

THE MOUNTS AUTUMN 2022

Community Newsletter of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine



Photo thanks to Nancy Fox

EDITORIAL

We have had a summer full of rain as the sandstone shelves oozed water in springs and impromptu streams. The European trees have loved the warm damp weather as they became heavy with summer leaves, but this has also meant that some of them became unstable and fell. Everything felt as though it was all a bit too much.

The community spirit was evident again in the search for Charlise Mutton. It was arduous and emotional work which ended in tragedy. It was equally difficult for the police, the SES and all the visiting volunteers. We thank everyone involved, especially the residents of the Mounts who worked tirelessly day and night desperately hoping for a positive outcome.

MWPA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

What an incredibly busy month for the communities of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine it has been in spite of the rain. Between yoga, the Artists in Residence program and the other programs, there is almost no time to garden!

Our first Music to Soothe the Soul concert was held and was a full house and a resounding success. Many thanks to Sarah Howell for taking the lead on the concert series and all the many people who helped make it a success.

Unfortunately, we had to postpone our Stonewall Building Workshop due to the muddy and wet conditions. It will be rescheduled in the autumn and we will be in touch to announce the new dates. Those who had signed up will be given first priority.

Just a gentle reminder of the combined community meeting on Saturday, 19th March 2022 at 4 pm in the Mt Wilson Village Hall. This will be a general meeting for the MWPA and an annual general meeting for the MWVHC. We are looking forward to updating the community on our projects. BMCC has been moving ahead on the new toilets and \$355,000 has been allocated. Come along and join us for a glass of wine afterwards.

Stay dry and hopefully we will have a beautiful autumn.

Nancy Fox

SYDNEY PHILHARMONIA SOOTHES SOULS

Through fog and flood they came. Sunday 6 March saw 25 intrepid singers from Sydney Philharmonia's Chamber and VOX choirs brave challenging conditions to present *Night of The Soul*, a program recently presented at Barangaroo as part of Sydney Festival. Conducted by Brett Weymark OAM, Musical and Artistic Director of Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, and featuring Claire Howard Race on piano and Fiona Ziegler on violin, the program was conceived as a musical meditation, utilising the power of music and the human voice to heal. St Georges Church was transformed by candlelight and flowers and filled by over 70 members of the Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine communities.



Performed without breaks, the program was bookended by Gregorian chant, with exquisite music by Arvo Part, Eric Whitacre, Samuel Barber, and Ola Gjeilo in between. Audience members were deeply appreciative of the beauty of the concert. Mt Irvine resident, John Lee wrote: 'I'm still dwelling on the concert and on the violin piece, *Spiegel im Spiegel* by Arvo Part, from Fiona Ziegler. Here we all were in a small dimly lit church listening spellbound as our

violinist, standing in the shadowed pulpit and beautifully silhouetted against the figured woodwork, softly played on. That in itself was wonderful but to cap it all off, as she played, the low reflected light sparkled against the diamonds in her earrings, finger rings, and bracelets and sparkled in perfect sync with her bowing. It was so surprising and visually amazing, such a treat, and a memory I will never forget. We are so fortunate to have these unexpected moments in our lives...perfect!'

An initiative of the Mt Wilson Progress Association, *Night of the Soul* was the first in a series of concerts funded by the Bushfire Recovery and Resilience Fund for communities affected by the Black Summer bushfires of 2019-20. The next concert takes place on Saturday 25 June and features string trio, Notturmo.

Sarah Howell

IT'S A BIT WET

The recent wet has transformed some landscapes of the Mounts, Waterfall Road became its own waterfall and Silva Plana is now 'Lake Plana' – a lovely water feature (photos courtesy Alex Halliday).



WOLLANGAMBE RIVER BACK TO LIFE

The Wollangambe River is coming back to life after several decades of water pollution from Clarence Colliery waste discharges. From 2017 to 2020 the NSW EPA issued stringent requirements that forced the coal mine to upgrade its waste treatment. The EPA did this after more than 130 submissions were received from the community. Our recent research revealed that concentrations of nickel and zinc in the colliery waste, and the Wollangambe River, have since sharply fallen. This has allowed river life to recover. In 2013 our research showed that the river 22km below the waste outfall, near Mt Wilson, was ecologically impaired from the zinc and nickel pollution.

Sampling in late 2020 showed that a biodiverse community of aquatic invertebrate was proliferating in this stretch of the river. These recovery stories are rare, and I thank the Blue Mountains and Mt Wilson community for their care and concern. The EPA were 'encouraged' to act when the community wrote more than 100 submissions demanding action to clean-up this World Heritage River. For me, this is an important case study that provides hope. Environmental problems can be addressed for long-term beneficial outcome.



