



The Mounts

The Community Newsletter of Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine



April 2011

Welcome

A sad gloom has settled over the mountains with the news of the untimely death of Alan Heap. Despite his work taking him overseas and interstate for extended periods of time, resulting in him being able to spend far less time in his beloved Mt Wilson than he would have wished, Alan had an extended network of friends in the community. All loved his infectious enthusiasm, his unrelenting commonsense and his urbane charm: he will be sorely missed. We extend our deepest sympathies to Diana. David Howell reflects elsewhere on his life and legacy.

Contrasting this, it is extraordinarily pleasing to report that the Dahlia and Flower Exhibition organised by Peter Richey proved to be an outstanding success. It was wonderful to see the Village Hall full of colour and new faces. Peter deserves our warmest congratulations for his hard work and vision: the event looks likely to a permanent feature on the annual calendar. Fittingly, Alan was able to see the results of Peter's efforts.

One of the enduring myths of our villages is that we have a very stable population. Whilst it is obvious that there is a very substantial core of residents who have been here for many years and even decades, happily new people do settle here, and, sadly, others leave for a variety of reasons. Alison Halliday has kindly offered to report periodically on the surprisingly large number of books written about the villages. Some of these books are long out of print or of such low profile that they remain semi-forgotten by many, or totally unknown by an almost equal number.

An interesting insight into the logistics and assembled resources of a Wollangambe rescue on a miserably wet Saturday night is provided in the RFS section by Sarah Howell. Encouragingly, the group concerned followed all prior advice meticulously; their misadventure, despite all precautions and due diligence, was once again a reminder of how unforgiving the wilds of the Wollemi can be.

This newsletter over many years has covered an extraordinarily diverse range of topics up to, but not including, the kitchen sink. A delightfully reverential article submitted by Eleanor Herriott rectifies this glaring omission.

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Community Calendar

April	Fri 15th Bushwalking Group— Katoomba Falls to Leura Forest	Fri 22nd 9.00am Good Friday Mt Wilson Church Service	Sun 24th 3.00pm Easter Sunday Mt Wilson Church Service	May
Sun 1st 9.00am RFS Training Mt Wilson Shed	Sun 8th 3.00pm Mt Wilson Church Service	Fri 13th 9.00am Bush Care— Wynne Reserve	Fri 20th Bushwalking Group—Mount Banks	Sat 21st 10.00am Historical Society Meeting Study Centre
June	Sun 5th 9.00am RFS Training Mt Wilson Shed	Fri 10th 9.00am Bush Care	Sun 12th 3.00pm Mt Wilson Church Service	Fri 17th Bushwalking Group—Kanagra Walls

Village Hall Jottings—The Annual Report from the 2011 Village Hall AGM

In November 2010 Ron Green resigned from the position of Chair of our committee.

On behalf of the committee and our community I would like to thank Ron, for his guidance and hard work for the Village Hall since the management of the Village Hall was handed back to the new Management Committee on 13th September 2003. I think you will all agree that the Hall amenities are vastly improved and the Hall is a much more attractive and comfortable place to be. That the Hall can be used as an Emergency Centre is also a great bonus for our community. We are pleased to say that Ron plans to stay on the committee to work on the Stage 2 project along with Darrel Conybeare.

I would also like to thank the committee for all the hard work they have put in during 2010; good discussion at meetings, helping with functions and working bees.

I would especially like to thank Mib for mowing the lawns, working so quickly and ably to get maintenance problems fixed and keeping us all informed about the cleaning problems as well as fulfilling her position of Booking Officer.

As always Terry Cameron has provided us with sensible, cheerful, support and advice, thank you Terry

2010 was a year of some frustration in terms of getting things done!

Our most urgent need is for the Hall to be re-roofed, as the roof is leaking badly and no other works can be contemplated until this is completed. On 22nd October the committee had a meeting with Dan Long and Terry Cameron from BMCC about the roof. An agreement was reached that the roof would be replaced with a colourbond roof, in Manna Red, to fit in with the surrounding buildings and the work would be financed from Council's maintenance budget. As yet this work has not been done.

Another concern is pedestrian safety in the Hall area. Council has made an undertaking with the MWPA to reform the gutter and access to the property, as yet not done. The lack of lighting and the speed some cars travel can also make the area dangerous. We have been advised that the area is not suitable for a 'shared zone', so we are thinking of other ways to alert cars to pedestrians in this area. Council has the addition of a street light on pole 199 (the pole closest to the Fire Station) in the list for a quote from Integral Energy for provision in this year's program. Hopefully it will come before winter.

Having said that a few improvements have been made:

- Toby Gow installed a wireless modem in the Hall which made it possible to use the internet connection at the Fire Station in the Hall
- There are now fly screens at the kitchen doors and we have a new fridge.
- We have covers made for the chairs
- A beautiful screen print of *Eastern Rosellas* was donated to the Hall.

Our goal for 2011 is to get the Stage 2 plans to a 'shovel ready' stage.

Thanks to Darrel Conybeare a concept plan is prepared and we are currently getting quotes for preparation of the DA and CC.

The next and biggest hurdle is to fund the project. We plan to apply to Council to be placed on the Capital Works Program for the toilets and store room block, as this is a council responsibility. To fund the Hall alterations – the pergola and front room, we will apply for grants and continue to involve the community through the Yulefest, Melbourne Cup Lunch etc. A copy of the concept drawing is available if you would like to see it.

Lastly I would like to thank the Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine communities who are most generous and are increasingly finding the Hall a good place to hold their meetings and functions.

Judy Tribe, Chair, 19th March 2010

Mt Wilson Progress Association Committee News

Clean Up Australia Day

Our thanks to all who helped in the village clean up and thanks particularly to Brian Abrahams who organised the event for the first time. Over half a large skip of rubbish was collected.

