



The Mounts

The Community Newsletter of Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine



October 2015

Welcome

Spring is traditionally a very busy time on the mountains. This year is no different with the 4th Annual Photography and Art Exhibition fast approaching. As well as a long list of entrants across a wide variety of formats, the three associated walks and workshops - Landscape Photographers' workshop, Garden & Photography Walk and Bird Walk - look particularly alluring. Please book your place via *TryBooking* - full details are listed inside - it is too easy! What better way to improve your knowledge or skills with the guidance of expert practitioners and teachers? For those residents who may not be on the mountain that weekend (I'm not sure why that would be the case), *TryBooking* can also receive donations for the local RFS brigade who do so much for our community.

Wonderful news on various fronts from the Mt Irvine Village Hall about a successful grant application for improvements to the Hall and the confirmed installation of a new mobile phone tower at Mt Tomah which should significantly improve coverage on the mounts.

Moving rather more glacially is the long-running Bowens Creek Road situation. Residents can substantially assist the community working group under the astute stewardship of Elizabeth Montano negotiating with multiple parties by giving voice to your concerns about the decay of a formerly invaluable piece of public infrastructure. Please don't leave it to others to write, phone or lobby decision makers - together we can, and must, make this happen.

That, plus support the Photography Exhibition!

Tim Gow Tel. 0412 133 559

e-mail: timsgow@gmail.com

Community Calendar

October	Sun 4th 9.00 am RFS Training Mt Wilson Shed	Fri 9th 9.00—12.00 Bush Care— Gregson Park	Sun 11th 3.00 pm Mt Wilson Church Service	Fri 16th Bushwalking Group— Farrer Rd to Danes Way
November	Sun 1st 9.00 am RFS Training Mt Wilson Shed	Sun 8th 3.00 pm Mt Wilson Church Service	Fri 13th 9.00—12.00 Bush Care— Wynne Reserve	Fri 20th Bushwalking Group— Ikara Ridge, Mt Victoria
Sat 28th 6.30 pm Community Christmas Party	December	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 Mt Wilson Church Service



of our rainforests, canyons and gardens

❖ **Photography and Art Exhibition**

Entry: gold coin donation

Enquiries: bevwoodman46@gmail.com

❖ **Creative Walks and Workshop**

Programme and booking information below

❖ **Saturday drinks: 5–7.30pm**

Guest speaker Caitlin Hughes, Mosaic Artist

Entry: \$10

❖ **Open Gardens: Bisley, Merry Garth, Nooroo**

Entry: \$8 for single garden/early bird \$20 for all 3

❖ **Art and Photography Book Sale**

❖ **Gift Shop**

Delicious food and drinks at the Café

www.mtwilson.com.au

www.facebook.com/MtWilsonMtlrvine

All profit to the Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade

All bookings: Try Booking reference:

<http://www.trybooking.com/152209>

Enquiries: Judy Tribe phone 4756 2096

judithtribe@gmail.com

Walks & Workshop - Presenters:

Gary Hayes: has been taking photographs since the 1980s and loves capturing emotive landscapes and travel photography. His pictures have appeared in magazines, stamps, exhibitions, TV, multimedia and newspapers, including recently in Australian Geographic and Blue Mountains Tourism magazines

Di and Ian English: are award winning photographers, members of the Australian Photography Society. For Di photography is a 'magnificent obsession'. Macro and floral images are a big drawcard. Ian's photography interests are very varied. One of his passions is HDR photography

Elisabeth and Tom Karplus: are keen bird watchers and members of 'Birding NSW', whose aim is to share the joy of bird watching with others and to support the study and conservation of bird life

Saturday
10 October
2pm

Meet at the
Old
Schoolhouse

Gary's Emerging Landscape Photographers Workshop

Aimed at emerging photographers this **2 hour** workshop will cover the main aspects of creative landscape capture and processing. A 1 hour presentation will be followed by a short field trip to De Fours lookout to put theory into practise Please bring your own dslr camera

○ Cost: \$50

Sunday
11 October

11am
Nooroo
2pm Merry
Garth

Garden Walks with Di and Ian

During this **1 hour** walk through a beautiful spring garden Di & Ian will give practical hints on how to improve your plant & garden photos using macro and HDR techniques. Please bring your own camera.

○ Cost: \$25, including garden entry

Sunday
11 October
8.30am

Meet at the
Old
Schoolhouse

Bird Walk with Elisabeth and Tom

Join us for a **2 hour** walk to see parrots, bowerbirds, whipbirds and lots of other native birds around Mt Wilson. The walk will not be strenuous but you will need suitable walking shoes. Please bring binoculars if you have them.

○ Cost: \$25

MOUNT WILSON PROGRESS ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE NEWS

Coming events

Remembrance Day Service – Wednesday, 11 November 2015 from 10.30 am. Please bring a plate to share for morning tea in the Village Hall.

Community Christmas Party – Saturday, 28 November 2015 at 6.30 pm in the Mount Wilson Village Hall.

