



The Mounts

The Community Newsletter of Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine



August 2013

Welcome

The recent passing of two Mounts stalwarts—John Holt and former resident Bruce Gailey— is very sad news. We have taken this opportunity to publish tributes from their respective professional affiliations, as many people may not be fully aware of their extraordinary activities outside the mountain.

Balancing this, there is a lot of good reading in this edition—a ray of light in the Bowens Creek Road situation, the long awaited sealing of the dirt roads in the villages, a new born, a new book, a new Photographic Exhibition, a book review, a holiday review, a search for a poetic collective noun for orchard trees, an incredible milestone for the Bushwalking Group.

Additionally, the very welcome news has just been received that the proposed electoral boundary change for the Blue Mountains have been shelved following a vociferous response from Mounts' residents. Of all the responses received by the NSW Electoral Commission for all electorates, almost 20% were from Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine!

The community response for donations to the Village Hall Stage II extensions has been nothing short of astounding: \$30,000 has been received to date.

Meanwhile, Vic Zhukov, pedalling his push-bike solo around Australia, has been sighted at Eucla on the WA—SA border and ready to tackle the Nullabor Plain. Lindfield Park is but a mere 2,410 kilometres away. Not bad for a 72 year old and surely an inspiration to all of us.

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Community Calendar

August	Fri 9th 9.00—12.00 Bush Care— Founders Corner	Sun 11th 3.00pm Mt Wilson Church Service	Fri 16th Bushwalk Group— Coxs Rd & Lockyers Rd, Mount York	
Sept	Sun 1st 9.00am RFS Training Mt Wilson Shed	Sun 8th 3.00pm Mt Wilson Church Service	Fri 13th 9.00—12.00 Bush Care— Wynne Reserve	Fri 20th Bushwalk Group— Bushrangers Cave, Rienits Pass, Mt Victoria
Sat 21st 5.30pm MWPA AGM Village Hall	Oct	Sun 6th 9.00am RFS Training Mt Wilson Shed	Fri 11th 9.00—12.00 Bush Care— Silva Plana	Sun 13th 3.00pm Mt Wilson Church Service

MOUNT WILSON PROGRESS ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE NEWS

Coming Events

- Mount Wilson Progress Association AGM – 21st September, 2013 at 5.30 p.m. at the Village Hall
- Remembrance Day Service – 11th November, 2013 at 10.45 at the War memorial

Local dirt roads to be sealed

The dirt roads in Mt Wilson and, if the funds are available, Mt Irvine are to be graded, reshaped where necessary and sealed. The Blue Mountains City Council decided at its meeting on 25 June to do the work following a successful similar project in the Lower Mountains that was completed under budget and in less time than planned. The economics make sealing possible: it will be less expensive to maintain the sealed roads than regularly mobilising the Council grading crew to keep the dirt roads in trafficable condition.

The Mt Wilson Progress Association has been advocating for this work to be done for many years and is very pleased to see an important safety and access security project is to be undertaken for our communities.

The work is expected to be under way following completion of the Lower Mountains project, possibly around September/October. The Council road crew will reshape and grade the roads. They will also maintain existing and where necessary install new drainage to ensure water runoff does not damage the new bitumen surfaces. To maximise the money available for sealing work and prevent future road-side collapses only small trees and vegetation will be cleared leaving larger trees with their root balls often extending under the roads.

Two-coat sealing will be applied over the graded surfaces: larger aggregate in bitumen will be applied and with a roller embedded into the dirt surface then a second pass with finer aggregate in bitumen will be applied and rolled in with a total thickness of about 20mm. Where necessary, a rolled bitumen and aggregate gutter will be formed and in other places, especially level areas, where water can run off the side there will be no gutter.

The roads to be sealed in Mt Wilson are Farrer Road East and West, Hillcrest Lane, Stephen Lane, Du Fours Rocks Road, Applecot Lane and Wynnes Rock Road where not already sealed. In Mt Irvine, Danes Way will be sealed if funds are available. Every effort will be made to do that work to achieve the economic advantages of not having to have Danes Way regularly regraded.

Council will write to all residents and homeowners to be affected by the project prior to the work commencing. This letter will also offer the opportunity for residents to let the Council know where there are springs that may not be visible except following extended wet weather and other issues

The Council is willing while its road crew is working in our area to have the crew prepare at property owners' own cost private driveways and roads for bitumen sealing. Similarly, the bitumen sealing contractor will be prepared to seal private driveways and roads. For this to happen at your property you will have to contact the Council project manager, Paul Creelman at

pcreelman@bmcc.nsw.gov.au to arrange for a quote for Council work on your property. Following the appointment of the sealing contractor it will be necessary for homeowners to contract directly with the firm for sealing to be done on their property. It is likely to be significantly less expensive to have the Council and sealing contractor do this work while in the area than it would cost homeowners for an independent contractor to be brought in in the future. This will literally be a once in a lifetime opportunity!

