



# The Mounts

## The Community Newsletter of Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine



**June 2016**

### Welcome

The Upper Blue Mountains is certainly in the midst of tourist boom. After years of seeming indifference to the lure of the mountains, it is not uncommon to see, by way of just one small example, the entire length of Katoomba railway station being six deep with people patiently awaiting the arrival of the Saturday 18.26 All Stations to Central train.

The Mounts, home to stunning exotic gardens and untamed wilderness, is also attracting many of the 5.25 million people who call Sydney home; a sizeable chunk of these live less than 100 minutes by car from the Five Mile. Additionally, many regional, interstate and overseas visitors also make the trek to see for themselves as to what makes the area so special in an increasingly frantic and stressed world.

The pressure this places on very limited infrastructure and services was abundantly clear over the recent Autumn. The Mt Wilson Progress Association's report in these pages details the process and intention of scheduling a community meeting to fully canvass and discuss possible solutions or responses for those areas where we can reasonably control or influence.

There of course is a wide variety of opinion as what can, or should, be done in acknowledgement to genuine concerns and real issues. We have at our disposal significant expertise in problem resolution and networking at many levels; the most difficult part may be to reach a consensus to the disarmingly simple question: what as a community do we want? The good news is that there is a sound process in train to flush out what is important to us as a group.

**Tim Gow** Tel. 0412 133 559

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### Community Calendar

|   |  |  |   |  |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| <b>June</b>   | <b>Fri 10th<br/>9.00–12.00<br/>Bush Care—<br/>Outside<br/>Windyridge</b> | <b>Sat 11th<br/>4.00 pm<br/>Mt Wilson/Irvine<br/>RFB AGM, Mt<br/>Wilson Hall</b> | <b>Sun 12th<br/>3.00 pm<br/>Mt Wilson Church<br/>Service</b>  | <b>Fri 15th<br/>Bushwalking<br/>Group — Popes<br/>Glen, Govetts<br/>Leap,<br/>Blackheath</b> |
| <b>July</b>   | <b>Sun 3rd<br/>9.00 am<br/>RFS Training<br/>Mt Wilson Shed</b>           | <b>Fri 8th<br/>9.00–12.00<br/>Bush Care—<br/>Outside<br/>Windyridge</b>          | <b>Sat 9th<br/>6.30 pm<br/>Yulefest,<br/>Village Hall</b>   | <b>Sun 10th<br/>3.00 pm<br/>Mt Wilson<br/>Church Service</b>                                 |
| <b>Fri 15th<br/>Bushwalking<br/>Group —<br/>Newnes Valley</b> | <b>August</b>  | <b>Sun 7th<br/>9.00 am<br/>RFS Training<br/>Mt Wilson Shed</b>                   | <b>Fri 12th<br/>9.00–12.00<br/>Bush Care—<br/>Meet at corner<br/>Wynnes Rocks Rd<br/>&amp; Queens Ave</b> | <b>Sun 14th<br/>3.00 pm<br/>Mt Wilson<br/>Church Service</b>                                 |

### Village Hall Jottings

On Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> May, the Committee of the Mt Wilson Village Hall hosted the long awaited opening of the Stage 2 Renovation of the Hall.

The opening speech by Judy Tribe, Chair of the Hall committee, is reproduced in full below:

Welcome to this celebration for the completion of the Stage 2 Renovation of the Mt Wilson Village Hall. Not an opening really, since there was a baptism of fire at the Autumn Festival on 16<sup>th</sup> April, but a time to say thank you to everyone involved.

Preparing for this evening I asked Milba if the Historical Society had any early photos of the Hall. Along with some photos, there were plans for the Hall when it was first built and also for when the original entrance way and store was added. It is interesting to note how our expectations have changed. The original plans were a Hall, just that; no toilet, no heating, asbestos insulation, a very tiny kitchen, the piers were cement bricks made by Betty Clark without filling between. Since then local history documents indicate that we adapt the Hall continually to meet community needs.

