

## JAZZ AND MORE AT THE TURKISH BATH

Plans are well in hand for the 7th Annual Music Festival to be held outdoors again in the spectacular grounds of the Turkish Bath Museum. There will be two bands: **Bill Boldiston & 'The Blowies'** and **'Mr Fats & Friends'**, with **Murray Child** (Mr Fats himself) on the piano and guest artist, **Jeanne Hope**, on trumpet and vocals.

Mark your diaries for **Saturday March 20th, 2004**, and invite your friends to come along for a relaxing afternoon of entertainment under the massive pines and chestnut trees. Bring a picnic! Sausage sizzle, drinks and desserts available on sale. Gates open 12.00 noon. Entry \$15.00 per person, children free.

## NEW MEMBERS!

*The Mt Wilson & Mt Irvine Historical Society is pleased to welcome as New Members:*

John, Zahara & Bruce Braybrooke	'Winbourne', Mt Irvine
Tom Breen & Dr Rachel Kohn	'Breenhold', Mt Wilson
Jane Knight Brown	Mt Victoria
Suzzane Daly	'Balangara', Mt Wilson
Ron & Moira Green	'Noonameena', Mt Wilson
Bruce Knott & Margaret Wickens	'Chimney Cottage', Mt Wilson
Diana Landsberg	'Withycombe Cottage', Mt Wilson
Carol, Luk & Robert Gasparini	Sydney
Michael & Penny Lee	'Far Cry', Church Lane, Mt Wilson
Helen & Maurice May	'Wollartukkee', Mt Wilson
Bill & Maureen Ryan	'New Bywood', Mt Wilson
Ross & Suzanne Tzannes	60 Mt Irvine Road, Mt Irvine
James & Annemie Stein	'Wildenstein', Shadforth Road, Mt Wilson

## FROM THE TREASURER

Financial Summary, 1st July 2002—30th June 2003

### RECONCILIATION STATEMENT FOR PERIOD 01.07.2002—30.06.2003

Balance of account at 01.07.2002	\$9 748.74
Income for period 01.07.02—30.06.03	\$23 177.57
Expenditure for corresponding period	\$27 870.59
Balance shown in account book at 30.06.2003	\$5 055.72
Balance shown in bank statement of 30.06.2003	\$5 055.72
RECONCILED	\$5 055.72
PETTY CASH ACCOUNT	
This account remains unchanged at	\$110.33
TERM DEPOSIT HELD WITH CBA BLACKHEATH	
This account was renewed on 20.06.2003 with an investment of \$9 357.19, having accrued \$259.88 interest.	
The deposit matured on 20.10.2003	
ELLIS G REYNOLDS (TREASURER)	
29th November 2003	

## TURKISH BATH OPENING HOURS

*The Turkish Bath is currently open 12.00 noon—3.00 pm EVERY SUNDAY during March, April, May, September, October, November; and the THIRD SUNDAY ONLY during June, July, August and December, January and February, and on some public holidays: Easter, Anzac Day, Labour Day. Open SATURDAYS—from Easter Saturday to Saturday 15th May 2004.*

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# Mt Wilson & Mt Irvine Historical Society



Newsletter Number 10

December 2003

## MEMORIAL SEAT AND PLAQUE UNVEILED IN TURKISH BATH PRECINCT

The Garden Seat in memory of Bill and Jane Smart was unveiled on 29th November 2003 by the Federal Member for Macquarie, The Honourable Kerry Bartlett, at 3.00 p.m. in the Turkish Bath Precinct. Invitations were sent out to all those who contributed to the cost of the seat and the plaques, and to our members, generally. Following the unveiling ceremony, all those present, happily including many descendants and relations of Bill and Jane, were invited to the Mt Wilson Village Hall to join The Hon. Kerry Bartlett and his wife, Christine, for refreshments and a pleasant social afternoon.

Bill and Jane Smart (nee Wynne) lived in 'Hynstay', The Avenue, Mt Wilson from the early 1970s until their untimely deaths: Jane in June 1995, and Bill in July 1999. Both contributed throughout their lives to the communities of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine in a totally committed and generous manner, whether it was through the Progress Association, the CWA, the Reserves Trust or the Bushfire Brigade. Their final overwhelming gesture was the lease of the Turkish Bath and the Precinct to our Society in 1997, for 50 years, as a museum for the whole community. The Memorial Seat, in recognition of their all-encompassing contribution to this district, was long overdue, but now it is in place and provides a comfortable rest for contemplation and appreciation of everything the Smarts' generosity made possible. (See Kerry Bartlett's Statement in Parliament, p 6)



Above Left: The engraved plaque.