Hawkesbury Council to seek funds for reinstatement of road & bridge

Mt Irvine Road, the extension of Bowen's Creek Road in the Hawkesbury local government area, is to remain a "road" after the Hawkesbury City Council on August 6 decided to withdraw its application to the NSW Government for the road to be permanently closed and de-gazetted.

The Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine communities and Progress Associations sent more than 30 objections to the closure of the only alternative route for getting in to and out of Mt Irvine and Mt Wilson in

the event Mt Wilson Road or the Bells Line of Road is closed. A front page article in the Hawkesbury Gazette and an item on the ABC's 7.30 Stateline program also got the message to the councillors. Hawkesbury Council acknowledged that the community objections left it no option but to withdraw the de-gazettal proposal while saying the road will remain closed because of "substantial deterioration and storm damage".

The communities' position was strengthened by the Blue Mountains City Council passing a resolution supporting "the maintenance of the Mt Irvine/Bowens Creek Road as a formally designated fire trail".

Hawkesbury Council at its meeting went one step better with its resolution it work with BMCC in "a joint approach (to) be made to the NSW Government seeking financial assistance to reinstate the road and bridge".

Meanwhile, repair of the badly damaged Bowen's Creek Road in Mt Irvine in the BMCC jurisdiction is subject to a claim lodged by the Council with the NSW government for its insurance to pay the cost of the restitution. The government recognised the disastrous rain in February that caused so much damage to the road as a natural disaster creating the opportunity for the claim. The land slip on Mt Irvine Road below Wynstay is subject to the same claim.

NSW Electoral Boundary Change Proposal

In another important local campaign, the voters and communities of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine are to remain in the state electorate of Blue Mountains and not be transferred to the Hawkesbury electorate as had been proposed by the NSW Electoral Commission.

Our local member, Roza Sage, advised on August 7 that following a public hearing by the Commission earlier that week the Liberal Party had told her the proposed transfer would not go ahead. Mrs Sage said she was delighted to keep the two communities in her electorate.

MWPA President Richard Beattie addressed the Commissioners at the public hearing in Sydney and at the conclusion of his remarks the Commission Chairman, Keith Mason AC QC, said the Commissioners "had certainly noted the volume and cogency of objections" from Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine.

There were 49 objections lodged to the change proposal – a fantastic community response – 49 out of the state-wide total of only 258 objections or suggestions for the 93 electorates across the state!

The mandate of the Commission is to achieve "One vote, one value" across all electorates. As more people have come in to the Blue Mountains area the Commission proposed moving the electors in Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine into the Hawkesbury electorate. The Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine progress associations worked closely to get the message out it is in our interest to remain linked to the Upper Mountains.

Mrs Sage and her predecessors have done good work representing our interests. We could not reasonably expect the same level of local support from the Windsor-based member for Hawkesbury.

The Commission's final decisions on all boundary changes will determine the electoral boundaries for the next state election in March 2015.

Condolences

We were very sorry to hear of the death of John Holt, a long standing and active member of the Association since 1997. Our sympathy goes to Mary and John's family and friends.

Mount Wilson Leisure Library

On 29th June, we had a successful sale of second hand books and morning tea. Our thanks go to all who donated books and to those who purchased books.

The library is open every Saturday morning from 10.00 to 11.00 unless the hall is booked for a function, so do drop in for a browse through the bookshelves. It is a small but varied collection covering such categories as fiction, biography, history, travel, horticulture.

Unfortunately the library has been closed some Saturdays recently because there are insufficient people to open it. If anyone would like to assist in looking after the library for one hour a month on a Saturday morning please contact me, we would appreciate your help.

Richard Beattie (President)

Moir Green (Secretary)

Safety fears as councils fight over future of Mount Irvine Road by Jennie Curtin

This article and cartoon is reproduced from 24 July edition of The Blue Mountains Gazette.

The only alternative exit road from Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine – Mount Irvine Road – is in serious jeopardy with the Hawkesbury City Council applying to the State government have it formally closed.

Local residents are fearful that, if a bushfire cut Mount Wilson Road, they would be trapped in their villages.

The Mount Irvine/Bowens Creek Road which links Mts Wilson and Irvine to the Bells Line of Road at Bilpin, has a long and chequered history. In 1990 Hawkesbury City Council decided to close a section within its boundary – approximately 6.5 km from the last property at Bilpin to Bowens Creek Bridge – erecting gates to allow emergency access only.

Later, when the bridge began to deteriorate, traffic was limited to 5 tonne gross vehicles only, meaning large emergency trucks could no longer used.

Now, council has asked the State Government to formally close the road.

Through all this time, Blue Mountains City Council has maintained the section within its boundaries, from Bowens Creek Bridge to Mount Irvine. Recent heavy rain, however, has caused severe damage and the council will seek natural disaster funding to restore it.

