

The Mounts Summer 2023/4

Community Newsletter of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine



Those involved in the Remembrance Day service on 11 November 2023, left to right Alex Halliday (flag wrangler), Vic Zhukov (former service member), Richard Prentice (former service member and community wreath layer), Tim McIver (Minster), Celia Kearin (cornet), (see article)

EDITORIAL

In her marvellous poem 'South of My Days' Judith Wright describes summer as 'thrust[ing] it's hot face in here' and we certainly have had a sudden taste of summer before its official starting point. Gardens are dry, many plants are drooping and lawns are already showing the bleached patches of high summer. The trickle of Waterfall Creek has already dried up and our many half hidden springs may follow on during this coming summer. Please be careful with water, especially if you are drawing on a bore or a spring. It is a precious, finite and essential part of the mountain landscape we all share.

Matilda and I wish you happiness during the festive season and a new year full of the delights of our mountain places.

Alison Halliday

MWPA PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Another busy season in Mt Wilson. Between yoga, concerts, garden courses, artist presentations...there is hardly time to get lost in the garden!

We held our AGM on 28 October and it was well attended with many staying around for drinks and nibbles. The hot topic is the release of the Environmental Impact Statement for the Western Sydney Airport and its effect on Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine. We will be filing a response and a committee has been established to be chaired by Elizabeth Montano to put together our submission. Residents can also file a submission on their own behalf or pass specific concerns to Elizabeth.

The Committee was also re-elected. Your MWPA members are Nancy Fox (President), James Douglas (Vice President), Robbie Feyder (Treasurer), Susan Woolfenden (Secretary), Matt Mason, Pete Raines, Janet McDonald and Bruce Downton. We are fortunate to have an involved and energetic committee who truly care about our villages and the legacy we will leave.

The first of our Garden Workshops was held in October and over 30 residents participated (see story in this issue The Mounts). Watch this space for our next workshop to be held in February (more information to come). Thanks for the grant we received from the BMCC which has allowed us to facilitate these workshops.

Lastly, the holidays have a raft of activities for your diaries. The Christmas picnic with Santa will be December 2nd, followed by Carols at Dennarque on December 9th, and lastly Christmas carols at St. Georges Church on December 17th!

Enjoy the summer and your holidays!

Nancy Fox

ANGLICARE'S TOYS 'N' TUCKER

This Christmas, we're collecting food and gifts for those who are doing it tough. Our partnership with Anglicare's "Toys 'n' Tucker" aims to share the joy of Christmas with families who would otherwise go without. Even the smallest donation can make the biggest impact!



Please deliver your donations to David and Sarah Howell, Culverdon, 8 Wyndham Ave, Mount Wilson. Please contact them before dropping off to ensure they are home (02 4756 2091, 0418 771 664 (David), 0404 091 771 (Sarah)).

UPCOMING CHRISTMAS EVENTS

CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

Saturday 9 December 2023

6.30pm – 8.30pm (Gate opens at 6pm)

Dennarque, 24-28 Church Lane, Mt Wilson

Entry via Koonawarra Gate

Please kiss-and-ride and park near the Church

\$20 entry fee, kids free (Cash or Card)

BYO picnic, drinks and picnic rug or folding chairs (some folding chairs will be available). Entry includes a candle-in-a-cup, matches and song sheet. All profit will go to the Mt Wilson & Mt Irvine Historical Society. In the event of rain there will be a shorter sing-a-long in the Conservatory with a performance by the Mt Wilson Community Choir. Dress festive!

**Brought to you by the Mt Wilson Progress Association
through the generosity of Bill and Lata Moss and the
Blue Mountains City Council**





COME AND JOIN IN THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

EVERYONE WELCOME

CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

ST GEORGE'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

THE AVENUE, MOUNT WILSON NSW

SATURDAY 16TH DECEMBER 2023

7.00pm

Supper in the School House afterwards

A small plate towards supper would be appreciated

St George's regular monthly service 3.00pm 10th December 2023

Everyone Welcome

CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICES 25TH December 2023

St Peters, Mt Victoria 8.45am

St Aidan's Blackheath 10.30am

St Aidan's Night Church 6.30pm

REMEMBRANCE DAY TALK, 2023 – HARRY TUSON

I began last year's talk by noting that on the War Memorial there are several repeats of a name. One of these pairings is that of AG Tuson and H Tuson. I then went on to talk about Alec George Tuson, who enlisted into the 20th reinforcement of the 12th Light Horse regiment which in turn formed part of the 4th Light Horse Brigade. Matilda and I had managed to find out a few things about Alec, mainly from his service record, and using the wonderful facility of Trove. But there were many things about the Tuson family which we just did not know, including why the names of two brothers were on the War Memorial when no one had any recollection of a Tuson family, and in all my archival reading I had never read this name (see note one). So today is layered on top of what I said last year.



In the years since 2009 that I have been talking about someone who is listed on our War Memorial there have been the occasional person who seems to have disappeared into history, and then, suddenly someone turns up who knows of him (or her). You may remember how, some years ago, a member of a Smith family happened to visit Libby at Merry Garth and mentioned that a relative had lived at Woodstock with the Davies and did she know anything about a Colin Smith. Thank goodness for Libby's encyclopaedic memory of all things Mt Wilson for she immediately got in touch with me and put myself and the Smith family together which was quite wonderful.

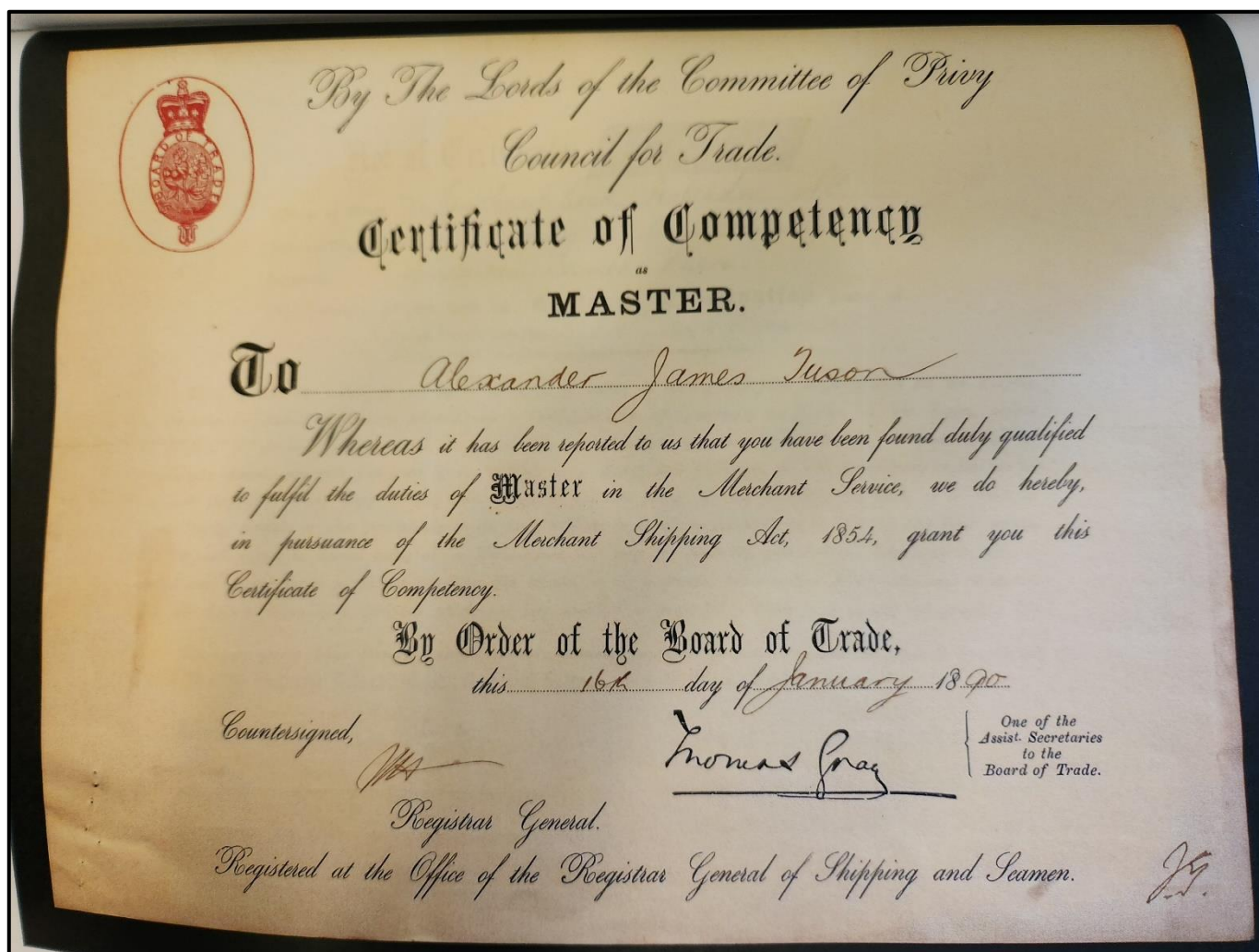
Harry, Dora and Alec (known as Mick) Tuson