Above Right: The Hon. Kerry Bartlett addresses the audience.

Below: Descendants of the Smart and Wynne families pose on the Memorial Seat, 29 November 2003.



## Chairman's Report

The 2003 Annual General Meeting of our Society was held on Saturday, 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2003 in the Mount Wilson Village Hall. Apart from the fact that this AGM was the seventh in the Society's relatively brief history, I felt that it was appropriate to draw attention to two other significant aspects of this particular gathering.

Firstly, our organization, which began its life seven years ago as the '*Mount Wilson Historical Society Incorporated*', has very appropriately and happily extended its title and its explicit range of interest in renaming itself as the '*Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine Historical Society Incorporated*'. Not that the scope of interest of the Society was ever restricted entirely to the history of these two local settlements. The Louisa Atkinson exhibition and function, which was held at Mount Tomah Botanical Garden on Sunday, 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2003, was organized and hosted jointly by the *Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society* and our own Historical Society. Our Society's representatives have also participated in the activities of the *Blue Mountains Historical Society* at functions in Wentworth Falls and Springwood; in the former *Museums Australia Association*; in the activities and training programs of the *Royal Historical Society of New South Wales*, and in the *Museums and Galleries Foundation*.

The second special feature of this AGM was the fact that we were meeting in the newly-commissioned Mount Wilson Village Hall. Most of us at the meeting were aware that the hall, which has been standing there since the early 1950s, was considered by some people in the recent past to be 'unsafe for further use', and that it had been closed, with a view to its demolition, by order of the Blue Mountains City Council in July, 2000. The hall had been reopened only a few days before this Society's Management Committee Meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> October, 2003, three years later.

It was with considerable pleasure that those members who entered the hall for the first time since the reopening looked around and responded to the refreshing interior renovations, and some of the minor alterations in the details of the hall, which has now been judged to be sound enough to provide for the needs of the community for many decades to come, perhaps with the addition of some further facilities and equipment as the needs may arise.

No useful purpose would be served here by any recital of a month-by-month account of the protracted negotiations over the past three years, which have led eventually to the cancellation of the demolition of the Village Hall, and its refurbishment instead. What I will place on record, though, is that it was only after the strenuous and sustained efforts of numerous members of the Society, and other sympathetic local residents and professional consultants, that we were able to meet once again in this familiar Village Hall on that morning.

I should like to record also the Society's grateful thanks to the Management Committee of the Mount Wilson Study Centre, and the Mount Irvine Hall Management Committee for coming to the Society's assistance by providing accommodation for our functions on numerous occasions during the intervening three years.

At the first Management Committee Meeting in the year 2003, Professor Arthur Delbridge expressed his wish to vacate the chair after a period of five very busy years in that role, and he was thanked sincerely for his untiring work during that long and productive period in office. Happily, he agreed to remain on the Management Committee as an ordinary member, so we have continued to benefit from his wise guidance.

I agreed to take the Chair, and Robin Leonard was kind enough to accept my previous position as Project Officer.

The Election of Officers for the 2003-04 Management Committee took place during the 2003 AGM. It was announced that eight (8) nominations had been received for the nine (9) vacancies on the Committee. No ballot was held and the eight nominated members were declared to be elected.

Mary Reynolds had declined to be nominated for, at least, the coming year. She explained that, after much earnest thought, she had decided not to make herself available in the coming year for the role as Secretary, nor to be an active member of the Committee. Mary is very conscious of her need to concentrate in the coming twelve months on the organisation and research into the Society's collection of historical records. This will involve the expansion of the present registration and indexing system, with the help of some professional guidance in that field to set up the most appropriate systems for our purposes. Once again, the assistance of volunteers from among the Society's membership will be very much welcomed by Mary, when she is ready for a small band of helpers!

The Society's Constitution calls for the allocation of the specific roles on the Management Committee to be allocated for the next twelve months by the Committee at its first meeting following the AGM. We hope the new Committee will see it as appropriate for Mary Reynolds to continue to attend meetings throughout the year, and to participate in discussions from time to time, even though she has chosen not to take on any Committee responsibilities.

