

THE MOUNTS

Community newsletter of Mt Wilson
and Mt Irvine June 2019 Winter

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the winter edition of The Mounts. It seems as though we did not really have an autumn with summer continuing until quite recently. Many trees still have colour on them even as we approach the end of June. Nevertheless, winter did come in with a bang with temperatures below freezing in the first week of June. There was snow and rain.

Apologies for the late distribution of this newsletter, as I was unexpectedly overseas for an extra week.

Contributions from members of the community are always welcomed – this is *your* newsletter. The email address for queries and contributions is themounts2786@gmail.com.



Above: as a farewell to autumn, we managed to catch the golden ash on the corner of Church Lane in all its very brief glory.

MWPA 2019 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The MWPA annual general meeting is being held on Saturday 14 September, everyone is invited.

Place: the Village Hall

Time: 5.30 pm

All Welcome

Drinks and nibbles will be served after the meeting

REPORT FROM THE MWPA

The community survived the autumn visitors and while many of the open gardens do benefit, as they well deserve, the amount of rubbish and the use of the bush as a toilet was deplorable. We will be talking, again, to the BMCC about what, if anything, can be done. It is probably only a few of the visitors who are guilty but they do spoil the experience for the rest, and for the residents. From mid-April to early May we estimated that there were over 30,000 visitors so their impact is significant. During this same period it was seen that many cars, trailers and even a tourist coach parked within the log barriers at the camp ground.

Recently there seems to have been an increase in the number of cars driving along Mt Wilson Road and through the village at high speeds. These are narrow roads and every one should drive carefully. Please encourage your tradies to do so, and as residents, we should not assume that we 'own' the road even if we do know it well.



Left: this is the rubbish collected from along the five mile in one two hour period just before Easter by Alex and Alison Halliday. We did not explore all the side roads and trails and there was one very large dump of many copies of printed material and machinery – perhaps dumped together. Interestingly...most of the rubbish was drink containers and even on both sides of the road. After Easter there was a similar amount in and around the camp ground. We did not pick this up. It is time that the council took full and proper responsibility for this area.

The MWPA under the expert guidance of Nancy Fox manned a visitor centre in the restored old school house. There were about 200 visitors a day who called in asking for directions, information and being surprised at the lack of facilities! We had ordered some specially branded water bottles for sale to try to reduce the use of plastic bottles and some were sold. There is obviously a need for such a centre during spring and autumn but once again it relies on the goodwill of a few volunteers.

This community would not function without the many volunteers who work tirelessly in many different ways. To them all we say a big 'thank you'. We were lucky to have a friend visiting from the country and with his help, the flag is now flying at Founders Corner again.

Enjoy the peaceful cold of the lovely winter season and many thanks to all the contributors. I promise the next edition will be out early in the spring season as I will not be travelling overseas then.

MOUNT IRVINE PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

Neighbourhood Safer Place

As indicated in the last edition of The Mounts, the Mt Irvine Public Hall site is in the process of becoming a Neighbourhood Safer Place (NSP). I also indicated that a

significant amount of wood chips was left in situ and spread over the cleared section of the site, in places up to 400mm thick and that the RFS agreed to rectify this. I am pleased to report that a contractor was engaged to do the necessary work and that it has been completed. The site looks great and even has a covering of new turf to the area around the hall itself. A big 'well done' to the Mt Irvine Public Hall Land Managers!

New Mount Irvine Fire Station

I am pleased to report that the Blue Mountains City Council supports the proposal that the new Mt Irvine Fire Station be located on the Mt Irvine Public Hall site.

The Mt Irvine Public Hall Land Managers (Land Managers) and the Mt Irvine Progress Association (MIPA) have agreed, with the unanimous support of residents at the recent MIPA AGM, that the MIPA should be the lead group to further discussions on behalf of the community regarding the new fire station with the RFS and other bodies. The Land Managers remain the contracting party (along with the BMCC).

