

EDITORIAL

NOTES FROM MT. WILSON

Drenching and incessant rains which have been falling for a week up to Saturday have interrupted the normal domestic and industrial routine in addition to damaging communications.

For a week 11 inches of rain were recorded and road conditions were made very dangerous when drivers were compelled to fight against greasy surfaces and extremely thick fog which brings an early darkness.

Around Mt. Wilson in particular roads are almost impassable without skid chains—the steep hill on the western approach to the Mount is very slippery and cars and trucks of all descriptions have been bogging nearly every day. Fortunately for many motorists, Mr. Peter Kirk has been able to give a helping hand drawing them through the quagmire under the power of his big “Mack” timber haulage waggon, fitted with chains.

On Friday, the Co-operative Society's delivery truck was held up for nearly an hour and a half in thick mud, the driver having to walk half a mile to the nearest phone. Mr. Kirk went to his assistance, as the Co-op. vehicle was not fitted with skid-chains, and many people in the area were depending on the arrival of the truck for their provisions.

On the left is an extract from an article published in the Lithgow Mercury, Wednesday 17 December 1947.

Another flashback, the following is from a letter written by Peter Valder to Libby Raines on 25 July 2015.

I was pleased to hear...that the snow was spectacular but apparently it did not cause any damage. I was concerned when I heard it was approaching as I recall the heavy fall in 1965 when trees were brought down, endless branches broken, all my father's shade houses flattened and the power off for several days. Another similar fall occurred in 1970 but caused comparatively little harm as all the vulnerable trees, branches etc had been broken by the earlier fall. I think the recent fall must be the heaviest since then. I imagine the melting snow will be appreciated by the spring bulbs.

While winter 2025 did not bring any snow of note it certainly bought enough rain to keep the tanks more than full.

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Sadly this edition of The Mounts brings notice of the deaths of two community members, Louise Byrne and Neville Whan. Our condolences to their families and friends.  
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IMAGE REQUEST

We enjoy sharing the news and other articles of interest in The Mounts but would love to have more images to share. Do not feel that you have to write a full article, just a short caption is great. Thank you!

VALE LOUISE MARGARET BYRNE

It is with great sadness that we inform you that Louise Byrne passed away late in the evening of Tuesday 5 August 2025, nearly eight weeks after suffering a major stroke. Louise was 70 years old.

Over the last ten years, Louise spent many happy times at Irvineholme, Mt Irvine with her partner Bruce Kerridge and his family. She adored the Mounts and became an integral member of the community, actively involved in Mt Irvine and with close friends in Mt Wilson. She was an expert and very keen gardener.

After initially working as a biochemist, her energy and wider positive contribution are reflected in her lifetime working as a barrister in Environmental Law. This culminated in her position as a Commissioner on the Land and Environment Court until her illness in June.

Louise is survived by her partner Bruce, her two children, her sister and her four grandchildren.

A service in honour of Louise, for family and friends, was held at Mosman Uniting Church, on Tuesday 12th August

With her ever-present radiant smile, Louise will be sadly missed by all who knew her.

DR NEVILLE WHAN 31/10/44- 12/07/25.



Sadly, we announce the passing of our beloved father, Neville Whan, who following a diagnosis of brain cancer, passed away peacefully at home. His three adoring children, Emma, Sophie and Andrew, feel comfort knowing that he was cared for by us in his home and Andrew's, was comfortable, content, almost pain free, and surrounded by love throughout that time. As always, he never complained. He has left behind three sisters, three children, eight grandchildren and two great granddaughters and was pleased he got to spend cherished time with all of them during his last months. Family really did mean everything to him, and he was proud and protective of every one of us.

Dad grew up in Glen Innes NSW, mostly on the family farm until he moved to Sydney to study medicine to become a child psychiatrist. During his studies, he lived at St Andrews College, and it was during his fun filled college days that he met and married the love of his life, Lynne. We grew up in a beautiful house in Hunters Hill and Dad was the brain behind all the stylish features of our home including an impressive Japanese garden and a bush house out the back. It was his growing love of gardens and the county boy in him that drew him to Mount Wilson and our parents were thrilled

to find a splendid property in Church Lane which they bought in the early 1990s, initially as a weekender and then as their fulltime forever home in about 1997.