Mount Tomah event marks coming of mobile tower



Marking mobile phone service to come to Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine: Mark Bancroft, President MIPA, Andrew Bogg, Telstra Area GM, Elizabeth Montano MWMIRFB, Louise Markus, Federal Member for Macquarie, Paul Fletcher, former Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for Communications and now Minister for Territories, Richard Beattie, President MWPA with Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine Mobile Black Spot Working Group members Graham Tribe and Brian Carrigan at the Blue Mountains Botanic Gardens

Despite the upheavals and reallocations of government responsibilities in Canberra in the prior week, Paul Fletcher, the new Minister for Territories, Local Government and Major Projects and former Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Communications, has marked the federal government's decision to build a mobile phone and data tower at Mount Tomah. The Minister and our local federal member of Parliament, Louise Markus, was at the Mount Tomah botanic gardens on 22 September to celebrate what is perhaps the most important infrastructure development for our communities in many years.

Each of the community representatives warmly thanked both the minister and Louise Markus for their openness to our submissions and acceptance of the importance of the need for good mobile service being available, especially during emergencies with calls to our first responders and for fire brigade operations.

The installation of the tower, the hard fought objective of the Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine progress associations, should dramatically improve the often non-existent mobile coverage in the two villages. It should also provide coverage along the Bells Line of Road between Bilpin and Bell, which is currently limited or without any signal.

Paul Fletcher said the government expected to sign an agreement with Telstra within a fortnight for the construction of 499 new towers across regional and remote Australia at a cost of \$385 million. The federal government is contributing \$100 million, the NSW government \$25 million, other state governments smaller amounts, Telstra \$165 million and Vodaphone \$20 million.

Telstra's area general manager Andrew Bogg explained that as soon as the contract with government is signed, technical analysis for the final location of the Mount Tomah tower will determine how to achieve the best possible service to the three target areas, the Mounts' villages and the Bells Line of Road. As most locations across Australia to get new towers have similar needs for emergency services, community and business phone and data access, Andrew said it was too early to say when the tower for Mount Tomah will be built and operational.

MWPA Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Mount Wilson Progress Association was held on a cold, rainy night in the village hall on 19 September. The meeting was presented with an update on the Association's finances in the 2014/2015 year and work completed and continuing to be done to maintain and improve the village.

Highlights of the reports included net income from the April Mount Wilson Autumn Festival of \$21,411, total funds as at 30 June 2015 of \$44,486; improvements including a new fire trail at Wynne's Rocks, more parking space near the fire shed, gutters cleared and battered, verges cleared, top-dressed and seeded, deteriorated vehicle barriers replaced at Cathedral Reserve, the timber street-side signs to be restored, the lettering repainted, and the success of the Autumn Festival (to be held again on 16 April next year); BMCC work on road maintenance; advice NBN satellite internet services with free connection should be available in the area from next April (with an ongoing service fee); and an update on the lobbying for emergency vehicle access between Bilpin and Mount Irvine.

Local federal member Louise Markus continued to be of great assistance with the mobile tower issue throughout the year and as our guest at the AGM briefed the meeting on the tower developments. Louise has also been taking a leading roll bringing senior state and local government politicians, councillors and bureaucrats together on the emergency access issue for the villages.

The meeting passed a resolution urging the Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury councils to work with the NSW and federal authorities and politicians to restore the Bilpin/Mount Irvine route so fire, ambulance and police vehicles will have other than "one road in and out" to the villages.

This motion was put to the meeting and passed unanimously:

Having regard to the significant risks to life and property in Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine caused by Mount Wilson's current "one road in and out" access to Bells Line of Road via Mt Wilson Road, this meeting of the Mount Wilson Progress Association resolves to urge the Blue Mountains City Council to work with Hawkesbury City Council and State and Federal governments and Members of Parliament to have Mt Irvine Road, Bowens Creek bridge, and Mt Irvine Road (being the route between Bilpin and Mt Irvine) restored for use as an emergency vehicles access route.

A copy of the motion was given to Louise Markus who recommended the resolution be communicated to the Mount Irvine Progress Association with the suggestion it or a similar resolution be adopted by that association. Members of the MWPA were also urged to make individual submissions to all levels of government. The names and contact details for you to phone or write to the relevant organisations urging commitment of funds to re-establish an alternative access route for emergency vehicles to reach Mount Irvine and Mount Wilson is available in this issue and on our website, www.mtwilson.com

Following advice on-line petitions to politicians have become so numerous they are being ignored, we will not build a petition function into the website.

The Rural Fire Service authority (not the MWMIRFB) has proposed the Mount Wilson Village Hall be a Neighbourhood Safer Place (NSP) for use in the event of a bushfire threat. An NSP requires significant set back from bushland and the RFS has sought the Progress Association's assent for clearing involving slashing of shrubs, grasses and ground covers and the thinning of the tree canopy at Marcus Clark Reserve. Because of concern about the possibility of there being endangered species on the land, the Committee engaged an environmental consultant to report on the site's "flora and fauna constraints relating to the site's development potential". The report found "the site does not contain any endangered ecological communities but has the potential to provide habitat for threatened species". Provided BMCC takes no exception to the RFS proposal, the Committee will formally agree to the land clearing to help achieve NSP status for the hall. The RFS will pay for the clearing and will be asked to pay for the cost of the survey.