Having discovered a bit about Alec Tuson I could find nothing about his brother Harry. Not only had he apparently vanished but, we later discovered, the information held by the War Memorial in Canberra was incorrect. Then one of those serendipitous moments happened and a Tuson descendent got in touch. A friend had read about the Tuson family, and 11 November 2022, in The Mounts. Melissa Corcoran joined us here today, the two Tuson brothers were her great uncles. Melissa sent me information, photos and answered questions. Her uncle John Corcoran very kindly sent me a history of his grandparents, Alexander James and Lilian Tuson. This is a great piece of research and I have made extensive use of it.

Alec and Harry had a younger sister, Dora, and Melissa is one of Dora's granddaughters. She described herself as: [descending] 'via her [Dora's] son Peter Leon Corcoran, who sadly passed in 2016. My sister and I are the youngest of our generation, as Dad had us when he was in his early to mid thirties. We were born and grew up in Adelaide, as Mum was from there, although I have actually just moved to Sydney, and am living in West Pymble.'

You know you have to be careful what you wish for because shortly afterwards I held in my hands a copy of the Tuson family history (see cover right)! I could not have been more thrilled. It was researched and written by John Corcoran's daughter in law, Alison Crampin. So, after this rather long preamble, I want to briefly go back to the father, Alexander James Tuson. He was born in Smyrna, Turkey in January 1864 [note Alexander wearing Turkish dress in the image right]. He migrated to Australia with his family from Plymouth, England, and he was a man of the sea. *Alexander James Tuson 1861-1951* researched and written by Alison Crampin is very detailed and it is wonderful for the family to be the beneficiaries of all this detailed research. The page numbers in brackets refer to this history. The 1860s were the very beginnings of steam ships but they were, at first and for many decades, unreliable and inefficient (p6). Alexander served on a number of ships working his way up to 2nd mate (1884), 1st mate (1887), and certificate of competency as Master (1890).

Alexander James Tuson
1864-1951



He married Lilian Sarah Smith in Plymouth on 27 June 1892. Sometime in this year he was aboard the *Fort George* (a four masted barque), as Captain. In the mid-1890s shipping suffered from a depression in the grain trade. This ship, the *Fort George* [see image next page], ended up being posted as missing in 1908 on a voyage from New York to Honolulu. Tuson was not the Captain, having moved on in about 1904



Technically, naval officers were not allowed to take wives or women on board ship but on merchant vessels the captain was often accompanied by his family. The birth of a child at sea was regarded as good fortune for the ship. (p16). The growth of steam ship gradually led to more women staying at home (the voyages, and a husband's absence was much shorter than in the days of sail. (p17)

Harry was born in 1894 in Devonport Plymouth. His older brother, Arthur

Edward was born the previous year but died after a few months. When Harry was born his father was in Australia, having sailed there on the *Fort George*, so probably he did not see his son until 1895. Alex was born on board the ship and the youngest child, a girl called Dora was born in Devon in 1897. In the 1901 census Harry is recorded as being 'age 6, born Plymouth'. The family migrated to Australia in 1909 on *Persic*.

The family arrived in Sydney in May and by November they were settling into Coff's Harbour. (p29). The harbour here was used to ship out the cedar timber, then in the early years of the 20th c. dairy herds were introduced.

Apparently young Harry Tuson was responsible for 'scouting in Coffs Harbour in 1909...after he arrived back from a trip to England to see Baden Powell. When Harry's parents and sister returned to England for a visit Harry and his brother went to Queensland to learn farming'. (p30/1). Alexander may not have gone to England for by December 1910 he was 'in the chair at a meeting to form a Harbour League' (p31). During the following year Captain Tuson, as he was usually called, worked hard to secure timber rights within local forest reserves in a broad area around the Bellinger River. Both Tuson and his wife were active in the local Coffs Harbour community and social life until in early 1913 they decided to leave the town. By March 1913 the Clarence and Richmond Examiner reported:

The many friends of Captain Tuson will regret to hear that he has been suffering from nervous prostration, but is recovering. We all wish the captain long life. (p35)

Today we would call this a nervous breakdown. By the end of 1913 he had 'arrived at Woolgoolga to take up a position with the Northern Timber Company. (p36). The company set up a mill and bought property to build cottages for their workers. They registered a capital of 30 000 pounds in one pound shares. It was claimed to be the largest hardwood mill in Australia at the time (p37). Timber was to be supplied for girders, sleepers and telegraph poles. The mill was working hard by September 1914. However, a month later the mill had to be closed 'owing to the trade being seriously affected by the war' (p41). Life was both busy and not always peaceful for the Tuson family. Insight into the mind of Alexander James Tuson may be gleaned from him participating in a public debate about 'Voluntary vs Compulsory military training. Tuson argued for the voluntary system, and they won the vote. (p44)

By August 1917 the Great Northern Timber Company was in liquidation and for sale. It seems that, according to the address of their father given by both Harry and Alec, he was living at Mt Wilson at about this time. The liquidation of all the mill's assets occurred in January 1919 (p46).

At this point I think it best to tell Harry's story in his own words. Again, I must thank Melissa for bringing this document to light and for putting me in touch with her uncle John Corcoran.

I think I was always interested in many forms of communication by flags, semaphore or lamps so that in 1912 or 1913, living in a house overlooking the sea (the house was high enough to communicate with passing ships by Morse lamp which my Father designed and had made up by a firm in Sydney so a friend, who also was interested and I, spent nearly every night on the front verandah looking out for passing ships. One night we were called by Solitary Island lighthouse [off the coast of NSW near Coffs Harbour Ed.], asking for us to get medical advice for a member of the lighthouse staff who was very ill. We phoned the local Doctor who came up and diagnosed the best he could with the information available and arranged to go to the Island by launch the next morning. Which he did and brought the patient to the local hospital for treatment.) I became the first, in the small coastal town where I lived, to apply for an amateur radio licence. My Father, who served over 30 years at sea, finishing as a Master, became interested in timber and arranged for two masts to be erected away from the house and a small shed with a bench for my crystal receiving set, made very roughly from instructions in a book I had sent for.

I spent most of my spare time "listening-in" but found it difficult to concentrate with the family around, hence the outside shed and at night by a hurricane lamp (don't remember whether we had electricity or not).

In those days with spark transmitters, radio signals were better at night so listening one night I was thrilled to pick up Awanui, one of the New Zealand radio stations in the North Island. I had already listened many times to VIS Sydney radio and ships along the coast and on Sundays walked up the hill and watched them pass, bound for Sydney or further on and longed one day to be aboard and taking an active part in my ambition to join in the communication field.

Meanwhile it was time for me to decide what I was going to do for a living – my Father, who had to go to Sydney on business, decided to make enquiries and went aboard the "Katoomba" and had a chat with the Radio man who told him there was no future in the job really as the salary was very poor, even tho [sic] one lived on board, which meant three meals every day and a bed n one's own cabin – Despite the poor prospects I decided to go to Sydney and board with some very good friends and attend the only Radio School for studying the theoretical side.