Dad's love for Mt Wilson had increasingly deepened ever since. He planted a lot of trees and enjoyed trekking and canyoning locally for many years and did quite a few impressive long treks in other places including Tasmania. He spoke fondly of the kind locals he enjoyed chatting to whilst out walking his poodle and following Lynne's passing, he cherished the close friendship he had with his neighbour Ben, looking forward to his visits every Saturday.

Neville was a wise man of high intelligence, total honesty, artistic style and a love of fine arts, plants, trees, dogs, keeping up with world news, crosswords, red wine and of course his home, the mountains and the community in Mt Wilson. He was a humble and gentle soul who loved those close to him unconditionally with unwavering dedication and dependability. His strength and guidance will be missed and though his passing leaves a profound void, we are eternally grateful for the values he instilled and his legacy lives on in our hearts.



We are having a small family wake, celebration of his life on 13/09/25 and will be burying his ashes alongside his late wife Lynne.

SPRING WALKS

Walks are run with upper mountains bushwalking club, usually on a Friday towards the end of the month, with one in the Mt Wilson area and a couple exploring areas nearby. If Interested email peter_raines@hotmail.com or look at [UBMBC | Activities Program](#)



Winter walks

Run in June - [Mt Wilson Road Area - Lambertia ridge back to Bogey Holes then up Old Mt Wilson Road to Mt Wilson, out to DuFours](#)

Run in July - [Asgard Swamp, Victoria Falls Road, Mt Victoria - visit Asgard Historic Mine & Kiln, Asgard Head, Thor Head](#)

Run in Aug (Friday 22) - [Glow Worm Tunnel - Wolgan View / The Dry Canyon](#)

Upcoming in Spring

Sept 26

[Hollow Rock and Crawford Lookout overlooking Wollemi Creek / Colo River Junction](#)

Drive out on the Culoul Range from the Putty Road - walk to Hollow Rock and Crawford Lookout overlooking Wollemi Creek / Colo River Junction. Great views of the upper Colo and the junction of Wollemi Creek joining the Colo. Walk is about 7km mostly on foot pad. Plan would be to carpool to get to Putty Road and preface is to only take 2 or 3 high clearance or 4WD in on the Culoul Range trail, lovely trail into the Wollemi.

Map: *Six Brothers*

Oct 24

[Mt Wilson - Softwood Logging Trails Explore - Waterfall Creek - The Throne - Daintree Road](#)

Starting at Waterfall Reserve, visit the two Waterfalls, then explore old bullock trails deep in the rainforest, used to drag softwood timber to the mill, visit mill ruins and mountain forest, before heading out to rocky outcrop called The Throne, good views over Bowens Creek, exiting via Daintree Road, with views over Mill Paddock and the area of steep rainforest on the south of Mt Wilson. About 7km

Map: *Mt Wilson*

Nov 28

[Kanangra Walls – Plateau Walk](#) / Crafts **Wall**

Walk Kanangra Walls Plateau out to and around Crafts Wall about 10km return by the same route. Open Plateau Walk - Great Views, involves clambering down a rocky cute off Brennan Top onto Kilpatrick Causeway, nothing too difficult,

Map: *Kanangra*

MWPA PRESIDENT'S LETTER

It has been one cold and rainy winter and I must admit to running off to warmer parts for July!

As we are all aware, the work on the Zig Zag is on everyone's minds. We are working with BMCC to keep you posted on any changes or closures. We are also working closely with them to ensure we have a voice in what they are doing and try to minimise any inconvenience for our residents. Watch your emails for updates.

After at least a decade of trying, we have finally secured six new picnic tables for the village. Three are at the Marcus Clark Reserve and three are at the campgrounds at Cathedral Reserve. A big thank you to Peter Raines and Dan Long of BMCC who have



persevered for many years to obtain the tables and install them. They will be used by residents and visitors and are much needed.

Work continues on our tree plantings along the avenues as the weather allows. I am looking forward to the spring and enjoying the new additions and watching their growth.

Stay warm and dry!

Nancy Fox, President

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.

