed him to come up with what he thought was the appropriate solution to the problem.

The virgin's tombstone was finally completed and duly engraved, and it read as follows:

'RETURNED UNOPENED'