

THE MOUNTS

Community newsletter of Mt Wilson
and Mt Irvine

Sept 2020 Spring



This has been a very strange year with all of us having to cope with the pandemic, each in our own way. Many owners came to the Mounts to be secluded in their house, where they could still enjoy the gardens and a truly exceptional autumn. There was a lot of walking, chatting over fences at the appropriate distance, and some very fit dogs. We could all pretend that life was normal...

We grew used to mixed and conflicting comments from various health experts and the

politicians, weird shopping habits, and much hand washing. Then came the wearing of masks, the unpleasant testing for COVID-19, and the absence of grandchildren – ‘for our own good’! Places overseas have never seemed so far away, many books were read and re-read, board games and puzzles came out from cupboards, holidays were wistfully planned and we adapted to a social life conducted via a screen.

Winter seemed cold, with the obligatory couple of snow falls and now spring is upon us. Bulbs have been up for weeks, trees are blossoming and we can see the truth of spring coming in like a lion and going out like a lamb, as in the weather predicting cliché.

Suddenly there is talk of the coming fire season...

REMEMBRANCE DAY – 11 NOVEMBER 2020

The 102nd anniversary of the Armistice of World War 1 will take place on Wednesday 11 November 2020. We do not yet know what type of commemoration will be possible as COVID-19 restrictions evolve. An email will be sent to all community members in early November with details.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR MWPA

The committee of the Mt Wilson Progress Association has been meeting via screens and various bits of technology and everyone has coped very well with the unfamiliar form.

I would like to thank all the committee for continuing to look after the mountain and the owners and residents, often under difficult circumstances. Sue Woolfenden has continued to do an excellent job as secretary, showing patience and organisation which has made my job so much easier; Robbie Feyder is not only the treasurer but also an excellent technical assistant, Matt Mason and Janet McDonald jointly cope with any queries and problems to do with BMCC, Ted Griffin who keeps us up to date with all matters to do with the Village Hall and insurance, Peter Raines brings much expert local knowledge to our meetings and Nancy Fox is not only re-building her garden yet again, but has impeccable knowledge about the protocols of meetings and business, as well as a good dollop of common sense. Everyone has worked hard over the past months and I really appreciate everything they have done and continue to do for all of us.

Repairs and ongoing maintenance, often as a consequence of the summer bush fires, have been happening all over the two mounts. Hundreds of dangerous trees on roadsides have been removed, as well as on private properties. The gabion wall below Wynstay on Mt Irvine Road has been extended so once again the Anniversary Walk can be enjoyed in safety. There is also much maintenance and repair work going on in the national parks, including the parts of the track to the Wollangambe River.

Many of the waratahs on the Anniversary Walk were badly burnt and some are recovering – a close reminder of just how resilient our bush can be. I would like to thank Toyota and Keith Ralston for another generous community grant which will allow us to replace and extend the waratahs along the Anniversary walk. These new plants will be coming in September.

I suggest that this October you visit one of the lookouts on the Mounts because the wild waratahs should be very visible. It has been great to see so many trees in the bush recovering from the impact of the fire but the bare ground is a reminder of the intense heat of the fire and its destructive force on vegetation and on wild life.

I would also like to thank the Minister of Veteran Affairs for the generous grant which has enabled us to re-gild the War Memorial names from WWII, tidy up the Memorial and surrounding area and to build a replacement fence between the site and the adjoining private property. This timber post and rail fence matches the one in front of

the school precinct and replaces the wire fence destroyed in the wind-storm of several years ago.

I would also like to thank all the First Responders who continue their hard work in looking after us in medical emergencies, and all those members of the community who act within and on behalf of other community organisations. I would also like to thank Dan Long and Patricia Gonzalez from the BMCC who have always been interested in life on the two Mounts and have helped us to negotiate with the Council on many issues. I must also thank Peter Raines for working hard in maintaining the public areas along with valuable help from Micah. There are many people on the Mounts who wear multiple hats and I am sure we are all grateful for their many and varied contributions to life here.

I am resigning as President, and from the committee, from the middle of September. Ted Griffin is also leaving the committee to assume greater responsibility on the Village Hall committee. Nancy Fox has accepted the role of President and I know you will all give her your full support and any assistance as needed. We bought Kirks Corner in 2000 and quite soon after that Libby Raines invited me to think about joining the MWPA committee. As we know, it was very hard to say 'no' to Libby. These past years have been busy and I have enjoyed being a caretaker for the places on Mt Wilson and grappling with the conundrums that living here presents to us all. Normally these resignations would be part of the AGM for 2020 but owing to COVID-19 restrictions on meetings the AGM is being postponed until such time as it is possible for the community to meet in person. An annual report and a financial statement will be sent in the middle of September.

These two resignations will leave two vacancies on the Committee so if you are interested in joining the MWPA please contact Sue or Nancy. If one day you get a tap on the shoulder, please contribute to the well-being of community on Mt Wilson. Of course, Mt Irvine has its own Progress Association and I would like to thank the committee of that organisation for inviting me to their AGM over the past years. While the two Mounts are different there is much more that unites us than separates us.



Frosty morning at Culverden, David Howell

Finally, I would like to welcome all the new residents to mountain life in a very special part of the world. Please make yourselves known to us as you explore. And farewell to a number of people who have sold and are moving away and onto other roles and times in life. May you continue to be well and please come back to visit us.

Alison Halliday

BACK BURNING AS A TOOL

This is the first in a series of articles which will outline some of the lessons the Brigade has learnt from last summer's bush fire.

Following is an article dealing specifically with the Brigade's response to the Gosper's Mountain fire last summer.