Two things remain constant though our self-reliance and the use of the Hall as a focal point for social gatherings, meetings and as an emergency centre. Milba has also brought along these two cups, a souvenir from an early fundraiser to build the Hall. They are labelled 'Wynstay 1929' with a note inside 'Trophy from the first Mt Wilson Woodchop' held at Wynstay Fete to raise funds for Village Hall.

This Stage 2 Renovation was a recommendation in the report commissioned by Council back in 2002 (Stage 1 being the 'make safe' after the Hall had been closed from 2000.) The goal in that report was to build in 2003.

As we know, this remained on Council's back burner for many years due to financial constraints. During this time Ron Green, who was Mt Wilson Village Hall Management Committee Chair from 2002 to 2010, didn't let the renovation plan just die away. He kept agitating Council - to be sure we wouldn't be forgotten - and, thanks to Darrel Connybeare, a concept plan was prepared and displayed for community comment.

Then, in 2011, thanks to the support of MWPA, we were alerted that the funds allocated for the Cathedral of Ferns Stage 2 toilets were deemed by Council not warranted at that time. Ron spoke on behalf of the Hall at a Council meeting and miraculously there was \$70,000 to get the project started, but of course not enough to get it completed.

For this a big thank you goes firstly to all of you, our wonderfully generous Mt Wilson community, who have come to many Yulefest dinners and supported our donation campaign.

That the Hall is a focal point in our community for meetings, social gatherings and as an emergency centre, as in the 1994 and 2013 fires, was so important when we applied for and were successful in getting a Building Community Partnerships grant from the State Government. Roza Sage, then our State Member, who I'm so pleased to welcome here this evening, is aware of the great value the Mt Wilson community places on the Hall. She has come to many Yulefest dinners and also visited us on many occasions. Thank you Roza for your support

And a huge thank you to Council who provided much of the funding for this project. I was able to show Councillors Don McGregor and Sarah Shrubbs, over the renovation before they had to leave for another engagement.

The people we have worked with in Council have been great: Steve Kitching in organising the Building Community Partnership grant submission, David Flintoff and Ian Tolhurst who project managed the job and Chris Brand, the contractor appointed for the build.

So although it has taken an amazingly long time, in the end, completion of the recommended Stage 2 Renovation of Mt Wilson Village Hall has been a successful cooperation of State Government, Council and Community.

A plaque didn't seem the way to go to commemorate this renovation

We do however have a cake to cut.

I would like to ask Ron to come and cut the cake.

So thank you Ron for your vision and persistence, without which I don't think we would be celebrating to-day.

From all the Mt Wilson Village Hall Management Committee (Ted, Helen, Milba, Steve and Beth (away on a HR) and me): congratulations and thank you everyone for your role in the completion of the Stage 2 Renovation of the Mt Wilson Village Hall.

**Judy Tribe**



You are invited to  
*The fabulous  
Mount Wilson Yulefest  
at the Village Hall*

**On Saturday 9th July 2016 at 6.30pm**

Make up a table  
or come along and join with others

RSVP by 2<sup>nd</sup> July  
Adults - \$40, Children up to 14 - \$10  
BYO drinks

Tickets available from Milba Kirk:  
4756 2120 or email: [milbakirk@gmail.com](mailto:milbakirk@gmail.com)  
*please make cheques payable to Blue Mountains City Council*

To make a donation of goods for the raffle please call  
Helen Freeman 4756 2053 before 2<sup>nd</sup> July



*Would you like to donate a book to the  
'Longreach School of Distance Education'  
bring your book to the Yulefest and put it under the  
Christmas Tree in the hall foyer*

***Looking forward to seeing you there***

## **MOUNT WILSON PROGRESS ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE NEWS**

### **The Mount Wilson Autumn Festival**

Success has many friends but it also has those who see another side further than short term targets achieved. So it has been with the Mount Wilson Autumn Festival perhaps exacerbated by the serious traffic chaos that occurred here the following Anzac Day weekend, particularly on Anzac Day.