Waterfall Reserve has now been added to the sites for bushcare in Mt Wilson. Doodia ferns (right) and Cyathea tree ferns have been planted along the rainforest edge, which will be kept weed-free.



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

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

The next bushcare is at Sloan Reserve, Hay Lane on Friday 12th September.

Everyone is welcome, even for a short time, hope you can join us!

Enquiries:

Mt Wilson contact: Alice Simpson (0414 425 511)

Council contact: Tracy Abbas (0428 777 141)

Alice Simpson

LANDLINE VISITS YENGO'S ENDANGERED WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

For dedicated conservationists like my dad, Peter Pigott, whose wildlife sanctuary he has run for over 50 years providing a haven for the endangered Parma Wallabies publicity is important. The arrival of ABC's Landline program in early June gave us a small window to raise awareness of the importance and difficulties of operating a private sanctuary.

Breeding endangered species, particularly in more remote Australian locations, comes with its unique set of challenges. We have been extremely fortunate in having the NPWS and WIRES and other private parties and volunteers involved in helping us seeing dad's project through in recent times.

While the passion for protecting these vulnerable marsupials is immense, private sanctuaries often grapple with very limited funding, demanding ecological management, and the constant need for expert scientific advice, for example over-breeding, disease management and predation issues are some of the largest problems faced in private sanctuaries.



Dad has largely been able to manage most of these challenges it is always an ongoing balance between getting the desired outcomes and what is best for the species in the long term. The current challenge is finding the appropriate feral free sanctuaries to ensure the future survival of the species.

While regulation is a very important aspect to ensure the proper management of these wildlife reserves and endangered animals, I believe too much regulation poses a risk that it may discourage private citizens and charity run organisations wanting to help protect the country's native fauna. As there are in fact many excellent privately run sanctuaries operating today, while I did actually state this fact on the program this was regrettably not aired.

Thankfully the National Parks and Wildlife Service have been a great aid for us in this endeavour, and I want to publicly thank them for all their ongoing support.

You can watch this episode of Landline [here](#).

Heidi Pigott-Irwin

HOUSE WANTED

My family and I are looking to relocate and buy a home in Mt Wilson, ideally pre-1940s. Any condition is fine as we're happy to renovate. If you're interested in selling, please phone Debbie on 0488 993 501.

MT WILSON VILLAGE HALL EXTENSIONS

On Saturday 28th June 2025 the Village Hall was reopened by our Federal Member Susan Templeman MP after it had been closed for 21 months for building works. The works included extending the Hall to the South by the addition of a new commercial grade kitchen, an adjacent covered outdoor area, a covered walkway linking it to the northern covered outdoor area, a new entrance gate and lighting, pathways and portico, a 20KVA generator, two new water tanks, two septic tanks, an additional vehicle entrance and landscaping. The reopening was combined with the launch of the Council's Library2U and satellite Wi-Fi internet service which had been installed during the building works. Approximately 60 people were there. It was a sunny winter's day with speeches being made by Susan Templeman and the Council's Mayor Mark Greenhill. Ted Griffin then spoke about the building project, a history of which follows.





Ever since the Hall was reopened in 2003, representations have been made by the Hall's section 335 committee (the Committee) to the Council to upgrade the kitchen. Apart from installing an instant hot water service and later a hot tap over the kitchen sink, no improvements had been in the last 15 years owing to Council's budgetary constraints. The Committee made a formal comprehensive submission to the Council in May 2020 asking that the Council appoint an architect to design a new kitchen. It was proposed that the kitchen be funded by a combination of Council funds, a Community Building Partnership grant and money raised by the Committee. These were the funding sources used to construct the new toilet block and storeroom and entrance foyer in 2016. This submission to Council was made following the 2019 fires which had seen volunteers work long hours in the totally inadequate 1950's style tea rooms kitchen supporting at times over 100 emergency personnel.



In November 2020 the Bushfire Community Recovery and Resilience Fund (BCRRF) invited applications for grants. The kitchen project fell within the BCRRF guidelines. Kathy Fox was our Community Buildings and Liaison Officer at the time. Kathy had considered our submission to the Council for a new kitchen and was very keen to make it happen. She obtained the necessary approvals within the Council for the Committee to make a grant application to BCRRF on behalf of the Council. The Committee then set about with assistance from the Council reworking the submission into a grant application and providing the additional information required by BCRRF. The maximum grant available under this program was \$300K and we applied for \$250K. Letters of support were provided by the Blue Mountains City Council, Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade, Mount Wilson Progress Association and The Old School Mount Wilson. In March 2021 we learnt that our application had been successful.