In the early days of the Society's life, some members will recall that each *General Meeting Report*, and each edition of the *Newsletter*, would contain details of —sometimes— substantial grants, and —usually— large and dramatic advances to the stabilisation and repairs to the structure and fabric of the Turkish Bath. For instance, the roof iron came off for rust control treatment and went back on again; 1920s wooden floors were removed carefully in order to expose the original, beautiful, tessellated Turkish Bath floor tiles; door fittings were repaired or replaced, and so on, with each completed task producing a substantial transformation in the appearance of the building. What we have achieved in more recent years has been much more subtle and less obvious. This applies to the major cleaning and repair process on the original stained-and-painted lead light windows, for example. New exhibition hanging rails and fittings have been installed, so that the increasingly fragile 1920s picture rail mouldings are no longer put under constant strain. Further draught and dust-proofing has been undertaken and the building is now fitted with dehumidifying and heating equipment—not just for the comfort of the visitors and attendants, but also to protect the exhibits on display and the fabric of the building itself.

Much of the earlier focus during the Turkish Bath project has now moved outside the building, into the immediate surrounds and the wider Precinct. A steel safety staircase has been installed to cover one side of the cobblestone pathway leading down to the basement where the furnace and steam production apparatus were originally located in the nineteenth century. As a matter of priority, the Committee has been considering alternative ways of reestablishing a water supply to this same basement area, in order to provide tea and coffee-making facilities, as well as a hand-washing facility for volunteers, who well may spend many hours working in the building. *(Chairman's Report continued on page 11)*

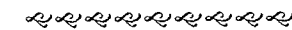
GWEN IRVINE ARTLETT (*NÉE* SCRIVENER)  
October 18, 1920 – March 22, 2003  
Contributed by Gwen's sister, Miss Ruth Scrivener

The youngest daughter of Charles and Edith Scrivener, pioneer settlers of Mt Irvine, Gwen was born at Katoomba and continued living at Mt Irvine for almost all of her life. Before attending Marshall Mount Church of England Grammar School at Lindfield, she had her early schooling by correspondence.

Living amongst the rainforest at Mt Irvine, Gwen developed a keen interest in native orchids, collecting and sketching specimens for Dr Rupp of the Royal Botanical Gardens in Sydney. Gwen was also an accomplished and keen horsewoman, competing in the shows at Lithgow and Rydal, and also in the New Years Day sports days held at Silva Plana, Mt Wilson, in the 1950s.

When the house at '*Kookootonga*' was destroyed by fire in 1939, Gwen and her older sister, Dorothy Scrivener, moved to '*Taihoa*' and opened a guesthouse, which they ran together for twenty years. The kitchen at '*Taihoa*' had an east-facing window that opened as a 'stable' door. Neighbours visiting would call at the open window to find Gwen, with flushed cheeks, amid glorious aromas of fresh-baked bread, cakes and gourmet dinners for their guests. Dorothy maintained the spectacular gardens, which included azaleas, rhododendrons and sweeping lawns.

In 1958 Gwen married Ed (Edgar) Artlett, and together they developed and ran '*Taihoa Plant Nursery*'. Ed had been born at Manly, and as a young man worked in country Queensland before joining the RAAF in 1943. After 35 years together at Mt Irvine, Gwen and Ed retired. '*Taihoa*' was sold in 1993, and they went to live at Buderim in Queensland. Gwen died in March 2003, and Ed died just three months later on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2003. They are survived by their two sons Gary and Michael, and one grandson Alexander.



*Chairman's Report continued from page 2)*

Most members will be aware that an outdoor performance stage has been constructed within the surrounding Turkish Bath Precinct. In addition, a vehicle and walking track have been provided for access from the gate entrance on Mt Irvine Road. Early in 2003, the 'temporary' pine-block and plastic-rail stairway that had served us well for three years was removed. This original access has been replaced by a gently rising gravel pathway, with intermittent, wide, timber-sleeper stairs, which meanders up the slope and around that beautiful, mature cypress tree, and then on past the rose garden to the Turkish Bath entrance gate. (See photographs, p.3.)

There is a gravel landing half way up the new pathway and adjacent to the cypress tree, and it is on this site that we have installed the new memorial bench that has been erected to the memory of Bill and Jane Smart, original members and benefactors of the Society. The funds for this project were generously donated by members of both *The Historical Society* and *The Bushwalking Group*. The memorial bench and memorial plaque were unveiled by the Honourable Kerry Bartlett, accompanied by his wife, Christine Bartlett, in a brief and moving ceremony at 3.00 pm on the afternoon following the morning Annual General Meeting.