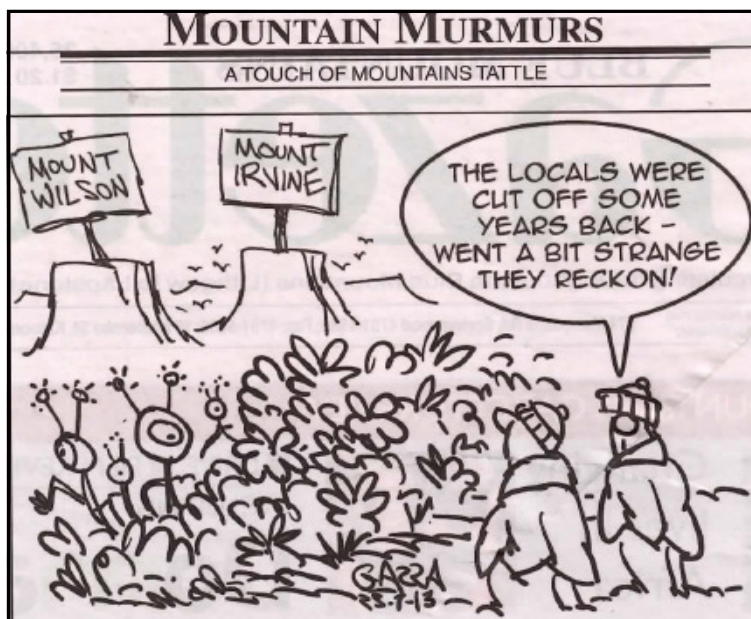
Blue Mountains Council last month voted unanimously to support maintaining the road as a fire trail and wrote Hawkesbury Council to ask to reconsider the permanent closure. Hawkesbury's director of infrastructure, Jeff Organ, said the request would be incorporated in a report on the road to be considered at a future council meeting.

Mr Organ also said the closure had been proposed to allow grant applications to be made for continued use of the road as a fire trail as funding was unlikely to be available while the route is classified as a "public road".

Richard Beattie, president of the Mount Wilson Progress Association, said the Victorian bushfire tragedy showed the need for more than one road into and out of a town. While the association recognise the cost of upgrading the road would be beyond either council, "we say this is essential as an emergency facility that should be funded by the State".

"It was used as the routine thoroughfare for people to get down to Bilpin and to Sydney from the time it was first built as a Depression make-work project until the 1980s," Mr Beattie said. "If it was good enough to be used for all those years, we would be say it's good enough to be returned to a usable road." Mr Beattie said

But Mr Organ said the Rural Fire Service had advised "the road is not favoured as an evacuation route due to its location and risk factors".



Village Hall Jottings

Our Yulefest this year was lots of fun. It was wonderful to have the support of Roza Sage, our State Member of Parliament. A big thank you to Tim for being the MC and his challenging 'Five Mile' quiz. I think we will all be far more observant as we drive in and out of Mt Wilson. Beverley Thompson conducted an enthusiastic impromptu choir for the Christmas carols accompanied by her daughter Kathy on the piano. The well-oiled kitchen team kept the food rolling out, thanks to Mib, Kim, Beth, Helen, Moira, Jeanette, Stephen and Loretta.

...and we added \$3,300 to our Village Hall coffers, so a big thank you to everyone who came

The update for our extension is that the grant application to the State Government 'Community Building Partnerships' scheme has been lodged by BMCC. We also have a letter of support from BMCC committing to match the \$50,000 we are raising for the project.

The community has displayed magnificent generosity in responding to an appeal for donations - in four weeks, over \$30,000 has been raised. Again, an enormous thank you to all who contributed. Donations—no matter how large or small—will still be gratefully received.

The long history of strong community support has meant that the Village Hall Committee can now actively lobby for the necessary funding to complete the second stage of the Hall extensions.

There is no guarantee that any funding request will be fully or partially successful; there is obviously vigorous competition for a limited amount of money. However, there appears to be very positive support for the proposal from BMCC. Certainly, the chances for success are better now than for any time in the past 10 years.

We are keeping our fingers crossed!

Judy Tribe

MT WILSON/MT IRVINE RFB COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT NEWS

Although July is usually the month for lighting fires rather than putting them out, brigade members continue to be busy with bushfire matters.

Mt Irvine Community Protection Plan (CPP)

CPPs are an initiative developed by the NSW RFS after the 2009 Victorian fires to assist communities to better prepare for and survive bushfires. Mt Wilson was part of the pilot program and the maps that were created were of great interest, particularly the Bushfire Survival Map showing the impact of fire on properties. However, we are two villages and the RFS has agreed to develop a CPP for Mt Irvine with the brigade collecting the relevant data.