The next step was the DA. The Council appointed Simon Hearn as architect, and the Committee worked with him on the design. The Council said that the DA should encompass everything the Committee wanted to see built as part of the kitchen project. This would enable the whole project to be completed in stages as funding allowed.

The project also provided an opportunity to help create an attractive central precinct for Mount Wilson comprising The Old School, the Fire Station, Marcus Clark Reserve (owned by MWPA) and the Village Hall. The Hall had been designated as a Neighbourhood Safer Place under the Rural Fires Act and significant clearing undertaken on the adjacent land including Marcus Clark Reserve. This had further exposed the rear of the then Hall which was the first building visitors saw when they arrived in Mount Wilson. Not a pretty sight with old concrete and metal water tanks, gas bottles, external hot water heater and wheelie bins. The Hall entrance also lacked visual appeal with its rough galvanized railings and narrow ramp. Barbara Landsberg our resident landscape designer, was approached and agreed to provide her design services free of charge. Barbara developed the landscape plan working with the Council architect and the Committee.



By July 2021 all the principal design elements had been agreed between the Committee and Council which then had to prepare more detailed plans and the Environmental Impact Statement together with the associated reports for lodgment with the DA. This was far from routine as the Hall is a heritage item under the BMCC Local Environmental Plans, a Neighbourhood Safer Place, located in an area of bushfire risk, and was built over 70 years ago in timber. The DA was lodged in March 2023 and approved in July 2023.

Vicki Edmunds (Manager, Community & Library) informed the Committee in June 2022 that the Council had obtained Government funding from the Black Summer Bushfire Grants for remote areas to improve communications during emergencies. This enabled the Council to provide high speed satellite Wi-Fi at the Hall and to couple it with the Library2U project. This funding also allowed for new concrete paths and exterior lighting at the Hall to safely access the book lockers.

Tan Vo (Manager – Strategic Property & Commercial Services) was responsible for the Hall and strongly supported the project. He was able to allocate \$100K then another \$102K to the project from Council unexpended grant money obtained from Bushfire Local Economy Resilience Fund (BLERF) grants. There was now \$452K in grant money available for the project. Following the issuing of the DA, tender documentation was prepared, which had to be reviewed by the Council's cost estimator. With construction costs escalating during Covid the \$452K was insufficient to complete the building works as set out in the DA (let alone the landscaping). Council could not go to tender with insufficient committed funding and deleted external roofs, new entrance and landscaping from the tender to meet the anticipated tender pricing.

The Committee wished to see all the building works completed as envisaged by the DA. The Committee informed the Council that the funding shortfall for the external roofing and new

entrance could be raised from the Mount Wilson community and requested that the external roofs and new entrance be reinstated. This was rejected by the Council on the grounds that any further delay in commencing construction would jeopardize the grants (multiple extensions had already been obtained). Tan Vo said, however, that if we could raise the money, the external roofs and new entrance could be completed under a separate tender to be known as Stage 2 after Stage 1 had been completed.



Above: the old and new entrances.

The modified design (Stage 1) went to tender in August 2023. The successful tenderer was Jatomedra PL (Todd Dean) who had built the extensions to the fire station. The building work commenced in October 2023.



The Committee, having spoken to prospective donors, concluded that significant donations would not be forthcoming unless Council agreed to refund the donations should Stage 2 not proceed for any reason. Council was not willing to allow the Committee to raise money subject to that condition. This obstacle was overcome when the Mount Wilson Progress Association agreed to carry out the fundraising from its members. A flyer was produced setting out the terms of the member's conditional donations together with drawings supplied by the Council of the proposed Stage 2 works. The appeal was launched at the fire station in March 2024 at the combined meetings of the AGM of the Committee and a GM of MWPA. Within six weeks \$76K was raised. A wonderful effort by the community. This coupled with \$19K previously raised by the Committee enabled the Council to prepare plans and issue a Request for Quote for Stage 2. The RFQ was issued in August 2024, and the contract was awarded to Ikodome PL in September 2024.