There was a disappointing response to the resolution adopted at the April General Meeting calling for the undergrounding of the power cables in Mt Irvine Road where the natural growth of the avenue of golden elms and copper beeches is being devastatingly affected by excessive pruning by Endeavour Energy's contractors. The response: ". . . it would be inequitable for this cost [three to ten times for undergrounding] to be funded by electricity charges as this effectively pushes a significant additional expense onto other customers who receive no benefit for undergrounding". We were advised the community could pay the cost. A Mountains contractor sight unseen quoted us \$100,000 – \$150,000 or more for the work. We have not given up and are seeking alternative overhead cables be installed by Endeavour that would allow the trees to develop much more naturally.

New members Sonya and Colin Cornick were welcomed to the Association in absentia. The Cornicks have purchased *Noonameena*, Ron and Moira Green's previous home. Mora, our former secretary, and Ron, continuing members of the MWPA, were given a rousing clap and cheer of applause in recognition of their long period of extensive service to the Mount Wilson community. Following Moira's resignation from the committee, Sue Woolfenden was invited to fill the casual vacancy. The Committee was delighted Sue accepted the invitation and agreed to be the secretary.

As all the members of the current Committee agreed to continue their work, and the number of nominations equalled the number of positions, it was not necessary to hold an election. The members are: President Richard Beattie, Vice President Alison Halliday, Secretary Sue Woolfenden, Treasurer Libby Raines, and Committee members Lorraine Barrett, Nancy Fox, Ted Griffin and Peter Laving.

The draft minutes of the AGM are available to members on our website.

New Members

All property owners, residents and former owners with five years residency or more are eligible to join or continue membership of the Association.

Please contact our Acting Secretary, Alison Halliday on 93891848, 4756 2060 or at alisonhalliday@gmail.com or (from December) Secretary Sue Woolfenden on 4756 2046 or at secretarymwpa@gmail.com if you are not members and wish to become members. The more members we have the better we can represent the community.

Richard Beattie
President

ANOTHER YEAR PASSES, THE BUSH FIRE SEASON APPROACHES AND STILL NO FIRE TRAIL TO SOLVE "ONE ROAD IN AND ONE ROAD OUT" SAFETY HAZARD

The solution to the potentially life and death issue of the remote isolation of Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine is still not being acted on by governments and councils. Years of campaigning to have safe access for fire trucks and other emergency authority vehicles to be able to get to Mount Irvine and Mount Wilson from Bilpin are yet to produce results. The best chance to get this is for all members of our communities and your friends, if they will, to contact the people who have to make the decision.

On behalf of the Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine Rural Fire Brigade, Elizabeth Montano has been organising meetings, writing submissions, working with emergency services and Hawkesbury Rural Fire brigades, with other MWMI Brigade members conducting research on visitor numbers and advocating for this essential improvement to the safety of our communities and many visitors. A summary of this work and an update on a meeting with officials on 21 September is available to members in the MWPA AGM 2015 draft minutes at page 18 on www.mtwilson.com .

What we can all do to help this campaign

CAMPAIGN FOR FIRE TRAIL BILPIN TO MOUNT IRVINE AND MOUNT WILSON PLEASE PHONE OR WRITE TO THE PEOPLE BELOW TO ASK THEM **TO ACT ON THE SAFETY OF OUR COMMUNITIES**

A phone call, individual letter or email – and many of them – will help get safe access for the Fire Brigade, Ambulance and Police. Time and again over the years injured or very sick people could have been reached much quicker if the Hawkesbury section of Mt Irvine Road was maintained for this purpose. Lost bushwalkers could have been recovered by the Police Rescue Squad quicker and more easily. Homes and property may have been saved from fire if there was an alternative way for fire brigades to reach them. Hazard reduction work could have been done to make the area safer.

This affects not only the communities of Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine. We've done our research – over 38,000 people come to visit us each year. We love having garden visitors, nut farm gate customers, school and TAFE groups, Scouts, canyoners and bushwalkers share this beautiful place with us.

We also know from working with our neighbours in The Hawkesbury that their RF brigades think this is important too. Fire, wind storms and medical emergencies don't follow local government or electorate lines and this route goes right through two local government areas – Blue Mountains City Council and Hawkesbury City Council and two State Electorates – Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury.

So, please help us help our communities, our volunteers and our visitors by telling decision makers what you think about having a fire trail for emergency vehicles to use in fire, natural disaster and medical emergency.

Email petitions and form letters are not effective in influencing political and government decision makers. Individual posted letters, emails or phone calls will have greatest impact particularly when they come in their hundreds. Choose a decision maker you know or believe most likely to help to contact and then copy others.