Consequently, a team (Beth Raines, Kathleen Oakes, Brian Carrigan) led by Ross Kelly completed the mapping of properties and the bush interface last week. This involved using a GPS to locate coordinates for the property and using the GPS tracking facility to map the closest bush. There was a lot of walking up and down between houses and bush, reminding us how old we are getting. Any benefit from this exercise was soon dissipated by the delicious and generous lunch provided by Maria Kelly. This weekend we will start mapping the fire trails and recording any problems or issues with them. It is hoped that we will have a CPP for Mt Irvine later this year.

University of Wollongong Bushfire Research

Nick Gill, Olivia Dunn and Chris Brennan Horley returned to Mt Wilson over the last fortnight to interview residents as part of their research project 'Co-existing with Fire: Managing Risk and Amenity'. They needed to interview at least 10 residents/households and, fortunately, 17 put their hands up. Those I have spoken to thought that the interviews were conducted very pleasantly and professionally and they particularly enjoyed playing with the iPad. This latter technology is as yet unproven as a research tool as apparently, according to Nick, we have been the guinea pigs for this research technique. Nevertheless, added Nick, the content of the interviews was 'very rich'.

Nick expressed a concern that there may be a bias in the results as almost everyone interviewed seemed to belong to the brigade. I assured him that, at Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine, support for the brigade was the norm and it was the envy of brigades lower down the mountains. The group will return to conduct a focus group discussion with those interviewed.

Community First Responders (CFRs)

Sunday 4th August was a busy day for CFRs with two callouts, both within Mt Wilson. On arriving on scene CFRs were delighted on both occasions to be met by a resident doctor, firstly Stephen List and at the second incident, Tony Barrett. Their friendly and professional advice was greatly reassuring not only to the CFRs but especially to the patients and their families. Our thanks go to Stephen and Tony for taking precious time out from their gardens.

One incident required that the patient be airlifted to Westmead with the result that a very large helicopter landed at Cathedral Reserve, changing some family picnic arrangements but very much to the delight of the children and not a few adults.

Kathleen Oakes

John Holt—an obituary from WSAVA website**THE PASSING OF A GREAT WSAVA VETERINARIAN, JOHN HOLT**

When I started at WSAVA (The World Small Animal Veterinary Association), I was sitting at the Assembly meeting and someone said, 'look there is John Holt, he is a very special person'. A dignified gentleman walked in the room, was greeted with respect by everybody and had an amazing friendly and caring aura around him. Later on I have met John and Mary many times and during my presidency I have always listened to his wise consults and took every opportunity to see them when they were around. Personally, I am going to miss him, he was a great friend, loved the WSAVA and what we are standing for, had passion for the things he thought were right and together with Mary were the nicest and most caring people I have ever met. I will remember him with love and respect. For me a pioneer that opened my heart to the global veterinary community, that we all are part of.

We share part of a eulogy below, made by Lindsay Hay, who worked for John for more than 10 years and some pictures on the WSAVA website of how we remember him. We send our love and support to Mary, she will always be family and I extend her a life long invitation to come to our WSAVA meeting to celebrate John's amazing life and achievements:

'Dr John Holt was an amazing, visionary veterinarian and a unique member of our profession who changed the face of small animal practice in our country. He bought the St George Animal Hospital from Richard Boon in the 1960s and developed it into a showpiece practice that set the standard for veterinary practice in Australia. He built a group of six practices in Sydney and employed many veterinarians at a time when most practices were small and poorly equipped. John also recognised very early the value of well-trained veterinary nurses whose skills were used to their full extent at SGH, again well ahead of practice standards at the time.

John drew much inspiration from North America and built contacts and friendships that led to many visits to Australia by eminent veterinarians such as Steve Ettinger, Carl Osborne, Joe Bojrab, Ghery Pettit and many others. He also spent time as a practitioner in residence in American universities on several occasions.

John came to believe that small animal practitioners needed an organisation to better represent their interests at a professional level and to drive the raising of small animal practice standards. He and a group of like-minded practitioners established the group that became the Australian Small Animal Veterinary Association. John funded and edited the Australian Veterinary Practitioner until it could stand on its own feet and provided administrative support for the Association for some years. It is difficult to see how the ASAVA would be as strong as it is today without John's vision and support.

In 1986 John became President of WSAVA, so far the only Australian to have held that position. After that he visited many WSAVA Congresses and supported the WSAVA in all its facets. He was an inaugural member of the WSAVA Foundation Board of Directors, a generous supporter of the Faculty of Veterinary Science and the JD Stewart Foundation.

Among the awards John has received are the inaugural ASAVA Practitioner of the Year Award in 1973, the WSAVA Award for Service to the Profession in 1998 and a special award for Meritorious Service to the ASAVA which was presented at the 2007 WSAVA Congress in Sydney. In 2007, the annual ASAVA Distinguished Service Award was renamed to honour and acknowledge John's contribution to the ASAVA and is now the John Holt Distinguished Service Award.