Back burning is one of the few tools available to firefighters to combat large bushfires. Other fuel clearing methods such as slashing are labour intensive and limited to accessible areas. Back burning, when done carefully, patiently and with understanding of the local conditions can be a highly effective method of controlling fires. One example is the successful back burning undertaken around Mt Irvine in December. We burnt what we wanted to burn, the fires didn't get away and there was no loss of property or buildings in Mt Irvine.

Back burning has been a part of the protection plan for the villages for many years. In general, the Brigade tries to undertake back burns in a mosaic pattern by burning from one rainforest valley to the next where the fire will go out due to the high moisture content of the bush. Starting at the highest points, generally along a fire trail around one of the villages, the fire burns downhill to the Wollangambe River or Bowen's Creek. By this method natural species are protected and there is not wholesale destruction of the bush. We believe that this method is similar to the Aboriginal mosaic burning done in western NSW.

The Brigade is working to further develop this pattern, with the 'double fire trail' concept, tied together with rainforest protection areas and mechanically fuel reduced zones. The objective is, where possible, to surround the villages with a double set of fire trails. A good example is Danes Way (which acts as the inner fire trail) and Danes Way Fire Trail (the outer) on the western side of Mt Irvine. When faced with an aggressive bushfire, the Brigade can burn between the two fire trails some days before the fire arrives, giving the villages a wide, black, fuel-reduced perimeter which should prevent a fire progressing into the area and would lessen the chance of the fire spotting ahead. When the major fire is almost upon us we would then back burn



out from the outer fire trail and the back burn would meet the main blaze and both would be extinguished. This is a method of gaining some control over a major bushfire. As Peter Raines said more than once in December of the Gosper's Mountain fire, 'we know the fire will arrive – we just want it to come on our terms and not on its terms!'

Article and photo, David Howell

BACK BURNING AND THE GOSPER'S MOUNTAIN FIRE

The Gosper's Mountain fire started on 26th October 2019, about 40kms north of Mt Wilson and zig-zagged its way south – moving east and south-east when the wind blew from the west and north-west, before moving south-west under the influence of the north-easterly. Experienced locals had seen this pattern before. The front was very long – effectively from Lithgow to Wiseman's Ferry. As it moved south it ran into areas around Bungleboori Creek which had been burnt by the State Mine Fire in 2013 and there it stalled. However, at both ends (near Lithgow to the west and Wiseman's Ferry to the east) the fire started wrapping around to the south. The plan was to back burn from east to west starting at Wiseman's Ferry, eventually getting to Lithgow via Mountain Lagoon, Mt Tootie, Bilpin, Mt Irvine and Mt Wilson and then Bell. This plan worked well to start and back burns were conducted as far west as Mt Tootie over the month of November. In early December the Brigade continued to prepare Mt Irvine for the back burn to extend the back burn line across from Mt Tootie to Mt Irvine.

The fire had also threatened Lithgow in the west. If a strong wind were to come from the west the fire would be driven east and threaten both Bell and Mt Wilson within 24 hours. A strategy was developed by the Hawkesbury Incident Management team (who had overall control of fire fighting of the Gosper's Mountain fire) to back burn along Mt Wilson Road in order to protect both villages, and to stop the fire entering the Grose Valley.

14th December Back Burn

Back burning is always risky and should be done in order to give the Brigade its best chance of containing the fire. To the extent we could, using our local knowledge of fire behaviour and years of history, our Brigade advised the Hawkesbury Incident Management Team on what we thought was the best way to conduct the back burn.

We favour back burning at night when the conditions are milder, fire is less active and is easier to control. We also prefer starting the burn near assets to be protected (such as houses) and burning away from them. Following that rule, if the fire subsequently gets away there is an area with less fuel close to assets which then become easier to defend.

Our suggestions were heard but not taken up and the decision was made to start the back burn in the morning from Bells Line of Road at the intersection of Mt Wilson Rd, in two directions – towards Bell and towards Mt Wilson.

Just after 2pm the fire jumped Mt Wilson Road and started burning the Bowen's Creek valley. From there it threatened the Mt Wilson Road and Wynnes Rock Road area of Mt Wilson and proceeded east towards Mt Tomah, and subsequently into the Grose Valley.

The weather was an important factor in the back burn later getting away. The temperature reached almost 30° in the early afternoon and the wind increased substantially.

We will never have a definitive explanation as to why the back burn got away, but we have learnt many lessons from the Gosper's Mountain fire which will help us face the next one. Our Brigade is contributing to four separate enquiries into the bushfires including the Royal Commission into National Disaster Arrangements and the NSW Bushfire Inquiry. The Brigade has made submissions to both the State and Commonwealth inquiries and Beth Raines gave evidence in early July to the Royal Commission.

David Howell

PILE BURN NOTIFICATION MADE EASIER

You can now lodge your pile burn request online. Using the link below enables you to register your pile burn. You still need to do it 24 hours in advance of the burn and you need to notify your neighbours.

<https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/fire-information/BFDP/burn-notifications>

You no longer need to advise when you light up nor when your pile burn is blacked out.

You still need to make all the necessary pile burn preparations and take all the necessary pile burn precautions.

This system applies during the pile burning period.