Following are points you may wish to include in writing to decision makers:

- The community is not looking to have a second general access road between Mount Irvine and Bilpin. It is not looking for a public road in the Hawkesbury local government area – just a safe, secure, well maintained fire trail – an emergency vehicle access route including access across Bowens Creek.
- Multiple fire fatalities at Kinglake in Victoria in 2009 resulted in part from “one road in, one road out only access” for emergency vehicles. That’s the Mount Irvine and Mount Wilson situation – “one road in, one road out only access”.
- About 250 people resident, and sometimes more than 3,000 visitors on any one day during peak visitor periods, are exposed to the threat of being trapped in the villages without an alternate land route to get ambulance, fire brigade, Police Rescue and other aid to them. We’ve estimated that’s over 38,500 people over a year.
- In emergencies, vehicular access is essential when aerial support such as helicopters can’t do the job (which is very often in bad weather conditions or at times of peak demand). In preventing fire, vehicles are necessary to do the essential back burning hazard reduction work to protect communities on both sides.
- Blue Mountains City Council maintains the route from Mount Irvine to Bowens Creek so it can be used by emergency vehicles. The section on the Hawkesbury City Council side, which provides the link to Bells Line of Road at Bilpin, has deteriorated due to no maintenance with washaways making the route impassable to ambulances, Police Rescue, fire trucks or any other emergency vehicles.
- The solution is for BMCC and HCC to jointly seek State and Commonwealth funding for the restoration of the route as a fire trail to emergency vehicle standards, including the replacement of the failing Bowens Creek bridge and for State and Federal governments to make this happen.
- Local Ambulance, the MWMIRBFB, other brigades from both Blue Mountains and the Hawkesbury strongly support this and the community is working with other authorities.
- The decision to restore and maintain the access could easily be a life and death matter. The Mount Irvine and Mount Wilson communities have worked long and hard to ensure all those in government and in the parliaments are aware of the serious ongoing threat to the communities not being addressed by those in a position to act. Who will have to accept responsibility among those not working to rectify such a serious community safety hazard? Answer: all those informed of the threat and who decline to act!
- The two communities have countlessly put the case to government and the two councils for so many years without action being taken our frustration level about such an unaddressed serious threat is at boiling point. Recent times of rain and vigorous bush growth mean it is inevitable bushfires will be coming again. What is your position on the issue?
- The Mount Wilson Progress Association unanimously passed the following resolution at its Annual General Meeting on 19 September 2015:

Having regard to the significant risks to life and property in Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine caused by Mount Wilson’s current “one road in and out” access to Bells Line of Road via Mt Wilson Road, this meeting of the Mount Wilson Progress Association resolves to urge the Blue Mountains City Council to work with Hawkesbury City Council and State and Federal governments and Members of Parliament to have Mt Irvine Road, Bowens Creek bridge, and Mt Irvine Road (being the route between Bilpin and Mt Irvine) restored for use as an emergency vehicles access route.

The people to contact:

The Hon M B Baird MP Premier GPO Box 5341 SYDNEY NSW 2001 **8574 5000**

The Hon Gladys Berejiklian MP Treasurer GPO Box 5341 SYDNEY NSW 2001 **8574 5207**

The Hon D F Perrottet MP Minister for Finance Member for Hawkesbury GPO Box 5341 SYDNEY NSW 2001 **8574 6900**

Louise Markus MP Member for Macquarie PO Box 855 Windsor NSW 2756
louise.markus.mp@aph.gov.au **4577 2631**

Trish Doyle MP Member for the Blue Mountains 32 Macquarie Road SPRINGWOOD NSW 2777
bluemountains@parliament.nsw.gov.au **4751 3298**

Cr Mark Greenhill Mayor Locked Bag 1005 KATOOMBA NSW 2780
mgreenhill@bmcc.nsw.gov.au **0414 195 990**

Cr Chris Van der Kley Deputy Mayor Locked Bag 1005 KATOOMBA NSW 2780
cvanderkley@bmcc.nsw.gov.au **0427 805 810**

Cr Michael Begg BMCC Locked Bag 1005 KATOOMBA NSW 2780
mbegg@bmcc.nsw.gov.au **0431 501 981**

Cr Don McGregor BMCC Locked Bag 1005 KATOOMBA NSW 2780
dmcgregor@bmcc.nsw.gov.au **0434 306 143**

Cr Sarah Shrubbs BMCC Locked Bag 1005 KATOOMBA NSW 2780
sshrubb@bmcc.nsw.gov.au **0414 195 980**

Mr Robert Greenwood General Manager BMCC Locked Bag 1005 KATOOMBA NSW 2780
rgreenwood@bmcc.nsw.gov.au

Mr David Jones District Manager Rural Fire Service Blue Mountains
David.Jones@rfs.nsw.gov.au

Ms Karen Hodges Officer-in-charge Hawkesbury Fire Control Centre
hawkesbury@rfs.nsw.gov.au

Mr Steve McMillan President Bilpin Rural Fire Brigade
president@bilpinbushfirebrigade.org

Captain Bilpin Rural Fire Brigade
captain@bilpinbushfirebrigade.org

Mr David Howell President Mt Wilson & Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade
howelldj@ozemail.com.au

Ms Beth Raines Captain Mt Wilson & Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade
e.raines@bigpond.net.au

Mr Mark Bancroft President Mt Irvine Progress Association
Kookootonga247@bigpond.com

Matt Lawrence Editor Hawkesbury Gazette
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Mr Damien Madigan Editor Blue Mountains Gazette
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Mr Peter Jackson General Manager Hawkesbury City Council
council@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au

Councillor Kim Ford Mayor PO Box 146 Windsor NSW 2756
kim.ford@hawkesburycouncillor.com.au 4588 5222 0413 195 052

Councillor (Dr) Warwick Mackay OAM Deputy Mayor PO Box 146 Windsor NSW 2756
warwick.mackay@hawksburycouncillor.com.au 4579 9036