General Meeting

The meeting was well attended and generated much discussion about a number of issues.

- A report was presented on the website, the first stage of which is operational. It has become a large website with over 190 pages. In February there were 851 individual visitors, with each one reading many pages and downloading information. The second phase will focus on building the secure area of the site. The team were thanked for the brilliant achievement thus far. Graham Tribe has provided a detailed report elsewhere in this newsletter.
- There was strong discussion about the state of the Village Hall road gutter and the lack of Council responsibility and action, despite a previous commitment to do the required work. Council will be notified of the members' demand that the inadequate drainage be fixed immediately. It was strongly suggested individual letters of complaint also be sent.
- The Committee was asked to approach Integral Energy about the possibility of bundle cabling the wires that run through the golden elm street trees on Mount Irvine Road.
- A policy of street trees in Mount Wilson was presented, explaining the nature of planting of street trees in Mount Wilson from the early days to ensure that the type of trees that are planted maintain the ambience and the longevity that is most suited to the village. You can read this article in another part of this newsletter.
- Libby Raines presented a report about the invasive weed, Japanese Honeysuckle. This can also be found in the newsletter.

Postal Service

As a response to complaints about the lack of delivery of small parcels, the Postal Delivery Co-ordinator at Katoomba Delivery centre has arranged for the delivery contractor to be given small parcels for him to determine if delivery is feasible. This arrangement cannot be guaranteed long term. Further complaints should be made individually to Ms. Amanda Gibson, National Resolutions, Australia Post, GPO Box 9911, Brisbane, Queensland 4001.

Condolences

We are shocked and saddened by the sudden death of Alan Heap and extend our sympathy to Diana and all Alan's family and friends. Alan had been a member of the Mount Wilson Progress Association since 1995 and has been a well respected and admired member of the community.

Mount Wilson Leisure Library

Don't forget, the library is open every Saturday morning from 10.00 to 11.00 so do drop in for a browse through the bookshelves. If you wish to come at another time, please contact Moira on 4756 2162 and it can be arranged. There have been very few visitors to the library recently so please utilise this fine collection of books to enable the library to continue.

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.

Proposed new BMCC Rate Structure.

Information has just been received from the BMCC about a proposal for a changed rate structure. Details of the proposal are documented on Page 5.

Moira Green

Secretary

A Mount Wilson Childhood

Helen Warliker and Meg Fromel are the granddaughters of Jesse Gregson, founder of *Yengo*. Their father was Jesse's second son, Edward; his older brother, William, was killed during WWI in 1916. Jesse Gregson had been passionately interested in the plants of his own garden and in the botany of the indigenous plants, and Edward continued this interest with a focus on the eucalypts. Edward, who was usually known as 'Greg', married Margaret Jefferson in 1920; she came from Schenectady in the USA. They built and then lived in the house known as *Wyndham*; unfortunately this original cottage, and its neighbouring *Applecot* burnt down some years ago. The land on which *Wyndham* was built was part of the original holding of *Yengo* but it was not sold when *Yengo* changed hands. The cottage was named after the surveyor, Wyndham who did the original survey of Mount Wilson in 1868.

It was here that the three daughters of Edward and Margaret Gregson spent their childhood and they returned to it, visiting and living there, and at *Applecot*. *Applecot* was the old converted apple shed, from the time when *Wyndham*, and other lands originally part of *Yengo*, had been apple orchards. The apple shed had a big concrete tank adjoining it and is still there many years after this shed became a cottage 'Applecot' and surviving its subsequent destruction by fire.

Edward Gregson retreated to *Applecot*, having sold *Wyndham* after his wife's death, and it became his last mountain home, living there until 1955. His daughter Meg lived there for while after her husband died. She then moved to the central coast but the lure of the Mountain called her back. She finally sold *Applecot* in 1996.

Helen Warliker was the oldest of the three girls and she is responsible for writing the memoir *A Mount Wilson Childhood*. Her younger sister, Margaret, but always known as 'Meg', provided the delightful linocut illustrations. The book tells of a magical time for the young Gregson children. But life was probably hard work and lonely for their parents. The house is described as a simple weatherboard cottage with an iron roof:

It was surrounded on three sides by verandahsRoses clambered up the railings of the verandah and a fragrant Lisbon lemon reached almost to the roof. In the corner where the verandah met two sides of the house was a hammock out of bounds except when adults were present because there was a high drop to the ground below. The glassed in back verandah with its window boxes of geraniums on the other side of the house was very different. It had its own smells and sounds; the smell of outdoor gear – raincoats, gumboots, hats – mingled with that of the wood boxes for the fuel stove and open fireplaces, and with fruit and vegetables in and under the long table.(p1-2)

Dad's room was full of notebooks recording rain, and trees and plants identified in the bush, matters relating to the farm, and so on. He also kept a daily diary right up to the time of his death. The smell of paper, old and new, pervaded this room stuffed full of books and maps. Maps were one of his obsessions and some were his own work. Adjoining this room was his own shower with a hand pump and a kerosene tin for hot water. The mysterious workings of this shower were known only to dad, which was used exclusively by him.

Inside the house proper a long narrow hall ran from one end to the other, and in a high cupboard well out of reach of us children, were boxes of exquisite dolls' clothes and tea sets produced only on special occasions and on very wet days.

In the pantry, on the shady side of the house, large pans of milk were set for cream. Also setting in pans but high up on a shelf was the home-made soap, my father's province for some reason, nobody else taking any interest in it because the smell repelled us.

It was in the kitchen that most of the little dramas of our lives were enacted....The big cedar kitchen table was... our usual eating place even for birthday parties and dinner parties; blue damask linen and silver candlesticks were added for the latter occasions.

