

The Mounts Spring 2022

Community Newsletter of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine



Raindrops, courtesy David Howell

EDITORIAL

It has been a wet, cold and rather too long, winter. The hanging swamps have responded with enthusiasm to all the rain and the signs of spring are already evident: the daffodils are long up and almost over, hyacinths are pushing through the soil with their brilliant flowers nestled deep into the foliage and some trees are dusted with bright green buds. Trees have been on our minds with plantings going on throughout the village due to the Queen's Jubilee.

Curiously some of the old eucalypts seem to be struggling, perhaps drought, fires, heat and an excess of rain has just been too much for them. I think many of us feel the same but the seemingly endless volunteering given by so many is always appreciated, and your hard work should never be taken for granted. Let's celebrate the turning of the seasons and hope that the burnt bush continues to rejuvenate.

I would especially like to thank those who contribute issue after issue to The Mounts with articles, news and photos. It is wonderful.

MAURICE MAY

Maurice May died recently, aged 88, he had owned Wollartukkee on Mt Irvine Road for at least 25 years. He was a successful lawyer and came to Mt Wilson to retreat from the busy legal world. Maurice was not a gardener, but he enjoyed looking at it. It was created by his wife Helen (deceased). When they bought Wollartukkee the garden had been constructed, by Frank Matthews, but she added many plants over the seasons.

Maurice was stubborn, determined and honest, he could also be delightful and kind. His family emigrated from Poland. He had definite ethical standards as evident in the work he did for several years for the Mabo case. Curiously, Chief Justice Brennan died at the same time. Maurice was a strong Labor supporter, and a private person who enjoyed a game of bridge so long as it was not taken too seriously.

He is survived by his partner Tina, his children Roshana, Rafael and Quentin, and his grandchildren. His family described him as: 'A social justice warrior, supporter of progressive causes and women's rights, mentor to many. As a survivor of the Holocaust and the Warsaw uprising, he fought against all forms of intolerance and prejudice in the cause of human rights and dignity.'

Wollartukkee has been sold.

MWPA PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Trust you are all enjoying the whiff of spring in the air!

In August, Councillor Suzie van Opdorp visited Mt Wilson and met with various residents to discuss their particular concerns. Beforehand, the MWPA met with Suzie to raise issues of concern in the community. The issues we raised involved primarily three key areas which should all be familiar to the residents;

- The maintenance of toilet blocks and picnic shelters
- Garbage collection during our tourist season, and
- Regular vegetation clearing for roads and guttering.

She committed to raise them with Council and in fact has already done so and hopefully we will see progress on these fronts.

Residents may have noticed placards around the village concerning the Draft Plan of Management for Mt Wilson. A link to the

On Public Exhibition 

Draft Plans of Management for Priority Natural Areas

Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine

Under the Crown Land Management Act 2016, Blue Mountains City Council has been appointed 'Crown Land Manager' for Crown reserves Mount Wilson & Mount Irvine Reserve 85173 and the Mt Wilson/Irvine Rural Fire Brigade Station. As Crown Land Manager, Council must manage these reserves as if they are 'public land' under the Local Government Act 1993 (LG Act) and write a plan of management. Also draft plans have been written for Council Community land Silva Plana and Waterfalls Track (Part).

To view the draft PoM documents and send in a submission please go to:
<https://yoursay.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/draft-poms-natural-areas>

Dates: Opens Wednesday 3 August 2022
Closes Wednesday 13 September 2022

* Also on Public Exhibition are other Priority Natural Area sites draft Plans in Katoomba and Mitchells Ridge in Mount Victoria.

For more information
Please call Council on (02) 4780 5000 or email council@bmcc.nsw.gov.au
email council@bmcc.nsw.gov.au - Attention: Plans of Management Team

report maybe found [here](#). There is some very good work by Council but it is important that the community provides feedback. The MWPA will be making a submission and we are happy to take any comments on the reports. Please send your comments to Matt Mason (mattmason28@gmail.com) or James Douglas (jamesericdouglas@gmail.com). You are also welcome to send comments directly to BMCC.

We are also continuing to work with Australia Post to find a way to improve the delivery of parcels to Mt Wilson. This as you all would know is a long standing problem and we will continue to try and make headway.

Stay well and I look forward to seeing you at the MWPA AGM in September. Watch your email for the notice.

Nancy Fox

MIPA PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Mt Irvine Neighbourhood Safer Place (NSP)

The work undertaken by the RFS to make the Mt Irvine Public Hall suitable as a NSP is now finalised. The last step involved placing of the NSP signs on the Hall and the fence line.

This culminates the efforts of the Land Manager Board and the RFS to make this happen. We thank them for the provision of this facility.