The Committee met with the Council on a monthly basis during the construction periods at the Council Offices at Katoomba. At the August 2024 meeting Tan Vo dropped a bombshell. He said he had retired and was leaving the Council in a week's time. He had been responsible for the Hall in various capacities for twenty years and wanted to see it completed in accordance with the original DA. He had a farewell present, he had found \$90K in other Council unexpended grant money and allocated it to the Hall. We now had sufficient funds to complete the building and undertake landscaping.

Barbara Landsberg modified her DA landscape design to meet the budgetary constraints, and the Council issued an RFQ for the Stage 3 works in November 2024. The contract was awarded to Ikodome PL (the contractor for Stage 2), and the works were substantially completed by end April 2025. MWPA with the agreement of the Council agreed to undertake additional plantings at the Hall.

The project took five years from the original submission to Council in April 2020, involved six separate fundings (including the community fundraising), three separate construction contracts plus the work undertaken by the Council for the satellite Wi-Fi and Library2U project.



At the reopening ceremony Ted Griffin, on behalf of the Mount Wilson community, thanked the Federal and State Governments for providing the funding. He also thanked the Blue Mountains City Council for seeing the project through to a successful conclusion and bearing the significant internal design and project management costs.

Ted Griffin, Chair, Mount Wilson Village Hall Management Advisory Committee

TWO ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE AT THE OLD SCHOOL

In June we were treated to not one but two artists in residence at The Old School, a first for the program hosting two visual artists in the same month!



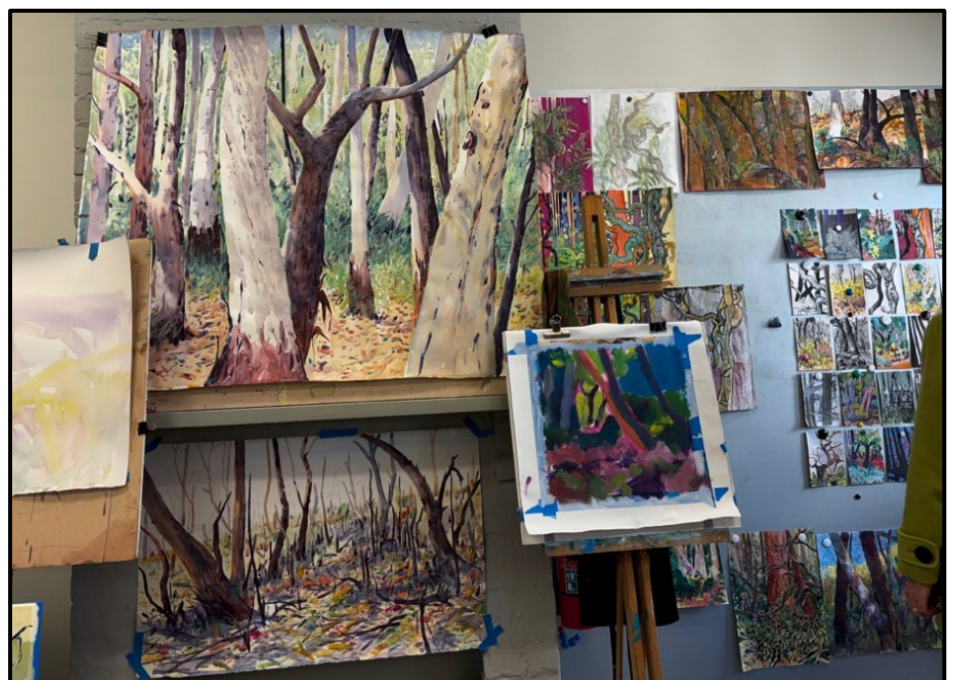
For Mellissa Read-Devine (on left) and Julie Simmons (on right) it would also be a first to collaborate together during their stay.