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(p2-3)

The illustrations record the church, the school and *Chimney Cottage* which was established as a tea room by the girl's mother. There are also a number of photographs showing the friends and neighbours, taken on picnics and sports day; the latter held on Silva Plana. The memoir is divided in short chapters about their daily life, their own and other local families, the days of exploring the surrounding bush, including walks to the Wollangambe which 'epitomised those halcyon days' (p61), the seasonal cycles and the small dramas of their childhood.

For the present day reader *A Mount Wilson Childhood* not only evokes a past era but it is a reminder of how, although much has changed, the Mountain and its special places may still be seen and known today.

Alison Halliday

Mt Wilson & Mt Irvine Historical Society Inc

The Turkish Bath Museum is open to the public from 12.30pm to 3.30pm every Sunday during April and May. 15 visitors were welcomed on April 3rd and we were pleased to note that one group had been attracted by the information posted on the new Mt Wilson website. Several groups were passing through after visiting the chestnut farms at Mt Irvine. We hope for more of those sunny, crisp autumn days that show the two villages off at their seasonal best.

The Society's volunteer resources will be challenged in mid-April when not one but two busloads of University of Third Age participants plan to visit the Museum and enjoy a guided walking tour along the Avenue. This group is planning some garden visits as well, so it will be a win - win day for the village overall.

Please remember the Society when you come across family documents and / or photographs of earlier times in either Mt Irvine or Mt Wilson. It is vitally important that our history is recorded for future generations. We can copy or scan your originals if you would like them returned. Any member of the management committee would be pleased to hear from you.

The Society's mid-year general meeting will be held in the Mt Wilson Village Hall on Saturday 18 June 2011, with guest speaker Alan Croker, head of Design 5 Architects, who has been overseeing conservation at the Turkish Bath and Wynstay Estate since 1993. We hope members and friends will join us for an interesting meeting and a pleasant lunch together.

Florence Smart

Proposed new BMCC Rate Structure

Blue Mountains City Council is proposing a new rate structure and the proposal is now on public exhibition. It will be simpler and fairer without increasing the Council's rates revenue. It will reduce the total rates contribution from **residential** ratepayers who, **on average** will pay \$39 less. Under the proposal, **Business** ratepayers will pay more, in line with the higher expenditure on services and facilities by Council.

Ratepayers can get an estimation of their rates for 2011-2012 by calling the Rates Team on 4780 000 or email council@bmcc.nsw.gov.au. Council is inviting comments and formal submissions, both from those who approve and those who don't so that both sides may be considered before decisions are made whether or not to adopt the proposal. Submission forms have been sent to the MWPA and must be returned to Council by 6 May. Please inform a member of the MWPA committee of your opinion so that we can truly reflect the community's views.

Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigades**Wollangambe Rescue shows Community Spirit**

A complex rescue which was successfully carried out in the Wollangambe Canyon recently demonstrated the generosity and willingness to help which identifies Rural Fire Service volunteers. On Saturday 19 March, a group of six canyoners set off for a day on the Wollangambe. Their preparations had been perfect: they had informed the Police of their plans and borrowed from them a Personal Locator Beacon. Each carried appropriate equipment and clothing. When one of the female members of the group fell and seriously lacerated her leg at around 4pm, the group activated the PLB to request a rescue. Two members of the group walked out until they could get mobile coverage to ring 000 and give more information to emergency services on the patient's condition and exact location.

Soon after, Police Rescue, NSW Ambulance and Mt Wilson Community First Responders were paged. Just as a Police Rescue helicopter appeared above Mt Wilson, heavy rain started to fall making a helicopter evacuation impossible. The Police then revised the rescue to a Carry Out and requested 50 volunteers from the RFS. Ultimately 55 RFS volunteers turned up at the Mt Wilson Fireshed, some coming from as far away as Glenbrook. Two Group Captains, Peter Church (West 3) and Fred Taylor (West 2) also turned out, and many RFS members from the Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Brigade.

Said Captain Beth Raines, "It is incredibly rewarding to experience that level of response from throughout the Blue Mountains District. Even though there was a lot of necessary waiting around while the patient was assessed, and in the end some volunteers were not needed, not a single person complained".

In addition to RFS volunteers, the rescue involved two Police Rescue personnel, two members of the Special Care Ambulance Team (SCAT), two paramedics, and an Ambulance Area Commander. Police Rescue co-ordinated the rescue, with Beth Raines in charge of the RFS. Approximately 20 RFS personnel working in teams of six carried the patient back to safety. The successful rescue effort was completed around midnight.

As Beth observed: "The patient did an amazing job in getting herself up a particularly difficult steep section with the help of the rescuers. She was in considerable pain and still managed to pull herself up cliffs which were too steep for rescuers to carry her". The patient is still suffering ongoing medical problems, but has sent her written and very grateful thanks to all who took part in her rescue for both their skill and time.

Communications Tower Progress

The recent Wollangambe rescue proved to be an important launch for the equipment mounted on the communications tower. New aeriels mounted on the tower made communication with teams operating in the canyon more reliable and clearer, all helping with the successful outcome of the rescue.

Brigade Training Update

Numbers of members coming to monthly training have been pleasing with 19 attending the February training day, and 9 in March.

The Welcome Back to the Brigade day on 27 February was a great success with 12 members coming along to reacquaint themselves with the Brigade and feel more confident to attend future monthly training sessions. Thanks to all those concerned.

New Members

A warm welcome to new members who have recently joined the Brigade: **James Peppercorn, Nicholas Peppercorn, Raoul Wilson, Hugh Wilson, Mark Bancroft, Robyn Scrivener, and Robbie Fayder**. All have successfully completed their safety induction and will now undertake their BF (Basic Firefighter) training.