Moving on to other matters, one of the Society's regular fund-raising activities has been the periodic Turkish Bath Open Days. It has been open for inspection for a few hours on Saturdays and/or Sundays, on varying weekends, most months of the year, depending on the seasons. At other times, mostly on weekdays, booked tours by members of a variety of clubs and other interest groups are conducted through the building by Mary Reynolds, our Secretary.

Helen and John Cardy and a very few other stalwarts have taken a major role in this aspect of the Society's public education and fund-raising program by taking the responsibility of setting up the attendants' rosters, and manning the gate and the building, and in keeping that facility functioning—in spite of the often very disappointing and sometimes nonexistent public visitation rate. We are greatly in their debt for their devotion to this task and I would hope that my raising the matter in this context will alert other members to the need for urgent assistance in this area. Active participation in the fund raising program of the Society is certainly not confined to those few elected members of the Management Committee, and any offers of even occasional assistance on Open Days and other fund-raising activities to be announced from time to time, will be very gratefully received.

We have received a Development Application from the Blue Mountains City Council for the installation of a permanent sign near the precinct entrance gate. The sign has the potential to make known more widely the regular Open Days and the occasional Special Events. We trust that the display of this information will increase the number of visitors who come to see both the unique building and the changing exhibitions provided by the Society. However, we are conscious that the low visitor numbers to our premises are by no means entirely the fault of our own advertising shortcomings, for the visitor numbers to Mount Wilson, and to the other communities of whatever location and size throughout the Blue Mountains generally, have experienced a similar decline during the past year or more.

Nevertheless, we cannot afford to be complacent about our fund-raising activities and there will be early announcements about our 2004 program when the incoming Management Committee has met.

My best wishes to you and your families for 2004 and we look forward to seeing you or, at least hearing from our more remote members, at our functions early and throughout the new year.

Bruce J Wright

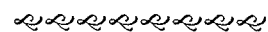
*Chairman*

## NELL KNIGHT-BROWN, January 17, 1922—June 4, 2003 by Julia Reynolds (née Knight Brown)

Nell's future parents, Norman Henry Knight-Brown (son of Edward and Lucy Jane Knight-Brown of Cooina) and Gertrude Victoria Powell (daughter of Thomas Alfred and Annie Powell of Maclean, Tynedale and Clarence River), were married at St Phillip's Church, Auburn, 27<sup>th</sup> November 1919. They lived at 'Painui', which Norman helped build. Norman ran an orchard. He had been born in Gisborne, NZ, on the 28th April 1885. Gertrude came to Mt Irvine to help her sister, Julia Knight-Brown (née Powell).

Nell was born at 'Clarlynita', Rose Bay, on January 17, 1922 at 4.30 in the afternoon, weighing 7-1/2 lbs.

Later, Nell went to the school at Mt Irvine until it closed, then did correspondence school. Her father broke his leg badly, whilst felling a tree; consequently, it took a long time to heal. As a result, the family moved to 'Brooklands' (a guest house run by Bess Knight-Brown). Nell developed asthma. The doctor recommended that she be taken back to Mt Irvine to 'run wild'. They did so. Nell went to 'Wenona' for a couple of years, leaving with the Intermediate Certificate in 1940. She also attended Hales Business College, finally, doing her training as a Tresillian Nurse. This she put to good use, by being a Nanny, too, for well-to-do families in Sydney. Nell returned to Mt Irvine to take care of her father who had not been well. Nell then took children at 'Bowen Lea' (which she bought) and, later, at 'Tallawong', for many years. Most of the children kept in contact with Nell for many years later. They called her 'Brownie'. Nell was one for not destroying the local environment, and she did not like 'progress'. Nell will be remembered by everyone as an eccentric who loved her land and the bush around it. Not a radical eccentric, though.