On a personal note, John represented Australia in the shooting team at the 1960 Rome Olympics and competed as an elite level rifle shooter for many years. He was always ready to back his beliefs with action and financial support and was a lifelong conservationist and animal rights supporter.

In his later years he became very passionate in his support of the campaign against live animal export. John always held strong views and was prepared to work for what he felt was right.

John and his wife Mary were true life partners in everything they did and in all of John's achievements. They were great world travellers over many years. John and Mary are also very important supporters of the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra.

Very few people have changed the lives of others and in particular our profession in the way John has done although he would never have thought about it in that way - he was a shy and modest man who avoided the limelight and was uncomfortable when his achievements were recognised. He will be sadly missed and hopefully never forgotten'.

Jolle Kirpensteijn, President WSAVA



Bruce Gailey - an Obituary from *Urban Cinefile*, the *World of Film in Australia* website**Bruce Gailey, 1923-1913.**

Respected gaffer Bruce Gailey died on 10 July 2013. He would have turned 90 in September. By trade, Bruce was a fitter and turner, prevented from enlisting during World War II as he was classified as being in an essential service.

He moved into film during the post-war boom in sponsored documentaries and commercials, working primarily as a gaffer but on some productions as a generator operator. The role of gaffer – or head of the electrical department -- is one not always appreciated by those outside the film industry but as the person responsible for executing a film's lighting plan, gaffers work very closely with their cinematographers. They must be tactful, imaginative, have a high level of technical knowledge and skill at solving problems while larger scale productions rely on their ability to motivate and lead a team. Above all, gaffers must be able to work fast and decisively, as lighting is potentially the most time-consuming element of on-set production. It is significant that Bruce Gailey was so often the gaffer of choice of some of Australia's best cinematographers.

In 1960, Gailey joined Artransa Park Film Studios, supporting the leading cinematographers of that era such as Ross Wood, Carl Kayser, Ron Horner, George Low, John McLean, John Leake and Bren Brown. In a period in which Australian TV drama was struggling into existence, Gailey worked on two significant commercial series aimed at the international market, both with American stars and relatively big budgets : Whip Lash (1960-61) and Rip Tide (1967-69). Giving experience to film technicians and actors, the programs rated well in Australia for Channel 7, and are regarded as landmarks in the development of Australian drama production.



In the early 1970s, under the leadership of Head of Production Richard Mason, Film Australia began to include feature films and telemovies in its production slate and Bruce Gailey was the gaffer. With Dean Semler as DOP he made *Let the Balloon Go* (1976) and *A Good Thing Going* (1978), and with Mick von Bornemann Cass, (1978, Dir. Chris Noonan) and *Annie's Coming Out* (1984). In 1978 he had begun pre-production of Film Australia's much anticipated feature adaptation of David Ireland's novel *The Unknown Industrial Prisoner* when, in an unprecedented act of censorship, Federal Minister Bob Ellicott called a halt to production, presumably because of the film's treatment of foreign investment and industrial relations. It was a shattering blow to all involved.

Gailey's work as gaffer took him across Australia and to many foreign countries. One of his more interesting overseas assignments was in Papua New Guinea where he was sent in 1983 to film the impending eruption of the Rabaul volcano. This did, in fact, not happen until ten years after the film team had departed. Of course, Film Australia made good use of the footage for a film entitled *Waiting for the Big Bang* (1984) and in 1994 the town of Rabaul had to be relocated after being devastated by pumice and ash.

In 1970, Gailey was one of the first technicians to leave the security of company employment to go freelance, working most notably for Ross Wood Productions on prize-winning commercials and also on several of the low-budget commercially funded Australian features which struggled into existence just prior to the flowering of the "Australian Film Renaissance".

In 1974, at age 51, Gailey joined the government film production unit, Film Australia, which was then entering a period of great vitality. There he worked on a large number of documentaries and with some of the up and coming young filmmakers attracted to the Film Unit as a centre of exciting production. At Film Australia he forged a relationship with future Academy Award winning cinematographer Dean Semler on the much-praised documentaries *The Steam Train Passes* (1974) and *Saturday* (1979) which Semler directed as well as shot. In 1980, Semler again chose Gailey as his gaffer for the independently produced documentary *Stepping Out* directed by Chris Noonan, another brilliant success.

In 1986 Gailey officially left Film Australia, although he was called back as a freelancer for about six months after that. Dedicated to the environment, Bruce finally retired to his much-loved Blue Mountains and his home in Mt Irvine where he was for many years captain [sic] of the Mt Irvine volunteer fire brigade. In recent years, after moving to South West Rocks with his wife, he committed his time to bush care and bush regeneration.

Bruce died with the same graciousness with which he lived. He is survived by his wife Sue (Suzanne), children Peter, Tony and Penny, and grandchildren Abbie, Katie, Martin, Murray, Felix and Finbar. Bruce worked with both his sons on a number of film productions and his niece Lynn has also had a long career in the Australian Film industry.