Both artists who are "plein air" painters and love the outdoors were on a mission to sketch and paint the natural beauty of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine. But the harsh weather conditions (some very wild winds) meant more time was spent in the studio than desired, but not to be deterred the artists would peer out of the School House windows as an adapted form of "plein air". The volume of work produced has been considerable and impressive driven by both a passion and disciplined work ethic. Following their community event, held on 29th June, where they exhibited a large range of both individual and collaborated artworks, it is fair to say they have certainly captured the beautiful native flora and landscapes of the area.



Artistic collaboration is often a challenge, especially given different artistic backgrounds and approaches, but these artists had one unique advantage, they were close friends. But how would this collaboration process work? Who would take the lead? Would one artist start and the other finish? Who would make the final decisions? These were all questions that the artists were not sure about, so not to overthink it, they just put brush to canvas and let it unfold.

Coming from different backgrounds: Mellissa's paintings have evolved into her "macropointilist" style celebrating the shape, colour and brushstroke of contemporary impressionism, in addition she specialises in woodcut printing. By contrast, Jullie brings her skills of working primarily in watercolour and her technical approach having trained as a commercial artist. So this was always going to be an interesting blend of creativity.



Before the big collaborated work reveal (see image below and following page), the artists discussed the benefits of collaboration, it was more than just the finished work, it was about changes in artistic approach and working style - to complement, to cooperate, to partner, to compromise and even not to upset each other.



So was this first-time collaboration between these two very individual and idealist artists a success, well in my mind, absolutely! The results speak for themselves.

Melissa and Julie are our final artists for this round of the program, but there has been lots of interest for the next upcoming round which will commence from October this year, so stay tuned.

To see each artist's individual works you can visit their websites:

[Melissa](#) and [Julie](#).

Sean Irwin, Secretary, The
Old School



UPDATE FROM YOUR RURAL FIRE BRIGADE

As we live through another chilly winter (as this contributor is typing on a cold, cold morning), your Brigade's variety of activities could help to warm your heart – or, at least, help you feel better prepared for the Summer ahead. While we've had lots of rain (understatement), we know that things can dry off quickly and so we always plan for the possibility that we'll have some fire activity over Summer.

With this in mind, we've been continuing to participate in various RFS courses. We've had drivers doing specialised rural fire driving courses, our Advanced Firefighter candidates continuing to go through the range of modules they have to do from navigating through to hydraulics (in the rain a few weeks ago – brave souls!) and generally increasing the skill levels of our members. Thank you to our members who have continue to skill up!

The Brigade's Annual General Meeting was held on Saturday, 7 June. At that meeting we reported on all things we did during the reporting year and the Membership voted on the Brigade Executive and Field Leadership team. See the newly released Phone Book for details.

In July, our Community First Responders completed their annual recertifications in CPR and the use of defibrillators and oxygen in cardiac arrests. And we've continued to do our monthly training on a variety of subject matters so that, when you call 000 and request Ambulance assistance, we'll be ready to get there to help you while the Ambulance and those fabulous paramedics are still on their way.

The RFS is rolling out Mobile Data Terminals on all RFS vehicles with ours having been fitted over the past few months. These data terminals allow us to directly provide and receive data from Fire Control in Homebush. While we have always done this via consoles in our vehicles and by radio, these MDTs allow us and Fire Comm to do more. We can respond to incidents, get information on them, advise our status when responding to incidents, get navigational assistance on how to get to incidents (very helpful when they're out in the bush) and advise Fire Comm of who are on board our vehicles, who's in charge and lots of other helpful information can be passed around.

At our August training day (the first Sunday of the month) we trained on the training module provided, working out how we'd respond to various situations using the MDTs. More functionality is to be rolled out over time, and we'll keep working on how to best use them.

Another key feature of our work in recent months is becoming more familiar with areas a bit further away from us but which we need to know about because...hey...fire doesn't respect Fire brigade boundaries. We need to be able to work well with neighbouring brigades. We already have close relationships with Mt Tomah and Bell Brigades. They are our closest brigades in the Blue Mountains District. We've been expanding our networks through having a joint training session with Clarence Dargan a few months ago. We familiarised ourselves with: their local fire trails (do you know how close they are as the crow flies and fire roars? Pretty close really); their station (always interesting to have a sticky beak around other stations to see how they organise themselves) and shared a very welcoming morning tea with them (very nice cakes and biscuits). In a neat segue, they had just had a vehicle fitted with an MDT and so we got a sneak peek at one and what it does before our vehicles were fitted with them.