The Festival Day itself was a huge success. Perfect autumn weather. Many trees were revelling in their beautiful yellows, reds and every tinge between. A wonderful, appreciative crowd of visitors who seemed to much enjoy their time chose to visit many of the nine gardens open for them and purchased everything from food, cider, coffee, plants, garden tools and art work. A story and pictures elsewhere in this edition tells more of the story.

During the Festival traffic moved pretty well with the help of volunteers. It usually took no more than about 10 minutes to drive from the Village Hall to Cathedral Reserve, allowing for people parking and moving their cars on and too many pedestrians on the road. Traffic, parking, pedestrians on the road and public toilets are the big issues. Significant solutions for these problems are on the table.

The Anzac Day traffic chaos is another matter. The MWPA along with the Blue Mountains City Council and the police had now warning of the huge influx of visitors to the Upper Mountains and Mount Wilson in particular. The beautiful weather, the Anzac Day holiday weekend, publicity in ethnic publications and on websites, word-of-mouth after the success of the Autumn Festival and visits in earlier years led to an inundation of visitors – 5,175 vehicles and about 15,500 people over three days with the peak on the holiday Monday. Despite one previous occasion many years ago when Mt Wilson Road had cars queued back to the Bells Line of Road, the Anzac Day 2016 traffic was overwhelming and uncontrolled. The police ticketed cars illegally parked on the tarmac on the Bells Line near the entrance to Mt Wilson Road but could do no more. There was no effective traffic management in Mount Wilson. There was traffic chaos affecting, frustrating and annoying visitors and residents alike.

The two events – the Festival and Anzac Day – need to be considered separately. The MWPA did its best to keep traffic flowing on 16 April; there was no one assigned to manage the traffic on the 25<sup>th</sup>.

The scheduled MWPA Committee meeting on 10 June will be considering the outcomes of the events in April. One decision will be to set the date for a community meeting so everyone will have an opportunity to speak on what has become a vexed issue. If the trend for rapidly increasing visitor numbers – especially in good autumn weather – is to continue, what should be the community response? Why is the MWPA raising funds for improvements in the village? (The simple answer: look at the Village Hall improvements just completed. If the community had not raised \$70,000 for that work, Council would not have done it.) What can be done about visitor arrivals such as happened on Anzac Day when there were no volunteers helping to prevent the sort of chaos that developed?

These issues and any others residents would like to ask and seek solutions to will be addressed at the community meeting to be held as soon as possible after the Committee meets on 10 June.

### **Well attended General Meeting**

The regular General Meeting of the MWPA took place in the Village Hall on 7 May. The well attended meeting went on much longer than planned as an early 5.00 pm start was intended to allow the Village Hall Management Committee to begin a celebratory event at 6.00 pm to mark the completion of the hall improvement project. BMCC Councillors Don McGregor and Sarah Shrubbs

attended and took away a very clear message. The extended meeting came as questions, comments and suggestions for solutions kept coming about the two peak visitor weekends. Councillor Shrubbs has already raised the problem in Council. Three senior BMCC staff come to Mount Wilson for a MWPA briefing and discussion on the traffic, parking, visitor crowding, public toilet and garbage issues on 19 May.

The minutes of the General Meeting and the president's report will be published on the Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine website. It is available after logging in under the Resident's Login, going to the MWPA section and then to the Administration section.

**Richard Beattie**

### **Mt Wilson Autumn Festival - April 16, 2016**

A glorious day greeted our Autumn Festival and it was a great success.

The statistics tell the story -

Gardens Open: 9 beautiful gardens

Weather: Stunning – almost too warm for autumn

Volunteers: Over 70 people volunteered on the day plus there were people who baked, made soups, sandwiches, ploughman's lunches, donated fresh fruit and flowers and more

Market Vendors: 8 Nurseries, 15 booths

Sausages sold: Over 500 sausages

Coffees sold: Over 800 cups of coffee

Pots of Tea: We lost count!