Now that the NSP is fully operational, please familiarise yourself with the following information provided by the RFS - <https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare/neighbourhood-safer-places>

The following points are from this article:

- Neighbourhood Safer Places are a place of last resort during a bush fire emergency.
- You can access them when all other options in your bush fire survival plan are exhausted.
- You should also know how to get there, as well as alternate routes you can use in case your preferred route is impassable or too dangerous to drive on.
- If you cannot get to the Neighbourhood Safer Place you should move to other safer locations that you have previously identified and added to your bush fire survival plan as a last resort. This might include a nearby home which is well prepared, or a clear paddock or field which is far away from the bush.
- Please note that travelling to, or sheltering at, a Neighbourhood Safer Place does not guarantee your safety.

Weeds

This remains an ongoing project with Council and Local Land Services continuing to provide funding for contractors to undertake weeding at Mt Irvine, including on private property. The objective is to rid Mt Irvine of weeds such as Banana Passionfruit, Blackberry, Holly, Japanese Honeysuckle, Sycamore, and other exotics. We will continue to work with Council and Local Land Services to undertake further weed control on Mount Irvine, as necessary. If you would like to highlight any area needing attention, please contact Allen Hyde for follow up.

Roads

The Council undertook emergency road repair work on Mt Irvine Road to repair a large “sink hole” that appeared in the road between the existing Fire Station and the Community Hall. This has proved to be a very temporary fix with the site again needing significant repair work. Our discussions with Council regarding this and the overall poor state of our single access/egress road to/from Mt Irvine, and the condition of our local roads continue.

RFS New Mount Irvine Fire Station

Preliminary work on this significant project continues and considerable progress with considerable progress made. Council for example has now issued tender documents for the construction of the new tennis court. This new court will be in the area between the Hall and existing tennis court site and the new Mt Irvine Fire Station will be located on the existing tennis court site.

Allen Hyde

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. Please 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 12 midday. It is an enjoyable morning and a great way to learn more about the native flora including beautiful rainforest trees, shrubs 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 02 4756 2110)

Council contact: Tracy Abbas (0428 777 141)

Alice Simpson

CORPORATE GOOD CITIZENSHIP AND BUSHCARE

Readers will be very aware of the regular Bushcare activities carried out by BMCC and a great group of local volunteers. But there's another group which come every year to do a day with BMCC's Bushcare Coordinators, Tracy Abbas and Nathan Summers. Starting in 2015 as a corporate community service event organised by Alexander Montano with a group from KPMG, Alexander has this year expanded the event into a group of people from a number of businesses (banks, a law firm and IT). Some attendees have participated in these annual events since they started.

After two years of having the event cancelled due to COVID, on 27 May, they worked with Tracy and Nathan to clear away non-native vegetation near Waterfall Creek (adjacent to Queens Avenue). The area is much clearer now with what looked to be the remains of dumped material removed, weeds cleared and the walking track which runs parallel to the road now easy to use.

When interviewed for this article, Tracy was keen to have the word put out – that leaving garden waste in reserves is a real menace. It can introduce new plant species into an area and cause a build up of vegetable matter. The verdict from the attendees is always a positive one – they enjoyed getting into the bush to clear away unwanted material, they learnt a lot from Tracy and Nathan and they had a lot of fun including at the after work barbeque and games afternoon.

So, there's an idea for anyone looking for something to do for a corporate community service event. Tracy and Nathan would love to hear from other interested groups, Tracy's email is tabbas@bmcc.nsw.gov.au.

Elizabeth Montano

FREE TO NEW HOME

This La-Z-Boy recliner is looking for a new home.

if you are interested please contact Alison Halliday by [email](#).



MURPHY NEEDS SOME FRIENDS

Church Lane pup Murphy Donna-Buang is seeking like-minded playmates for dates and more, weekends and weekdays after work. Loves chasing balls in the Church yard, quoits under the Donna Buang beeches, frisbee at Silva Plana (if the rains hold off), village walking and home garden visits. Please leave a message with my human Anton on 0412 682 148.



AUSTRALIA'S FROGS NEED YOUR HELP

If there is one group of local residents who are enjoying all the rain, it's the frogs. Anyone with any standing water on their property (and who doesn't?) will have heard them celebrating the deluge with their range of calls. From croaks and barks to whistles and bleats, every frog species makes a unique sound.

Since 2017 the Australian Museum has run its flagship citizen science project, Frog ID to encourage people all over the country to record frog calls with nothing more than a smartphone and send them in to the Museum for identification. In this way, scientists can create a database showing the distribution and breeding habitats of Australia's 245 species of frogs.

Frogs like all native species are under threat from bushfire, urban spread, disease, and non-native animals. Allowing scientists to identify where the various frog species are helps them understand how frogs and their ecosystems are responding to the changing planet. Last year the recordings sent in by citizen scientists helped museum staff track the progress of a mystery frog disease through eastern Australia.