Our twice monthly maintenance nights have continued with our regular checks of vehicle readiness and station organisation.

In July we got some sad news- the Mt Irvine Fire Station has been condemned by BMCC as unsafe – it was in a bad way. So, our Cat 7 fire truck is now based at the Mt Irvine Hall. It's really important to all of us that we have capability stationed in Mt Irvine to respond to all the things that come up in our communities which we work on – not only fires but events such as fallen trees, searches and CFR call outs. That's why we're really keen (and I mean REALLY keen) to have the new station at Mt Irvine, which has been in planning for a long time, built and operational before many more fire seasons. We're working as closely as we can with the RFS (which is running this project) to make that a reality.

On the operational front, we've attended ten callouts in recent months, being three CFR incidents, three fire calls, two motor vehicle accidents and we've cut up and wrangled two big trees which have come down across our roads.

And a reminder, now is the perfect time to get your properties in shape for Summer. Your mission? Reduce the fire load around buildings; do your permitted size pile burns when still permitted (with notifications as required); make sure your firefighting gear is good to go (pumps, hoses, sprinklers...) and please think about how you can make access to your properties easier for our vehicles if we do have to come to your assistance in a fire or other emergency event. Street numbers and nighttime lighting all helps.

Keep safe – and warm – people!

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

UPCOMING ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE AT THE OLD SCHOOL

It's time to welcome another group of artists to Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine. As you know, during their stay in the Old School precinct, every artist offers us the opportunity to experience their art, learn a new skill and understand the connections and processes which bring their talent to life.

This seventh round of our Artists in Residence program offers up seven very different visual artists who will stay here between this October and June 2026. Our community hosts have a new host organiser, Heidi Irwin, and she would welcome and support any of you interested in being added to the list of host volunteers.

Cheryl Bruce from the central coast and primarily a watercolour artist arrives in October. She specialises in impressionistic paintings covering a wide variety of subjects taking inspiration from the environment around her. With a lifelong passion for fabric and all things pattern related, Cheryl also creates other works such as stationery and linens. She is drawn to our local areas waterfalls, gums and gardens which she will use to inspire a new body of work. Toward the end of her stay, she will host an open studio and pop-up exhibition and if there is enough interest, would like to teach an outdoor watercolour workshop.

All is quiet in the Old School precinct until January next year when Michele England arrives. Her practice investigates environmental concerns, concentrating on human impact on different ecologies and the earth as a whole. She paints mostly in oils, watercolour and gouache but also uses found objects and embroidery to make her assemblages. She sees the natural environment of Mt Wilson as ideal for capturing flora, fauna and wild vistas in situ. These works would then be coupled with images of progress in terms of industry, machinery, structures, etc

to form unique works of art, which you will have a chance to study and hear her story towards the end of her stay.

In February, the landscape painter Joel Arthur comes to stay. Again, his practice responds to place but in a very different way. Joel sees Mt Wilson's beautiful gardens and surroundings giving him scope to find alternative ways to depict landscape by remodelling the imagery. While working predominantly with oil on canvas to explore utopian and dystopian landscapes, he also uses different mediums such as wax, marble dust and acrylics. He will reveal his works at an open studio at the end of his stay.

Suzanne Knight, a contemporary Canberra-based artist, arrives in March. While initially trained as a printmaker, her art practice includes tapestry weaving, Japanese woodblock prints, drawing, painting and lithography. Her works explore the tension between containment and the unconfined, between domestic and natural environments. You will be able to experience her practice at a tapestry demonstration, artist talk and small exhibition.

Then we have an intriguing duo, specialising in night photography. Arts photographer Sharon Hickey and Sara Corlis, a passionate wildlife, nature and landscape photographer, arrive in May 2026 to introduce us to the wonders of night photography. Their project is called Silent Hours and ventures into the twilight realm of Mt Wilson to explore the delicate threshold between the real and the unreal. Working with a limited colour palette, they will seek to distil the visual language of the night revealing a Mt Wilson rarely seen, even by the locals. We will be invited along on one of their twilight explorations to try some of their techniques and witness our village from a whole new perspective.