Councillor Barry Calvert PO Box 146 Windsor NSW 2756
barry.calvert@hawkesburycouncillor.com.au 4567 7478 0437 998 951

Councillor Patrick Conolly PO Box 146 Windsor NSW 2756
patrick.conolly@hawkesburycouncillor.com.au 0419 321 328

Councillor Mike Creed JP PO Box 54 Richmond NSW 2753
mike.creed@hawkesburycouncillor.com.au 0419 255 972

Councillor Mary Lyons-Buckett PO Box 25 Kurrajong NSW 2758
mary.lyonsbuckett@hawkesburycouncillor.com.au 0419 512 192

Councillor Christine Paine PO Box 146 Windsor NSW 2756
christine.paine@hawkesburycouncillor.com.au 4577 3600 0407 729 915

Councillor Bob Porter PO Box 146 Windsor NSW 2756
bob.porter@hawkesburycouncillor.com.au 4579 9547 0408 437 510

Councillor Paul Rasmussen PO Box 146 Windsor NSW 2756
paul.rasmussen@hawkesburycouncillor.com.au 4776 1611 0412 366 633

Councillor Jill Reardon P.O Box 304 Kurrajong NSW 2758
jill.reardon@hawkesburycouncillor.com.au 4572 1534 0434 022 631

Councillor Tiffany Tree PO Box 146 Windsor NSW 2756
tiffany.tree@hawkesburycouncillor.com.au 0434 021 610

Councillor Leigh Williams PO Box 146 Windsor NSW 2756
leigh.williams@hawkesburycouncillor.com.au 4579 0135 0437 498 589

RFS News

Bushfire Season Has Arrived – new pile burn procedures

With the introduction of the bushfire season (1st October 2015 – 31st March 2016, unless otherwise advised) the rules for pile burns have changed. You will now require a Fire Permit, which will include an inspection of your pile burn. Permit forms and further details are available from RFS Blue Mountains District Office, 4784 7444. You will need to allow a fortnight for the process to be completed. Once you have your permit the normal rules regarding advising neighbours and District Office still apply.

New Recruits

Graham Tribe advises that four new recruits have volunteered to join the Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Brigade, for which we are very grateful. They are undertaking their basic bushfire fighting course this September and October at Bell fire station. They are Keith Ralston, James Peppercorn, Will Kerridge and Bruce Kerridge. They are part of a group of 16 people from several brigades doing this training course at Bell.

There are many roles for people wishing to become involved in the brigade. About half our active members are firefighters who get on trucks and attend incidents. The other half are support people who keep the fire station operating, make sure new crews are available, keep the community informed, assist residents leave in an emergency, and catering to make sure everyone is fed. Also the support people help the community prepare for emergencies and make sure our systems are in place and ready.



The brigade welcomes new members and if you would like to become involved either as a firefighter or a support person then contact Graham Tribe or Joe Montano and they can assist with the membership and training process.

Get Ready Weekend

With the number of people who put their hand up for a property inspection and the number of residents who registered with District Office to conduct a pile burn over this weekend we know, for certain, that at least 9% of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine households took serious steps to prepare their homes for the bushfire season. Of course, we also know that many other households over that weekend (without inspections or pile burns) were tidying up their properties and we hope that some of you discussed your bushfire plans with your family.

For the most part, our inspections revealed that residents had taken a lot of trouble to clear around their homes. However, the main issue was trees too close to houses and overhanging roofs. The 10/50 legislation provides residents with an opportunity to reduce this risk and we would encourage residents to take advantage of this opportunity to make their homes safer from bushfire. Please check the RFS website, www.nswrfs.gov.au, to ensure that you can comply with their requirements.

Glossary of Bushfire Terms

Every profession has its own language and the world of bushfire fighting is no exception. The following are terms you may hear over the coming months in the media or from your neighbours:

Section 44: the section of the Rural Fire Act which allows the RFS to take over the management of a major fire. This section is usually invoked when local resources are not adequate to manage a fire which has broken out in their area. This fire is then referred to as a 'Section 44 fire'.

Hazard reduction: a burn that is planned and usually carried out in the cooler months. The aim is to ensure that the flame height is not too high (and therefore does not go into tree tops) and that ground fuel is reduced, thereby ensuring that if a fire does break out in the bushfire season there will be little fuel to feed it.

Backburn: a fire started intentionally to consume the fuel in the path of the bushfire, thereby starving it of fuel and causing it to stop or change direction (eg away from houses).

Crown fire: a fire that advances from top to top of trees or shrubs. It is a fast moving fire

Embers: glowing particles cast from the fire and a major cause of houses burning down

Fire retardant: a chemical generally mixed with water, designed to retard combustion by a chemical reaction. It is applied as slurry from the ground or air to fuels (bush) ahead of the fire

Ladder fuels: fuels that provide vertical continuity e.g. a garden bed with leaf litter under shrubs with branches to the ground and under trees with bark hanging down to shrubs or lower limbs of trees touching tops of shrubs. This provides a ladder of fuel from the ground to the top of the tree.

PPE (Personal Protective Equipment): those iconic yellows that all firefighters wear. They are designed to mitigate the risk of injury during an incident.