The Road to Bowens Creek

As reported last time, the road to Bowens Creek has been locked by the BMCC. It was again reaffirmed at our recent AGM that the Mt Irvine community always has been and continues to be of the view that the road to the western side of Bowens Creek should remain a public road and accessible to all. This position is entirely consistent with it also being used as an emergency vehicle access route. At the AGM it was agreed that the President of the MIPA should lead discussions with BMCC with the aim of achieving a satisfactory outcome to this denial of access.

BOOK REVIEW



Dennarque is one of the original eight houses built at Mt Wilson in the last years of the 19th century. There is now a book, of the same name, written by the present owners, Bill and Lata Moss. It is a wonderful tribute to the history of the house and garden. Arranged according to the seasons, plus a fascinating short history, the book

is full of evocative photos of the garden, from the detail of new buds in spring to the glory of autumn as the garden dresses itself in tones of red, gold and orange; matched by the glitter of the koi carp lake in the Japanese garden.



A garden is far more than a display of trees, shrubs and flowers, no matter how rare and old. The sum of its parts ideally creates a far greater whole and this is evident at Dennarque from when you first walk in the gate. The garden evokes not just visual beauty and all the other senses but also, and perhaps this is an element of a great garden, it suggests emotions and moods in those who work, live and visit it: from joy in the spring cherry blossom to the melancholy of bare winter branches.

Bill and Lata Moss have been nurturing and expanding the garden at Dennarque since 2003. There is admiration and respect for the giant original trees and tree ferns, some probably more than 400 years old; and there are the treasured plants from the original planting by the first owner Edward Merewether, such as the magnificent Douglas fir, Monterey cypress and the redwood, towering above their companions. Under and around these anchoring points are hedges, walls, clumps of azaleas, camellias and all the many cold and temperate climate favourites, all planted to maximise their unique characteristics. Beyond lies the splendour of the Wollemi wilderness.

The essence of the book is the 100s of photographs taken by Evan Wang, many of them double page spreads and all clearly captioned. In reading this book one is absorbed by the journey through the seasons, the myriad changes of foliage, flower and bark that gradually show the year's arc. Congratulations to Bill and Lata for their work at Dennarque and for this book which marks their time there.

Dennarque, a Mount Wilson Story may be purchased at:

<https://www.dennarque.com/product-page>

Images courtesy of dennarque.com

Alison Halliday



BOWENS CREEK EMERGENCY VEHICLES ACCESS ROUTE UPDATE

Hawkesbury City Council (as lead local government area – its partner in this being BMCC) is still considering emergency services agencies' responses to the feasibility

study undertaken in 2018 to identify the technical and engineering requirements to restore the whole of the route between Mt Irvine and Bilpin route to fire trail standard for use by emergency services vehicles and then to provide a general costing.

Readers will recall that the feasibility study sets out, in very general terms, material regarding how the route can be restored. Further, it provides an indicative costing of \$3.25 million. While this is, necessarily, an imprecise figure, it does put a cost on restoring an important part of our emergency services infrastructure to support the safety of our communities.

The Brigade (along with other emergency services agencies, such as NSW Ambulance, NSW Police as well as the RFS more broadly) was provided with an opportunity to comment on the value to the Brigade and our communities in having the route restored. The Brigade's response has been provided to the RFS and HCC and BMCC in January 2019.

Since then, HCC has advised that it is waiting for strategic advice from the RFS on the implications for both affected RFS Districts – Hawkesbury and the Blue Mountains. We have been seeking a meeting with the two District Managers to better understand the current state of their work to identify and prioritise fire trails within the two Districts and, most importantly, in respect of this fire trail which spans both Districts.

The release of the feasibility study provided opportunities to continue our engagements with the two local government areas, and State and Federal MPs. For both the State and Federal election campaigns, we continued to engage with State and Federal election candidates. However, because consultations are still ongoing with emergency services on the usefulness of the route, no decision has been made by HCC and BMCC to restore the route and seek State and Federal funding. Without any local government requests for funding, it was impossible to get any concrete commitments from any candidates.