Call Out Log

The Brigade was called out nine times during February and March to one campfire on the Bells Line of Road, one rescue as described above, three road accidents, and four medical emergencies. Our thanks go to Brigade members who responded (listed by number of calls attended): Peter Dempsey (6), Libby Raines (5), Beth Raines (4), Kathleen Oakes (4), Stephen Dean (3), Vic Zhukov (2), Barry Freeman (2), Peter Raines (2), Graham Tribe (1), Kim Gow (1), Tim Gow (1), and David Howell (1).

Sarah Howell

Dahlia and Flower Arrangement Exhibition

The Dahlia and Flower Arrangement exhibition was hosted by the Central West Dahlia Society on Saturday 13th March at the Village Hall. Peter Richey, and fellow Australian Dahlia Council member Rob Slarke of Lithgow, put in an extraordinary amount of effort and time in organising this event; the result of their vision and organization was there for all to see.



The day was only slightly marred by the failure of the Hall's toilets and half the power circuits. The service levels of the Blue Mountains City Council has come in for much criticism in recent times—much of it warranted—but it does need to be acknowledged that the Council's electrical contractors did respond with record speed and efficiency, and did succeed in resolving the issue by the following Monday morning. In the time-honoured tradition, a temporary solution was found on the day, involving (as it inevitably does) a metaphorical length of No. 8 fencing wire and a stoic refusal to panic.



Peter Richey conveys his thanks and appreciation to all the growers and exhibitors for their superb displays, as well as the many people and companies who donated prizes for the raffle, which was won by Elly Gunn. Additionally, many residents contributed time, effort and support to help make the event such a spectacular success.

The colour, variety and beauty of the genus was an eye-opener to non-aficionados, whilst the simple elegance of the floral displays also drew much comment. Eleanor Herriott established a world first for her creative use of barbed wire in a horticultural show whilst, as always, John Cardy's bonsais were astounding.

The commercial growers were delighted with the attendance and response; anecdotally, we are told of many advanced orders being placed on the day.

Simon Marnie, ABC 702's weekend presenter—a staunch promoter of Mt Wilson for many years - enthusiastically promoted the event and even evoked a limerick that had long been lost in the mists of time for most:

*There was a young man from Australia
Who painted his bum like a dahlia;
The colours were fine
And so were the lines
But the smell was an absolute failure*

The nett proceeds of the day totalled \$716, which Peter and Rob have kindly allowed to be shared equally between the Village Hall and the Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine RFS. As much as these funds will be put to good use, possibly what was more valuable was the influx of many first time visitors to our community who filled the Hall with laughter and energy and conversation.

Street Trees on Mount Wilson

The street trees on Mt Wilson are a wonderful feature contributing to the unique character of the mountain. The first trees planted are those on The Avenue, with elms on one side and originally Spanish or sweet chestnuts on the southern side. These chestnuts later died and were replaced with alternate beech and lindens (or limes if you prefer). These were followed by plantings of horse chestnuts, beech and plane trees. The Avenue was planted by the earliest settlers who were probably inspired by the wonderful avenues of trees in England but no doubt they were also aware that planting such trees is a very long term project. Today we see the benefit of their foresight and generosity. The cherry trees in Queens Avenue were probably the next to be planted, but there is no evidence as to when this happened.



Since the beginning of the Progress Association, in the early years of the 20th century, it has been responsible for the street trees; the selection, the planting and the maintenance. The Progress Association acts on behalf of the Blue Mountains City Council; and it is much better to have local knowledge, experience and skills preserving our unique trees. The ideal street tree is one that is a large tree at maturity with maximum vertical growth and preferably one that is deciduous to give cool shade in summer and let in the winter sunlight. Those original Avenue trees are good examples. The flowering cherries, while spectacular in spring, have growth that is rather too spreading. It is also useful if the trees can be 'trunked up', that is, tolerating their lower branches being trimmed off which not only encourages the vertical growth but also allows for vehicular and pedestrian access. In practise this means trunk only to a height of three to four metres.

Beeches and lindens are the perfect street tree: their growth is vertical and they are lovely in both their summer and autumn foliage. Trees such as the oak, while a very handsome tree, are really too big to be a street tree as the mature growth is horizontal as well as vertical; and the tulip tree does tend to be brittle in windy places. Allowing light through to the ground is

increasingly important when there are so many beautiful gardens which also have their share of (potentially) large trees so preference is given to deciduous trees. (Bushes and shrubs are not appropriate street plantings.) The green beeches in Galwey Lane, planted about 30 years ago, are now more than saplings or youthful trees and they will become more beautiful and further enhance the street-scape. You may wonder why the beeches, which continue this avenue in Davies Lane, have been planted inside the fence of *Wynstay*. This was done because if the land adjoining a half-chain road is formally subdivided then the road should allow for an increase in width to one chain. It is doubtful if our laneways would ever now be widened but this is the reason for the placement of these trees. These smaller beeches were planted in 1999 in memory of Bill Smart.

It is very important that street trees are carefully chosen for every location. Not all the mountain roads are bordered by the basalt soil, so the trees next to the Cathedral Reserve are Liquidambars which do well in the poorer soil, growing slowly and colouring very well in autumn, similarly the smaller maples alongside the school and its cottage. It is hoped that the recent planting of *Nyssas* next to the Marcus Clark Reserve will cope with the exceptionally wet conditions there. Recent avenues include the mixed copper and green beeches in Hillcrest Lane. The older copper beeches outside *Wynstay* and *Campanella* provide a beautiful colour contrast with the golden elms on the other side of the road. These golden elms reinforce the importance of appropriate planting as some of you will have noticed that those ones under the power lines have been harshly pruned,

destroying the lovely natural vase shape of the mature elm tree.