BOOK REVIEW – MAKING SENSE OF MURDER

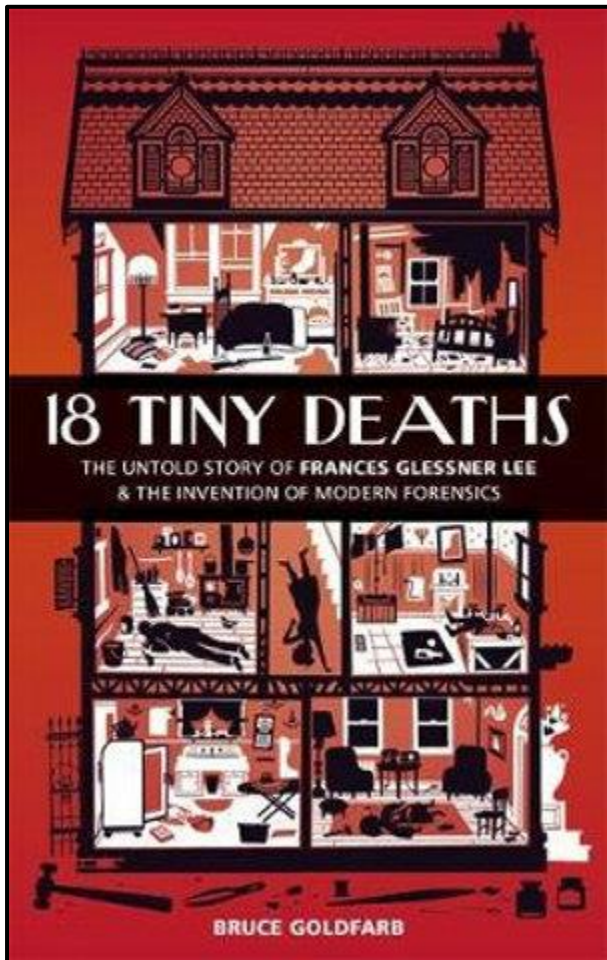
For all those aficionados of crime novels *18 Tiny Deaths* by Bruce Goldfarb is essential reading. It is part biography, the life story of the indomitable Frances Glessner Lee, and part a history of the origins and early years of forensic medicine. Unexplained and unexpected deaths in the USA used to be the responsibility of the local coroner to sort out. This person would often have no medical training and little understanding of what was needed to recognise or to solve a possible crime.

Frances Glessner Lee came from a wealthy Chicago family where the expectations for a woman were marriage and family, and certainly not of a career or an extraordinary interest in death. Through her friendship with a Dr Macgrath, who was an early practitioner in what was known as 'legal medicine' now the science of modern forensics, she developed a fascination in the beauty of the insides of bodies, and for the importance in having specialised training for doctors in the science of forensics.

She married and had children and it was not until she was in her 50s that she developed such an unlikely passion. Macgrath had long been deeply concerned about the significance of training for the medical examiner

Legal medicine, what would later come to be called forensic pathology, was focused on patterns of fatal injuries, poisoning,

postmortem changes and other subjects that were outside the usual teachings of medicine. (p61)



They were a perfect partnership.

Lee was independently wealthy and she petitioned Harvard Medical School to set up a separate school to educate young doctors in this new field. She spent years building up a library of rare and unusual resources to support this school. She was described by an academic at Harvard as having a 'practical and pertinacious mind' (p109) and she was as determined as a bulldog. Perhaps most importantly she was prepared to financially underwrite the fitting out of a building, the salary of well educated doctors as instructors and to leave the university a substantial bequest.

Once all this was underway she turned her enthusiasm to creating 18 miniature three dimensional models of significant crime scenes. These would provide a way of teaching the importance of an uncorrupted crime scene and the power of close observation and analysis to the

students. These students were drawn not only from the medical sphere but also from the police force and the law.

This book explores the life of a most unusual and determined woman and the role she played in creating an essential tool in modern crime solving. It also contains coloured images of her miniature scenes along with a detailed description. The book is rather macabre and fully fascinating.

Alison Halliday

WAR MEMORIAL FENCE

As part of the rejuvenation of the War Memorial site Tim Gow and Bruce Knott [formerly of the Old Post Office] constructed a post and rail fence out of treated pine posts and hardwood rails which matches the fence in front of the School House precinct. It replaces an old wire fence which was destroyed in the windstorm of some years ago. This site used to be entirely fenced off to prevent the local cattle from using the War Memorial as a rubbing post and now cars are prevented from parking there by a series of timber bollards. It was once one of the sites and reserves which were originally cared for by a local group and before they reverted to the BMCC. The history of the sites and reserves is told in documents under the Historical Society on the local web site. The Memorial itself is owned by the community.



WAR MEMORIAL FLAG POLE - REMEMBERING EARLIER REPAIRS

The flagpole is hinged, we (dad, Bill Smart, Rob and I) redid it in the 1990s when the original base had rotted out and the top cap had rotted off. The weather was starting to get into the top and the paint had been weathered off it. We took it down and put it on Bill's truck, took it back to Merry Garth, cleaned, sanded some patches and repairs (done by dad) then repainted it (probably by mum). A new top cap was constructed out of redwood. We cut a new base post with Bill from down the mill and set it and cut it to suit, then reset the flagpole and pulled it up to vertical again

Peter Raines

THE MOUNTS CLASSIFIEDS

Gardener Who Loves Our Area Seeking Work Two Days Per Week

My name is Steve Ferretti and I am keen to dedicate 2 days a week to gardening in your beautiful region. An avid gardener and lawn care person, I have now had my full time work change to part time, and as such I am trying to use this free time to dedicate my free hours to labours of love. The regions of Mt Wilson and Irvine is an area that I adore and I have spent much time in the region bushwalking and camping and we look forward to moving to the region within the next 3 - 5 years once I conclude my main work which requires a commute. As such, I thought this would be a most wonderful way to get to know some of the community prior and equally so spending time in the local gardens and environs.

My main day time work has been of a managerial nature, however gardens and gardening is where I spend my evenings and weekends. Therefore, I thought I would write to you to see if there was any gardening assistance any owners required as we come out of winter and into spring. It could be help with a small or large garden, whether formal or informal. I can supply a resume on request as well as references as I appreciate that anyone who may need some gardening support, may wish to ensure the people they were engaging with were trustworthy and upright citizens.

I charge realistic rates, whilst the driving time and petrol will be my expense, given its something I love doing, and an area I'd love to be gardening in. If you are interested in talking to me, Steve Ferretti, M:0418 605 043, E: steveferretti@steveferretti.com.

I look forward to hearing from some residents.