This is a Mayfly larva in the pollution-sensitive Baetidae family. The photo was taken by my masters research student Callum Fleming (used with permission). It is one of many sensitive species that are returning with improved water quality.

I wrote an article in [The Conversation](#) if your readers want to read a bit more detail. And there is a [video on YouTube](#) which brings together the problem of pollution from closed mines, and celebrates the Wollangambe River recovery.

Ian Wright

MT WILSON & MT IRVINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

A Warm Invitation Is Extended To All Members And Friends
To The Society's Annual General Meeting 2021 (Deferred to 2022)

Saturday 12 March 2022
10.30am to 12.30pm

At Mt Wilson Village Hall,
The Avenue, Mt Wilson

Main Topic Of Discussion Will Be
'The Future Of The Society'

Please let us know if you are coming or send apologies
By phone or email to

Malcolm Reynolds, 02 4754 2886 or 0402 891 941
malcolmreynolds1961@gmail.com
historicalsociety@mtwilson.com.au

BUSHCARE NEWS

The Mt Wilson Bushcare Group spend a few hours together each month helping to reverse the damage done to the environment by invasive weeds in bushland in Mt Wilson. During this time we carefully remove weeds and encourage native plants to grow, using the principles of bush regeneration to guide our work.

Volunteers will be briefed on following COVID safety protocols. BMCC provides all equipment, including gloves, secateurs, spade, herbicide, kneeling pads etc. It is now necessary to bring your own morning tea. Those interested should 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 12midday. 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.

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

SNAKEBITES

Myths and Facts

3000 bites are reported annually **300-500** hospitalisations **2-3** deaths annually

The average time to death is 12 hours. The urban myth that you are bitten in the yard and die before you can walk from your chook pen back to the house is a load of rubbish.

While not new, the management of snakebites (like a flood/fire evacuation plan or CPR) should be refreshed each season.

Let's start with a basic overview.

There are five genus of snakes that will harm us (seriously) Browns, Blacks, Adders, Tigers and Taipans. All snake venom is made up of huge proteins (like egg white). When bitten, a snake injects some venom into the meat of your limb (NOT into your blood). This venom cannot be absorbed into the blood stream from the bite site.

It travels in a fluid transport system in your body called the lymphatic system (not the blood stream). Now this fluid (lymph) is moved differently to blood. Your heart pumps blood around, so

even when you are lying dead still, your blood still circulates around the body. Lymph fluid is different. It moves around with physical muscle movement like bending your arm, bending knees, wriggling fingers and toes, walking/exercise etc. Now here is the thing. Lymph fluid becomes blood after these lymph vessels converge to form one of two large vessels (lymphatic trunks) which are connected to veins at the base of the neck.

Back to the snake bite site. When bitten, the venom has been injected into this lymph fluid (which makes up the bulk of the water in your tissues). The only way that the venom can get into your blood stream is to be moved from the bite site in the lymphatic vessels. The only way to do this is to physically move the limbs that were bitten.

Stay still!!! Venom can't move if the victim doesn't move.

Stay still!!

Remember people are not bitten into their blood stream. In the 1980s a technique called pressure immobilisation bandaging was developed to further retard venom movement. It completely stops venom /lymph transport toward the blood stream. A firm roll bandage is applied directly over the bite site (don't wash the area).

Technique:

Three steps: keep them still

1. Apply a bandage over the bite site, to an area about 10cm above and below the bite.
2. Then using another elastic roller bandage, apply a firm wrap from fingers/toes all the way to the armpit/groin. The bandage needs to be firm, but not so tight that it causes fingers or toes to turn purple or white. About the tension of a sprain bandage.
3. Splint the limb so the patient can't walk or bend the limb.

Do nots:

- Do not cut, incise or suck the venom.
- Do not EVER use a tourniquet
- Don't remove the shirt or pants - just bandage over the top of clothing. Remember movement (like wriggling out of a shirt or pants) causes venom movement.
- DO NOT try to catch, kill or identify the snake!!! This is important.

In hospital we NO LONGER NEED to know the type of snake; it doesn't change treatment. Five years ago we would do a test on the bite, blood or urine to identify the snake so the correct anti venom can be used.

BUT NOW...we don't do this. Our new antivenom neutralises the venoms of all the 5 listed snake genus, so it doesn't matter what snake bit the patient.



Read that again- one injection for all snakes! Polyvalent is our one-shot wonder, stocked in all hospitals, so most hospitals no longer stock-specific Antivenins.