Our final artists is Hannah Lewis, whose work is inspired by her passion for Australian native plants and her love of the natural environment. As an artist and educator, Hannah has a passion for artisan textiles and clothing, often using the shape of a favourite piece of clothing to 'frame' her prints, as clothing is her metaphor for nature wrapping itself around you. She wants to record the beauty and fragility of our natural landscape through the lens of an 'outsider'. As part of her residency, Hannah will offer a talk about her art practice followed by linocut workshops for up to 10 adults, focused on drawing inspiration from our environment.

We have been privileged to have so many joyful events provided by our Artists in Residence, the most recent one being last May. The open studio and fun talk by two colourful creatives, Melissa Read-Devine and Julie Simmons, provided rare insights into the creative process. Please come and enjoy this year's program.

Anne De Salis

BOOK REVIEW

Sometimes a new book grabs you by the scruff and shakes out a lot of preconceptions and changes long held ideas. Raising Hare by Chloe Dalton does the opposite: it creeps up on you with a mixture of enchantment and spell binding descriptions.

Hares are the stuff of legends in Britain and when Dalton literally almost trips over a baby hare, or leveret, she is uncertain as to whether to leave it to its fate or take it home. She lives in a restored small barn in the countryside so she is familiar with hares and their seemingly eccentric behaviour. So she picks it up, 'no longer than the width of my palm' and takes it home. She is determined to keep it as a wild creature rather than tame it into some kind of pet. Despite her

concerns the hare grows into a marvellous creature who seems to respond to the presence of Dalton. It has free run of the house, the garden and eventually the fields over the stone wall.

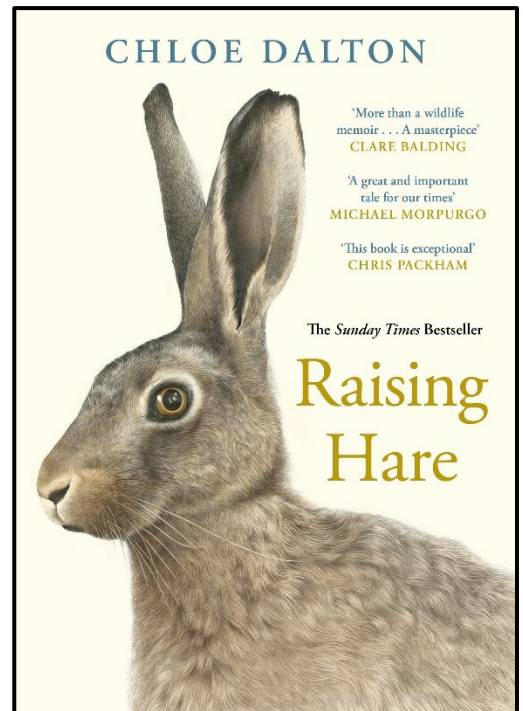
She can find almost no help with what the leveret may need except in very old hunting memoirs but these do lead her to success. Her descriptions of the hare's behaviour and the subtle changes in its coat according to the season are beautiful. 'Its fur lost its dark chocolate hue, until its paws, flanks and chest were the colour of spilt cream and only the fur on its back and ears still recalled its newborn pelt.'

As the hare grows Dalton finds that her own behaviour has changed in response to the hare – she is quieter, she tries to leave it in peace. However she is intrigued by how much of the behaviour seems guided by instinct, and how as it moves into the fields it still returns to the barn. It is a safe and secure place for the hare and for Dalton as she is held there by the restrictions of Covid.

Dalton does her best not to anthropomorphise the little hare but she admits to accepting some life lessons from the hare's behaviour. She also refuses to name the hare, seeing this as a step towards shaping it to be with humans rather than letting it be its own half-wild self.

I read this book in a hardcover and everything about it was part of the whole experience – the cover illustrations, the endpaper drawings, the chapter headings and the detailed references to all that she reads about keeping a hare. It settled into my hands as much as the hare shared its life with Dalton. I thought the book may have been sentimental and a bit mawkish but it really was a delight in every way.

Alison Halliday



FEEDBACK AND SUMMER EDITION

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

The closing date for the Summer edition of The Mounts is **Friday 14 November 2025**. 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.