Meantime my parents had also decided to live in Sydney so obtained a job as a messenger boy and after going home for dinner, returned to the city for the Radio classes at night. By this time the Marconi School was built to which I changed until obtaining my 1st Class Certificate just before World War 1 started.

We know from a newspaper report dated 21 July 1914 that he had passed his examinations in wireless telegraphy and accepted an appointment. By December 1914 Harry was working on the Cooma [see image next page] as a wireless operator. But Harry's own account states:

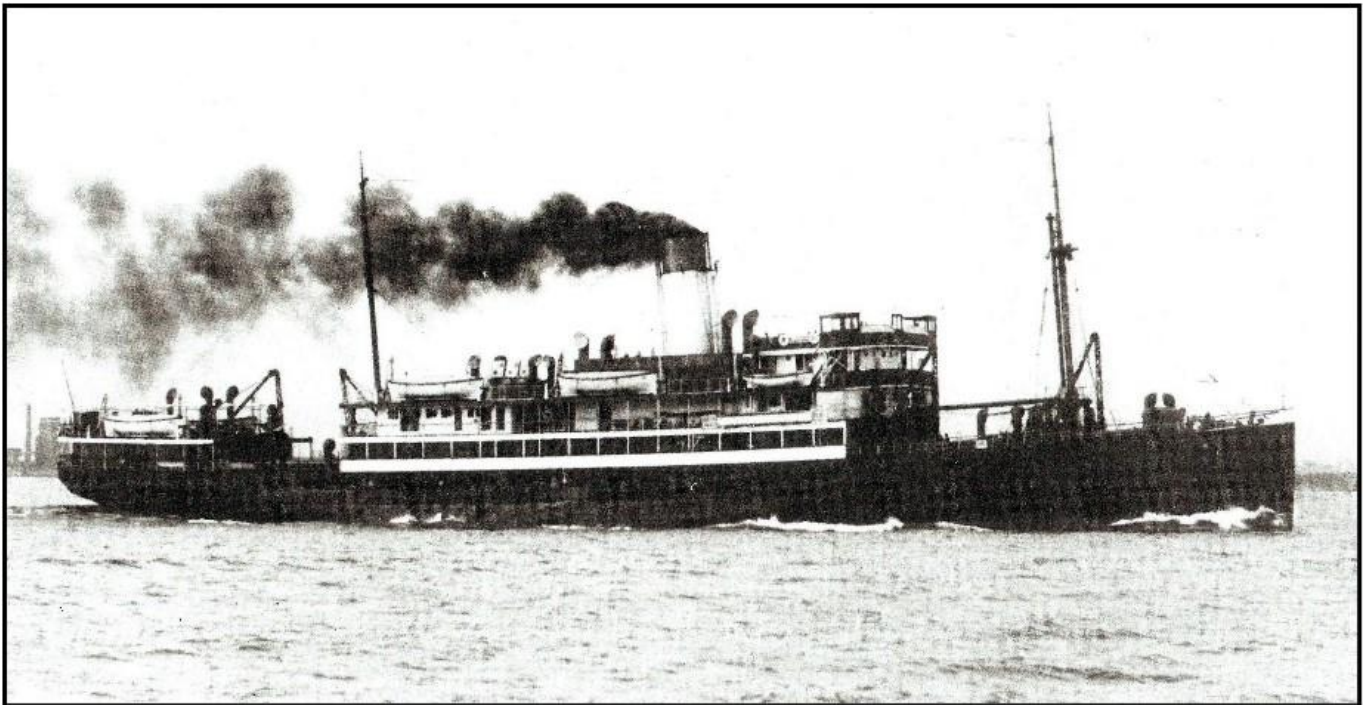
My first ship was the Howard Smith "Bombala" which traded between Melbourne and Townsville, via Sydney and Brisbane. I only did the trip from Sydney to Brisbane and then transferred to a small A.U.S.N. ship called "Suva", trading between Brisbane via

ports to the Gulf of Carpentaria, calling at Normanton and Burketown, which were practically uninhabited. [This] reminds me of an incident:

When we were signalled by an Australian Navy ship for our name, the next thing I knew we were signalled to stop and a naval launch came along side and the Captain of our ship was asked why we did not reply when asked to identify and was informed the R flag which was part of our signal code was missing – After a naval reprimand the flag was supplied and we proceeded on our way.

That wasn't the end of the story. During the weekend the officer on duty happened to pass the freezer room and, finding the door open, he spotted the missing flag wrapped around a carcass of beef. Talk about the "casual Aussie" –

After being appointed to various ships I got a bit fed up and joined the Army in Melbourne, advising the Company I was resigning.



Harry Tuson's service book contains an incomplete entry page – there is no signature of the attestation officer – and there are no contents or actual service number or record. This raises a number of questions, and I wonder whether his family knew that he had not, in fact, served in the Australian army. However, from his service record book we do know a little about his physical appearance. He was only 20 years and 2 months old when this information was filled in. He was not tall at 5' and 3 ¾ inches. (It may be possible that at this time he was thought to be too short to serve in the army). He is described as having a 'fresh' complexion with brown eyes and dark brown hair. He had two vaccination scars, and his upper right molars were missing. He gives his religion as Church of England. Perhaps most importantly he gives his father, AJ Tuson, as his next of kin with an address of Mt Wilson, via Bell NSW.

Was on the New Zealand run at the time and on arrival in Wellington soon after was told by the Manager to join a ship going to Sydney for leave. On arrival there [I] told them I wanted a ship on real war service. Was informed there was a vacancy on a British ship owing to one of the Radio men being taken off sick but it would only be a one way job. The other ship was the "Kanowna" – Australia's No 2 Hospital ship, which I decided to join. (see note two)



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

ART91910

Being a Hospital Ship meant we were not allowed to use the radio or be supplied with code books which also meant that although we sighted mines, we could not warn other ships.

On one trip we arrived at Aden and after coaling were about to raise anchor and proceed through the [Suez] Canal when a fast naval launch signalled and informed the Captain to proceed via the Cape, which meant we crossed the line 4 times to travel from Australia to England. In those days it wasn't a pleasant trip with no air-conditioning or stabilisers. We subsequently were informed when we were diverted from the Canal. German submarines had been sinking Hospital Ships outside Alexandria.

The next trip we were the first ship to enter Turkish waters, after they signed an Armistice. Our job was to embark prisoners of war, mostly British, including survivors of the Australian submarine which penetrated the Dardanel [sic] and was mined. (see note three)

One trip to Southampton I noticed a lot of ships bunched together and destroyers patrolling off the Ushant, although we proceeded on our way and anchored off port for a pilot. Again a naval launch rushed up the side and an officer boarded and made for the bridge – it turned out we had been prowling around a minefield – it must have been our lucky day!

Being on the 8p.m. to midnight shift, I usually joined the 2nd Mate on the bridge for a cup of coffee before turning in. I usually walked along the starboard side and back the same way however, on this particular night I walked across the bridge to the port side, for some unknown reason and just about to step off the ladder to the boat deck when one of the patients stepped over the nearest boat. I quietly took him by the arm and settled him on his mattress, asking the 2nd Mate to keep an eye on him. I might

mention we had left Sierra Leone on the West Coast of Africa and it was terribly hot, which was why a lot of the wounded were being allowed to sleep on deck.