**Arthur Phillip:
Sailor, Mercenary, Governor, Spy
by Michael Pembroke**

This judicious and timely publication is not just your average account of naval life, warfare, ambition or wealth. It is also a story about privation and hardship, matrimonial mistakes, espionage and mercenaries, discovery and exploration. At its heart, it is a story of hope and the extraordinary idealism that inspired and accompanied the founding of Australia. In *Arthur Phillip: Sailor, Mercenary, Governor, Spy* Michael Pembroke, published author, one-time leading commercial silk, and now judge, brings to life his subject's fascinating character amidst the culture, values, fashions and features of Georgian Society. Written with historical fidelity, Michael unveils extraordinary events that transported Arthur Phillip from the inauspicious beginnings as an 'orphan of the sea' to captain's servant and eventually to Admiral of the Blue, traversing the globe in the employ of the British and Portuguese governments before founding the colony that he thought would one day be the most valuable acquisition Great Britain ever made.

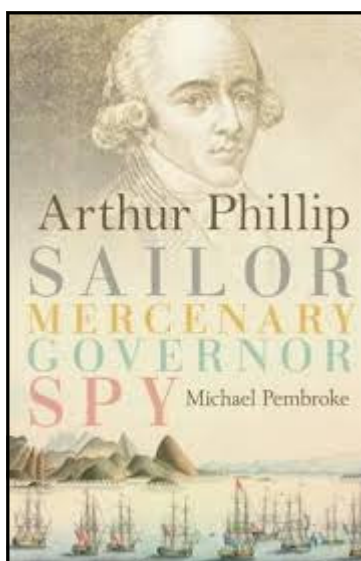
Arthur Phillip's journey takes you through the 18th Century poverty-stricken streets of the City of London to the high society in Hampton and Regency Bath; from the Channel port of Lymington across the Atlantic to the South American coastline; from North-East France to the French Naval base at Toulon; and from Lisbon, the undisputed capital of Europe's overseas trade, to Rio de Janeiro, the slave capital of Brazil. Chosen to lead the First Fleet, one of the most remarkable social experiments of the Enlightenment, Phillip's service continued on his return to England, commanding ships of the line in the French revolutionary war until his eventual decline into obscurity that comes with old age.

Arthur Phillip: Sailor, Mercenary, Governor, Spy is a compelling story punctuated with loneliness and desperation, integrity and persistence, rewards and loss. Yet it is marked by an enduring humanity and egalitarianism - a legacy for the colony that Phillip founded in 1788.

‘At long last, a finely written biography of the astonishing egalitarian who became
Australia's founding father’ **Geoffrey Robertson**

‘A gripping life of a quite extraordinary man: the most important enlightenment life
story we've never had, properly told, before’ **Andrew Marr**

‘The colour and dash of Arthur Phillip's extraordinary life, lived in amazing times in every
corner of the world, is told just brilliantly in Michael Pembroke's utterly absorbing book,
destined to become a classic of Imperial literature’ **Simon Winchester**



This press release was kindly provided by the publisher, Hardie Grant Books.

Hearty congratulations!

Scott and Grace would like to welcome the fourth generation of Crowle/Leonard to *Sylvan Close*, Mount Wilson. Holly Isabelle Kwon Leonard was born 28th June, Royal North Shore Hospital, 3.466kg, 51cm long.
Grace and Holly doing well!



Of buildings and birds...

Hidden in the dour heart of the Scottish city of Aberdeen is a deep water-filled crater which Esther Woolfson visits with a like-minded group of naturalist friends. They are awed by its silence and eerie beauty, one that few know of or visit. During the seasons of one year Woolfson takes us on a series of small, and large, discoveries of the evidence of the natural world within an urban environment. Migrating birds, persistent spiders and colonising rats, and the constant intriguing observations of those birds who share her house are recorded with sympathy and meticulous detail: 'a jackdaw...a beautiful bird, head feathers magnificently black and startlingly grey, eyes sharp and silver'.

In *Field Notes from a Hidden City: An Urban Nature Diary* there are a series of quasi-diary entries and one or two longer essays for each season. From bitter winter to the brief intensity of summer and then winter's return she traces many brief lives, waits for the aurora borealis and enjoys the occasional family gatherings. The lives and world of wild creatures is ever-present, against a background meditation of how humans relate to those who share the world and what is our individual and joint responsibility. But it is the acute quality of her observations that are the best part of this book as birds, insects and even the beetles under a garden rock are examined and enjoyed as they go about their own business.

Woolfson's first book, *Corvus: a Life with Birds*, was based on her love of her tame (and not so tame), corvids; the crows, ravens and rooks that entered her house and stayed, some of them, for many years. In this new work her scope is broader and focused more outwards and it is remarkable how the granite walls of Aberdeen enclose so much wild life, and even better that she shares it with us.