Cars into Village over weekend: 2,650

People estimate: 7,950

Plein Air Painters: 8

Net funds raised for community: \$67,500

The Festival was a wonderful community day with everyone working together. While there were hiccups due to the crowds, we managed to ensure most people had a lovely day and the Village looked glorious.

It was an opportunity to use the Study Centre for a community function and many had never walked around the schoolhouse and appreciated the land and facilities.

The Village Hall was tested out after its refurbishment and we were all very happy with the result.

Many thanks for all who helped and those who had their peace disturbed for the day. The funds raised will be used for the Village and there will be more to come on where the community would like to see the funds spent.

**Nancy Fox**



**Owen Haviland on onion duty with Peter Raines and Alex Halliday**



**Anne Mayall (centre) took orders and Kate Tribe (right) managed the till in the Village Hall**



**Peter Laving (centre) led the traffic management to help keep cars moving pretty well**



**Early morning: Rosie Walsh (left) with visitors and Autumn Festival Coordinator Nancy Fox (right)**



**From nursery plants to works of art: there was something for everyone at the market stalls**



**Helen Freeman was one of the many volunteers in the Village Hall**

**Locally born Mount Wilson resident achieves national fame  
(with a little help from his friend, Dianne English)**

In January, 2014 Tim Gow and my husband, John were working at the rear of *Jalscene* and, noticing a blocked downpipe, stopped to remove the offending "plug".

With a gush out came sludge, followed by dry leaves, and then, sitting on top, was a bright eyed, tiny baby pygmy possum.

As is usually the case in these situations, the first thing to do is to visit George Mayne which I did with the golf ball sized baby in my shirt fob pocket.

George was able to provide native animal formula and a syringe and our new friend, who we named Percy, came into our care. He immediately began to thrive living in a transportable hollow stump while graduating to a diet of summer fruits. Cherries and lychees were his favourites and he would appear nightly to devour these delicacies until only the bare seed remained.

Early in his time with us, I phoned our good friends Dianne and Ian English, well known to Mount Wilson residents for their expertise in leading and advising camera enthusiasts in photographing our gardens during the Mount Wilson October Photographic Festival each year, and they came to visit.

As a result, last year one of Dianne's photographs of Percy won the 2015 Federation of Camera Clubs in NSW Nature Digital Section and in early May this year, as one of only fifteen photographs chosen by an international group to be exhibited in Sydney's MLC Building and at a venue in Bourke Street, Melbourne (along with another of her photographs), one of Percy was chosen to be exhibited. Di had captured the fine detail of his whiskers, bright eyes and beautiful long tail to perfection.

And yes, there is a happy ending. In a matter of weeks Percy "matured" and, like any other teenager, didn't want to know us anymore. He just wanted us to leave the food and go. The time had come for him to be returned to his natural habitat and so one day while he slept, John and I placed him in his hollow stump beneath a large Juniper tree (which was only about five metres from where he had originally been found) which at the time was covered in bright, red berries.

For us, as his carers for a few weeks, it was the most delightful, unforgettable experience.

**Judith Teulon**





**Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade*****New Bushfire Survival Guide***

Last year I was asked to participate in a workshop to discuss RFS advertising and messages for the next three years. This invitation came as a result of our winning the National Resilience Award. Personally, I was never keen on the previous alarmist campaigns as research shows that people can make intelligent choices when faced with disaster and I think it is preferable to encourage residents to realise that they have the capacity to prepare for an emergency.

As a result of that workshop and after the completion of a tender process for companies interested in putting together communication campaigns, the new advertising has been released along with a new guide to making a bushfire survival plan: *Get Ready for a Bush Fire. Four Simple Steps to Making Your Bush Fire Survival Plan*. Previous guides have created a template for a written plan but the new guide is more interested in providing assistance for a family discussion of what is required for a bush fire survival plan and describing simple, easily achievable actions for bush fire preparation.