This is where you can contribute. Simply download the free FrogID app to your smartphone or download the app from the website and start recording. The app is very easy to use – all you have to do is record the calls you hear for a minute and send the recording to the Museum. Scientists will analyse the sounds and send you a list of the different species they have heard on your recording. This not only provides them with valuable data for the protection and conservation of frogs, but also allows you to discover the range of different frog species you have on your property.



Australia's frogs need your help

FrogID is a national citizen science project that is helping us understand and protect Australia's frogs.

Use the FrogID app to record frog calls, and help discover where frogs are most at risk from habitat loss, disease and climate change.



1. Visit frogid.net.au
2. Download the FrogID mobile app
3. Explore your nearest garden, creek or wetland
4. Record and submit frog calls using the FrogID app

frogid.net.au    FrogIDAus

Nancy Fox and I have been submitting recordings from our properties for the past few years and have both identified different frog species at different times of the year including the Striped Marsh Frog, Peron's Tree frog (also wonderfully known as the 'maniacal cackle frog'), and the Common Eastern Froglet. It is so rewarding to learn more about our local environment, while contributing to scientific research.

Nancy says: I have been involved recording the frogs around our pond pre and post the 2019 fires which enables the scientists to understand the state of the bio-diversity of the waterways and the overall health of the recovering bush. It is also fascinating to be able to identify the different calls and different frogs at various times during the year.

So hop to it!

David Howell

NEWS FROM ST GEORGE'S

Regular Services

Church Services are held on the 2nd Sunday of each month at 3pm followed by a friendly cup of tea. Everyone is welcomed at St George's.

Working Bee

A working bee is held 9am-11am on the 1st Wednesday of each month depending on the weather. We mainly work on the garden, pulling weeds, pruning, raking leaves etc and would welcome anyone who can help, morning tea is provided.

Grant

David Howell kindly applied for a Flood Disaster Recovery Small Business Grant from the NSW Government with which we were successful. The grant of \$8,613 will cover the entire repair project of two leaks in the roof, being the louvres in the north end and overhanging ceiling near the front on the south end. The repair work will commence in the near future.

Concerts

The Music to Soothe the Soul Concerts have been a great success being held at St George's. The atmosphere, acoustics, and of course the professional performers have provided wonderful entertainment. Thank you to Nancy Fox who successfully applied for the grant for the concerts on behalf of the Mt Wilson Progress Association, and to Sarah Howell who has engaged the musicians and organises the events with valuable assistance from Sue Woolfenden. The donation to the church from the concerts provides some much needed funds for ongoing repair works at our 106 year old St George's.

Helen Freeman, Warden

MUSIC TO SOOTHE THE SOUL – NOTTURNO

The communities of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine were treated to an exquisite performance of early music by the ensemble, Notturmo, on Saturday 25 June as part of the series, Music to Soothe the Soul.

Notturmo is a trio comprising Simon Martyn-Ellis (guitar), Melissa Farrow (flute), and Karina Schmitz (viola). All are luminaries of the Early Music scene, regularly appearing with ensembles such as Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, Australian Chamber Orchestra, Orchestra of the Antipodes, and the Australian Haydn Ensemble.

Described as a salon concert, or soiree, the program featured French and Italian music from the late 18th and early 19th centuries when these small events provided one of the main avenues for musicians to show their talent and earn a living.

The beautiful acoustic of St George's Church showcased two works for the trio by Francesco Molino and Anton Diabelli, and a work by Ferdinando Carulli for guitar and viola alone. Over 60 members of the community warmly welcomed the ensemble and showed their enthusiastic appreciation of the program.



Members of chamber ensemble, Notturmo: Simon Martyn-Ellis, Melissa Farrow, Karina Schmitz

An initiative of the Mt Wilson Progress Association, the Music to Soothe the Soul series of concerts is funded by the Bushfire Recovery and Resilience Fund for communities affected by

the Black Summer bushfires of 2019-20. The grant enables professional ensembles of the calibre of Notturmo to be engaged at no cost to audience members.

Future concerts include The Muffat Collective on 20 August (see following article), Castalia Vocal Consort on 29 October, and Emily Granger and Tristan Coelho on 4 March 2023. All will take place in St George's Church, Mt Wilson.

Sarah Howell

MUSIC TO SOOTHE THE SOUL – THE MUFFAT COLLECTIVE



The Muffat Collective, a trio of players, delighted the audience on Saturday 20 August. They played baroque era instruments: Matthew Greco on baroque violin, Anthea Cottee (pictured, courtesy Rosemary Walsh) on viola da gamba and the baroque cello and Anthony Abouhamad on harpsichord.

The seven pieces, by six composers, filled the church with sounds evoking the emotions so we felt like dancing, we were uplifted by joy and responded with enthusiasm to the delicate, precise sounds of the instruments. We were fortunate to have comments about the instruments and the intention of each piece explained to us. It was a wonderful way to spend a late winter afternoon.

Alison Halliday

THE MORE THINGS CHANGE...