The Progress Association has responsibility for all the street trees, that is, those that are outside a property fence, as these are considered part of the road. There is a responsibility to both pedestrians and to vehicular traffic. We want people to be able to walk under the street trees, to enjoy their beauty and to be safely off the road. It is also important that not only cars but also larger and commercial vehicles, especially the fire trucks and those of Integral energy, can use the roads without being damaged by the street trees. For example at Ferny Corner trucks now have to use the centre of the road, and it is a real problem if vehicles are going in both directions. The new fire truck has rear-vision mirrors which cost \$1000 each! Similarly, the tree ferns on the side of sections of the road between Mt. Wilson and Mt. Irvine will need to be sympathetically removed, and re-planted elsewhere if possible.

Unfortunately there are few places left that are appropriate for street trees, but all the street trees, both younger and those nearing senescence will remain the loving responsibility of us all through the Progress Association.

Alison Halliday

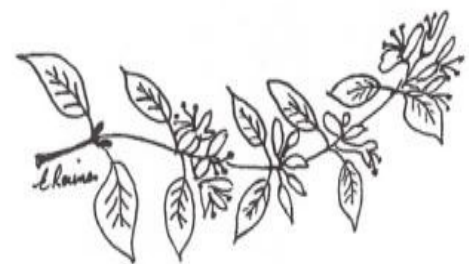


(The pictures in this article have been kindly supplied by Bev Woodman, a passionate photographer and frequent visitor to Mt Wilson. A collection of her work is shown in the Photo Gallery of www.mtwilson.com.au)

A noxious weed: Japanese Honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*)

A vigorous fast growing climber from China and Japan producing a tangle of twining woody stems. It is found everywhere on the Mountain: in gardens, roadsides, bush, rainforest and in the grass. The leaves are oval in shape and in opposite pairs along the stems. The flowers are tube-like and fragrant, ranging from white to yellow in the summer. In autumn shiny black seeds form and these are spread around the Mountain by birds. If a seed roots near a tree the shoots will quickly spread up the tree or shrub forming a blanket over the canopy and eventually smothering the plant. The seeds will also germinate in the grass and you can see how quickly it can spread by rooting along the stems in all directions away from the original plant.

When removing honeysuckle from a tree cut the stem as near to the ground as you can and then paint the stem



quickly with neat Roundup or glysohate; or you can scrape the stem with a sharp knife and paint the wound. Leave the honeysuckle in the tree to die as you may damage the host plant if you try to pull it down.

Honeysuckle is very hard to remove from the ground as it can travel so quickly beneath the grass or ferns and root again and again. Try to dig it all out, gathering all the long stems and roots as you go. You can cut or scrape and paint the stems. Sometimes you have to resort to spraying but remember if you use glysohate or roundup you will also kill all the grass or any other plant which receives the spray.

As with any work on removing weeds remember the follow up work months or years later is always necessary.

Don't forget our Bushcare group meets every second Friday of the month from 9.00 am -12 noon at different locations around the Village. We would love you to join us in this essential work.

Libby Raines

Note: Information about this noxious weed, and twenty others, can be found in the booklet **Bushland weeds of Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine**, which was commissioned by the Mount Wilson Progress Association and written by Libby Raines in 2000. Libby also sketched the charming line drawings in the booklet. For many years, it has proven an indispensable guide to identifying, controlling and eradicating the many varieties of weeds in the Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine area. The booklet can be found in electronic format on www.mtwilson.com.au under Community Information > Weeds, or in hardcopy from Libby.

www.mtwilson.com.au—an update

The new website has been live since 11th February and we have received praiseworthy comments from quite a number of people who have used the website. It is already a large website with 190 pages. It has 148 menu items, 132 images on the main website, 107 high quality images in the photo gallery, 74 newsletters (MWPA, Historical Society, Bushwalking Group, RFS), and 67 documents being past minutes of meetings, constitutions, booklets, etc.

In February 853 people visited the website 1,360 times and viewed 18,372 pages; in March 1,821 people visited 2,959 times and viewed 20,459 pages! Compared with the old website, there has been a significant increase in people going to the website, and we hope this is local residents visiting the website for a 'look see' and to find information.

We are receiving emails through the website from potential visitors requesting information on visiting Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine. In the six weeks the new website has existed, we have received 20 emails requests for information. When is the best time to visit? Which gardens are open? When are autumn colours best?

So far, only the public sections of the website are accessible. In the public area, there is much information which is valuable for local residents. The calendar has all the dates of main activities in the villages. The sections devoted to the Mt Wilson Progress Association, the Historical Society and the Rural Fire Brigade have a great deal of information which will interest local residents. In addition, the Brigade section has a lot of information on preparing your property for the next fire season or mitigating fire risk. The Historical Society has information about the history of properties and people associated with both villages, with a lot more to come.

So please use the website and regard it as your source of information and how you stay up to date with the past and present of the two villages.

Next to come is developing the secure sections of the website for local residents and members of the local organisations.

We have a web editor's session organised for the 29th April. This was to be held on the 1st April but was moved because of Alan Heap's funeral.

Once we have trained web editors in place, we will be able to add all the content to the secure area of the website. This will include minutes and papers relating to local organisations, telephone book, contractor's listing, and name and address database including property details.

Currently the various files containing name and address details are being gathered and cleansed, then this will be entered into the contact database so we will have one source of contact information for emergencies and for all community organisations.

The RFS Property survey has had about a 60% response rate, which is considered an excellent start, and this information will be used for the property section of the contact database. In an emergency, we will be able to provide good information to all the various services which come to our assistance.

To enable local residents to access the secure section, we have to assign usernames and passwords to every resident or member of an organisation so they can login to the website secure area and obtain the information they need.

Once this is complete, we plan community sessions at both Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine to educate the community on how to get the best value from the website.