Research informs us that, in the Blue Mountains fires of 2013, 68% people had a plan but only 7% had written it down. These unwritten plans included discussions about what to do such as deciding on evacuation details and alternative options, who would take what action and what household preparation was best. These plans are valid and seen as more achievable than a formal written plan. There was always a concern that residents found decisions too difficult and complex to write down which could lead to paralysing indecision.

The **first** step is discussing what to do. Following the 2013 fires a third of those surveyed said that they didn't think there was any risk of fire (before the fire). Let me make it very clear for you. Residents of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine live in a very high bush fire risk area and it would be foolish not to plan for bush fire. The choice is always presented as a choice between deciding whether to stay and defend or leave early. Leaving early is obviously the safest option but in our isolated, one road in and out area we may not always have a choice (in 1994 the road was cut within an hour of the fire commencing) and dynamic and fast moving fires may not allow us to use our planned definition of 'early'. It makes sense to prepare for having to stay, even if you do not want to.

Another thing to think about (don't tell the RFS because they don't encourage residents to even think of coming into an area impacted by fire) is what needs to be in place if you want to get to the village but can't. That certainly happened to residents during the State Mine Fire and was the main reason we tried to give the most accurate information on the timing of road closures. If anything needs to be written down, it is checklists of what equipment and protective clothing to have if you are staying (or can't leave), what needs to be done to prepare the home (inside and out) for before, during and after the fire has passed and what you would take with you if you are leaving.

Having a checklist means that when you are under pressure you know what to do without having to think about it. A checklist is a simple but very powerful tool for keeping the panic under control.

The **second** step is preparing your home and now is the perfect time to take those top 5 actions to make your home safer:

- Trim overhanging trees and shrubs
- Mow grass and remove cuttings. Have a cleared area around your home
- Remove material that can burn (this is especially important in bushfire weather – doormats, wood piles, mulch, leaves, paint, outdoor furniture)
- Clear debris and leaves from gutters
- Prepare hoses that reach all around your home. Make sure your pumps work

The **third** step is to know what the bush fire alert levels mean such as 'Advice', 'Watch and Act' and 'Emergency Warning'.

The **fourth** step is to have to hand the contact details for where to find key information and for those you may need to call.

If you would like to know more you can download *Get Ready for a Bush Fire. Four Simple Steps to Making Your Bush Fire Survival Plan* from the RFS website [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au). If you would prefer a hard copy please do not hesitate to contact me.

**Kathleen Oakes**

**Community Engagement Officer**

*Discover The Beauty*

## **MOUNT WILSON In Spring**

Stunning cool climate gardens,  
magnificent vistas, towering forests,  
glorious spring wildflowers



[www.mtwilson.com.au](http://www.mtwilson.com.au)

Supporting the Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade



**Henry Marcus Clark, St Georges Church, and the Clark family's continuing involvement**

**St Georges Centenary Service, 13 March 2016**

*The April edition of The Mounts contained reports of the St Georges Centenary celebrations and featured two retrospectives by John and Peter Valder.*

*Unfortunately, Christopher Clark's talk on the pivotal role the Clark family played in the establishment and construction of St Georges Church was not available for the April edition. That omission is gladly rectified below.*

I want to thank the wardens for inviting me to speak today as a parishioner and as a member of the Clark family.

My niece - and Marcia Clark's grand-daughter - Stacie Kaczmarek is going to help me do this.

**Voice of Marcia Clark, as spoken by Stacie \***

"In December of 1910 [my father] Marcus visited Mount Wilson in the Blue Mountains for a day. He fell in love with it, the many deciduous trees planted there and the whole atmosphere of the place reminded him of his native England. The next day he bought a property ....."