## EDITH WALLER (NÉE RILEY) September 3, 1918 –November 7, 2003 Contributed by her daughters Marian and Ruth and son Paul

Born Edith Riley in Sydney in 1918, Edith studied Arts at Sydney University. There, her peers included writers such as James McAuley and Donald Horne and her life long friend, novelist and poet, Amy Witting. Edith and her two sisters were among the founding members of the *Sydney University Bushwalking Club*. The university years were rich and rewarding, intellectually and socially, and reinforced her passionate commitment to the life of ideas and the cultural value of a humanist education. The teachings of the philosopher and sceptic, Professor John Anderson, were to be a major lifetime influence on her thinking and that of her future husband, Neville Waller, whom she met at an evening philosophy class. Edith's twenty-first birthday coincided with the outbreak of World War II. During the war, she worked as a schoolteacher in Kiama.

Following her marriage to Neville in 1948, she devoted two decades to family life, bringing up three children, and then for five years caring for her bed bound mother. Then, in the mid seventies, she began her political and community work, embarking on decades of campaigning on human rights, social and cultural issues through active participation in *Amnesty International* and *Friends of the ABC*. Edith was a tireless champion of Radio National and defender of the independence of the ABC, serving for many years on the committee of *Friends of the ABC*. In the eighties and nineties she served for some time, and with decisive style, as editor of the Friends' quarterly newsletter 'News and Views', writing many substantial articles, as well as letters to the press, on government communications policy and media matters during several political challenges to the ABC's independence. During the mid eighties she was on the ABC State and National Advisory Councils.

Edith was a founder of the Middle Harbour Group of *Amnesty International*, which was one of the earliest local campaign groups to be established. An incisive and elegant prose writer, Edith drafted countless letters for the letter-writing campaigns lobbying for the release of political prisoners worldwide. Edith was also a regular contributor to the Letters pages of the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Australian* on issues of social justice and human rights.

Edith always articulated issues with verve and clarity. In a submission to a 2001 Senate Inquiry on the Appointment of the ABC Board, she wrote in fierce defence of Radio National:

*'Jonathan Shier is apparently about to fulfil the PM's long cherished wish for "a more mainstream ABC", although that would seem to be a market already well served by the commercial sector. Perhaps there is always room for more mediocrity. The PM once, surprisingly, said he would like to have a "right wing Phillip Adams". One wonders why. Phillip Adams might interview Henry Kissinger; Ralph Nader; Salman Rushdie - but it is John Laws who interviews our Prime Ministers. That is fine and appropriate. Commercial radio does what it does best and Radio National does what nobody else does at all. Its audience may not be large, but its voice is. It is significant because it talks to the communicators - the serious journalists, writers and politicians, the educators and the cultural commentators. It is unlikely that these people will readily forget or forgive those responsible for its destruction.'*

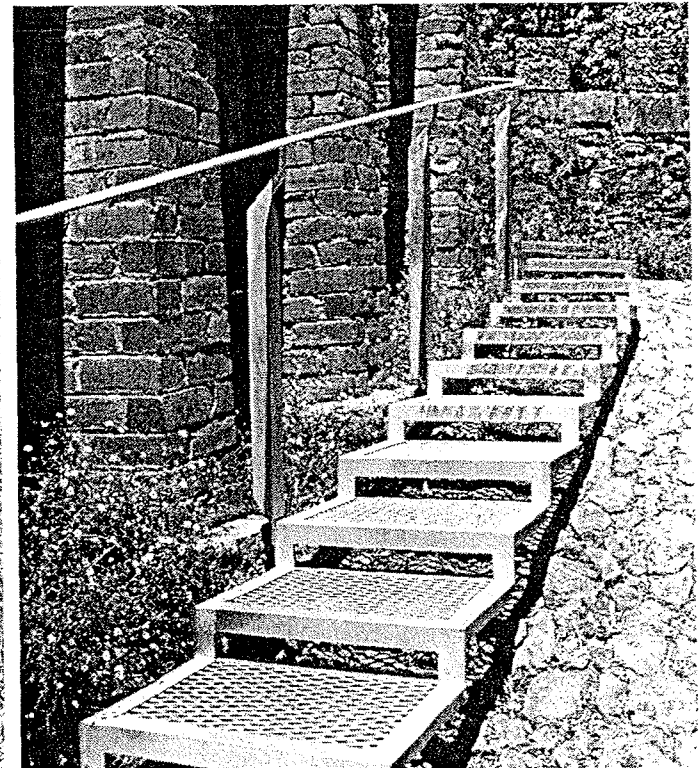
Friends describe her as kind, loyal, wise and witty. Feisty in argument, due to her strong commitment to ethical principles, she was, nevertheless, modest in regard to her own considerable talents and achievements. She was an inspired occasional poet, penning brilliant, witty and lyrical pieces for family and friends on special occasions. Her observations were astute, compelling and often tinged with a wry and amused human empathy. These lines are from 'Some Thoughts on Chinese Painting' (a discipline she studied and practised with some accomplishment for over ten years):