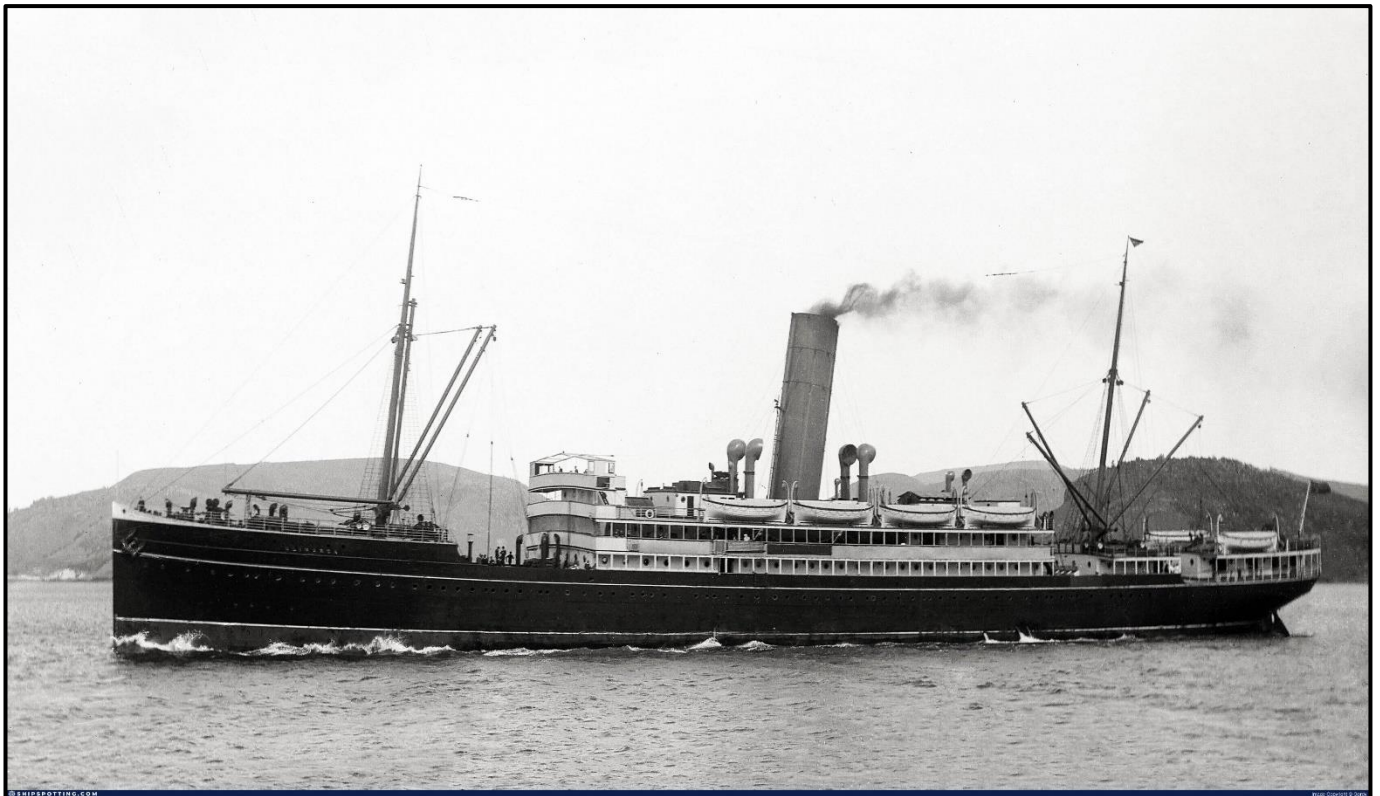
I know if it became known what the poor fellow tried to do they would all be ordered below. I was subsequently informed he was a Lieutenant in a Queensland Regiment and had a plate in his head. What guided me to cross over instead of coming down the usual side?

On another trip we were berthed at Newport, Monmouth in Wales, a few yards from a factory. If the weather was fine, the workers, mostly women and girls, would have their lunch in the sun sitting against the wall, as with most factories. Being Welsh, soon after their meal they would sing, their beautiful Welsh voices filling the air with song. One forgot the war for a while. One of the Aussie crew on board was bold enough, no doubt affected by the singing, walked to one of the young girls but came away quicker than he thought, his tail (if he had one) between his legs.

The greatest thrill, I received, was picking up the ARMISTICE message when we were in the Med, from the British Legation, Athens. We were limping along with a damaged propellor when a pilot in the Suez Canal ran us into a sandbank.

After the War and a few more trips around the Islands, I joined the "Ulimaroa" on the New Zealand run, [I] was with her three years before getting a shore job.

During my time on the "Ulimaroa" [below] the Captain woke me up about 4 a.m. one morning to report a dismasted sailing ship between Sydney and Hobart. Another sailing ship incident was picking up a message from the "Helen B. Sterling", dismasted in the Tasman. I asked if they wanted assistance, was informed that H.M.A.S. "Melbourne" was on her way.



Among the humorous incidents was when a New Zealand station was trying to get in touch with a small trading vessel names "Flora" who had to leave port with urgent cargo before she could be informed of her allotted call sign; after several calls one of

the ships in the vicinity saw the funny side and promptly called “speak, speak to me Flora”.

As in life, there are happy and sad times at sea. I enjoyed every minute of my eight years, met many good shipmates and visited many countries and places at no cost. I visited practically every port from Normanton in the Gulf of Carpentaria to Freemantle in the West.

I have experienced the days of the crystal set, spark transmitters, to the radio telephone and push button stage, from when the microphone placed in front of the loudspeaker prior to the advent of the pick-up, from the carbon type microphone to the modern highly improved type giving really true reproduction of speech and music.

In the early days, transmitters went off the air when singers, particularly sopranos, hit a high note or someone knocked the microphone stand. Modern equipment provides safeguards before the audio reaches the transmitter.

With all the improvements in the electronic field it cannot prevent human errors such as a well-known announcer in the early days, who certainly wasn't “on the job” when he announced “and now we cross to the Sydney Cricket Ground for community singing”. When the announcer there continued his description of the Test Match, or as still happens, when the announcer giving the weather report forecasts “fost and frogs” on the highlands – or the Minister, after giving his first devotional service announced the Benediction, concluded with “I don't think” before the announcer could switch him off – actually he turned to the announcer and remarked “I don't think I did so bad, do you?”

There is the saying that the world is a small place. I certainly found it was. Many years ago when my daughter was in hospital a fellow worker gave me a book for her and endorsed on the fly leaf was his name, also the school he attended, which happened to be the same as I did a few years previously in England. Another occasion was when we were living at Baulkham Hills. The young girl next door mentioned her husband came from England. It turned out he was born in the same town as me. What a coincidence! Out of the hundreds of places and thousands of houses he could have chosen, to come 10,000 miles and choose next door.

Many of us would like to have the memory of a fellow driving along Seven Hills Road one day on my way to the shops when he pulled up and said “You're Mt Tuson aren't you?” to which I replied “yes”. He then introduced himself. We had not seen each other for over 30 years. We had moved to many places during that time. He told me the name of my daughter and also the dog we had at that time. He was only a schoolboy then. I didn't think he would have known me by my looks so I asked him why he was so sure he recognised me. He said by my walk. Not only a wonderful memory but also powers of observation.

Harry married Alfreda Carmen E De Paule in Sydney in 1919. They had one son born in 1920 who died the same year, in Mosman. In 1926 Harry was employed by Amalgamated Wireless Aust Ltd and participated in Sydney's Australian-made “shopping week” where he is noted as a wireless operator in coverage of the firm's exhibit in car 15 of The Great White Train. According to research by Alec (always known as Mick by his family), Harry worked as a wireless operator to at least 1936. The electoral rolls up to 1954 show him living with his wife and at least one child – a daughter Margaret in North Sydney. He is then described as a ‘technician’ (p48)

I can find no confirmed record of the death of Harry, nor what happened to his daughter. There was a Harry Tuson who died in 1978. A Margaret Denise Tuson married twice: first to a

Beverley William Cains in 1947 and second to a John Thompson Bell in 1958, but again I have no confirmation that this is Harry Tuson's daughter.

Dora, sister of Alec and Harry married James Cameron Corcoran in Sydney 19 January 1924. They lived in Adelaide and raised their family there.

This leaves one assumption and one question. I had assumed that Harry Tuson's name is on the War Memorial because that was the wish of his father, and it was agreed to by the committee who decided these matters. (There are no minutes of the meetings concerning matters to do with the creation of the War Memorial in 1919)

While Harry did not go to war as an enlisted soldier or sailor there is little doubt that, as a merchant mariner, he played a very useful role.