Electric Submersible Pump

On another subject, could you put an ad in The Mounts – I have an electric submersible pump to be used in a bore hole for lifting water. It is almost new and it comes with about 30m of rope and electric cable. Free to a loving home!
David Howell, 0418 771 664

AELPER FESTIVAL – 70 YEARS AGO

Barbara Harry recently passed on a copy of the following invitation for the Second Spring Time Aelper Festival held in September 1950, we have reproduced it below. On the last page you will note mention of the Swiss Gymnastic Club of Sydney. The President was Fred Huber who lived with his wife at Windy Ridge for many years.

Invitation to the SECOND SPRING TIME Aelper Festival



Silvaplana Picnic Ground
(Mount Wilson, Blue Mountains, N.S.W.)

SUNDAY, 16th SEPTEMBER, 1951

☛ If raining, the event will be held one week later.

Guests of Honour . . .

HANS HEDINGER, Esq.

(Consul General of Switzerland in Australia) and

Mrs. H. HEDINGER

NORMAN KOHLER, Esq.

(Hon. President of the Swiss Club of N.S.W.) and

Mrs. N. KOHLER

The Committee of the Swiss Gymnastic Club of Sydney takes this opportunity to invite all its members and friends to this occasion and hopes to give them an unforgettable day.

Our Special Bus for the Aelpler Festival leaves Sydney Town Hall, at 7 a.m. on **SUNDAY, 16th** (or if postponed, at the same time (7 a.m.) on Sunday, **23rd SEPTEMBER, 1951.**) If in doubt, kindly ring LM1046

Return fare for Adults, 16/-

Children under 15 years, 8/-

In order to make this event a successful one, we should be pleased to know the number of passengers who desire to travel by bus at least a fortnight prior to September 16. Reserved tickets must be **collected and paid for** not later than September 12th, to our Hon. Treasurer, F. Barrow, 35 Bruce St., Stanmore (LM1046)

★ Once more **ALBERT NEUMAIER**, our famous accordionist, will entertain the guests in our special bus with melodies from Home.

Friends with cars should also take advantage to join us up at Mt. Wilson.

**The return bus will leave Mt. Wilson
not later than 5 p.m.**

BRING YOUR LUNCHEON!

FESTIVAL COMMITTEE

(Red/White Badge)

Fred Huber, Charles Hadorn, Dick Thorpe, Frank Wyss,
Fred Barrow, Otto Schmucky, Hans Wenk.

JUDGES OF THE EVENTS

(Green Badge)

A: H. Schiess, Snr.	B: J. Kohler, Snr.
J. Dreelin	Ed. Gertsch
H. Heiniger	H. Waldmann
Ed. Baltis	F. Bernet

PROGRAM OF THE SPORT EVENTS

Opening of the Festival at 10 a.m., by Fred Huber, Esq.,
Hon. President of the Swiss Gymnastic Club.

Welcome by Hans Hedinger, Esq., Consul General of
Switzerland, and Norman Kohler, Hon. President of the
Swiss Club of N.S.W.

Song, Men's Choir — Flag Swinging

A: ARTISTIC GYMNASTIC CONTEST

Parallel Bars	- - -	10.45 a.m.
Horse	- - -	11.15
Horizontal Bars	- - -	11.30
Free Exercises	- - -	11.45
100 Meter Race for Men	-	12.00

B: NATIONAL GYMNASTIC CONTEST

Stone Lifting	- - -	10.30 a.m.
High Jump	- - -	11.00
Stone Throwing	- - -	11.30
Broad Jump	- - -	11.45
Wrestling	- - -	2.00 p.m.

C: CHILDREN'S EVENTS

Broad Jump	- - - -	10.30 a.m.
High Jump	- - - -	11.00
50 Meter Race	- - - -	11.30
Bag Race	- - - -	11.45
Swiss Song Competition	- - -	1.00
Australian Song Competition	- - -	1.30
Egg and Spoon Race	- - -	2.00
Tug-o-war	- - -	2.30
Rope Climbing	- - -	3.00

} During
Lunch
Break

D: SPECIAL FEATURES

Exhibition of Wood Chopping and Wood Sawing,
arranged by Tom Kirk and Brothers at 4.00 p.m.

Presents for this occasion will be most welcome. Kindly bring your contributions along to the Swiss House, 35 Bruce St., Stanmore, or make out cheque to the Swiss Gymnastic Club of Sydney. Our Treasurer will gladly take care of them. Thank you!

Don't get fat — get fit!

Join the Swiss Gymnastic Club. We meet every TUESDAY
NIGHT, at 8 o'clock, in St. Paul's Church Hall, Cleveland
Street, Redfern.

The Committee of the Swiss Gymnastic Club of Sydney

FRED HUBER, Hon. President
OTTO SCHMUCKY, Hon. Vice President
DICK THORPE, Instructor
HANS WENK, Hon. Secretary
FRED BARROW, Hon. Treasurer

W. GÖHL, Fr. NUHEIM, Committee Members

COMMON HOLLY *ILEX AQUIFOLIUM*

After English Ivy, Common Holly is the most ubiquitous weed in Mt Wilson.

There are many old established Holly Trees and hedges in Mt Wilson. Whilst owners may be reluctant to remove these, care should be taken to stop the spread of Holly trees. Holly gets established very quickly and it is easiest to remove when the plants are still small. When they are seedlings they can sometimes be dug up as long as all roots are removed. Holly cuttings should all be placed in the green bin, mulched or burnt as they reshoot very easily.

More information can be seen in this link to [Weeds of the Blue Mountains](#), and from an extract from the Libby Raines weed booklet as shown below.

A native of Europe to China and North Africa. Holly is a large fast growing evergreen shrub (a small tree on Mount Wilson). It has very prickly shining green leaves and many red berries in the Autumn, which are carried by the birds. Each berry contains up to four seeds, which germinate readily in our ideal conditions, especially in the shade, and they quickly make a large self-layering shrub which usually shades out everything else around it.