Cat 1 (Category 1): RFS vehicles are given a rating depending on their size. Our firefighting vehicles are a category 1, a category 7, a category 9 and a category 11 (also called a pumper).

Fire Danger Meter: almost every country town in Australia has one. Our meter is outside the Mt Wilson Station and tells you the current fire rating – low moderate, high, very high, severe, extreme or catastrophic. Take note as you drive past.

TOBAN (Total Fire Ban): A total fire ban is declared because of extreme weather conditions. They are declared on days when fires are most likely to spread rapidly, threaten lives and property and be difficult to control. A TOBAN is usually declared the afternoon before to ensure that they are based on the most accurate weather forecasts. It usually starts at midnight and lasts 24 hours.

When a TOBAN is declared it is illegal to do anything that could or is likely to start a fire. The ban includes all open fires for the purposes of cooking and camping and all fire permits are suspended

RAFT: Remote area firefighting team. Several members of our brigade are RAFT qualified. They usually are winched in by helicopter to fight fires in remote areas.

Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine are not just for the old!

As part of the continuing negotiations to have Bowens Creek Rd reopened as an emergency access route we have been trying to get a handle on the number of visitors to our lovely villages. Those of you who drive past Cathedral Reserve will have noticed the numbers of young people regularly camped there during the week. I decided to investigate. Barker College and Blue Mountains Grammar are regulars bringing over 300 students here each year. I was even more surprised to learn that you can study 'Outdoor Recreation' for the HSC and Lithgow TAFE runs a 9 day program for these students (who come from 40 schools from all over NSW) and which includes 3 days camping at Mt Wilson. Over 350 students are involved annually. They love the area and are particularly keen on the fact that the students can't get mobile reception. Unfortunately, I had to warn them that the community hoped that would change in the near future with a tower at Mt Tomah!

Then, of course, the Ryde TAFE arboriculture students are regulars here as are many university canyoning groups, some of whom camp here for the Festival of Canyons. Next weekend 150 scouts under the guidance of Alan Hyde and with assistance from the brigade will camp at Mt Irvine and learn fire awareness.

Many of us have homes here because we were first introduced to the area by parents or friends when young. Fond memories of those times have led us to return later in life. It is heartening to know that, in spite of the more fashionable attractions of the beach and computers, there may still be a supply of future residents as so many young people are still being introduced to the beauty of the Mounts.

Kathleen Oakes
Community Engagement Officer

Spring has sprung

Spring is always a wonderful time in Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine.

Not only do the gardens and avenues look beautiful, with the abundant flowers and fresh new leaves, but the native bush too has its own charm as the flowers emerge each season.

A number of people have asked me to identify some of the many plants which are flowering in October and which you may see as you drive along the road, so I will mention a few.

The Yellow Pea flower (*Pultemea*) grows beneath the trees at the bottom of the Zig-Zag, along the avenue near the Village Hall and in many places along the Mount Irvine Road. It has soft green leaves and all yellow pea-shaped flowers. In many places it grows over two metres high in great masses up onto the hillsides and down the slopes. It mostly grows on the edge of the basalt in sunny positions in amongst the tall timbers.

Along the Five Mile, *Comesperma ericinum* "Pink Matchhead" is an attractive erect shrub with bright pink flowers at the top of the stems. It grows about one metre high.

Another pink shrub which catches the eye along the Five Mile is *Boronia microphylla* which only grows about a metre high and has clusters of bright pink and highly fragrant flowers and tiny dark green leaves.

At Du Fours Rocks and Boronia Point, *Boronia Florabunda* is out. Great soft pink fragrant clumps, a glorious sight, and again at Boronia Point and Du Fours, the rare *Hakea constablei* makes quite a sight with its small white flowers out along the stems. It grows about two metres high and is a rather loose, delicate looking shrub.

One of the most beautiful places to go in October is Fields Selection on the Mt Wilson side of Zircon Creek. A small track leaves the Mt Irvine Road on the south side; I think of this area as Mt Wilson's secret garden.

Walk or drive along the track for 200 metres and you come to a glorious patch of *Boronia pinnata* with masses of it growing over two metres high and covered in pink fragrant flowers. The large bright yellow flowers of *Hibbertia saligna* are out as well as the large pea-shaped flower *Gompholobium*.

The mint bush *Prostanthera caerulea* (pictured) is also making a strong comeback in this area. It has deep lilac flowers in clusters and makes an attractive large shrub or small tree.

During the Spring, it is always good to drive up Farrer Road and Smiths Road to see the *Indigofera australis* with its many lilac pink flowers lighting up the bush, or to simply enjoy the beautiful drive out to Mt Irvine.

Libby Raines



Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Facebook site

You do not need to be signed up to Facebook to see what is happening on our community Facebook page. Just use link <https://www.facebook.com/MtWilsonMtIrvine> and take a look. If you would like to make comments on the page however, you will need to be signed up. We would love your comments and feedback.

Also, we would love to see more of what's going on around the village. If you would like to share something happening in your garden or veggie patch, or you have an event or something you would like to plug, please email photographs with a short description to Linda Raines at gowanrossfarms@gmail.com and I will share it on our Facebook page.

Garbage Bins

We had some trouble over the autumn period with people dumping household rubbish in our public garbage bins.