The question is: what was Alexander James Tuson (the father of Alec and Harry) doing at Mt Wilson? For a while we thought that he may have had something to do with the timber mills on Mt Wilson because the old family anecdote recalled him as investing in timber, and losing his money. (the Great Northern Timber Company). But it is likely that he was a friend of, or worked for, Marcus Clark.

Oh, and that mistake by the War Memorial historians? Someone else was given Harry's identity by mistake and Matilda and I sent some time chasing this elusive serviceman to Kalgoorlie in WA where he had had a relationship, and had become a father. The War Memorial historians were a bit perturbed at our discovery, especially as when I had first tried to clear it all up about 5 years ago I was told that there was absolutely no chance of any error in the official documents. They have assured me that the records have been amended

The two Tuson brothers are listed on the Honour Roll in St George's Church [left]. It does not show the same list of names as those who went to WWI on the War Memorial. Presumably these men were members of the church congregation.

Notes

ONE

Nevertheless how names are recorded and memorialised seems a bit more subtle as may be seen from these comments concerning WWII: (From book E1 – War Memorial, WM1 to WM14 Committee set up 12/9/1992):

'Lists of those names which had been proposed for inclusion had been presented prior to the meeting by Mr Kirk [Tom], Mrs. McClean [sic] and Mrs Smart. It was explained that some of the names presented did not fit the criteria [for WWI?] which is: that the enlisted person was a resident of Mt Irvine or Mt Wilson [or presumably Bell], or his/her main home was in this area and that, with the exception of the War Memorial in Canberra, was not honoured on another Memorial in other Town, City or Village in Australia'.

'There was some discussion about this and Mrs Turner proposed that those people who did not fit this criteria but who were historically connected with the area by way of semi-residential status at that time could be honoured by being recorded on a Polished Wooden Plaque to be erected in the Village Church, similar to the Plaque already erected in the Church. This was well

received. It was moved by Libby Raines, seconded by Elly Gunn that these proposals be accepted; the motion was carried unanimously.' If this Plaque was put up it is not in the Church and its whereabouts is unknown).

TWO

On 1 June 1915 *Kanowna* was used as Troopship A61, to Egypt. After completion of this run, she continued to Britain where she was modified as a hospital ship. In her new livery she worked around the Mediterranean and made regular voyages back to Australia carrying up to 452 seriously wounded with a medical staff of 88. (armymuseumwa.com.au. Sourced 1/11/2023 @ 12.47pm)

On 1 June 1915, the vessel was requisitioned again for military service. *Kanowna* transported soldiers and supplies to Egypt, then made for England, where she was modified for use as a hospital ship. After completion *Kanowna* could carry 452 wounded in cots, along with a medical staff of 88 in addition to her regular crew. Sailing in September, *Kanowna* was used to transport Royal Army Medical Corps personnel to locations throughout the Mediterranean, then collected wounded Australian personnel and transported them home. She would make a total of 10 voyages between Australia and England in the next three years, although some runs were made to England with British wounded. In May 1917, the unrestricted submarine warfare campaign forced the ship to sail around Africa instead of through the Mediterranean: the nurses and medical staff were transported overland from Durban to London, and used to supplement hospital personnel until *Kanowna* arrived in July. In October 1918, after the war's end, the hospital ship was sent to collect 900 British and Commonwealth prisoners-of-war that had been interred in Turkey. *Kanowna* was returned to the AUSNC on 29 July 1919, and she resumed passenger and cargo in Turkey. *Kanowna* was returned to the AUSNC on 29 July 1919, and she resumed passenger and cargo service. (Wikipedia sourced 1/11/2023 @ 12.51pm)

THREE

WWI Submarine

AE2 was a submarine, known as the 'silent ANZAC'. Her purpose in a secret mission was to draw attention away from the landing at Gallipoli, 25 April 1915. She travelled through the heavily mined straits of the Dardenelles to the sea of Marmara but once there she had to reveal herself to the enemy which she did by successfully torpedoing an enemy ship. She was captured and her captain and crew (13) became POWs. (from Catalyst ABC TV on 29/8/2014)

References

Crampin, Alison	<i>Alexander James Tuson 1861-1951</i> [privately published]
Tuson, Harry	<i>Looking Back</i> [personal recollections]
Tuson, Harry	WWI Service Record.

Those that remain...

There are only four names on the War Memorial that Arthur Delbridge and I have not talked about, these are people about whom we know nothing. These men could be from Mt Wilson, Bell or Mt Irvine. They are all from WW1. If you do know anything about them please get in touch.

J Geary J P McDonald F J Nixon J Sharp (related to Postmistress)

Alison Halliday

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.

Many thanks again to the new recruits who are helping out with our efforts, much appreciated!

BMCC provides all equipment, including gloves, secateurs, spade, herbicide, kneeling pads etc. Those interested should check the calendar on the Mt Wilson Mt Irvine community website to determine the location each month. There is a good chance there will be a delicious home-baked cake at morning tea! Please bring your own tea/coffee.

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 02 4756 2046.

Everyone is welcome, hope you can join us!

Enquiries:

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

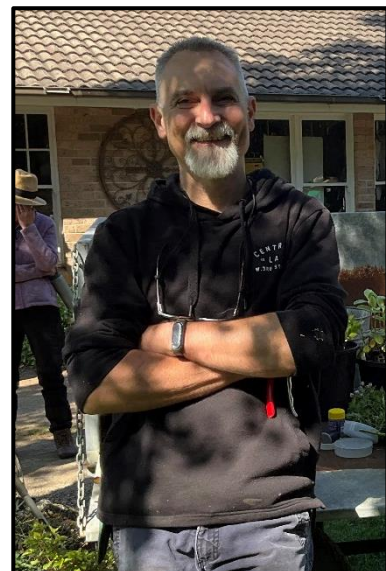
Council contact: Tracy Abbas (0428 777 141)

Alice Simpson

PROPAGATION WORKSHOP



Capably led by Micah Fink (right) we gathered at Merry Garth to learn the details and principles of propagating. Micah gave a clear summary of the main necessities: air, water, and an appropriate soil mix and then showed us the difference between hardwood, semi-hardwood and green cuttings. He explained how the cutting should be taken and the best time of year. We then did a wander through Merry Garth, looking magnificent in its spring finery, before putting all that we had learned into effect. Like many aspects of gardening it seemed a lot easier in theory than in reality, but the mountain gardens should be full of new plants by autumn. Many thanks to the MWPA for the organisation and to Micah for his patience and expertise.



LADIES FRIENDSHIP LUNCHES

These lunches are always a highlight of the month at Mt Wilson. Generous hosts, delicious tea and cakes and a chance to catch up on activities, friendships and showcase the beautiful gardens of Mount Wilson.



Jane and Tony Hutt's picturesque lake



Marcia Moulton's beautiful house and garden.

BIRDSONG SURROUNDS ST GEORGE'S

On a beautifully warm spring day, St George's Church resonated to the recorded sounds of the pied butcher bird, answered and echoed by birds outside the church heard through the open windows and doors. In the latest concert in the Music to Soothe the Soul series, three members of Ensemble Offspring came together as Songbirds Trio to present a program inspired by birdsong and the environment.



Co-founder and Artistic Director, Claire Edwardes had compiled a beautiful program of works for percussion, flute and clarinet written by Australian composers. The concert opened with Hollis Taylor's field recordings of the pied butcher bird, answered by Lamorna Nightingale's flute, Jason Noble's clarinet, and Claire on vibraphone. The program continued with works by Fiona Loader, Hollis Taylor and Jon Rose, Brenda Gifford, Nardi Simpson, Bridet Bourne, Ella Macens, Alice Humphries, and Gerard Brophy, all featuring the song of various birds, and representing the Australian landscape.

Claire played a range of percussion instruments including Australia's only "waterphone" (also known as an ocean harp) – a strange looking circular vessel which was filled with water and played with a violin bow to produce a wide range of ethereal sounds.

The program and combination of instruments were unfamiliar to many of the audience, but the reaction at the end of the concert was enthusiastic and Claire was kept busy selling CDs to her new supporters.