Holly can be seen almost everywhere you walk on good soil. Holly and Ivy are the two most serious weeds on Mount Wilson. It is heartening to see many land owners removing holly trees from their properties.

The variegated forms of Holly are suitable to grow.

Control

- Pull or dig out small plants or spray December to March.
- Large plants cut off and poison.

Previous weeds of the month

English Ivy.

Killing Ivy on Trees (not treeferns): Simply cut the Ivy stems at the base of the tree trunk and pull away from the tree. Ideally you want to clear 1/2 meter round the base of the tree. Then monitor the tree for any regrowth of the stems. The English ivy will die over time and the dead leaves will shed.

[Click here to see the previous email with more detail on English ivy.](#)

If you want to share any successes you have had or want to suggest weeds for another month then please email weeds@mtwilson.com.au

Robbie Feyder

MT WILSON WEED CONTROL INCENTIVE PROGRAM

Over the past five years Blue Mountains City Council and National Parks managers has been instigating a weed control program in bushland reserves in Mt Wilson, primarily targeting bird spread weeds such as English Holly and Himalayan Honeysuckle which invade Rainforest and Basalt Cap Forest bushland.

Around 18 months ago Council received some funding from the Greater Sydney Local Land Service to assist landowners to control these target weeds on private properties in Mt Wilson. The Council commenced the Mt Wilson Weed Control Incentive Program whereby bush regeneration contractors are engaged to control target weeds in bushland on private properties. Participating landowners are asked to sign a management agreement. Some contribution from landowners is encouraged, either in hours per year which, many landowners already spend on weed control on their properties, or by way of a financial contribution to additional bush regeneration contractor hours. This contribution is negotiable.

In January 2019 I signed up to the Mt Wilson Weed Control Incentive Program. The deal was the Council arranged and paid \$5,000 for a contractor to attend my property to undertake weed control, while I had to either provide 35 hours on ground weed control work as well, or contribute \$1,000 toward the cost of employing the contractors. I opted for the former, by having my own gardener work with and in addition to, the contractors. My husband Andrew also rolled up his sleeves and got stuck in, learning how to effectively kill weeds such as holly, blackberry, Himalayan honeysuckle, English ivy, cherry and other weeds.

After I signed the agreement I had a meeting on site with the co-ordinator of the program, Linda Thomas, Community Conservation Officer, who examined the problem areas and developed a scope of works with the bushland part of Farcry being divided into five zones, with the specific weeds in those zones identified.

A team from Blue Tongue Ecosystems then attended at the property and conducted work twice throughout 2019. The following is an extract from the report delivered to the Council by Blue Tongue:

Zone 3

Jasmine was both manually treated and sprayed. Much was pulled up from around natives to minimise off-target from follow up spraying. This second spray should be more effective as Jasmine was somewhat thinned out from the first spray, allowing the remaining live stems to be lifted up and exposed for better access. As an experiment, several mature sycamores in the dense stand at the bend were drilled and stem injected, to see if treating them while dormant still results in them dying in Spring.

Zone 4

The dam edges were checked for Honeysuckle and all weeds, including sweeps a bit deeper into the bush edges above and below the dam, where a few scattered woody weeds were found & treated.

Zone 5

The slope between the tracks was swept several times, with scattered Holly, Bird Cherry, and Sycamore seedlings being the main woody weeds found.



Zone 5 Sycamores, trial stem injection in Winter

The remaining larger Sycamores were experimentally drilled and stem injected in this zone as well. Isolated patches of blackberry, ivy and jasmine were found and treated.



Zone 5 Jasmine out of dense fern patch



Zone 5 Holly before (above) and after (below)



Zone 5 blackberry and
jasmine in dense fern
patch



Recommendations

The results of jasmine spraying and sycamore drilling will need to be checked, and follow up continued. The remaining sycamores should also be treated. General sweeps of all the zones we've previously worked would be advisable, once again involving the owners if further hands-on experience is desired. Thorough sweeps deeper into the lower good bush edges could also be undertaken, as previous checks have resulted in scattered woody weeds

The efforts made by Blue Tongue inspired both Andrew and I to really clean up our bushland once and for all - as it happened, before the fire, which I am sure made a difference to the outcome. We ended up paying almost \$2,000 to our gardener to assist in the weeding efforts and Andrew took off two days of work to assist the effort and increase his knowledge of weed control – far more than we needed to do to take advantage of this excellent program.

Farcry will continue to be monitored over the next little while by Linda and her team and we now know what to do to keep pesky and harmful weeds under control.

Post fire weed control funding

After the recent fires regenerating bushland is particularly vulnerable to weed invasion from unburnt areas as well as regrowth of weeds such as Broom in the burnt areas from soil stored seed

Council has secured further funding from the Greater Sydney Local Land Service to assist landowners to control target weeds on fire affected private properties and on properties close to the burnt areas.

As before, the proposal is to engage bush regeneration contractors to control target weeds in bushland and adjoining areas on target properties. The contract will be managed by Blue Mountains City Council. The works should be completed by June

2021. As with the program I signed up to, participating landowners are asked to sign a management agreement.

I strongly encourage everyone in Mt Wilson to sign up to the program. I understand that it may not matter that your property does not back on to bush, as the seeds from weeds on properties will still find their way into the bush.

Anyone interested in participating in the project should contact Linda Thomas at lthomas@bmcc.nsw.gov.au or 4780 561

Janet McDonald, Farcry, Church Lane

THE MOUNTS COMMUNITY FIRE RESTORATION AND RESILIENCE

Weeds and erosion

Linda Thomas: BMCC Environment team

- Has some Grant funding for Post-fire weed control on both private and public – favour private: small sections public
- Can target The Mounts, Darling Causeway, Bell, Berambing
- employ contractors to do bush regen on private properties
- Some plans already made for Mt Vic – street meetings to come
- Eric Mahoney manages public bush land and weed control and Linda understands that council also has funds for weed control in the Mounts.