From the minute book of the Sites and Reserves Trust, dated 1959:

Wynnes Rocks Rd: remove dangerous rocks and fill up bad holes. Council Engineer had said 'too much basalt for a good job to be done with a grader'

MT WILSON / MT IRVINE BUSHWALKS WITH THE UPPER MOUNTAINS BUSHWALKING CLUB

Feb walk 15 people - Fri - 18-Feb-2022 - 3 M - Day Walk

[Mt Banks - Banks Walls, Frank Hurley Head, Mt Banks Summit](#)

Mt Banks Carpark out to Banks Walls and Frank Hurley Head, return via Mt Banks Summit.

Great views into the Grose Valley.

Map: *Mt Wilson*



March walk had 16 walkers. - Fri - 18-Mar-2022 - 3 M - Day Walk

[Mt Wilson - Sunday Walk Spur / Old Mt Wilson Road](#)

DuFours Rocks Lookout, then follow the firetrail around the back of Breenhold Gardens and down Sunday Walk Spur to the Bogey Holes. Return through scribbly gum country close to Mt Wilson Road and using the old Zigzag alignment through the rainforest to climb back onto Mt

Wilson, final leg along the Avenue. Approx 8km

Map: *Mt Wilson*



April Cancelled due to park closures

May walk had 11 walkers - Fri - 20-May-2022 - 3 M - Day Walk

Mt Wilson - Happy Valley, Cathedral Creek, Lambs Hill

Cathedral Reserve to Cathedral Creek, Happy Valley and return via Lambs Hill. Rainforest and moist basalt cap forest, hidden gem of Mt Wilson. Approx 6km, steep into and out of Happy Valley.

Map: *Mt Wilson*



June walk had 7 walkers - Fri - 17-Jun-2022 - 3 M - Day Walk

Asgard Swamp Thor Head / Asgard Head

Asgard swamp Thor Head / Asgard Head - Depart Victoria Falls Road, Asgard Swamp, Historic Mine and Kiln, Asgard and Thor heads Approx 10km
Map: *Mt Wilson*

July walk had 8 walkers - Fri - 22-Jul-2022 - 3 M - Day Walk

The Pavements - Mt Irvine

The Pavements - Mt Irvine - Interesting rock formation Tessellated Pavements out on the ridge from Mt Irvine between the Wollangambe and Bowens Creek about 5km - Plus 2.5 optional explore out on ridge to Wollangambe. Relaxed walk with campfire and billy for lunch.



Mt Wilson / Mt Irvine Bushwalks with The Upper Mountains Bushwalking Club

[Dargans Arch and Goochs crater](#)

Dargans Arch and Goochs crater - Unique rock features in the upper Wollangambe area out from Dargan - Newnes Junction. Mostly off track 12.5km

Map: *Wollangambe*

Peter Raines

UPDATE FROM YOUR RURAL FIRE BRIGADE

What? Time for another column for The Mounts? Yes, it is – and, as usual, we have quite a few things to report.

Firstly, the stats – in the last few months we've had three Community First Responder callouts; attended five motor vehicle accidents; dealt with three large tree falls over roads due to rain and storms; we responded to a call to assist Police on a search and one member of our Brigade assisted in work following the floods in The Hawkesbury.

With colder times, we also try to get in as much training as we can. We had a group of members do re-certification for chainsaw work (see that stat above on tree fall callouts), some new First Aiders and a brand new group of Bush Firefighters are going through their paces. We've also had a group of people start on Village Firefighter courses (following on from our big group which went through this training earlier this year) and some members doing introductory training modules for Advanced Firefighter (AF) qualifications. We've got a couple of trainee drivers on the go too – but need a lot more. You can't run a crew without a qualified fire truck driver. Come on folks – isn't driving a fire truck every little boy's/girl's dream?

And then we've had our usual monthly training sessions on the first Sunday of the month. At our last training session we went through two scenarios – a smoke sighting (which turned out to be a very menacing witches hat representing a fire at the end of Church Lane) and a small fire at the end of Wynnes Rocks Rd. The two crews who responded had to find the smoke/fire using the map grid references provided or bearings as reported in by bushwalkers. Then, they went to the incidents, radioed in their "Sitreps" to Incident Fire Control (aka our Captain Beth Raines) advising about the conditions: size of fire, weather readings and information on nearby properties which may have been under threat if the fires were not extinguished. We charged our hoses with water and put out those fires. Crew members took turns to do the radio call-ins. Then the crews refilled their trucks from the nearby tanks and made up their gear. Then we swapped scenarios and did it all again at the other fire incident.

The first crew to do the Church Lane scenario also tested the new water tank at the end of Church Lane for the first time. It worked! So, another great addition to our fire-fighting infrastructure is now ready for a fire more realistic than that witches hat.