**Voice of historian (and Mt Wilson resident) Charles Currey from his book "Mount Wilson NSW" (1968), as spoken by Marcia's son Christopher Clark**

"He (Marcus) was an able, resourceful, enterprising merchant who in twenty-five years had built up a big, prosperous retail business. He converted J. D. Cox's premises into a billiard room, and erected nearby a handsome residence which he named *Sefton Hall*, having in mind Sefton Park, the village, not far from Liverpool, England, in which he was born in 1860."

"Marcus Clark brought to Mount Wilson a vitalising energy and freshness of outlook that soon found expression in a manner that excited the disapproval of such of its older residents as put a premium on the remoteness and seclusion of their sylvan retreat. He had *Sefton Hall* connected by telephone with the Post Office at Mount Victoria." (Before that it was necessary to drive into Bell to contact the outside world).

"As the necessary poles were then only in situ as far as Bell, his initial outlay, for which his estate was later reimbursed, was substantial. But he had broken fresh ground, and had he been vouchsafed a longer life, his influence in the development of Mount Wilson might have been considerable. He died in 1913. "

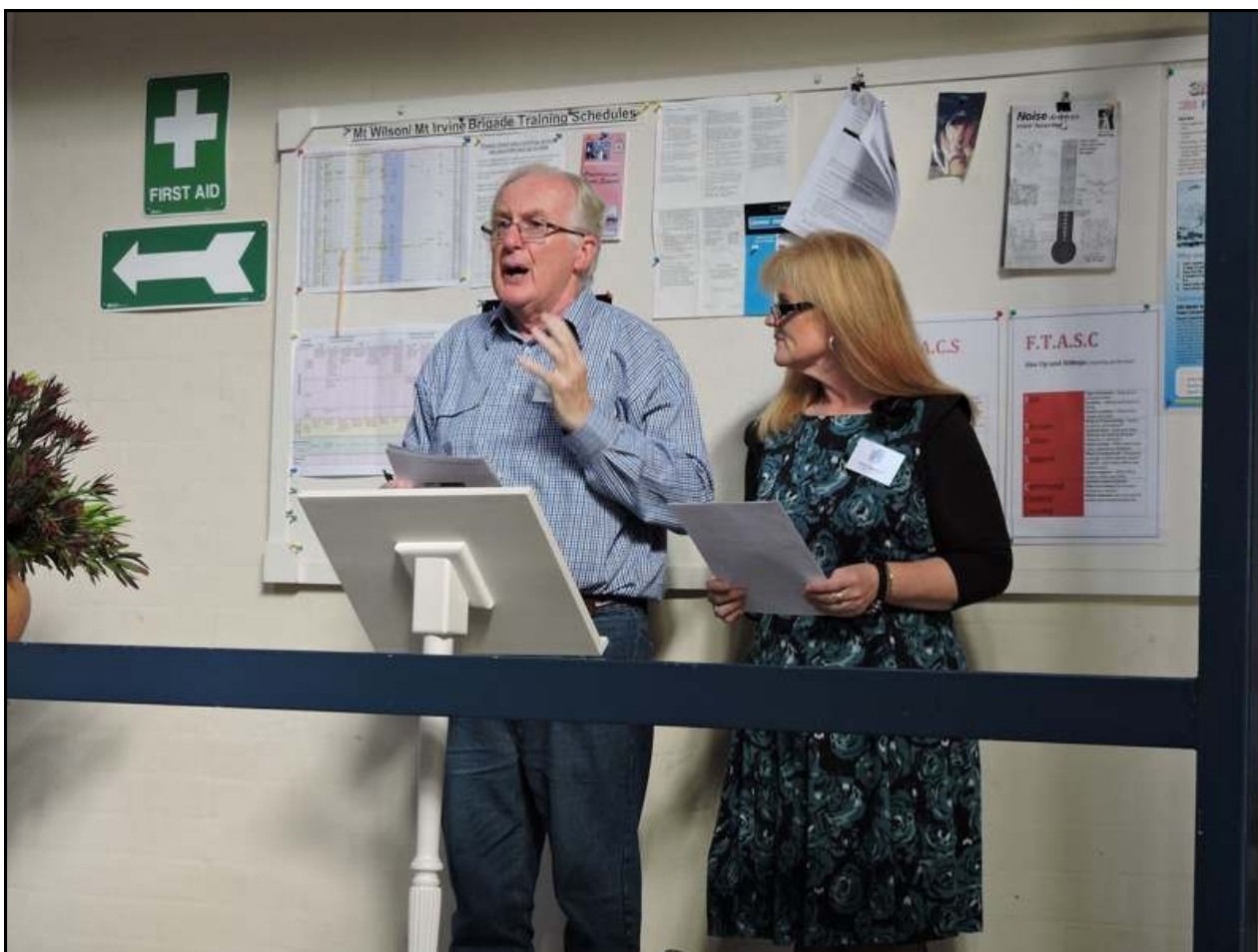
"To perpetuate his memory his children built, on land given to such end by Lieutenant-Colonel Richard O. Wynne, St Georges Church of England, the one place of public worship at Mount Wilson. It was consecrated in 1916 . . . . . the visiting clergyman being then ... the incumbent of the Church of England at Mount Victoria." (Now Blackheath)