Australian snakes tend to have 3 main effects in differing degrees.

Bleeding - internally and bruising.

Muscles paralysed causing difficulty talking, moving & breathing.

Pain

In some snakes severe muscle pain in the limb, and days later the bite site can break down forming a nasty wound. Allergy to snakes is rarer than winning lotto twice.

Final tips: not all bitten people are envenomated and only those starting to show symptoms above are given antivenom.

Did I mention to stay still?

Rob Timmings, CEO ECT4Health Pty Ltd

ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE AT THE OLD SCHOOL

The Artist in Residence program continues with an eclectic mix of very talented musicians, writers and visual artists spending a month in Mt Wilson devoted to their work. Accommodation is provided at the Teacher's Cottage and the Old School provides studio space for their artistic endeavours.

Wonderful news has been received from Jody Graham our December 2020 Artist in Residence. She has just been awarded the prestigious Adelaide Perry Prize for Drawing with 'Cinder Dance' (left) a work that was inspired by learning about the Black Summer bushfires. Her time spent in Mt Wilson contributed significantly to the creation of the work.



Brad Gill (left) was our December 2021 Artist in Residence. Brad is a musician and composer, who is developing a body of work and creative approach involving meditation, connection with nature and 'deep listening'. Towards the end of his residency, he gave a performance on the vibraphone and a fascinating talk about his work to members of the community at the Old Schoolhouse. He showed the group how the vibraphone is constructed, how it produces sound and performed some short pieces on this intriguing instrument.

In January our Artist in Residence was writer Ariella Van Luyn (right) who used the residency to work on the second half of her novel Submerged. The novel is an archaeological thriller, set in the near future and ancient past. Sometime in the 2040s, cyborg marine archaeologist Petra is diving on an ancient Minoan shipwreck discovered off the coast of the Greek island Crete. On the dive, Petra discovers the remains of an unknown woman and a Goddess figurine. Petra sets out to discover all she can about the woman, learning more about herself and the impact of intergenerational trauma.



Ariella presented a creative writing workshop via zoom where she introduced participants to techniques for finding inspiring archival material, setting scenes in the past, composing vivid

images and creating engaging characters. The workshop is 1.5 hours and can be [accessed here](#) (Passcode: #XkT@#^6).

Our February Artist in Residence was Natasha Dubler, a multidisciplinary artist working across sound installation, music performance and small sculpture. Her recent work explores the transformative capacity of resonance to shape geological structures. During the Mt Wilson residency, she carried out research for a multi-channel sound work responding to the unique geological features of the Mt Wilson area.



On 26th February Natasha presented a wonderful cello recital at St Georges Church (left) which was very well attended. Her recital included a selection of movements from Bach's cello suites followed by one of her own compositions for cello and electronics. Natasha gave a very interesting talk about her creative process and experiences during her residency.

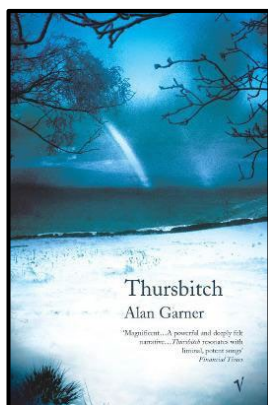
The community engagement projects of the artists are all unique and fascinating in their own way, we encourage everyone to attend.

Many thanks to all the members of the community who have been contact hosts for the artists, a valuable contribution to the program. Being the contact host is an enjoyable and rewarding experience, please contact Alice Simpson if you are interested.

Our next artist is Jennifer Keeler-Milne who will be in residence in May, look out for information about her activities.

Alice Simpson

BOOK REVIEW



Alan Garner has spent his writing life exploring how the language and myths of an old England become apparent in the modern age. *Thursbitch* was published in 2003 and recently re-released by Vintage. It is full of wonders. Two stories, one of Jack and his wife in the 17th century and the other of Ian and Sal in present times, intersect in the valley of Thursbitch, a real place in Cheshire. The book evokes a mysterious place where a row of standing stones marks not only an old walking track but also a particular moment in the movement of the stars. In this isolated place people have led simple lives for generations.

There is peril in places further away where strange ideas and diseases may disrupt the small community, their livelihood and personal relationships. Here Jack Turner comes back to his home, after travelling as a packman, bringing treasures, gifts and goods from far away. Here too comes Sal struggling to cope with her own condition and what it means for her future.

This is not quite a fairy story, not quite an allegory and more than a folktale or fantasy. *Thursbitch* reveals the complexity of how people live with and react to each other, and to the essential and intrinsic relationship one can have to a special place.