Our goal is for the website to become a real community resource. Something that everyone with an internet connection can use to find the information they need about our community.

We welcome feedback and suggestions on additions to the website which you would find useful.

Graham Tribe

Rainfall records for Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine

The February edition of this newsletter erroneously noted that Richard Prentice's monthly submission of *Clarine* rainfall figures to the Bureau of Meteorology are not readily visible to the public. Martin Barge of *The Cabin* very helpfully advises that in fact the Mt Wilson records—and indeed Mt Irvine records, courtesy of Helen Naylor at *Booralee*—are accessible via the Bureau's website www.bom.gov.au. From the Home page of this site, just click on **Climate Information** (on the left hand side of the page) then on the **Climate Data Online** link (immediately above the small map of Australia).

Unfortunately, not all the records for every month and year are available on the Bureau's website for both *Clarine* and *Booralee*.

However, Vic Zhukov (*Lindfield Park*) and Ross Kelly (*Teinafaighte*, Mt Irvine) have supplied rainfall records they have kept from their respective properties.

The table below has been constructed using their data, as well as Joe Landsberg's records for *Withycombe*. Historical records from the Bureau's website for Mt Boyce and Sydney Observatory (used here as the proxy for Sydney's weather) are also shown.

The annual figures over the last seven years have then been averaged and weighted against *Withycombe's* baseline of 100.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Average	Relativity
Sydney	995	816	994	1499	1082	956	1153	1071	85.8
Withycombe	781	1109	785	1775	1331	1496	1462	1249	100.0
Lindfield Park	1027	1393	869	1880	1476	1500	1528	1382	110.7
Mt Irvine	981	1236	761	1654	1208	1338	1469	1235	98.9
Mt Boyce	765	741	640	1435	1044	1074	1199	985	78.9

Ross's contention that Mt Wilson's extra altitude seems to make, on average, about 200mm a year difference does not appear to be supported by data from the last seven years.

Longer term rainfall differences between Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine will be explored in a later newsletter.

Vale Alan Heap

Alan Heap was a man of many facets, many of which were not evident as part of his Mt Wilson life. On the same day that he could be seen running on the fire trails of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine, he could be seen later that evening dressed in a suit being interviewed on the ABC's Lateline offering expert opinion on the global metals and minerals market.

Alan's many friends were deeply saddened to learn of his sudden death from a heart attack at his Sydney home on 20 March. He was 59.

Alan was born in the Hertfordshire village of Blackmore End in England to Mary and Eric Heap. After achieving a BSc from the University of Wales, he went on to complete a PhD in Marine Zoology at the University of Reading. While studying for his PhD, Alan developed a passion for statistics, and started his career in the metals and mining industry in 1981 joining Goldfields in the UK as an analyst. He came to Australia in 1987, working at Goldfields House in Circular Quay. He later worked for Salomon Smith Barney, and then joined Citigroup in 1992. He was to remain at Citigroup for 19 years.

Alan was fiercely loyal to both the 'Old Dart' and his adopted Australia, and maintained dual passports. His nostalgia for English village atmosphere and love of mountain scenery led Alan and his then wife Alison to Mt Wilson in 1995 when he acquired his beloved property *Gowan Ross*. Alan immediately fell in love with the area and that love never left him.

Mt Wilson was his passion and he spent most of his available spare time working on the property. He looked forward to the day when his corporate life would allow him to spend more time in his garden and become more involved in the day to day life of the community. He was quietly knowledgeable about plants and enjoyed discussing plant selection with local experts such as Libby and Keith Raines as he selected just the right plant for a certain spot.

Alan made many friends on the mountain and was known for his generous hospitality. He was a member of the local bushwalking group, enjoying the walks in earlier years when he had time to attend, and especially enjoying the trip down the Wollangambe Canyon, a test for even the fittest person.

And he was extremely fit. He was a diver, sailor, walker, and mountaineer. A keen runner from an early age, Alan completed over 20 marathons, and was to be seen training on fire trails and roads around the district, often with border collies Laddie and Bea. He was in training to walk across South Georgia Island in Antarctica to celebrate his upcoming 60th birthday. Alan lent his support to fund raising for the RFS, taking part several times in the Mt Wilson to Bilpin Bush Run – the "Willy to Billy" – and was the first firefighter to complete the Six Foot Track run from Katoomba to Jenolan Caves.

Alan's sense of community led him to join the Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Rural Fire Service in 1996. He maintained a strong sense of loyalty towards the fire brigade and achieved various levels of training (Basic and Advanced Firefighter, Chain Saw operator, First Aid, and driver) leading to his appointment as Deputy Captain in 2001, a position he held at his death. Due to his exceptional level of fitness and love of the mountains he trained as part of the prestigious Remote Area Firefighting Team.

Alan attended as many brigade training days as possible and turned out willingly for fires, road accidents, and rescues. In 2000 and 2001 he and Alison were joint Secretaries of the Brigade, and between 2000 and 2004 Alan was Equipment Officer. The camaraderie of the brigade was important to him and he was held in high esteem by his fellow firefighters, many of whom formed a guard of honour at his funeral.

Alan will be equally missed by his banking colleagues. He was Managing Director & Global Head of Commodities with Citigroup, focusing on Metals and Minerals. Described by colleagues as a key member of Citi's research globally, he is remembered as an enthusiastic hard worker, passionate about his work. For more than a decade he was ranked in the top three of all global analysts.



Alan was highly regarded all around the world for his positive disposition, humility, and generosity to all. A true gentleman.

Our deepest condolences are with his wife, Diana whom he married in his garden at *Gowan Ross* two years ago, his family, and his colleagues in the global commodities industry. We are all the poorer for his loss.