Q: Rainbow ravine monument and Skyline Road; council lands in need of weed control

A: Linda will investigate if work in these areas can be covered by the funding or otherwise dealt with

Q. can funding cover Fire trails weed removal?

A: if NPWS land then No. But where they are council land or traverse private property then yes.

- Fire Trail a breeding ground for weeds, so this effort needs to be coordinated so the whole trails are addressed
- Causeway lost so much soil in subsequent rain events – places like this all over

Q. what can be done ?

A. Linda: in Small areas, can come in from the edges. Eric Mahony doing stormwater works/culverts and been putting in swales. Sites to be looked at with Linda and/or Eric, and assessed.

- Weeds rainforest devastation, banana passionfruit taking over, feeling overwhelming. Canopy these rainforest bush hasn't been burnt before. Sense of urgency - such an important time for Mt Irvine .. the weeds are going to get deeper and deeper into the Wollemi
- Allen: Greg from Botanic Gardens can give us a list of rainforest plants that can Recreate the canopy. As soon as we have this we can share with people and think about ways to get these into the ground. Also, be aware that lot of rainforest plants get pulled out because they are thought to be weeds. Greg is

able to give us a talk about what species and planting species from local seed.

- Linda would like to be involved in discussion with Greg Bourke.
- Individual land owners can contact Linda at 02 4780 5612 or email lthomas@bmcc.nsw.gov.au.

Rainforest Conservancy

Concept

Allen and Sarah Hyde

- Conservancy came out from the recent fire event
- lot of rainforest burnt for first time
- something had to be done or we would eventually lose all the rainforest
- incorporate a Community Protection Zone - perimeter zone managed for reduced fuel load, wetter substrate
- The more rainforest we have the greater protection we have, temperature control, soil moisture

Chris Cantwell

- clearing during 19th century saw loss of rainforest from the Mounts to the Hawkesbury River and a fundamental change in vegetation and environment
- Rainforest timber cut down and sent away, delivered the 19th C economic boom. Now We are responsible for building this back up.
- The scale of this project is huge and will need as many projects as possible and be set up to continue to the next generations
- We need to do this on the basis of science and we have made contacts in the scientific community to see what was really here in the past, identifying species. Reception is overwhelmingly positive and exciting

Where we are now

- Conservancy Registered as an association on 1st June
- Website up in sept
- Applying for DRG status – access more donations
- having community engagement meetings
- On the ground the project has become such a positive reception. Meeting in small groups, learning opportunities. Showering us things we still need to learn and things we took for granted, such as what are assets in fighting fires, what are we trying to save.
- I feel particularly excited about the healing aspect for our community. Its place based - in your area for your community and your environment

Q. Linda

- Asked if incorporated into the thinking are legal ramifications? Basalt vegetation communities they have a special legal status

A. Allen

- Yes and we see council and national parks as fundamental partners in this council have been supportive on this enthusiastically on board.

Building our Knowledge

- A key part of the conservancy is linking people with experts and sharing research and knowledge to bring it into their gardens with their plants. Link with knowledge sharing and getting institutions into the areas. Knowledge goes both ways

Peter Clymo

- Wyn Jones is documenting our Wollemi pines, because the Wollemi came back and they have never seen that (PhD Local Ecologist, famous)

The Mount Tomah book.

- Written by Norman and Tony Rodd, 1987 published by royal botanical gardens directory of soil types, and flora and faun
- Billy and Sarah have a copy (Janene bought one online during meeting).
- 'Absolute gem', incredible book published by pioneer groups
- Norman Rodd wanted someone to take up research and follow up. Chris now doing this
- We want to engage other scientists to corroborate research that Chris

Sarah Hyde

- can put book on Conservancy website
- As part of a localised pool of information that we can continually grow and add to it and other resources.

Talk Presentation

- The group requested that an event is organised for exploring the Mt Tomah Book and other resources
- Greg from Mt Tomah Botanic Gardens and Chris would speak
- Wyn could be another option

Colin Berryman, BMCC



David Howell

ATTENTION ALL RFB FIREFIGHTERS

Now is the perfect time to take a few minutes to take stock of your PPE. You need to check that you have helmet, goggles, gloves, flash hood, jacket, pants, shirt and boots. Please also make sure your name is marked clearly on every item. Some crew members found that they had some important items missing last December, stocks soon became depleted, and it was difficult to obtain new PPE quickly from District Office during the emergency.

Please contact Robyn Scrivener by email kookootonga247@gmail.com if you need any of the above items ordered.

BMCC COMMUNITY NEWS

The latest BMCC Community News can be access via the below link:

<https://mailchi.mp/a2ed613d7bf6/community-news-snapshot-03july2020?e=c233c37b97>

You can subscribe to future issues here:

<https://nsw.us8.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=b48e6238d92ab870d9c0c35b8&id=5ddf1942a8>

RESILIENCE NSW – MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Resilience NSW is the lead disaster management agency for NSW, responsible for all aspects of recovery and building community resilience to future disasters. They recently posted the below to Twitter:

Want more info about how to look after yourself mentally during and after the bushfires?

Rural Adversity Mental Health Program (@[ramhpnsw](https://twitter.com/ramhpnsw)) have a great resource offering information and advice about coping with the impact of the bushfires from a mental health perspective. Download it here: <https://bit.ly/2T52lqn>

LONG TERM FIRE PREVENTION AND PREPARATION OF YOUR HOUSE

Some good news from the recent fire is that the villages of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine should face a reduced bush fire risk for some time. Because the Gosper's Mountain was so extensive we will probably have a few years to get ready for the next big one. This will allow us all to undertake long-term projects to make our houses and gardens safer.