I consider Garner's best work to be *The Stone Quartet*, a series of four short novels each of which reveals a day in the life of a child from his own extended family history. Garner described it as 'the most rewarding of everything' he had done to that time. In this quartet and in *Thursbitch* Garner makes use of the language and rhythm of his local Cheshire dialect.

His vision of the world is potent and unique. It is well worth seeking out.

Alison Halliday

UPDATE FROM YOUR RURAL FIRE BRIGADE

We've had a busy few months in the Brigade. Here's what we've been doing.

With the wet and often windy weather, we've dealt with four (some of them very big) trees which have blocked roads around the two villages. Our fabulous Community First Responders have attended three incidents all at households and we attended a car fire at Berambling.

As everyone knows we also provided assistance during the search for Charlise Muten. In all 35 Members of our Brigade participated. We took part in searches (often in really steep and rugged terrain, in the rain and at night). Our Station Officers worked on crew allocations, keeping things running at the station and facilitated hundreds of RFS and SES crews getting their RATs before participating in the search. Our catering team supported the Police catering and two of our members baked to provide some well-deserved treats to all. Everyone involved was invited to attend an RFS psychological debriefing session at the Village Hall a few weeks ago. It was a welcome opportunity to come together to check on ourselves and each other.

We received effusive thank you calls from several senior Police who were most complimentary about how we pulled together to assist in whatever ways we could, including vacating a big part of the Mt Wilson Station so the Police could use it as a base for their operations! If we didn't know it before, we certainly know now how much we need our Mt Wilson shed extension. See our separate article on the exciting progress made in the past few months on that project.

Work is still ongoing on selecting a site for the new Mt Irvine Station. Once selected, the RFS will undertake and fund the construction of that one.

After our very successful Village Firefighter course late last year (which ran with virtual tutorials and partly with COVID safe practical sessions), we're at it again! This time, we're running a new Bush Firefighter course involving at least 15 new recruits (we're hoping to get a few more involved).

We've also had eight new members join the Brigade. There's always room for more though, so if you're wondering about what you can do in the Brigade, there's a wide range of roles to play. You can be an operational fire fighter, an equipment and maintenance officer, a station officer, catering guru (it isn't only armies which march on their stomachs) through to a community engagement team member. There really are jobs for everyone.

We've had several maintenance nights this year when we check over the fire trucks and our other vehicles, made sure our equipment is all in order and ready to go and generally keep things ship shape. Apart from this important work, maintenance nights also give us the chance to talk through what we've been doing recently. In the case of the Charlise Muten search, at our last maintenance night we held our operational After Action Review on what worked well and what we can do better in the future. Reviews like this also feed into wider debriefing sessions

with a big multi Brigade one coming up soon regarding the search. We've also been able to have some COVID safe social mingling after maintenance nights. We hold maintenance nights every second Friday – Brigade Members, see Graham Tribe's regular emails for dates, times and details.

We've also held several training sessions so far this year. We hold one the first Sunday of every month. At our last one, we 'responded' to a fire on Silva Plana at which we deployed two trucks (our Pumper and a Cat 7), the Cat 9 (our little fire truck) and our Personnel Carrier (pretending to be our Cat 1 which is currently off the mountain for servicing!). In that exercise, we put out the 'fire' (a.k.a. about 15 very nasty looking traffic cones lurking in various spots in the dense bush), before it spread to adjoining properties (boy, did we give them a dousing!). We also sent one truck back to the station's water tank for a very quick refill and redeployment back to Silva Plana for a transfer relay moving water between trucks. Our Station Officers also played their part, allocating crews and trucks according to skill sets and being Fire Control for the session which helped us practice our radio calls ('Fire Comm, this is Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Pumper, yellow – over,...' 'Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Pumper, this is Fire Comm, over,...').

Less exciting perhaps, but still important - we have re-issued our Circular on when Brigade members walk fire trails as part of Brigade activities. Have a look at it on the website before you decide to walk a fire trail for the Brigade.

Well, that's our general round-up for this edition of The Mounts. See you around.

Elizabeth Montano

MOVE BREATHE RECOVER

Come and join us for yoga every Saturday morning in the Mt Wilson Village Hall at 8.30am. It's a beautiful way to start the weekend - stretch, relax and catch up with others.

Everyone is welcome, there is no need to have done yoga before and injuries and chronic conditions can be safely catered for. Catherine Sherlock is a yoga therapist and mindfulness educator who has been teaching yoga for over ten years. She is passionate about yoga's positive and supportive benefits to health and wellbeing. Catherine's classes are inclusive and tailored to those present.