As advised to the community via an RFS email group, the New South Wales Labor Party gave an 'in principle' State election commitment to examine the restoration of the route. This was, of course, not a definite commitment but it was a helpful recognition of the significance of the route to our communities. While we briefed the Liberal candidate for the State seat of Blue Mountains, no corresponding commitment was given by the Liberal Party.

In the Federal Election context, we also sought statements of their positions from both the Liberal and Labor candidates. While both confirmed their support and interest in the issue (which they have demonstrated over some time), no formal positions were provided. At the time of writing, the election result for the seat of Macquarie is unknown. Once it is, we will continue our work with the incoming Member. Thank you to those community members who have also taken the time to express their concerns to all levels of government about this issue. It does help.

Elizabeth Montano, Executive Committee Member, Mt Wilson/ Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade

YOUR RFS IN ACTION

The Mt Wilson/ Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade responded to eight callouts since we last reported in The Mounts. They were:

- Two trees across roads (on Queens Avenue and near Bells Line of Road) – we cleared the trees from the road
- One Community First Responder call out for a rescue
- One caravan alight on Bells Line of Rd
- Investigation of a smoke sighting on a total fire ban day
- Three reports of fires lit in reserves where no fires permitted

RUNNERS TRACK AND PICNIC POINT WALK

Walk Signage Colour: Black

Length: 3.2 km circuit

Elevation Change: 150 m

Time: 1 ½ hours

Grade: Easy/Medium

Starting point:

Mt Irvine Road. Just past junction of Farrer Road East

About 4km after Cathedral of Ferns

Walking conditions:

- Generally well formed track.

Highlights:

- Lovely views from Picnic Point
- Best done in spring for the Waratahs.

Warnings

- There are steep drops near Picnic Point



Heading by car from Mt Wilson towards Mt Irvine, about 4km after Cathedral of Ferns Camping ground and just after the junction of Farrer Road East you pass under some power lines. Park your car on the left hand side of the road about 50 meters past the power lines. The route can be done in either direction and the description below has been described following this track in a clockwise direction.

The track starts under the power line heading down the slope in an easterly direction. After about 100 meters the track heads off to the right (look out for the track sign) and heads along the contours of the hill.

It is also worth walking all the way down the slope under the power line to the creek. Crossing it and following the track to the end for about 15 minutes. Integral Energy have done a great job ensuring they can reach all power poles for service. It is pretty down there and one can see the far power pole across the gully which you pass later in the walk.

Return to the track sign and walk along the track. The track is easy to follow and generally follows the contours round the valley until a short steep climb up some steps takes you up to the power pole you saw earlier across the valley.

Pause here to enjoy the view back towards Lindfield Park and Gowan Ross and think of the difficulty the crews had in 1962 in putting the electricity across this gully when taking the power out to Mount Irvine.

This section of the walk was made by Bill Ross who was a keen long distance runner and who lived at Brambil at Mount Wilson for a time. It was he who suggested the Willy2Billy Bush Run (Mt Wilson to Bilpin) be put on the runners' annual calendar. Bill worked out the 34.4 kilometre course that borders on, and passes through, the World Heritage listed Wollemi National Park. The race was last run in 2011. Sadly in 2012 the race had to be cancelled due to problems with the bridge across Bowens Creek. A landslip on Bowen's Creek Road in 2013 permanently closed the route forcing the RFS to cancel the race indefinitely.

The track then follows along a fire trail towards Mt Irvine Road. The track crosses a fire trail before Mt Irvine Road. The Runners Track turns left at this point and heads towards Mt Irvine. Do not take this turnoff but continue straight to Mt Irvine Road.



Turn right into Mt Irvine Road (be aware of cars). After about 120 meters on the left hand side the Picnic Point Track starts. If you get to the fire trail you have gone too far but you can access the track from the fire trail.

Picnic Point (above) is aptly named about 80 meters from Mt Irvine Road and this offers lovely views to Berambing. This is a good spot to stop for a break but beware of the steep drop from this lookout.