Alison Halliday

The Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Bushwalking Group

The local Bushwalking Group celebrated their three hundredth - 300! - walk on Friday 19th July when fifteen members ventured to Box Creek Falls and Morong Falls at Kanangra Boyd National Park.

The group's first walk was on May 17, 1990; the participants to the Tessellated Pavements at Mt Irvine were recorded by Libby Raines, as shown below:

1990. Mt Wilson / Mt Irvine Bushwalking Group
First Walk 17th May, 1990

Destination: Tessellated Pavements Mt Irvine

Walkers:

- Libby Raines
- Vera Strano
- Caterina Coluguri
- Joan Rogers
- Helen Ghent
- Liz Harding
- Ellie Gunn
- Sue Gailey & Bruce
- Helen Naylor & Ron
- Fae Boulton & Cedric
- Trudi Spranger
- John Ward
- Mary Reynolds & Ellis

Mild, overcast

At the time, history records a proposal circulated throughout the community seeking interested people to join was "supported by the Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine C.W.A., and an established and knowledgeable resident, Mrs Libby Raines".

John Cardy, the group's archivist, says that at the time of the afternoon tea in the Village Hall to celebrate the 20th year of the group on 21st May 2010, he estimated that over the twenty years, with reconnaissance walks to check track conditions as well as the scheduled walks themselves, Libby would have covered a distance from Sydney to Darwin and back to Brisbane. Over the ensuing three years, she would be well on her way to making it back to Sydney!

Libby is the only original member of the first walk still walking with the group; Mary Reynolds was the second last of the originals to stop.

Sadly Libby was absent from the 300th walk. Nonetheless, the participants on the day celebrated the remarkable achievements of the group and that of Libby.

Congratulations to all!

Visit to Chelsea and U.K. Gardens

We have recently returned from a trip to Europe and UK visiting Chelsea and many wonderful gardens.

Our first stop was Paris where we were overwhelmed by the beauty of the horse chestnuts ranging in colour from white to deep pink – trees in their thousands.

The weather in England was cold and miserable – the coldest spring for 50 years, but that did not dampen our enthusiasm.

English gardens have a special quality gained from their development over many years. Famous gardens such as *Sissinghurst*, *Hidcote Manor*, *Great Dexter*, *Waddeston Manor*, *Bodnant* and, of course, the RHS *Wisley* – all have features of interest.

Sissinghurst with its white garden and the interesting history surrounding its founders Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicolson; *Bodnant* with its amazing laburnum walk (not in flower because of the cold spring) all are wonderful to visit.

The garden which impressed us most was Beth Chatto's garden at Colchester, Essex which featured a gravel garden, water gardens and large areas of perennials separated by lawn walks. We were delighted to have Beth Chatto, aged 91, to talk to us about the establishment of the garden and what inspiration she gained from it.

Another wonderful experience was the Botanic Garden at Cardiff which is only ten years old and there you will find the largest glass-house in the world, featuring plants from all over the world. It was a wonderful year to be at Chelsea because of the beautiful Australian garden winning the over-all prize. It certainly was stunning and captured a large appreciative audience. It was a truly Australian garden with its subtle colours so different from the many English gardens with their trimmed box hedges and ornamental pools.

Chelsea is an unbelievable place for garden lovers – if only there were fewer people.

Leaving London, we drove to the lakes area staying on the banks of Lake Windermere at Ambleside – this truly is heaven on earth. No wonder Wordsworth was inspired to write such beautiful poetry. We took a boat ride on Lake Windermere and visited the house and garden of John Ruskin at Coniston Waters.

Then into Scotland where we had four days in Edinburgh visiting the castle and the Queen's ship *Britannia*. Graham was surprised to hear that the ship had a crew of 300 – quite a lavish lifestyle. We drove across Scotland via Loch Lomond to Oban, a beautiful fishing town, then onto the Island of Mull which is a unique island where sheep graze along the roadside. Mull is the resting place of Lachlan Macquarie where there is his mausoleum which is maintained by the Australian National Trust – quite a moving experience. On the Island of Mull we saw woodlands covered with bluebells, a magical sight.

Our last visit was to Iona, a place of great peace where St Columba brought Christianity to the British Isles. From Iona we took a boat to the Island of Staffa, some 50 minutes away through very choppy seas. Staffa is an unbelievable rock formation best known for its magnificent basalt columns. Their effect is most overwhelming at the musical cave known as Fingal's Cave.

Mendelssohn was so moved by the sound of the waves rushing in and out that he composed the Hebrides Overture in 1829.

Fingal's Cave was brought to the attention of the wider world by the famous botanist Joseph Banks in 1772. He wrote

"Compared to this what are the cathedrals and palaces built by men! Mere models or playthings, imitations as his works will always be when compared to those of nature."