The audience and musicians mingled after the performance in the Studio of the Old School as the Village Hall is currently under renovation.



Thank you to our generous donor and the Mt Wilson Progress Association for continuing to make these concerts possible.

Sarah Howell



UPDATE FROM YOUR RURAL FIRE BRIGADE

As we approach the fire season your Brigade has been working hard to get ready – as have both the communities of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine. Here's a wrap up of some of the things we've been doing. We've continued with more members getting more qualifications. From tree work with chainsaws to three members going through Crew Leader assessments, things are going well.

On the training front, we've been holding our regular training sessions on the first Sunday of the month. We've practised refilling trucks from static water sources such as the Mt Wilson station's new hydrants and various sources around the Mounts where we hook up from tanks, creeks and other sources. In doing so, we've been familiarising ourselves with their locations and how to most efficiently extract water from them - time counts when refilling trucks so it's important that we all know as much as we can about those precious water sources.



We've also spent time at training doing "lessons learnt" exercises in respect of the various incidents we've been called out to since our last column- two pile burns have required assistance to contain them and we attended a smoke sighting at Bell (only to see a well run pile burn underway). But, with dry and windy conditions we can never be complacent about things like smoke sightings. In addition to those call outs, we've had two CFR callouts, attended a Motor Vehicle Accident and dealt with various trees down around the villages.

And on Maintenance Fridays (we hold them twice a month on the second and fourth Fridays), we've restocked the Cat 1 (which had been away being serviced - it's come back bright and shiny!) and destocked our Pumper which has gone away for its servicing. The Cat 7, which is a smaller fire truck housed at the Mt Irvine station, is regularly checked too. We've checked the contents on our Cat 9 (the little fire truck) and Personnel Carriers (they're the vehicles the CFRs use and we take around when a fire fighting truck isn't needed) and generally been keeping the Mt Wilson station all ready for action. We do regular fuel runs to Mt Victoria and Blackheath not only to keep the trucks full but also to make sure we have other fuel at hand when needed.

Our station officers have been busy refining all their practices and generally doing a very thoughtful and business-like job. And they've been super busy putting up and taking down Total Fire Ban signs around the area and doing daily updates on overall fire ratings. That's such important work in educating and notifying both residents and visitors to fire danger on any particular day.

Our Community Liaison Officer, Janet Mc Donald, has now run all of the street meetings in preparation for the season (more news from her comes out separately). Our catering team continues to provide wonderful support by preparing us delicious meals once a month after a Maintenance Friday. They keep the Mt Wilson station and the trucks stocked and generally help our little army to keep marching.

On the safety front, we've now got an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) at the Mt Wilson station. It will soon be installed in a special cabinet but for now, it's there and ready if needed.

As you can see, as always, we've got a lot on the go and we'll continue to work hard to be ready to protect our communities. And, as I always say – if you're not already a member of the Brigade, are you tempted yet? Lots of jobs for lots of people. And lots of fun too. What's not to like?

Elizabeth Montano, Member of the Brigade Executive, and WH&S Safety Officer

BUSHCARE AND SOME CORPORATE GOOD CITIZENSHIP

Readers will be very familiar with the wonderful Bushcare work undertaken by members of the community under the auspices of the BMCC. However, these monthly events are not the only opportunities residents and fans of the Mounts have to contribute to keeping our environment beautiful through planting work or in fighting the invading weeds.

Through an annual corporate event, a group of energetic and very keen people (all either former or current KPMG or Dell Australia people) work under the supervision of Tracy Abbas who runs BMCC's Bushcare program to tackle particular areas around the Mounts. Recently, they've worked across from Windyridge on Queens Avenue doing some planting. On other occasions they've cleared ivy and other invasive species.



A number of this year's group, led by Alex Montano, have been coming back each year (a COVID year excepted) for nine years now.



So, if you're looking for a corporate activity which is both fun and a rewarding contribution to our environment, a Bushcare event may well be the answer.

Elizabeth Montano

MT WILSON MT IRVINE RFB COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT NEWS

WhatsApp!



I am pleased to report that every precinct in Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine now has a Get Ready Get Together WhatsApp group. As reported in the Spring edition of The Mounts, WhatsApp Groups and the Mt Wilson Mt Irvine WhatsApp Community will be extremely useful in an emergency, so I encourage everyone to sign up.

For those not familiar with WhatsApp it is messaging and calling service that works over the internet. You can download the app for free onto your phone by going to the relevant app store or by going to www.whatsapp.com.

If you have not yet joined the WhatsApp group for your precinct but would like to, or thought you did but have not been receiving WhatsApp messages (I send one out whenever there is a total fire ban), please text me on 0410 565 018 or email me on jmcdonald67@outlook.com and I'll add you to the relevant group.

Prepare your home for fire



As we head into summer, make sure your home is prepared for the impact of fire. A well prepared home is more likely to survive a bush fire.

Even if your plan is to leave early, the more you prepare your home, the more likely it will survive a bush fire or ember attack. A well prepared home can also be easier for you or firefighters to defend, and is less likely to put your neighbours' homes at risk. A well prepared home will also give you more protection if a fire threatens suddenly and you cannot leave – which is a real possibility here on The Mounts.

Here are some basic maintenance tips to prepare your property:

- Clean your gutters of leaves and twigs
- Install metal gutter guards
- Repair damaged or missing tiles on the roof
- Install fine metal mesh screens on windows and doors
- Fit seals around doors and windows to eliminate gaps
- Enclose the areas under the house
- Repair or cover gaps in external walls
- Attach a fire sprinkler system to gutters
- Keep lawns short and gardens well maintained
- Cut back trees and shrubs overhanging buildings
- Clean up fallen leaves, twigs and debris around the property
- Have hoses long enough to reach around your house
- If you have a pool, tank or dam, put a Static Water Supply (SWS) sign on your property entrance, so firefighters know where they can get water
- Check and maintain adequate levels of home and contents insurance. Ensure it is up to date.

What to do when you become aware there is a fire in the area

You may receive information that there is a fire in the area from any one of number of sources. I encourage everyone to download the **Hazards Near Me NSW** app and set up a Watch Zone around Mt Wilson or Mt Irvine. Mine is set with a 15km radius, but you can set it for anywhere between 5 and 50 km. You will get an alert if a fire starts in the specified radius. Or you may hear a warning message over the radio or television, or you may even receive an Emergency Alert text message or phone call. Other fires may start so quickly that there will be no time for any warning at all.

To assist Area Coordinators in the event of a fire, if you learn of a fire within The Mounts area please immediately contact your Area Coordinator by WhatsApp, text message, phone or email, to advise them whether you are on the Mounts or away and what your plans are. This helps our Brigade to manage risks and keep everyone safe. Throughout the emergency your Area Coordinators and I will do our best to keep you informed of local developments.

It is also important that you make sure you are also familiar with the **Alert Levels**. During a bush fire, Alert Levels are used to give you an indication of the level of threat from a fire. Remember – don't wait for a warning. Some fires start and spread so quickly there may not be any time for a warning. If you get a Bush Fire Alert, you must take it seriously. Failure to take action can result in death or injury to you or your family members.

There are three levels of Bush Fire Alerts:



Advice

A fire has started. There is no immediate danger. Stay up to date in case the situation changes.



Watch And Act

There is a heightened level of threat. Conditions are changing and you need to start taking action now to protect you and your family.



Emergency Warning

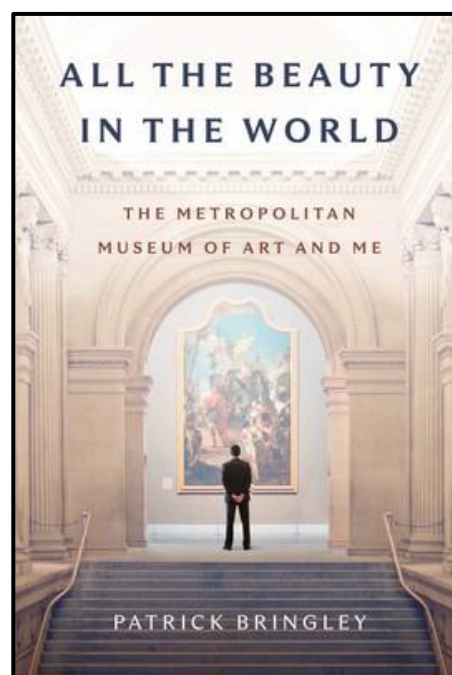
An Emergency Warning is the highest level of Bush Fire Alert. You may be in danger and need to take action immediately. Any delay now puts your life at risk.