Continue along the path below the fire trail. This follows the contours below Mt Irvine Road. The path is generally well marked but there are points where it is a bit indistinct. It is however easy to follow. There are a couple of lovely views to the rainforest below along this path (left). The trail eventually ends up at Mt Irvine Road near where you started.

Robbie Feyder

BRIAN ABRAHAMS

Brian Abrahams, who lived at Cyathea in Hay Lane, died in March this year. Brian quietly contributed to many aspects of community life including being responsible for Clean Up Australia Day for many years and serving on the MWPA committee.

JUDY FORNESS

Judy Forness (nee Kirk), second of Vivian and Olga Kirk's four daughters (the others being Patricia, Dianne and Jennifer), died on 30 May in Warwick, Queensland at the age of 88. She was a loyal member of the Historical Society and, in the early days of the Society, generously donated many photos of her life at Mt Wilson. These now form part of the Kirk Collection. Judy was an important participant in the youth group who raised money for the Village Hall. With thanks to her niece, Jenny Davis, daughter of Jennifer.

Our condolences to Brian and Judy's families.

BUSHCARE PICNIC AND MT WILSON 20 YEAR AWARD

The annual Bushcare picnic is being held at the Megalong Valley on Saturday 29 June 2019 **11:30 am – 3:00 pm**. Fun filled with awards, a snake display, kids activities, the Trad Band, and presenting 'Bushcare' the Musical. Plenty of food with wood fired pizzas, soups and sweets.

To RSVP click the following link: [Bushcare Picnic Saturday 29th June, 2019](#)
If required, there is a bus available to transport you to the picnic. Please contact Bushcare Team on 4780 5623 or bushcare@bmcc.nsw.gov.au

[To view the full brochure click here](#)

We are delighted that the Mount Wilson Bushcare Group will be receiving an award at the picnic for 20 years involvement with Bushcare.

Any enquiries:

Mt Wilson contact: Alice Simpson 0414 425 511 or 02 4756 2110

Council contact: Tracy Abbas 0428 777 141

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE PROGRAM UPDATE

Would you like to meet a budding Picasso or a future Beethoven or perhaps a potential Patrick White? Here's your chance!

Now that our application for grant funding has been submitted and we have invited expressions of interest from potential artists, we need to find some artist support volunteers for the AiR program at the Old School. This is not an onerous task and should be lots of fun, it need only be once a year for a month. You don't have to be in residence in Mt Wilson for months at a time – just be here to welcome the artist on arrival and to see them off when they



leave. Between time, as long as you can be their point of contact during their stay, you can be anywhere.

As an artist support volunteer you decide on the artist/month you are available with the committee. Then you would simply come to the school house cottage to welcome the artist and show them around. During your conversation, find out what their interests are, whether they want much contact during their stay and decide who else might need to be involved. As the artist is required to participate in a community event at the end of their stay, it would be useful to tease out the details of their idea so that the AiR committee can take care of the logistics eg setting the date, use of the hall, catering, publicity, etc.

It is up to you and the artist how much more you wish to be involved (help with the welcome basket, invite them to share a meal, arrange to see a garden or take around a cake?). Your final duty would be to farewell them the day they leave to get a feel about what worked well and what needs to be improved. The committee is there to support you and you will be fully equipped with briefing guidelines and contact lists for any matter of events - from a plumbing issue to a bushwalking query.

To register your interest or seek more information, please call Alice Simpson on 0414 425 511.

Please join us for
*The fabulous
 Mount Wilson Yulefest
 at the Village Hall*
**On Saturday 20th July 2019
 at 6.30pm**

Make up a table
 or come along and join with others

RSVP by 9th July
 Adults - \$40, Children up to 14 - \$10
 BYO drinks

Tickets available from Judy Tribe
 4756 2096 or email: judithtribe@gmail.com
please make cheques payable to Blue Mountains City Council

To make a donation of goods for the raffle please call
 Helen Freeman 4756 2053 before 14th July

Looking forward to seeing you there

LOST AND FOUND PROPERTY AT THE VILLAGE HALL

Do any of these belong to you?