*Hierocracies of trees half hide a house,  
Though frail and pretty as a tea pavilion  
It's a 'thatched hut', with its incumbent poet.  
You never see him, but you know he's there -  
Painting sad verse of snow on lotus flowers,  
Or of missing that nice job in the Records Office.*

Edith died after eighteen months of a debilitating, degenerative, neurological condition. Unfortunately, although an advocate of voluntary euthanasia, she was unable to die in a manner, and at a time, of her choosing. Her work, for a wiser and more humane Australia inspired friends, associates and family alike. Her husband Neville, son Paul, daughters Ruth and Marian, granddaughter Sky, and great granddaughter Anika, survive her.



New pathway and steel staircase, improving access to the Turkish Bath



## SECRETARY'S REPORT

*The 'Blazed Stump'.* In acknowledgment of the work achieved in having a bronze plaque placed adjacent to the historic 'Blazed Stump' on the boundary of Ern and Margaret Morgan's property, 'Goonong', in Farrer Road, a celebratory morning tea took place, at their home, on Saturday, 1<sup>st</sup> November 2003 at 11.00a.m. Those attending included committee and other members of the Mt Wilson Progress Association and interested residents of Farrer Road.

*The MGF Conference at Wentworth Falls, 13 -14 September 2003.*—The conference was highly organized, but my deafness made it very difficult for me to hear in the larger rooms. Bruce Wright and Ellis Reynolds can provide their comments. The session on Exhibitions was very helpful. Meeting with others was also very useful: for example, Rebecca Pinchin of the Power House Museum organized for a consultant, Kimberley Webber, Curator of Social History at the Power House Museum, to visit us in regard to our Collection. On Monday 20<sup>th</sup> October, Kimberley came to Mt Wilson, spending about an hour and a half viewing our collection; the archival storage space in the Turkish Bath, and, as it turned out, the *outside* of the possible storage space in the vestibule of the Mt Wilson Study Centre, as it was locked from the inside. We have the benefit of some on-the-spot recommendations, but we are awaiting a written report from her. Kimberley was ecstatic about the Turkish Bath and the exhibition we have on display there now.

*The Health and Medicine Tour.*—This event, organized by Megan Hicks, Curator of Health and Medicine at the Power House Museum, proved a great social and financial success, raising \$210. The group comprised retired doctors and health workers, and they found the Turkish Bath particularly absorbing. The use of the Mt Wilson Village Hall was a real plus, too: as Helen Cardy commented, 'It was a lot easier than sitting on the gate for three hours!' A special thank you goes to Robin Leonard, Helen & John Cardy, Pauline Michell and Barbara Harry for their sterling help. The question remains: how do we find special interest groups, like this one, on a regular basis?

*The tour on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2003.*—The tour went well, yielding \$85 from seventeen visitors. The visitors were most appreciative, too. Room 1 in the Turkish Bath, contrasting 'as it is now', with 'as it was', was another plus. We have the material orientated towards the history of Turkish Baths in England in the 19th century, with emphasis on Richard Wynne's library on the subject. There is a marvellous website on Victorian Turkish Baths with wonderful stories and history (<[www.victorianturkishbath.org/](http://www.victorianturkishbath.org/)>). Thank you to Florence for suggesting it.

*Louisa Atkinson Day.*—Much time was spent on the organization of this event, held at Mt Tomah on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2003. Patricia Clarke, author of the biography on Louisa Atkinson, was the guest speaker. Her topic: 'Louisa as a Journalist'. Victor Crittenden, who has published Louisa's novels, spoke about 'Publishing Louisa'. Jan Allen, the Plant Recorder at Mt Tomah, led a walk in the morning to see the plant '*Atkinsonia ligustrina*', at a cost of \$15 per person. Jan has also carried out further research into Louisa's botanical work, which was on display. The talks (cost \$15 per head) took place in the afternoon. Catering for afternoon tea was undertaken by our Society.