This was particularly evident at the Happy Valley picnic spot and at Cathedral Reserve. This caused follow on issues as rubbish from the picnickers and campers could not fit into the bins so was left scattered all around Cathedral Reserve or in bags on the ground next to the bins.

Now for those of you not in this century, the garbage man stopped getting out of his truck moons ago and so that rubbish had to be moved and put into another bin somewhere else. This meant finding gaps in bins around the village and also bringing in more bins from the council.

The other issue was that in at least two instances there was hazardous material left in the bins that had to be quarantined. There was also a follow up investigation by the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA). This was not only potentially hazardous to anyone putting rubbish in the bins but also to those that manage the weekly bin service.

The council has since put notices on every public bin in the village warning against dumping of household waste (note - there is a \$200 fine!) and have mentioned surveillance cameras may be utilised if the problems continue.

As we move into another busy spring period, could all residents and weekenders please dispose of your waste appropriately by either using your own bins and/or taking your rubbish back to Sydney with you?

Many thanks

Peter & Linda Raines

Mt Wilson Mt Irvine Historical Society

The Turkish Bath Museum be open from 3.00 to 5.00pm on Saturday, 31st October 2015

Residents of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine and members past and present are welcome to afternoon tea.

So if particularly if you are new to the villages, have not seen the Museum recently or would simply enjoy afternoon tea with us, please join your Committee at this special gem from the past!

Zaharah Braybrooke *President* **Mary Reynolds** *Vice President*

John Braybrooke *Secretary* **Milba Mewburn** *Treasurer, Rosters, Membership*

Des Barrett *Tours and Maintenance* **Pauline Michell** *Tours and Maintenance*

MOUNT IRVINE PUBLIC HALL

Great news for the Mt Irvine community!

Following a submission to the NSW Crown Lands, the Hall Trust has been successful in being awarded a grant of \$49,982 for improvements to our hall.

The responsible Minister, The Honourable Niall Blaire said in his letter that the grant is for:

- replacement of the kitchen
- replacement of the timber pergola
- installation of a roof over the outdoor area and
- extension of the outdoor paved area.

Work has already commenced on the planning and consultation phase. The Trust is drawing upon the skills and talents of a number of our community members to ensure we will have a facility that can be further improved over time and will meet community needs into the future.

The building works are expected to commence early in 2016.

Carol Carrigan
Trustee

2016 Autumn Garden Festival

Nancy Fox, convenor of last year's inaugural and highly successful Autumn Garden Festival, advises that the date for the 2016 Festival has been set for Saturday 16th April.

Further details will no doubt be published later on, but apparently three more gardens have kindly agreed to open their gates for the Festival.

In the meantime, block out Saturday April 16th in your calendars.

A special reminder about the Annual Remembrance Day Service

This year's service will be held on Wednesday, 11 November 2015 from 10.30 am. Please bring a plate to share for morning tea in the Village Hall.

Without fail, this service is a very moving occasion.

As part of the morning, Alison Halliday, as she has done every year since 2009, will give a short talk outlining her research into two more of the twenty-seven names inscribed on the granite block of those who served in World War I. (Eight more who served in World War II and one from the Vietnam War are also listed).

Without this research, and that of the late Arthur Delbridge who initiated this charming ritual from 2004 to 2008, these names would, other than to their immediate families, largely remain anonymous.

Both Arthur and Alison have a rare knack of bringing a very personal, and at times, intimate insight into their subjects from their deep and persistent research.

Book Review: *Walking Away*

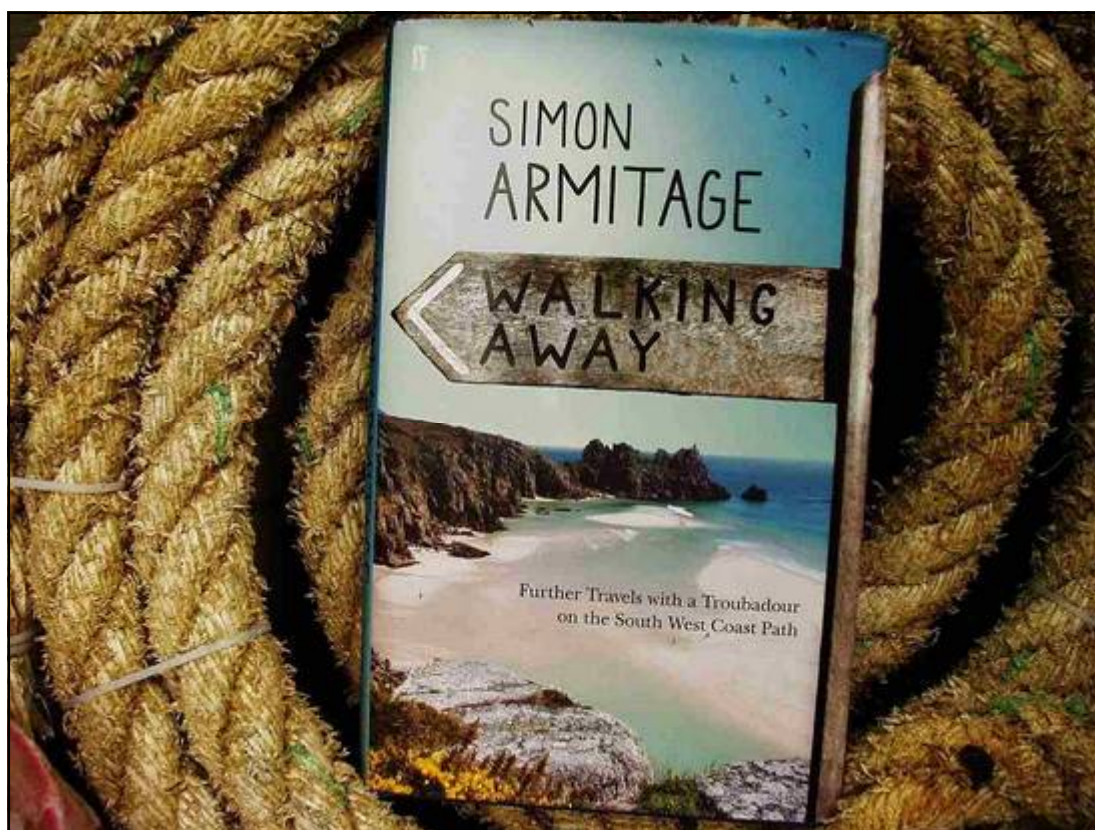
I have been a fan of Simon Armitage's poetry for some time. His writing is evocative, sometimes blunt, but always illuminating. Much of it focuses on the natural world and he also wrote/translated a version of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. A few years ago he walked the Pennine Way, paying his way by giving readings of his poetry every night, and recorded this experience in *Walking Home*.