**Voice of Marcia Clark, as spoken by Stacie \***

"[According to my brother Les] father bought quite a lot of property at Mount Wilson. His idea was to give each member of the family a piece of land and so gather his family about him, but each with their own home.

For instance *Withycombe* was to be for Reg. All these properties later of course were part of Father's Estate and were sold. Marcus did not live long enough to carry out his ideas."

**\* taken from *Bound to Rise -The Story of Henry Marcus Clark and Sefton Hall* -by Marcia A M Clark, 1984 (Copy in State Library of NSW)**



**Christopher and Stacie, speaking after the St Georges Centenary service at the Mt Wilson Fire Shed**

I would acknowledge and thank the following:

- Tim McIver and his energy, teaching and pastoral care
- John Gaunt for his pastoral care
- The St George Church Wardens, especially Libby Raines
- The Mount Wilson Community website - a great repository of facts
- Many of the family would like to have been here, particularly former residents Jill Mullens, Judy Bennett and Jan Hurrey
- visits to Mt Wilson since childhood, holidaying at *Sefton Hall*, as well as to Bill & Margaret Clark at *Mistwold*, Noellie McLean at *El Southee*, and Liz Gow at *Sefton Cottage*
- My friend Rev Dr Roger Chilton, rector of St Swithun's who has spoken at St Georges twice: the first at the dedication of Marcia Clark's plaque in October 2005 (when the St Swithun's choir sang) and the second at a family service in March 2013 to commemorate the centenary of Henry Marcus Clark's death at the mountain.

Thank you again for the privilege of thanking the church and the community.

**Christopher Clark**

### Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday 11th June 2016 at 4.00pm in the Mt Wilson Village Hall.

#### AGENDA

- Opening and Welcome from President
- Apologies
- Confirmation of Minutes from 2015 AGM
- Report from the District Manager
- Reports for 2015/2016
  - o Captain
  - o Treasurer
- Appointment of an Auditor
- Election of Officers
- General Business
- Closure of Meeting

Please join us after the meeting for wine and cheese



Information we have from the Electoral Commission is that the Mt Wilson Village Hall will be **OPEN** as a Polling Place from 8am to 6pm for the Federal Election on July 2<sup>nd</sup>

For information about absentee or postal voting check the web site:

[http://www.aec.gov.au/Voting/ways\\_to\\_vote/](http://www.aec.gov.au/Voting/ways_to_vote/)

**Book Review****2071: The World We'll Leave Our Grandchildren**

Are you totally swamped by the amount of information about climate change? Can you tell the difference between the facts, the opinions and the lies? Are you yet to be convinced about the reality of climate change? Do you never want to hear that phrase again?