We then de-briefed back at the Station – what went well, what can we improve on, lessons for checking gear at our Maintenance Nights. And, because we had a mix of experienced members and several of our newly minted BF's, our Senior Station Officer, Sue Woolfenden, mixed up the crews so that we had a blend of experience. Our two new Crew Leaders led the two crews out in the field and Sue led some work for our vital Station Officers. They need to practise too. All that in under three hours. Time really well spent.

And, of course, for every training activity we have our Brigade trainers – Graham Tribe leads a group of trainers who support our participants in all these courses by arranging all the admin

associated with RFS training courses, being course trainers and by providing practice sessions for assessments. They also generally mentor our candidates along the way. David Howell, senior deputy captain, is one of the trainers for AF for the Blue Mountains District. Deputy captain Allen Hyde and Matt Mason are designing and running many of these imaginative Sunday training sessions. Other Brigade members also support courses and training by coming along as assistants and passing on their tips.

We've also continued with our twice monthly Maintenance Nights – where we check gear on trucks, keep the Mt Wilson Station in order and have the chance to catch up on some gear paperwork under the supervision of our equipment officer, Stephen Dean. And we also get to have a drink and a meal together – Covid safe – provided by members of our excellent catering team.

A visit to the Mt Wilson Station will show that our extension is zooming along – the roof is on and things are gathering apace. Our Executive and the Committee of Infrastructure Inc, our special purpose association undertaking the build, led by Project Manager, Joe Montano and architect extraordinaire, Owen Haviland, have been busy working through all the things which will go into the extension and the existing section – the IT gear, the control/comms room fit-out, the kitchenette, the hose pole and winch, the garage doors... You name it, we're on it!

Below is an article on the presentation of the National Emergency Medal to 40 of our Brigade members for their work on the 2019-20 bushfire by the Governor-General. Those members and 8 other Members also received the RFS Commissioner's Certificate of Service for work on that fire presented by and RFS Assistant Commissioner.

So, there you have it. Your Brigade in action even in the deep of Winter. What's that? You'd like to know more? You're a Member who'd like to get back into it? You'd like to join? We've got something for everyone. And you'd be very, very welcome.

Elizabeth Montano

NATIONAL EMERGENCY MEDAL AND COMMISSIONER'S CERTIFICATE FOR SERVICE DURING THE 2019-20 BUSHFIRE

The National Emergency Medal was established in 2011 to give recognition within the Australian Honours system for 'the unique contribution and commitment of those who have provided sustained or significant service in response to declared nationally significant emergencies'.

Following the 2019-20 Black Summer Bushfires it was decided to extend the awarding of the National Emergency Medal to volunteers who worked so hard during these devastating bushfires to protect their and other communities. Fifty two (yes, 52) of our Brigade have been awarded the National Emergency Medal.

The Rural Fire Service has also recognised the enormous contribution made by RFS volunteers by issuing a Certificate for Service. All National Emergency Medal recipients and many other RFS Brigade members around the State have been awarded the Certificate.



Twenty eight members of our Brigade who worked during the fires but who did not meet the National Emergency Medal requirements have been awarded Certificates. So, what does a Brigade do when told “you can have them presented at your Annual General Meeting or you can arrange some other function at which to have these awards presented”? Well, if you’re our Brigade you think big and I mean really BIG.

As the National Emergency Medal is an Australian Honour, we asked the Governor-General if he would come to our Community to present our National Emergency Medals. And the response to our invitation to the Governor-General was a resounding YES!



So, on 20 August, after much preparation we hosted the Governor-General and Mrs Hurley at the Mt Wilson Fire Station at which forty of our fifty-two recipients of the National Emergency Medal received their medals.

Of course, we also wanted to celebrate receiving the Commissioner’s Certificate, so Assistant Commissioner Kelly Quandt presented Certificates to our Medal recipients and eight other Brigade members. In attendance was our RFS District Manager and the Blue Mountains Group Captain and two Deputy Group Captains.

Our State MP Trish Doyle came along as did Mark Andrews, Chief Of Staff of Susan Templeman MP, our Federal Member for Macquarie (who was rather disappointed she too couldn’t come), Mark Greenhill, BMCC Mayor and Kevin Schreiber, a BMCC Ward One Councillor.

We had speeches and photos with the Governor-General and Mrs Hurley. Families came along. We even had two dogs in attendance.

After the presentations we showed the official party around the Mt Wilson Fire Station extension currently under construction. They were impressed.

We then adjourned to the Mt Wilson Village Hall for a truly fabulous spread. Our catering team had done themselves and us proud. The Hall looked amazing. The Governor-General and Mrs Hurley enjoyed themselves too with Mrs Hurley singing us an impromptu song (she has a great voice) and then we all joined in with a rendition of ‘You are my Sunshine’! It was surreal.