David Howell

**Mt Wilson/Mt Wilson RFS President
Investment banking colleague since 1991**

(Photos of Alan and Diana at the 2005 RFS AGM at Mt Irvine Hall supplied by Penny Ewing)



Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine RFS Community Engagement Program

To their credit, the NSW RFS is evolving and changing the way things are done. Often this adjustment is a direct result of the findings from catastrophic recent fires or studies that change policy and implementation. Notably, change has also come through feedback from the community. The messages are that more people want to become better informed and better prepared. A community which is well informed and prepared has a much better chance of managing in a major fire event than one that is completely unaware.

At a recent Blue Mountains RFS Community Engagement presentation, three different localities and brigades spoke about the different ways they are sharing information and supporting each other in developing their preparedness of their property.

In 2008 Mina and Larry started a Community Education group in Blackheath that has grown and developed. Now called HUFF - Heads up for Fire, its members meet once a month. Through doorknocking, Mina has discovered a number of disabled people in the area who have gained confidence by making appropriate plans for what they would do in an emergency.

At Woodford, Carmel and Sue began street meetings in the area 10 years ago. They have tried several approaches with the aim of developing self sufficiency. This has including working with other emergency services by training in the use of community-run fire fighting equipment.

Brad in South Katoomba has developed a brigade website that includes links to social media such as You Tube, Facebook and Twitter. For many brigades who have young members, this is the way information is now shared.

In Mt Wilson and Mount Irvine, there is a high proportion of weekenders and an older demographic than other mountain communities. The challenges for our street co-ordinators are to connect with residents and to encourage all to prepare their property and their strategy in event of a bush fire.

Given the recent extended period of wet weather, it seems beyond belief that there could ever be a serious fire threat in our area. However, many weather models show climatic extremes will be come the norm and that for eastern Australia, extended dry periods are going to be longer and hotter than before. Experience over many decades has shown that the sandstone bushland can, and does, dry out very quickly and that we live in a part of the world that is subject to extreme fire risk. It would seem only prudent that we act and plan accordingly.

Kim Gow

For Sale - Euro Leopard FT 604

Engine - 4 Cylinder Perkins
Power - 60HP / 46kW

Cabin with Heater and Air-conditioner.
Dual stage clutch – PTO speeds 540 & 1000 RPM.
Front end loader with self levelling 4 in 1 bucket.
Dual hydraulic remotes in addition to loader.
Low hours – Less then 200 hours.
Fully serviced by licensed mechanic with service logbook & all manuals.
New in June 2009 – Less than 2 years old. Still under 5 year warranty period.



Brought New for \$36,000 - Sell for \$20,000

Contact - Peter Raines (0403 140 963) or email peter_raines@hotmail.com

Mount Wilson makes the News on Election Night.

Not long after the close of polls on the 26th March during the coverage of the State Election on the ABC, Mount Wilson was named as having the first results through for the State – they even were so bold as to predict a swing from our grand total of 71 votes! (Mt Wilson polling results were again one of the first booths mentioned by Anthony Green on the ABC at the August 2010 Federal election). But have you ever wondered what goes on behind the scenes at Voting time?

Six months out from an election emails, text messages appear asking to register your interest in working either as a Polling Place Manager or an Election Official. Detailed application forms are duly completed online and notice is given whether your application has been successful – needless to say the Polling venue of Mount Wilson is not exactly one many people vie for!

A month before the Election the training starts, first with a manual followed by online training and assessment and culminating with face to face training and the collection of election material a few days before voting day.

Then it is the task of setting up the hall (doing giant origami with the ballot boxes and voting booths!) and organising staff, in this case, Moira Green was my trusty deputy. One of the nice things about working at the Mount Wilson polling venue is that we are hardly ever rushed (maximum queue length is 3 people) allowing us to catch up a bit with residents. There are even a couple from the other side of the Mountains that come to Mount Wilson specifically to vote and have been doing so for the last 5 elections!

Once the polls close at 6pm it is the beginning of the next phase which is counting the votes and accounting for all ballot papers. Moira and I count both types of ballot papers and also do the two party preferred preferences under the watchful gaze of Graham Thompson who scrutineers. We then phone through the results, sometimes being the first polling place to do so!

But the day doesn't end there. All voting equipment has to be boxed up, all paperwork completed and all ballot papers sealed, secured and then returned that night to Katoomba.