(Secretary's Report continued on page 8)



## SOME MEMORIES OF MY LIFETIME FRIEND—NELL

Betty Clark

We heard 'mutta putta' and raced up to the road to wave to Mr and Mrs Knight-Brown coming home to 'Painui' with their baby daughter—Nell. At school, I made her a bib, with her name in red on light grey linen. Later, when I walked a mile each Saturday morning to get our butter supply, there would be Nell, with her lovely curly blond hair, dressed in brown overalls, and a cream silk blouse, beautifully-made by her mother. Nell would be in the dairy with her dad, 'helping'.

Later, unfortunately, her father had an accident when felling trees to extend the farm. His ankle was broken very badly. They then had to sell, and so they moved to stay with his sister at 'Brooklands' in Blackheath. Again, unfortunately, Nell developed asthma and following on Doctor's advice had to return to Mt Irvine and, in his words, be 'let run wild for twelve months'. We often saw Nell and her mother then, as they lived in the little two-roomed cottage that they bought, and had moved to the present site, where it became part of 'Tallawong', opposite 'Painui' gate. Once, the cottage had been at the entrance to Farrer Road, built for the road maintenance man. Nell and her mother would come along to our place to have a hot bath and a 'natta', and later walk the mile home with the hurricane lamp.

Nell went off to a private school in Sydney. Then, she trained to be a nurse and worked there until it became time to return to help her parents. And so she began to take children for holidays, later buying 'Bowen Lea' so her parents, who helped her there, had their home to themselves.

To save time mowing the grass, Nell bought a few sheep, which later had lambs—of great interest to the children.

Having two friends at Nuffield Village, Nell and I went to see them and attend a Fête. In the back of the station sedan we took four lambs, which had to be bottle-fed, watched by residents nearby, and fed again at a 'takeaway', on our way home.

Another time, when Nell had to go to Sydney for several days, she left six lambs with me to be bottle-fed every two hours. I fenced in a fresh area of the lawn at the cottage each morning, and at dusk they would run up and down the drive to the front gate before going to their bed in the garage, some to sleep straight away, others to chew the cud first.

We shared our trips to a Lithgow florist with our cut flowers; we would shop for our provisions; sometimes go to see a film. At council's request, we collected for 'Freedom From Hunger' around the nearby Mountains. World Vision invited us to a dinner at Springwood. The guest Speaker was one of some Indians who later came to speak to us at 'Mowll Village'.

When her dog accidentally had pups—and pups! One chose to come and live with me—a wonderful friend for 14 years.

And when I moved to 'Hopetoun Village', returning to the mountain for several days each month, we shared many a meal together at Mt Irvine, watching TV, often having a 'nap' between!

I saw Nell when she was in Lithgow Hospital. When she came to Sydney, her friend Trish brought her over to spend a day with me here at Rose Court, but sadly, that didn't happen again.

*Au revoir, Nell, 'til we meet again.*

## RECOLLECTIONS OF STAYING WITH 'BROWNIE' AT MOUNT IRVINE

Belinda Bussell and Barbara Cummins

To those of us who stayed with her in the 50s, 60s and 70s, Nell Knight-Brown was 'Brownie'. A trained Karitane nurse, she successfully managed to care for a variety of children of different age groups at 'Bowen Lea'. Usually, six or eight of us stayed at one time, but if there were more, the older children overflowed to her parents' home, 'Tallawong'. We all thoroughly enjoyed our time with her in the mountains, where life was a little different from that in the city. The most outstanding memory is of the lamps being lit at night and the associated smell of kerosene. The wood chip heater that was used to heat the bath water is also something none of us will forget. Baths were every second or third night (usually with a friend), to conserve water.

In the mornings we were sent outside to play. There were bikes and swings, we built cubbies, we played in the bush (as long as the house was kept in sight) and quite often we made bows and arrows. Morning tea was fruit, handed out the kitchen window, after we had washed our hands in an enamel basin set on top of an old kerosene tin. If it rained, activities were in the garage. During thunderstorms, Brownie's sense of humour was revealed. She would say it was, 'Mr and Mrs Heaven throwing the furniture around.' Of course, we all thought that was a great joke!

Most days we had a hot lunch, and the younger ones had a rest after lunch. Activities were more organised in the afternoon. There were team games, or, at times, Brownie would pile us into the back of the 'ute'. We would be singing at the top of our voices *en route* to Bilpin (via Bowen's Creek Road), or Blackheath, for shopping, or for a summer swim in the icy cold waters of Bowen's Creek.