That's it for this edition. Fingers crossed we have a quiet bush fire season.

Janet McDonald, Community Engagement Officer

BOOK REVIEW

I love being lent books – a joy to delve into a book that someone else has not only read but also thinks that it will be equally enjoyed by me. Sharing books, and having recommendations from someone who seems to know your tastes very well, is a special gift. Recently I was lent *All the Beauty in the World* by Patrick Bringley. The intriguing subtitle is *The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Me*. Stopped in his tracks by the death of a much loved brother, Bringley realises he needs a complete change of job and rather than a sea or tree change he decides to work as a guard in a celebrated museum. It would not be everyone's first choice! This book was made even more special for me because it came from Jennifer Keeler-Milne who was an artist-in-residence at Mt Wilson. Some of you may remember her workshop where she took us through the process of making a concertina sketch book.



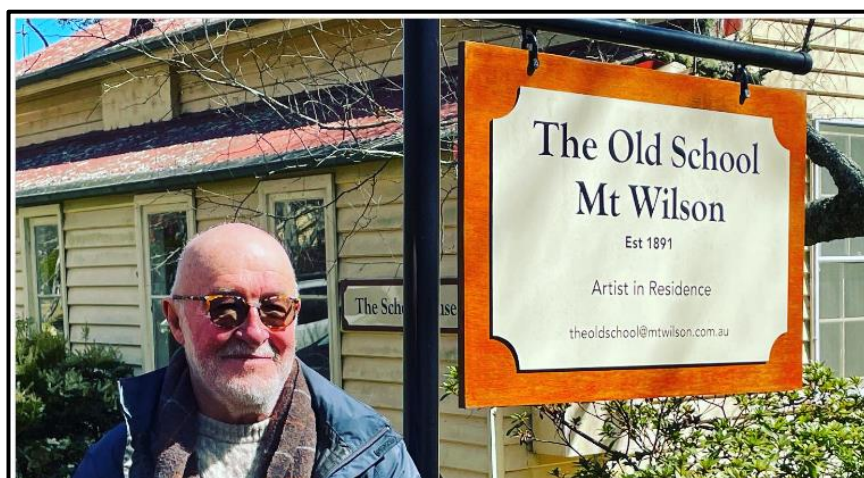
The book explores Bringley's co-workers and visitors to the museum, revealing eccentricities and endless questions. But the real interest is in the art that surrounds him. From antiquities to the Impressionists, from abstract to naïve art he becomes deeply involved in seeing and learning about the world of art. He also learns how to stand still, leaning gently against a pillar sometimes, how to react to being ignored and how to walk through his area for the day. He relishes investigating and re-visiting the paintings. He comments that the more he looks into any art, such as that by Bruegel, the more he sees, and the more questions he has of the artist and the more intrigued he is by the work.

Bringley makes friends, learns to accept his grief and loss, and finds love and a family. He develops a huge respect for the museum and its role, a delight in its contents and pleasure in the other guards. The book lies somewhere between memoir and art education, and it is written with great care and humour as it weaves together the personal and the public experiences of life and art.

Alison Halliday

THE OLD SCHOOL MT WILSON

The Artist in Residence programme at The Old School continues to bring a fascinating mix of visual and performing arts and literature to our community. A strong feature of the programme is the way in which our visiting artists and our community engage with each other through the artists' community engagement activities (such as open studios, concerts and workshops) and on other occasions.



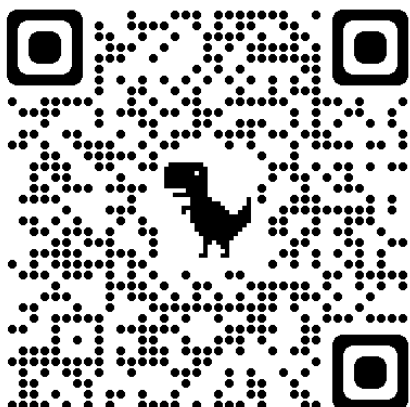
We have recently had the pleasure of welcoming Ward O'Neill who presented an interesting and very well attended open studio and talk about his work. Ward is well known for his drawings, illustrations, caricatures and political cartoons which have been published in Australian newspapers and magazines for over forty years.



At the time of writing our current Artist in Residence is Johanna Hildebrandt who focusses on paintings, drawings and ceramics inspired by the Australian landscape. She has held more than twenty solo exhibitions in Australia, Japan and Germany.

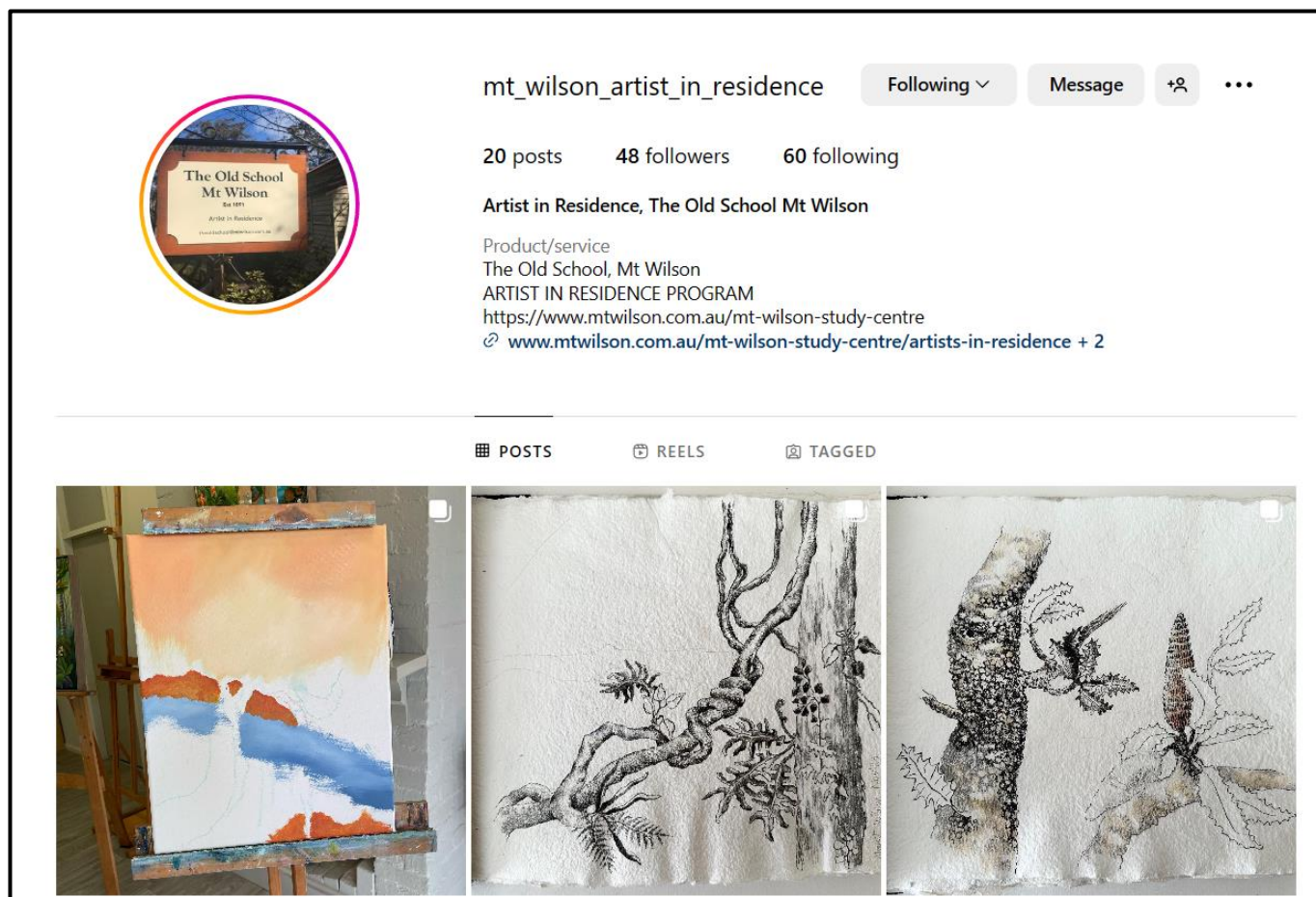


Ward and Johanna, together with all the other artists who have participated in our programme, have made a real and inspiring contribution to the artistic life of our community. Hopefully, our community and our wonderful environment have also made a contribution to their work. We do regularly receive very positive feedback from our artists about how welcoming and enthusiastic our community has been.