As organiser of the event and MC on the day, I’m very grateful to the rather large number of Members who came to two very busy Maintenance Nights to get ready, who moved chairs, moved heavy equipment out of the Station for the day, collected the marquee and medals from District Office, took photos, arranged flowers for the Hall and for Mrs Hurley, who baked and

cooked, who decorated, who gardened, who wrangled recipients into alphabetical order and who generally made it a very impressive and really well run affair. We all know we can run a bushfire emergency, who knew we could also run an Honours presentation?



It was a lovely mix of the necessary formalities and a community celebration. As some of our recipients weren't able to receive their awards on the day, we'll be in contact to get them out to them although I can't promise that the G-G will deliver them personally. For more on the day, see the article in the Blue Mountains Gazette.

Elizabeth Montano, all images courtesy Mahn England

PROGRESS ON MT WILSON/MT IRVINE RFB STATIONS

Those of you who have had the chance to pass by the Mt Wilson Fire Station will have seen the excellent progress being made on the extension.

This has proven to be a challenging time to carry out a project such as this with all the supply side and pricing issues that I am sure you have all heard about or experienced, along with the impact of repeated and quite extensive wet weather delays.

Nonetheless, thanks to the good work of many, the project continues to roll on. At the time of writing we are getting close to finishing the installation of the roofing iron, which will certainly help us to get on with things in wet weather.

It is a little tricky to talk about completion dates in the current conditions, but our working target remains to get the extension finished this calendar year...we will see how that goes.

I thought that those of you who enjoy construction projects might be interested in seeing some internal photos showing progress to date. Below are three shots...one of the new double truck bay and two of our new multi-purpose space.





The Brigade remains grateful for the support of this project provided by the Commonwealth and State Governments through the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund grants programme and by all the generous donors to the Brigade over the years who have made it possible for the Brigade to make a substantial co-contribution to provide sufficient funds to allow this project to proceed.

Planning continues for the new Mt Irvine Fire Shed. While there is still much to be done, the target is to get underway during 2022/23. More details will be circulated as they become available.

Joe Montano

ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE

Congratulations to the artists coming to The Old School for a one month residency during 2022/2023.

Our first residency in October 2022 is poet/classical pianist Bell Bregovic and guitarist Eitan Muir. Belle's collaborations with guitarist Eitan Muir explore spoken word and popular song forms, through to immersive musical-theatrical performances of Bregovic's poetry. During their 2022 residency at The Old School, the emerging Sydney-based duo will delve deep into their craft and develop new performance works, culminating in a premiere performance for the Mt Wilson local community.

During November we welcome writer Helen Pitt, a senior writer at the Sydney Morning Herald and the Walkley Award winning author of *The House, the extraordinary story of the Sydney Opera House and the people who built it*. This residency will be her first attempt at writing fiction, working on an idea about French female explorers in NSW. She wants to re-examine the explorers path over the Blue Mountains, forged by Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson and

reimagine it in a fictional setting. All tips from locals about the explorers' path across the Blue Mountains are welcome.

In January songwriter, composer and performer Helen Begley, is currently working on a trilogy of musical performance pieces that explore the stories of female immigration to Australia in the 1830's; 'Voyage', 'Wild' and 'Wrecked'. 'Voyage', was completed in 2021. It is now time to write 'Wild', the story of immigrant, Martha Wild. She is curious to see how the resonances of The Old School's environment, history and the 'ghosts' of previous artists work will influence her story.

Textile artist Sharon Peoples is our February artist. She spends a lot of time wandering and wondering about gardens. For this residency she proposes to take time to research and explore the birds that are present or migrate through the Mt Wilson 'garden'. She is interested in not only making bird-like structures but also playing around with the visual representations of birds and bird sound.

In an interdisciplinary collaboration Anna Glynn and Peter Dalmazzo our March 2023 residents aim to create works, mainly using digital media, that address nature, ecology, history and environment, embracing art as a way to pursue meaningful conversations and exchanges.

Our last artist for this round in June 2023 is Marynes Avila who creates site specific large scale immersive installations in collaboration with the community. The investigation of multiples as an allegory for the relationship between the individual, the group, and their interaction with nature has shaped the vital focus of Avila's art/science research practice.

This wonderful variety of artists will be working on their residency projects. They will all present a community event ranging from the premier performance of a musical work composed during their residency, talks, workshops and exhibitions. Watch out for notification of their events, come along and meet them and enjoy hearing about their time at The Old School.

Judith Tribe

STONEWALL BUILDING WORKSHOP

After many delays due to COVID and then torrential rains, the Stonewall Building Workshop finally took place in June. Despite bitter cold and wind, the enthusiastic and well rugged up participants and observers came with good cheer.

The workshop was run by Rod and Connor Hunter from Milestone Masons. A low wall was built in Marcus Clark Reserve. It is planned to put a sign with the name of the reserve on the stone base. This will match the existing Mt Wilson sign at the bottom of the Zigzag.

Some quotes from those who took part describe the highlights of the day:

'The instructors gave very clear and helpful information and advice on stonewall building and made it a more accessible activity to contemplate doing in the future.'