Just out is a companion journey, *Walking Away*, in which he investigates the south west coast path of Cornwall. He prepares for his trek by buying a rather special sun hat, which he forgets to wear, and by carving a walking staff from a holly branch, rather more needed on this path which seems to be either up or down with little in between.

Having walked a very short section of this path I was intrigued by his choice for while it seems as though one would have splendid sea views, the reality is that either you are looking where to put your feet or, as he discovers, much of the path is between steep banks and well treed over. This is as much a journey into his aging self, the value of friendship, the responses to poetry and disintegrating boots as it is about the actual route. Most powerful are the vivid descriptions of the landscape and the occasional eccentric companion. Just out of Newquay he finds the sand artist Tony Plant drawing with a rake on the beach sand, 'making art, though what he does is appealing in its simplicity'. When Armitage has a go he finds that making a pleasing design on such a large scale is not as easy as it looks. The comparison with his own poetry is covert and inevitable.

He hoped to end up on the tiny island of Samson, walking there at an extreme low tide but he discovered that this was 'always something of a poetic fantasy based on unsubstantiated rumours and casual research'. It is just as well he had excellent helpers for the many days of walking before this. He decides that this will be his last long walk and we are fortunate that it lives on here in his precise writing and ironic tone.

Alison Halliday



Ask the Neighbours

Dear Readers,

In our last column, we discussed the development of the RAATS Manifesto - beyond our shared abhorrence for all things creepy and crawly which invade our homes and gardens, doing unspeakable things. No Tim, I said we won't be speaking about those antechinus antics any further!

I am a little surprised to advise that we have received no feedback from Readers on the future direction of RAATS. This can only mean that we have a shared vision for the future, that you're all deliriously happy about RAATS' current (but forward thinking) view of the world and that you have confidence in the ability of our leadership team to steer us through to further greatness. Either that or none of you give a.....RAATS.

So, Tim - it's up to you and me. Just as well you've brought back a million ideas from your recent sojourn to parts of the world far, far away. No, Tim - not your trip to Penrith last week. I mean your recent International Study Tour of "Comparative Social and Political Movements in Wildlife Restraint".

Your first idea, Tim was to eat the little beggars? Because the French told you they deal with some garden pests by eating them? And you believed them? I suppose they also told you they ate frogs' legs to provide a boost to the small amphibians wheelchair industry? Or, they eat lambs' kidneys, but only since they've perfected dialysis for sheep.

I think they were pulling your leg, but then, we've had crazier policies than that find success at the ballot box, so let's workshop it - while antechinus are not the new snails (the tails would be too chewy), perhaps we should explore the lyrebird as the new turkey? Wombats as the new beef; wallabies the new kangaroo; kangaroo theerr, old kangaroo; leeches the new....NOOOO, Tim. I draw the line at taste testing those little suckers.

So, it's agreed - the RAATS Manifesto will include eating selected species of pests. You'll have to get in the test kitchen to devise some snappy recipes to go with that, Tim. I can see our political ads now: a celebrity chef endorsing the RAATS manifesto around a long table set in a romantic Blue Mountains landscape, surrounded by jolly people all chowing down on barbecued lyrebird. And another ad with an old timer doing a piece to camera (that's advertising talk, Tim) reminiscing about the good old days of wombat stew. Not sure about your suggestion on the slogan, Tim: "Eating a lyrebird is music to my stomach"ummmm.

I think we've got enough material there for the focus group, Tim. If they like it, it's in. If not,well, being an organisation driven by populism, then of course we'll ditch the whole idea and look for something else. RAATS is nothing if not flexible in its principles.

Elizabeth Montano

Suggestions, comments or contributions warmly welcomed!