We are very grateful for your continuing support and welcome any comments or suggestions about how we might improve our programme.

To help you keep up to date with what is happening at The Old School, we have recently launched an updated Instagram page (scan the QR to follow this page). Many thanks to Anton Smith who has come on board as the driving creative force behind this initiative. If you have a look I am sure you will agree that he is doing a wonderful job.



We will have further Artists in Residence in January, February, March and May. Please watch your emails and our Instagram account for more details.

We look forward to seeing you soon at The Old School.

Joe Montano, Chair

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE TALK

Johanna Hildebrandt gave a fascinating talk about her life (she was born in Austria), her work, especially painting and ceramics and her time at Mt Wilson as artist-in-residence. She said she loves the Australian bush and will go home replenished by the plants, birds and beauty that she found everywhere. Her painting is in a naive style and her finished work captures birds, flowers, trees and leaves. They simply glow on the wall. The audience appreciated her generosity and enthusiasm.

Alison Halliday



MIPA PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Community Get Together

For the past twelve months the Mt Irvine Community has met together one Sunday a month for morning tea/coffee and a social chat. These social events also afford the opportunity for the MIPA to gauge the community's view on matters of importance to the community without formality.

Mt Irvine Web Site

This project is nearing completion, and all development work is expected to be completed by the end of December this year. We are working with the MWPA to ensure that items of mutual benefit are preserved, for example the combined telephone book and contractor list.

Aircraft Noise

Western Sydney Airport

Together with the Mt Wilson Progress Association we are submitting feedback on the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport (WSI) preliminary flight paths. Please contact us if you want to have your thoughts included in our response.

Blue Mountains City Council

We have established a close working relationship with the Council's Place Manager and now have regular meetings to raise and discuss Council matters of importance to Mt Irvine. Roads and dangerous trees feature high on our list. These are ongoing concerns and will require persistence on our part to push our position.

Weeds

This remains an ongoing project with Council funded weeders present on Mount Irvine during the year. Council has been very proactive in their support of our endeavours to rid Mount 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.

Blue Mountains Planetary Health Initiative

Allen Hyde has served on the Blue Mountains Planetary Health Initiative Advisory Committee since its inception.

The Blue Mountains Planetary Health Initiative supports local action to restore the health of our natural systems and support community health, wellbeing, resilience, and hope in the face of climate change and increasing natural disasters.

In the Blue Mountains Gazette dated 8/11/2023 it was reported that Blue Mountains City Council approved the precinct plan for the Katoomba Golf Course.

RFS

Community Engagement

Recently at one of our Community Get Togethers, the RFS updated us on the way the brigade's community engagement function is going to work in the future. The changes were well accepted by the community.

New Mount Irvine Fire Station

Following an extensive evaluation of all possible locations at Mt Irvine, the RFS concluded that the only suitable site for the new Mt Irvine Fire Station is the existing tennis court site which is

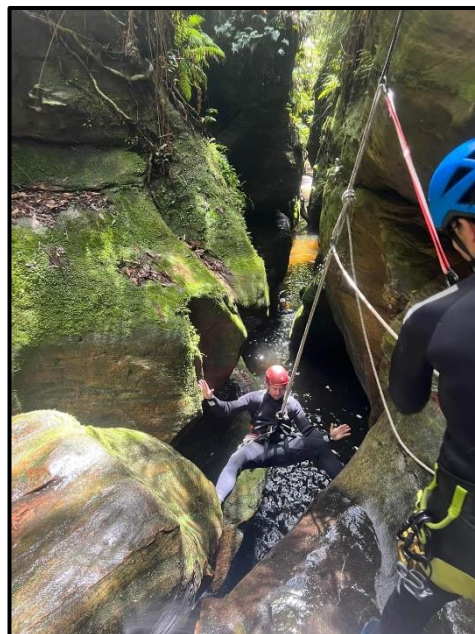
part of the Mt Irvine Public Hall precinct. The *Land Managers* have agreed with this proposition. Part of the solution is the development of a new “sports court” between the existing Community Hall and the existing tennis court. This is the culmination of many years of discussions and community consultation. The RFS has committed funding, and a DA has been submitted to Council. Approval of the DA and commencement of work is dependent on the resolution of the current claim over the land that the community has previously been made aware of.

I take this opportunity to wish you a safe, pleasant, and relaxing Christmas with your family and friends and a healthy and prosperous 2024.

Allen Hyde

WOLLEMI WANDERS

Andrew Mitchell's walking and canyoning business has had a name change (long story!) and is now [Wollemi Wanders](#). The free walks and canyon trips offered for Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine residents are proceeding as planned and there are still a few spots available. Details were provided in the previous edition of The Mounts, but to recap there is a 4 hour walk to the Wollangambe River on 9 December, the 8 hour Wollangambe 1 canyon trip (no abseiling) on 27 Dec and the 6 hour Serendipity canyon (with abseiling) on 29 Dec. We are collaborating with food writer and 2016 Australian Rural Woman of the Year Sophie Hansen ([Local is Lovely](#)) to provide delicious food and refreshments on our trips. Get in touch with Andrew if you are interested (andrew@wollemiwanders.com.au).



BUSHWALKING CLUB

These images are from the Kanangra Walls - Plateau Walk out to Cottage Rock on Friday 17 November.





Upcoming Walks

Fri 15-Dec-2023
3 M - Day Walk

[Mt Wilson - Smith Hill Circuit – Zircon Creek - Fields Selection – Picnic Point and the Runners Track](#)

Mt Wilson - Smith Hill Circuit – Zircon Creek - Fields Selection – Picnic Point and the Runners Track - 10km Good mix of landscapes, rainforest, tree ferns, mountain ash, most of the walking is on good open trails, one section off track exploring headwaters of Zircon Creek. Views over Wollangambe and Bowens creek catchments. Mid way between Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine.

Map: *Mt Wilson*

Fri 19-Jan-2024
3 M - Day Walk

[Wollangambe River Via Du Faurs Rocks](#)

Bushwalk to the Wollangambe River via Du Faurs Rocks 10km - Depart Mt Wilson Fire Station Explore Du Faurs Rocks and Chainman's Hat before heading off track on a good ridge, explore around Joes Canyon before joining the Wollangambe track to the Horseshoe Bend explore / swim and lunch, look up into the Wollangambe canyon upstream, before heading back to Mt Wilson on the Wollangambe walking track (steep uphill many steps). Map: Wollangambe

Map: *Mt Wilson*

Fri 16-Feb-2024
3 MX - Day Walk

[Explore Birrabang Ridge - out to Liversidge Hill Exit Via Birrabang Brook](#)

Explore Birrabang Ridge (opposite Mt Wilson turn off) - Head out to Liversidge Hill then back onto Birrabang Ridge to the end, then pass into Birrabang Brook (wet feet) exit via creek back to Bells Line of Road.

Map: *Mt Wilson*

FEEDBACK AND AUTUMN 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 Autumn 2024 edition of The Mounts is **Friday 16 February 2024**. 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.