'I thought it was brilliant. I learnt a lot of great skills from two really patient and knowledgeable stone masons whose past experiences on the Mountain were valuable because this is the rock all the participants and the onlookers will be working with if they choose to do some stonewalling in the future.'

'It provided an opportunity to come together and work together to build relationships, tell stories and organise team efforts with stonework into the future.'

'Together with the rest of the village we were able to build a legacy structure for the community and mark a sense of place for Marcus Clark Reserve. It was fun and not too much hard work. I'll always be able to look at it and know which stones were 'mine'. I'm now looking forward to repairing my own walls with the skills I've learned.'

The workshop was organised by MWPA and funded by a Community Wellbeing Grant from PHN (Penrith Health Network).

Sue Woolfenden

BOOK REVIEW – FOR THE LOVE OF BIRDS

The beautiful new publication *For the Love of Birds* really only needs a cluster of photographs to show its amazing contents. This is a new book of Australian bird photography with all the photos by Georgina Steytler, and published by Australian Geographic.

The images are gathered into ten categories such as bird behaviour, flights of fancy (my favourite) and quirky. Georgina is very careful about how the photographs are taken so that the birds are little disturbed or interrupted in their daily life, see the tiny Grasswrens having a dust bath (p234). She comments that the use of artificial bird calls results in birds showing panic and fear – this may result in arresting images but at great cost to the bird. She prefers quietness and patience and, as she comments, a fair amount of luck. She is also concerned with showing, where possible, some of the local habitat. She has many images taken at dawn and dusk because then the birds are most active.



Each image is accompanied by a comment on the bird, or some aspect of the photographic techniques or the particularities of the location. The images are simply wonderful with so many of our birds, even ordinary or commonly found ones (pigeons and LBJs – little brown jobs), showing their unique characteristics. The closeups reveal the intricacy of feathers (note the endpapers), faces and feet while others are seen along the shoreline, in forests and flying high. Some are camouflaged while others seem to be impossibly bright, such as the Red-capped parrot on p136.

The more I read this book the more I came to see birds as essentially strange; but such a vital and intriguing part of the world. Buy this book and enter the world of birds.

Alison Halliday



Brown booby

I can't get enough of boobies. On Christmas Island they are a common sight in the skies, and present great opportunities to practise your birds-in-flight photography. With persistence – and a bit of spray and pray – you can get really interesting images.

NEWS FROM ARTIST IN RESIDENCE JENNIFER KEELER-MILNE



Jennifer was artist in residence in May and delighted in the autumn colour and the lush rainforest (above). Some of her work from this time is part of a new exhibition of approximately 30 works chosen for the walls of the Sydney offices of Bank of America, in Governor Phillip Tower. The works will be hanging from the end of September 2022 until March 2023 as part of their Art of Connecting program.

ROSBY GALLERY – HOLDING STILLNESS



Sculptor, Stephen Hogan, and painter, Margaret Hogan's joint collection of works brings together mediums and moments with objects and observations to grasp the past and deliver it into the future. Working from their joint base of Bathurst, both artists find evolution through process and exploring composition – selectively choosing moments of the physical and natural machine – holding them in time and reconveying them to their audience.

Stephen dissects the machines of post-industrialisation – recomposing elements piece-by-piece with instinct as his guide. Margaret's works are born from memories, sketches and the stillness that can only be achieved when slowing to the pace of nature.

Rosby Cellar Door & Gallery, 122 Strikes Lane, Eurunderee, Mudgee
27th August – 26th September 2022, Thursday - Monday 10am - 4pm
www.rosby.com.au/holding-stillness



THE QUEEN'S JUBILEE TREE PROJECT

The Mount Wilson Progress Association has been awarded \$17,000 as part of HM The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations. The grant is part of a commonwealth-wide initiative to promote and establish heritage plantings and to enhance the overall tree canopy.

Work on this project has already started at Marcus Clark Reserve (photo below) with the planting of *Nyssa sylvatica* around the border and a feature planting of a single Dawn Redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*). There will be a plaque to commemorate the plantings at this location.



This new work on the reserve will complement the wall recently built by the community at the Dry Stone Wall workshop and which will become the sign for Marcus Clark Reserve.

The Queen's Jubilee Tree project will progress to cover plantings at a number of locations including:

- The Mount Wilson Sign at the Zigzag,
- The junction of Queens Avenue and The Avenue
- Wynnes Rocks Road
- Queens Avenue
- Founders Corner

Work will continue during Winter and Spring culminating in a community event in April 2023 once all the trees have settled in.

MWPA sees this as a pilot project to continue the tradition of establishing and maintaining heritage plantings in the avenues within Mount Wilson. Accordingly, we have formed a tree committee to work closely with Council and we will allocate additional funds and resource to the management of trees within the village on an ongoing basis. The current committee is Alison Halliday, Micah Baker (below at Merry Garth), Pete Raines, Tim Gow and James Douglas.