We must always bear in mind that even with this reduced level of risk, bushfires particularly more localised outbreaks in relatively unburnt areas or in areas where

fuel loads can reestablish relatively quickly, are still possible. We should not be complacent.

Below is a list of projects you may want to think about in the next year or two:

- **Access:**

Is your front gate wide enough to get a large fire truck into your property, and once inside is there room for fire trucks to get close to the house and to turn around?

Many fire appliances were stuck in the street near houses last December when they found that gates were too narrow and the driveway overgrown. If you are unsure of whether a truck would fit in your driveway contact one of the senior Brigade members and they can advise you;

- **Water:**

Do you have enough water stored close to the house to defend the house? Is the water accessible to RFS? Do you have the right Storz fittings on the tank to allow the RFS to get water out of your tank? Maybe it's time to add a new tank or two. Talk to someone in the Brigade to advise you on the siting of the tank and the best fittings to attach;

- **Fuel:**

Fires can't burn without fuel and the more you can reduce the fuel load around your house, the better the chances that the building will survive a bush fire. The ideal situation from the fire defense standpoint is to have a fuel-free area around your house, with a fuel-reduced area beyond that. Consider taking out big Eucalypt trees within 50 metres of the house, particularly if they are down slope of your house (remember you will have to check this first with BMCC). Grass doesn't burn nearly as well as trees, so replacing big trees with lawns will reduce the risk.

Also think about fire breaks – is it possible to cut a fire break between your garden and the surrounding bush

- **Street Numbers:**

Ambulances and out-of-area brigades need to be able to identify properties quickly and easily. A local escort is not always available to lead an emergency vehicle to an address. Please make it easy for them. Your safety could depend on it. For this reason, please action the following over the next couple of months:

- Clearly show your property name and street number on your mailbox or gate
- Make sure that your street number is large and easy to read, preferably with reflective numbers
- Make sure that foliage is cut back around your property name and number
- If you have two entrances to your property, consider a sign directing vehicles to the main gate
- If your property is hidden down a laneway, consider placing a sign at the road indicating the direction of your property

- **Fire pump:**

- Make sure you have a petrol-powered bush fire pump, with connections into your water sources and enough hose to surround the house and sheds.

If you have any queries about any of the ideas above please don't hesitate to contact Beth or Peter Raines, Joe Montano or myself. Our thoughts will not guarantee that a future fire won't affect you.

David Howell

BUSHCARE

Great news, Bushcare has resumed after being temporarily suspended due to COVID-19. Volunteers will be briefed on following COVID-19 safety protocols. It is now necessary to bring your own morning tea.

Please check the calendar on the Mt Wilson Mt Irvine community website to determine the location each month.

Bushcare is held on the second Friday of each month, between 9am and 12 midday. It is an enjoyable morning and a great way to learn more about the native flora including beautiful rainforest trees, shrubs, vines and flowers.

For residents who are wanting to identify and control weeds in their gardens, the booklet 'Bushland Weeds of Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine' can be found in the Bushcare section of the community website. The booklet is also available from the MWPA, if residents would like a free copy please contact Sue Woolfenden on 4756 2046.

Tracy Abbas has advised that after the June session, she was able to meet with the Bush Regeneration Team and Noxious Weeds Officer on site. The Regen Team had done some work removing the garden dumping from outside WindyRidge and will continue to monitor the situation. It is good for us as it will reduce the nutrient and weed seed impacts on our area of the site, and may allow the area to better be able to recover with a little help from us. She also went around with the Nox Weed officer to plan out our spray regime for the coming months, with an emphasis on the street based spraying.

Everyone is welcome, hope you can join us!

Enquiries:

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

Council contact: Tracy Abbas (0428 777 141)

Alice Simpson

RAINFOREST CONSERVANCY

The Rainforest Conservancy was founded in January 2020 by the Hyde family in the Blue Mountains community of Mt Irvine, New South Wales (NSW), in response to the devastating impact of the 2019/20 bushfires on vast areas of NSW's forests. This bushfire tragedy impacted more than 35% of NSW national parks and approximately 80% of the World Heritage listed Blue Mountains area. Rainforests throughout the state were particularly impacted. Of the 819,582Ha of rainforest in NSW, 290,880Ha have been affected by bushfire, 35% of all of NSW rainforests.

The Rainforest Conservancy is now an Incorporated Association.

In our application for incorporation we state that our vision is 'to preserve, grow and protect Australia's rainforests'.

We aim to achieve this vision by working with local communities, well targeted programs, putting science and technology to work and employing best practice forest and land management practices.

Fundamental to our approach is that this needs to be a 'grass roots' project whereby local people work in their local environments and rainforests, supported by scientific experts and relevant stakeholders. Support from the wider communities through school and youth group engagement will also be sought. We also believe that partnering with environmental and educational entities such as universities and local, state, and federal governments is vitally important. Obtaining input from and cooperating with the RFS and the Blue Mountains City Council (BMCC), and government departments such as NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service is critical to our success. The support we have been extended by the BMCC to date has been outstanding.

This is an ambitious project that will be achieved by taking small steps and gradually scale the project by the inclusion of many willing participants. Our starting point is to document the current state of our exiting remnant rainforest. This includes mapping the rainforest, undertaking flora surveys to identify what plant species currently are present in our rainforests, undertaking research into what species once inhabited the rainforests and formulating a list of species identifying those that are prolific, endangered, can be reintroduced from other areas and those that are extinct or there is no direct suitable source stock available. As stated, we need to 'put science to work'!

Where we cannot source suitable stock for replanting, we will propagate stock from existing samples. We have, for example, undertaken a trial propagation of two hundred lilli pilli trees from a donor tree within the rainforest at Mt Irvine. This test run is going very well!