Bring your own yoga mat (if you don't have one, there are some available), a cushion and a rug or throw. Stay afterwards for coffee, cake and a chat.

This activity has been funded by Wentworth Healthcare, provider of the Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network, as part of the Australian Government's response to the 2019/20 bushfires.

Sue Woolfenden

BUSHWALKING GROUP

As foreshadowed in the previous edition of The Mounts, the Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Bushwalking Group has begun a new chapter under the auspices of the Upper Blue Mountains Bushwalking Club (UBMBC). The first walk of 2022, to Mt Banks just off Bells Line, was held in February. Walks will take place monthly on a Friday at 9 am, alternating between walks around the Mounts and walks further afield. This walks for the rest of 2022 are:

18 March	Happy Valley/Cathedral Creek/Lambs Hill
8 April	Haystack ridge
20 May	Sunday walk spur/Old Mt Wilson Road
17 June	Asgard swamp/Thor Head/Asgard Head
15 July	Tessellated Pavements
19 August	Gooch's Crater
16 September	Crawford lookout/Hollow Rock
21 October	The Runners Track Scrivener Pass
18 November	Kanangra Walls
16 December	Boronia Point plus logging trails

Walkers must be members of UBMBC (\$25 p.a.). For further information email [Peter Raines](#) or [Andrew Mitchell](#).

MT WILSON VILLAGE HALL

The AGM for the Mt Wilson Village Hall Advisory Committee is to be held at the Hall on Saturday 19th March 2022 commencing at 4pm. Everyone is welcome, please come along. The MWPA General Meeting will follow directly on from the Village Hall meeting.

Every four years the various hall committees are appointed by the Blue Mountains City Council following the Council elections. This year all the members of the committee (with the exception of Megan Wood who has left Mt Wilson) have indicated that they are willing to stand for election.

The committee comprises Ted Griffin (Chair), Andrew Mitchell (Treasurer), Judy Tribe (Booking Officer), Helen Freeman, Steve Woolfenden, Beth Raines and Megan Wood. Our constitution allows up to have up to twelve on the committee. So far, we only have six and we would like to have additional members. The final design work and construction of the new kitchen and outdoor areas (funded by the successful grant application for \$250,000 under the Bushfire Community Recovery Resilience Fund) will take place this year. The committee is assisting the Council in implementing this major project and if you would like to be involved please contact a member of the committee.

Ted Griffin

MT WILSON RFB STATION PROJECT REACHES AN EXCITING STAGE

The project to extend the Mt Wilson RFB Station is one of those things that we have talked about so often that we could be forgiven for starting to think that it would never happen. That is understandable given that the Brigade has been trying to get this done for over 10 years now. Designs have varied over that time as have ideas about how the project would be financed and run.

But what has been a constant as the Brigade pursued its primary purpose of community protection, whether in the context of a major fire event, a search, a rescue or anything else that arose, is that the Brigade has been reminded time and again that it really does need a better facility at Mt Wilson.

As you know, we had a breakthrough in September 2020 when, after changing strategy, deciding that this project needed a whole new approach and with a new design, we succeeded in obtaining a Development Approval for the work. Then came the need to obtain a licence to use the Crown Land surrounding the Station (because we couldn't build an extension without it), to negotiate control of the project by a special purpose community association supported by the Brigade and to obtain additional funding through a government grant to supplement the fundraising the Brigade had done.

How we did all of that probably won't make terribly interesting reading. The important point is that we did it. Which takes me to the title of this article. As I sit writing it on a sunny Friday afternoon so that I can submit it within this evening's deadline (yes, I am one of 'those'), I have just returned from seeing the builder as he supervises the installation of site safety fencing and takes possession of the site. On Monday, if the rain holds off, he will be starting bulk excavation and kicking off construction. Hopefully, by the time this edition of The Mounts comes out, the construction will be well underway.

And that is the exciting bit. It is actually happening. I am sure there will be other issues to deal with as construction continues and then as we start fitting out the new facility, but I have no doubt that our team is more than up to the challenge.

We are all looking forward to an opening celebration, when war stories will be told, our team who have done so much will be thanked and the Brigade will have the type of emergency services facility that it needs at Mt Wilson.

Joe Montano

FEEDBACK AND WINTER EDITION

The Mounts is edited and compiled by Alison Halliday and Matilda Halliday. Your feedback and comments are always welcome, please send to themounts2786@gmail.com.

The closing date for the Winter edition of The Mounts is **Friday 6 May 2022**. 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.