Anyone from the community who is interested in supporting the tree planting efforts and in maintaining the new trees with watering etc. can contact James Douglas at Sefton Hall (jamesericdouglas@gmail.com).

James Douglas

Free Nature Therapy Walk



Originating from Japan, Shinrin-yoku (*or forest therapy*) is a preventative health practice that improves wellbeing by immersing your senses in nature. This guided experience is designed to increase your mental and physical health by reducing stress levels and lowering your pulse and blood pressure. The walk is hosted by guides who have been certified and accredited by the International Nature and Forest Therapy Alliance.

Bookings: 47544050-numbers are limited

When: Saturday 10th September

Time: 11am-1pm

Where: BM Botanic Garden Mt Tomah-check in at Visitor Centre at least 10 minutes before the walk. Wear comfortable footwear & clothing appropriate for weather conditions.



*This activity is a collaboration of
Winmalee Neighbourhood Centre &
Gateway Family Services.*



This activity is supported by Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network (NBMPHN), as part of the Australian Government's response to the 2019/20 bushfires. Wentworth Healthcare is the provider of NBMPHN.

THE MOUNTS REPRESENTED ON COUNCIL'S PLANETARY HEALTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Blue Mountains City Council has long been a leader in recognising that our actions affect the health of the whole planet, with Council's guiding Sustainability Model published in 2003. In 2014, however, the medical journal The Lancet, called for a movement for planetary health to transform the field of public health. It highlighted that human health is now being negatively affected by the declining health of the natural ecosystems which support us. It recognized that both the natural and human-made systems that support humanity are now under threat, and called for the:

achievement of the highest attainable standard of health, wellbeing, and equity worldwide through judicious attention to the human systems – political, economic, and social – that shape the future of humanity and the Earth's natural systems that define the safe environmental limits within which humanity can flourish.

(Safeguarding human health in the Anthropocene epoch: report of The Rockefeller Foundation–Lancet Commission on planetary health)

Councils play a critical role in protecting both the public health of their communities and stewarding large areas of land, and the diverse life forms this land supports. The world is made up of local governments, so transformative change at local government level has the power to improve the wellbeing of the whole world.



With this in mind, Blue Mountains City Council purchased the old Katoomba Golf Course Clubhouse in September 2020, to establish a Planetary Health Leadership Centre. In 2021 it also established a city-wide Planetary Health Initiative. Its goal is to urgently transform all our systems so that we can live within planetary boundaries for generations to come. It has set itself a long-term vision to Care for Country and contribute to restoring planetary health as it works towards creating a new era: the Symbiocene, where we live in a symbiotic relationship with one another and the rest of the natural world.

A unique site where Council has begun doing baseline biodiversity surveys and education programs for young people and the wider community

To guide this vision, Council signed Memorandums of Understanding with Western Sydney University, UTS, Monash University and the World Heritage Institute to further local education, research and funding opportunities. It also established an internal Council Steering Group and a Planetary Health Advisory Committee, which includes Allen Hyde, representing the Mounts and the Rainforest Conservancy.



Councillors, Council Staff, MOU Partners and Planetary Health Advisory Committee at the Cultural Centre on World Health Day

In 2021 Council also became the first Council in Australia to recognise the Rights of Nature and it adopted the Statement of Recognition and Commitment with Traditional Custodians. Over the past year the Advisory Committee has worked with Council to develop a set of principles to guide the Precinct Plan for the former Golf Course site as part of a wider Masterplan for Katoomba. Council has also explored and tested possible directions for a future Planetary Health Centre – including site restoration, research, education, opportunities for community collaboration and trialling social enterprise development. It is exploring local-government and community-led education, research and communications, and a focus on innovative water management for disaster risk reduction.



Permaculture Teachers trained in 2021 – they are now being mentored to teach free courses for young people and the Council-led Pluriversity model is providing local micro credentials.

The Planetary Health Initiative is taking place across the whole Local Government Area and in a Bioregional Collaboration with Lithgow City Council and the Lithgow Transformation Hub. At a recent strategy workshop a common vision was to create a 'Journey of Hope' across the Blue Mountains, highlighting the many ways we are

collaborating as a community to regenerate our natural systems, and repositioning our social systems, to restore Planetary Health. It was proposed that this would be supplemented by a

strong digital presence to share inspiration and resources with the whole world to help accelerate the transitioning we need to create a healthier future.

Lis Bastian, Blue Mountains City Council's Planetary Health Initiative

FRIDAY 11 NOVEMBER – REMEMBRANCE DAY

We are delighted that it seems we will be able to have a full Remembrance Day service this year, meeting at the War Memorial at 10.30 and then on to the Village Hall for a presentation and morning tea.

More details will be sent separately closer to the day.

FEEDBACK AND SUMMER 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 Summer edition of The Mounts is **Friday 18 November 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.