In all of this we are not forgetting the fauna that inhabit our rainforests and those that seek protection in them in a fire event. Fauna will certainly be incorporated in our future planning.

We of course need to agree with landholders and other stakeholders which areas are 'remnant rainforest' and which areas are suitable for regeneration, including identifying potential connecting corridors.

This is an extensive project but one in which residents and others can engage to a large or small extent. All input is worthwhile. We need such input from botanists, those with propagation expertise and land managers, including managing the land to withstand another serious fire event. We also need lots of 'willing hands'.

All of this cannot be done without the community's support. We will also need to raise funds to achieve our goals.

Although our proposed focus areas are Mt Irvine, Mt Wilson and Mt Tomah, we recently discovered the following page on the [NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment](https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/savingourspeciesapp/project.aspx?ProfileID=20282) website:
<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/savingourspeciesapp/project.aspx?ProfileID=20282>

It highlights five things:

1. that 'our' rainforests comprise a 'threatened ecological community'
2. indicates other nearby areas that are similarly threatened
3. lists an 'action toolbox', and poses the question
4. 'how will this ecological community be managed?' and
5. further states that currently, no management sites have been identified for this ecological community.

We propose that Mt Irvine be used as the initial management site and to a large extent Mt Wilson and Mt Tomah in parallel with it.

The Rainforest Conservancy's Mt Irvine Management Site will be used to bring the project together for rapid rollout to Mt Wilson and Mt Tomah if these communities so desire.

Our intention is that in October we will hold community meetings in Mt Irvine, Mt Wilson, and Mt Tomah to detail to residents our plans and seek their input and to gauge the level of enthusiasm for this project. Where communities decide to be involved, we will commence the joint planning process and put in place a management regime that is consistent with community desires. We have also been asked to hold a meeting with the Mt Victoria community.

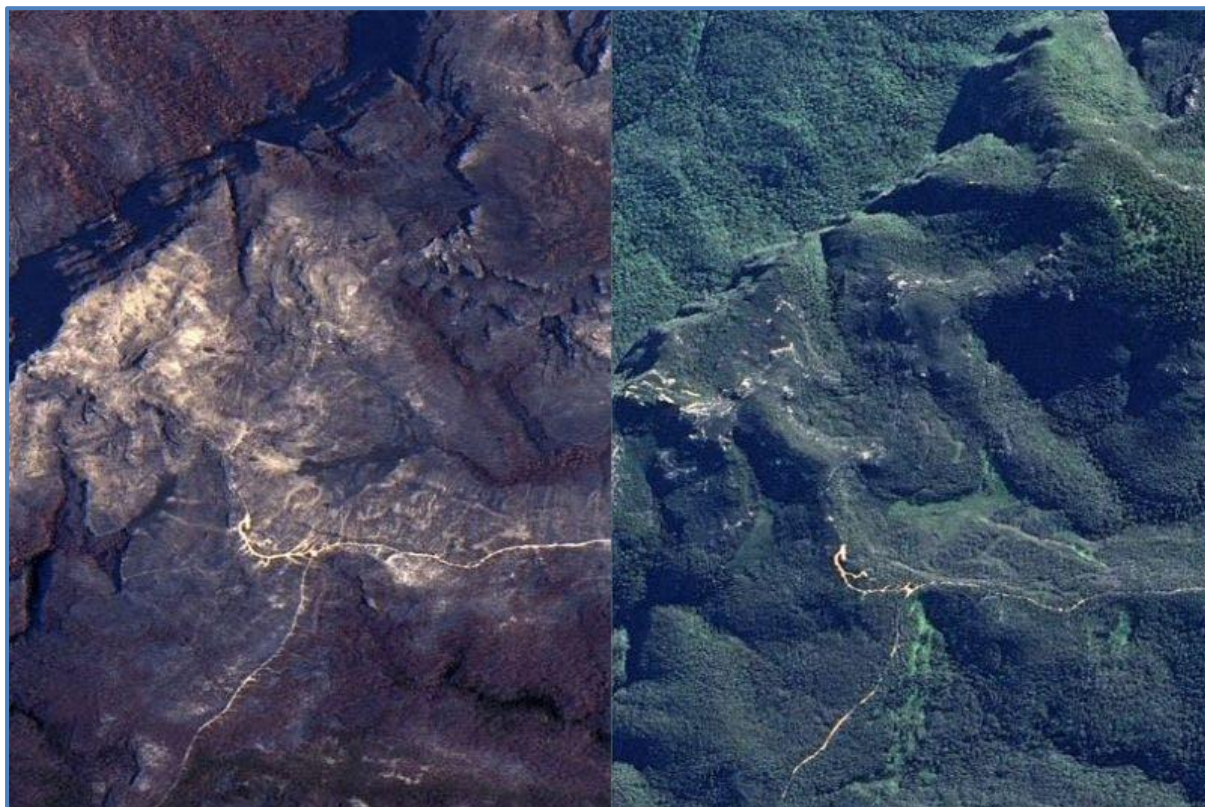
In the meantime, if you want further information or to discuss any aspect of the Conservancy, please email: info.rainforestconservancy@gmail.com.

We look forward to commencing and going on this journey with you and your community.

Allen Hyde, Rainforest Conservancy Incorporated

FIRE IMPACT

Geospatial Intelligence has taken satellite images that show the stark before and after appearance of Mt Wilson and other areas across Australia. Below are the images of Mt Wilson and surrounds after and before the fire. More images can be found on their website at <https://www.defence.gov.au/ago/geoint.htm>.



Via Pedestrian TV

FEEDBACK AND SUMMER EDITION

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

The closing date for the Summer edition of The Mounts is **Friday 20 November 2020**. Please send submissions in Word format to themounts2786@gmail.com. Images of local events, wildlife and flora are also welcome.

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