Beth Raines

The Ecology talks on 2nd April

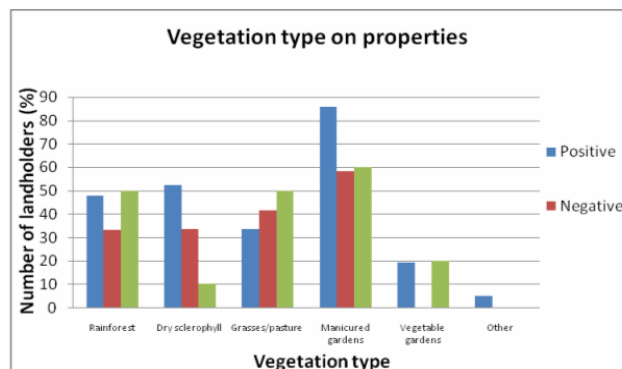
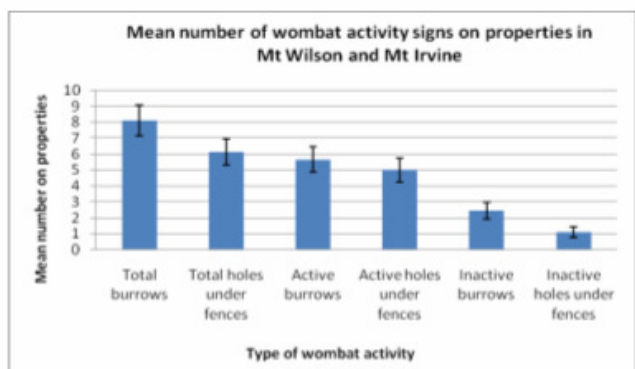
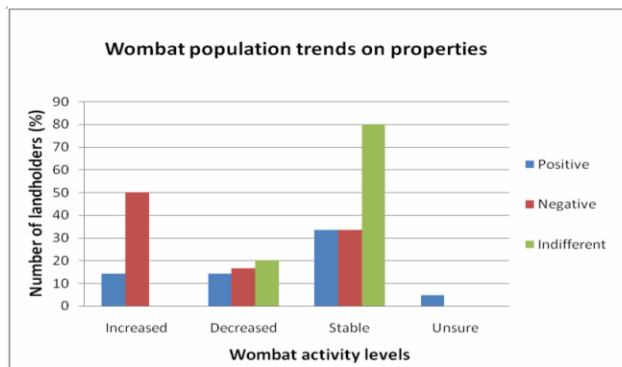
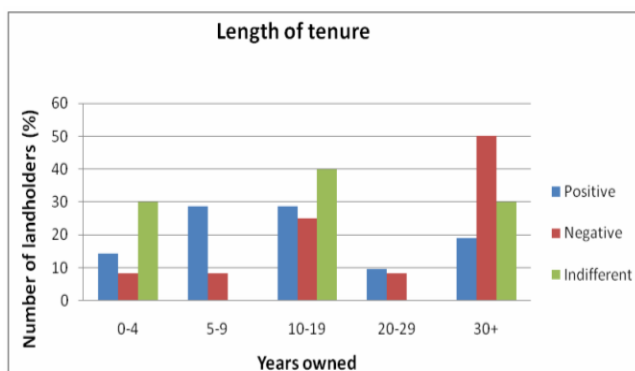
On April 2nd forty five people gathered at the Mt Wilson Village Hall to hear about two ecology projects and enjoy a drink and nibbles afterwards. Both these projects were sponsored by John and Mary Holt with Joe Landsberg as their supervisor. Nikki (nee Selles) Hunter told us about her wombat project in Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine. Unfortunately Chris Ephraums wasn't able to attend, but he sent his talk about his involvement in a sea turtle project in Costa Rica to Joe, his grandfather, who did an excellent job of presentation.

Chris spent some time in Costa Rica involved in a project to save the eggs of the leather backed sea turtle. The leatherback turtle has survived for more than a hundred million years, but some populations are now facing imminent extinction. Until recently, a lack of patrolling on the beaches led to widespread poaching of their eggs. A volunteer project to remove the eggs to a hatchery to increase the percentage of baby sea turtles hatching is proving successful. Although poaching remains a problem, the local people have shown dedication to ending this problem and are grateful to the groups of volunteers coming to help. Chris, while being engaged in this project, also gained insights into village life in Costa Rica, so different from his city life in Australia.

Many of you will have met Nikki Hunter when she was doing her wombat project in Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine. She was grateful to the many people who answered her survey, a 45% response rate, which is very high and to the people who allowed her onto their properties to count wombat holes and photograph wombat movements at night. We hope to be able to put her presentation on the Mt Wilson web site, but here are a few of her findings to set you thinking:

- She found that 60% of people were positive to wombats, 23% were negative and 18% were indifferent
- The residents attempts to stop or reduce wombat activity varied:
 - Of those that were positive to wombats 29% attempted to stop or reduce wombat activity and 71% didn't
 - Of those who were negative 58% attempted to stop or reduce or wombat activity and 42% didn't
 - Of those that were indifferent 60% attempted to stop or reduce wombat activity and 40% didn't

And a few graphs about perceptions about wombats and their activity:



Judy Tribe

Help a PhD Candidate.

Kristal Coe is a PhD student from The Australian National University and is investigating what it is like for people to live in, or near, World Heritage places. She is looking at small towns in the Blue Mountains and would like to speak to residents of Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine about their experiences of living near a World Heritage site.

If you would like to help Kristal, contact her at kristal.coe@anu.edu.au or 08 8920 9981. She will be in the mountains for ten weeks.

Update on Deborah Griffin

Ted Griffin has advised that Deborah recently underwent a seven hour operation to correct a worrying medical condition.

Happily, Ted reports that the operation went exceedingly well. Shortly after the operation, Ted sighted, amongst the profusion of tubes, wires and bandages, a familiar smiling face behind an oxygen mask. Deb is in no pain, able to swallow some melted ice (for her dry mouth) and sends her love to all her many friends on the Mountains. She is due out of hospital within a few days and then a week in rehab before returning back to her Sydney home.

We take this opportunity to wish her a speedy and full recovery, and look forward to seeing her back at *Maple Lodge* in the very near future. We have all missed her.

Carisbrook's Kitchen Sink

A five metre pine and sassafras 'run' of 25mm thick wood (one inch in the old scale) drains the sink of the Carisbrook kitchen.

The seven siblings of the Hubert Smart family were fed from its hand-worked surface by their mother Florence, as were many relations neighbours and relatives. The home-cooked delights that came from the mountain farm were baked in the cast iron oven, or on the fire in the grate. Fruit—apples, raspberries, apricots, plums - were preserved in the Vacola jars or made into jams, and of course, cakes, biscuits and scones were taken to the community meetings and tennis happenings of the mounts.

As I clean the boards, scraping off the year's stains, I reflect on the love that has been expressed from this kitchen's marked boards. Grooves that were cut by hand by the builder run the washing up water into the herb garden and water the *Fuchsia*

magellanica that in turn feeds the Eastern Spinebills.

This year, our families' Easter fare will again be prepared to share with our mountain friends.

What a story the bench could tell!

**Eleanor Harriett
Carisbrook**



Suggestions, comments or contributions warmly welcomed!