We were fascinated by the hundreds of puffin birds who nest in burrows and rocky crannies around the cliffs of Staffa. Certainly this is one of the most magical places to visit.

Despite all that we have seen, it is always good to be home. We have returned with renewed energy and grand ideas for our own garden.

Beverley & Graham Thompson



Ask the Neighbours

Avid followers of this column will recall, Tim, that having prepared our Anti-Antechinus Strategy, all members of the Rural Anti Antechinus Training Services (RAATS) have been deployed in the field (and the roof and the shed), to implement said Strategy.

Interestingly, I haven't received a reply from the Australian Museum to my request that they make a taxonomic revision and hereafter call our enemy the *mus musculus domesticus* (the brown mouse). I think their letter must have gone astray. Or, in a more sinister turn of events, has it been intercepted and now lies in shreds at the bottom of an antechinus nest somewhere? Must remember to send a follow up request.

On the bright side, I am pleased to report Tim that the enemy appears to be in retreat with few sightings over the past few months. What's that, Tim? They go underground in Winter? Or jet off to their favourite B&Bs in Provence for a rodent rendezvous (that's French, Tim)? Not sure about that, but it has been very entertaining to watch one of our dogs adopting her pointer stance whilst staring intently at a wall for an hour listening to unidentified scrabbings.

Whilst we wait for Spring to see if the RAATS Strategy has been effective, there have been other things to ponder, Tim. The Under Gardener and I have recently gone all agricultural and planted fruit trees, blueberries, raspberries and olives (yes, I know it's unlikely they'll do very well but he was VERY keen to grow his own Martini olives).

So, whilst we wait to become significant orchardists, it has occurred to me there is another question to Ask the Neighbours: What do we call our trees collectively whilst lovingly tending to them – "hey, you apricot trees" isn't right - so, is it an "Anticipation of Apricots"? A Pandemonium of Peaches? An Avalanche of Apples? And, do four olive trees make a Grove? And, do we need one more to make a Plantation? And when should the collective noun signify despair rather than delight? When they don't do well, will we have a Quandary of Quinces? A Fug of Figs? And the ultimate in frustrations, a Raspberry of Raspberries? Contributions from the Neighbours would be most welcome.

And one more thing – Vale to John Holt – a friend to all creatures great and small, including me.

Elizabeth Montano

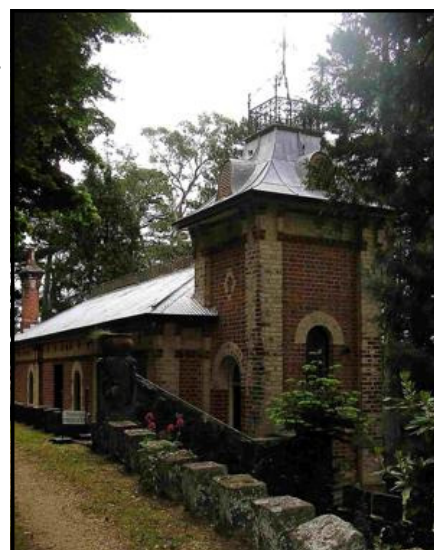
Call for Turkish Bath Museum Guides

The Turkish Bath Museum is typically open to the public 12.30—3.30 pm on the third Sunday of each month outside the winter period.

There is a roster of people who act as a guide to those who visit this fascinating and unique building. Unfortunately, the number of people serving this invaluable role has decreased over the last couple of years.

If you would like to be involved more closely with the Museum, please contact Zaharah Braybrooke on zaharah@zaharah.com.au or 02 9449 9948.

Full training will be provided for those new to the role. It was a very satisfying way to spend one Sunday afternoon once a year, sharing the rich history of the Turkish Bath Museum with some very interesting and appreciative visitors.





MT WILSON & MT IRVINE

PHOTOGRAPHY & ART EXHIBITION

To be held in the Village Hall at Mt Wilson on
Saturday 26th & Sunday 27th October 2013

10.00 am to 4.00 pm.
Gold coin entry

PHOTOGRAPHY, ARTWORK, JEWELLERY AND SCULPTURE

This is a unique exhibition with all the photography and artwork being exclusively of Mt Wilson and/or Mt Irvine.

Most of the works on display will be offered for sale

The stunning gardens of **Bisley, Nooroo and Merry Garth** will be open to the public. The **\$20 entry fee** (children under 18 years free) will include entry to all three gardens and a photo walk by well known photographers at 11am and 1pm at Bisley and Merry Garth. Refreshments will be available at the Village Hall

Enquiries and entry forms to Bev Woodman
at bevwoodman46@gmail.com

Follow us on Facebook at [https://www.facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/MtWilsonMtlrvinePhotographyArtExhibition)
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More details on Mt Wilson may be found at www.mtwilson.com.au

All monies raised over the weekend will be donated
to the Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade

Suggestions, comments or contributions warmly welcomed!