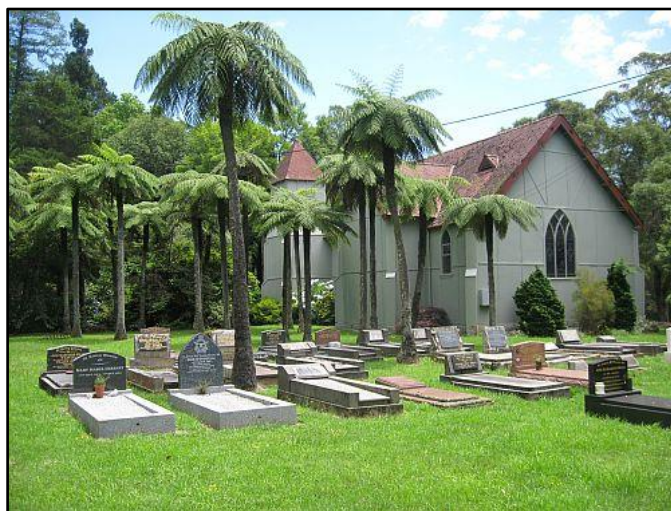


They are all at the Mount Wilson Village Hall. To claim them contact Judy Tribe,
 phone: 4756 2096 or email: judithtribe@gmail.com.

ST GEORGES ANGLICAN CHURCH

Church services are held on the 2nd Sunday of each month in the beautiful 103 year old St Georges Church in Mount Wilson at 3pm. Everyone is made welcome and we finish with a friendly cuppa after each service. Tim McIver, our minister, comes from Blackheath to conduct the service, and we are very lucky to have him as a minister and friend who loves to be on the mountain.

The seat donated by the Progress Association on the occasion of the 100yr Anniversary of the Consecration of the church, was put in place earlier this year beneath a tree in the grounds of the cemetery. It provides a beautiful spot for people to sit and rest a while. Repair work has been carried out at the church which will improve its life, and hopefully the congregation and support will grow along with the longevity of such a beautiful place.



Helen Freeman, on behalf of the Church Wardens

MT WILSON AND MT IRVINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S ACTIVITIES IN 2019

It was pleasing to read acknowledgement of the Society's role in maintaining records of the local Bush Fire Brigades over the past 50 years in Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine. This appeared in the recent publication of *Fighting Fire* compiled by Alison Halliday. It is a reminder to all of the important role the Society plays quietly behind the scenes since its establishment in the 1990s.

On Saturday 30th March 2019 a small group gathered to undertake the important task of removing the Society's collection of archives and special historical items from the Turkish Bath Museum where they had to be stored while the Study Centre (the old school room) underwent its repairs and restoration. The small group consisted of my son Malcolm, Des Barrett, Stefan Ilyak from the Blue Mountains Historical Society and a good friend from the Blue Mountains Retirement Village and her son, James from Blackheath plus a Mercedes van all the way from Narellan.

The repairs and restoration were made possible following the success of the grant application in 2018 for \$100,000 from the NSW Government. It should be noted that contributions were also made by the Society, Mt Wilson Progress Association, Mt Irvine Progress Association and the Rural Fire Service.

It was fortunate on that day that the weather was very kind to us. The removal went ahead very smoothly and efficiently. Many thanks to Wendy Smart who allowed us to

use the drive way in Wynstay to gain easier access to the Museum. The Society is also very grateful to Barry and Helen Freeman for the gift of a large desk and a companion cupboard which are now nicely accommodated in the archive room of the teacher's house along with the archives, images, maps and other special items of historical importance.

Des Barrett and Malcolm Reynolds (acting chairman) now hold the keys to the archive room after signing a lease agreement with the committee managing the site and the payment of rent (\$40 per month). Our work of many years is now relatively secure.