If you answer 'yes', or 'maybe' to any of these question then you need to read *2071: The World We'll Leave Our Grandchildren* which is written by Chris Rapley and as up-to-date as the publishing world can make a hard copy book. Rapley is well-qualified to explain and explore the complexity of climate change as he has had a wide career as a scientist, ending up as Professor of Climate Science at University College London.

This small book succeeds in explaining climate change without talking down to the reader or oversimplifying the vast amount of material. He begins with a brief explanation of how he came to be writing this book and then examines the complicated 'dynamic balance' between the major players: the atmosphere (gases around the earth), the hydrosphere (all the water), the cryosphere (ice, snow and permafrost), the lithosphere (rocks) and the biosphere (us and all other living things). From these factors making up the big picture, he goes on to give a devastating history of how the climate of the earth has changed and why- where the main player is carbon.

There is a succinct summary of the many climate change conferences and finally just what we may expect the world to be like in 2071 and what we should or could do about it.

The book is rather oddly formatted with only one or two paragraphs per page but this does give lots of time to think about what you are reading, as well as room for notes if you are so inclined.

Playwright Duncan Macmillan is a co-writer, but I am not sure what he contributed – perhaps he made the science comprehensible, for it certainly is.

**Alison Halliday**

**ATN\***

The column formerly known as "Ask the Neighbours"

We interrupt our brand new look ATN for an important public announcement...

Hubris, Tim? Or were we just seduced by our runaway success in the lifestyle media genre? Did we try to shoot for the stars, only to find that we've shot ourselves in the foot? Did we bring this calamity down on our own heads?

What calamity you ask? Well, isn't it obvious? All those TURKEYS wandering around. They come up from Sydney enticed by their fellow fowls by tales (tails?) of exotic colours and scents. You haven't SEEN them, Tim? Well, plenty of us have - and here's proof.

I know the picture's a bit grainy. But look closely and you'll see the culprit - a bush (or brush, if you prefer) turkey.



This is what the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage has to say about them:

"This fascinating bird is abundant in favourable habitats. However, since European colonisation its numbers have declined, particularly near cities. In places where it shares its breeding and foraging grounds with humans, *the survival of the species depends largely on the goodwill of householders*" (Italics provided by moi)

What's that we hear? Is it the sound of all those antechinus, lyrebirds, wombats and assorted local beasties laughing at us OR is it the sound of our latest pesky intruder strategy being hatched. It's the latter, Tim.

I thought we'd moved on but....it's time to call all RAATS\* members to once again don those fabulous safari suit inspired uniforms and get out there and be positively unfriendly to all those intruder turkeys. "How should we do that?" you ask. It's very simple Tim - we vacuum up all the Autumn leaves - all of them. It's a variation on the scorched earth approach. And, we publish the Second Edition of the RAATS' Cookbook with the addition of a new chapter on how to turn these nasty intruders into tasty tucker.

Actually Tim - it's a media cross promotional dream - we can feature the noble efforts of RAATS with that new idea you came up with - Survivor @ The Mounts.

Yes, I can see it now. The drums are beating, the torches are burning and then you Tim, in your eye catching RAATS uniform, come into the rainforest clearing bearing your latest catch - bush turkey. You turn to the camera, you pout and then Nigella-like you take the captivated audience through your "Bush Turkey Surprise" recipe.

The surprise?

Well, that's for our next column to reveal (drum roll as you stalk majestically back into the rainforest...)

Elizabeth M, Lifestyle Editor and RAATS President

\* ATN Productions, a Subsidiary of Bread and Circuses (Cayman Islands) Limited.

\*\* RAATS- The Rural Anti Antechinus Training Service (for those whose memberships/ memories have lapsed. We know who you are)

**Suggestions, comments or contributions warmly welcomed!**