Recently the Society was contacted by Douglas Gilling of Leura. His father was the architect for the construction of Wynstay from 1921 to 1923 for Colonel Richard Owen Wynne. Gilling and Joseland were the architects in partnership. Mr Gilling had both the original drawings of Wynstay, the Turkish Bath and the Lodge, and copies. The Society considered these drawings very valuable indeed. The original drawings with either stay with the Gilling family or be passed on to the owners of Wynstay. The copies have been donated to the Society and will be protected. It is a remarkable acquisition.

This year we have endeavoured to open the Turkish Bath Museum during the busy autumn season on Sundays from 12.30pm to 3.30pm.

It is important to remind residents, especially newcomers, that this building dating from 1880s is a highly significant heritage item and it is listed on the State Heritage Register. It has a unique background and history. It is rare and very different from any other building in Mt Wilson. Yet through lack of helpers from among our members we were unable to open it as frequently as we desired. Des Barrett, a long time member and a previous President, has been a tower of strength fronting up on a number of Sundays. As a result a considerable sum was banked from the number of visitors who came! What this demonstrates is that the Museum is an important drawcard in Mt Wilson.

The Society is responsible for the care and maintenance of the Museum and its grounds. Opening the Museum is an important source of income for the Society.

We ask current residents to please consider being a member of the Society to help care for the Museum and to maintain its status and its contribution to our past and the present.

Mary Reynolds mary_reynolds@internode.on.net

A NEW HOME FOR THE ARCHIVE

The completion of the renovations to the old Mt Wilson Teacher's House and School (c. 1890-1990) has provided the Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine Historical Society with a better facility in which to keep the collection of maps, letters, photographs and letters that record many aspects of the history of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine, from the early days of European settlement to today.

For many years, the archive was crammed into two small rooms that were located at the front of the School. The conditions were not ideal for research and rats would gnaw at, and nest in, the archive boxes and their contents.

The building renovation project required the Society to move the archive offsite and prior to that, with the discovery of termites in the buildings, the Society was confronting the possible removal of the archive from Mt Wilson, there being no place locally to permanently store the material. The Society considered an approach to the National Archives of Australia (Canberra), The State Library New South Wales (Sydney) and the Blue Mountains Historical Society (Wentworth Falls). A New South Wales Heritage Grant received by the committee managing the school site saved the day. A temporary home for six months storage of the archive was found in the Turkish Bath Museum, the buildings were restored and we moved to our new facility in March.

The Society has two rooms in the Teacher's House. The bulk of the archive is kept in the larger room. Researchers can now bring their various modern recording devices and work in comfort. The smaller room contains archive material and filing cabinets.

The Society welcomes researchers. Access to the archive can be arranged through the Society via email to historicalsociety@mtwilson.com.au. All of the Society's Historical Papers (2001–2015) and Newsletters (1997–2018), which are a good research resource, can be found there too.

Des Barrett, Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine Historical Society

NEW PHONE BOOK – LAST CHANCE!!!

Please check via the community website that all your contact details are correct. If there are any errors or changes, you can correct on the website. If there are any problems please contact Sue Woolfenden by email to secretarymwpa@gmail.com.

There will be a new local phone book published during this year and we really need it to be as accurate as possible.

One free copy will be provided for every household; additional copies will be available for a small cost once published.

THIS IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

BOWER BIRDS AT MT WILSON

These images have been kindly provided by Peter Raines and Robbie Feyder. They are not of the same nest or birds but the activity seems similar. The male bird (dark blue colour on the left) builds a nest which is decorated with found blue objects (this is *not* a reason to littler small plastic items). Here he has been successful as the dull brown/green coloured female bird has taken up residence in the bower.



FEEDBACK AND SPRING EDITION

Your feedback and comments are always welcome, please send to themounts2786@gmail.com.

The closing date for the Spring edition of The Mounts is Tuesday 13 August. Please send submissions in Word format to themounts2786@gmail.com. Images of local events, wildlife and flora are also welcome.