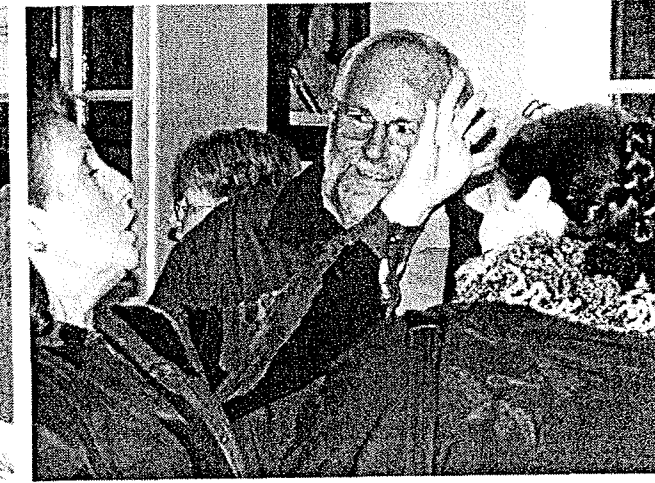
We had tea at night and often cooked toast in front of the 'Aga' or the open fire. Then it was story time. First, a shorter story for the younger children, then a longer, continuing story for the older ones.

During this time, Brownie also looked after many of us in our own homes, during school term, usually when our parents went away. Again, we always welcomed her coming.

In the 70s, she moved to 'Tallawong'. Here, her animals played an important role in her life. A walk along the Mount Irvine road with the first of her sheep and Tess the dog was a unique experience. Over the years, the sheep flock increased, as did the number of pets. As there were fewer of us staying at one time, she would take us for walks in the bush and point out the native flowers along the way. Her garden was also important and a lasting memory is of the daffodils in springtime. Many of her 'children' returned to visit her over the years with their own families.

Her approach to all her charges was very consistent and fair. She was a caring person with a sense of fun who expanded our horizons with her unique approach to life. In her passing we have lost a very special and dear friend.

(Belinda and Barbara, both *née* Millner, stayed with or were looked after by 'Brownie' from the ages of 3 to 18).



Smiling familiar faces and animated conversation at the combined Progress Association Christmas Celebrations and Opening of the newly restored Mt Wilson Hall, Saturday afternoon onwards, December 6, 2003

**Our visit to Kurrajong on 24<sup>th</sup> September was to see the 1979 plaque in Powell Park in honour of Louisa Atkinson.**—There was an article in the *Hawkesbury Gazette* as a result of our visit. Regrettably, there is a lesson to be learned from the experience of Kurrajong. In 1979, the *Kurrajong Garden Club* had a plaque to Louisa Atkinson placed in Powell Park, with due ceremony and the publication of a small book. Today, that plaque sits stranded and neglected, after the local Bushfire Brigade took over the site with the construction of a new building. Of course, they were unaware of the significance of the plaque. It demonstrates how easy it is for our history to be forgotten and lost. It is hoped that, in due course, the plaque can be removed to a more suitable site where it can be cared for properly.

**Land Title Research.**—Elaine Turnidge, a very loyal and long-standing member, through a generous donation to the Society has made possible the research of ten land titles in Mt Wilson, including Portions 3-10 and Portions 66-67. The research was carried out by the firm 'Dutton and Tanko'. We are most grateful for Elaine's interest and contribution. Elaine has assisted further in arranging a tour of the Turkish Bath and Mt Wilson in March 2004 by the *Kuringai Historical Society*.

**'Windy Ridge'.**—As you are probably aware, the owners of this property applied in March 2003 to the Blue Mountains City Council for the demolition of this heritage listed residence, to be replaced with a large, new residence. The Council officers recommended that as 'Windy Ridge' was a heritage listed building on the Local Environment Plan 1991 and within the Mt Wilson Conservation Precinct, it should not be demolished. The Society supported the Council officers' recommendation and individual members also wrote in support. Regrettably, on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2003, nine Councillors ignored the recommendation of their officers and voted for the demolition of this 1920s simple timber residence, which the officers and the *Heritage Office of NSW* had declared could be repaired! One of the Society's main objectives is the protection of the heritage of Mt Wilson. Now, a significant part of our heritage will be permitted to be destroyed, setting a dangerous precedent for the future. The *Heritage Office of NSW* stated in its submission to the Council on this application that 'Windy Ridge' and the Mt Wilson Conservation Precinct should be on the *State Heritage Register*. Even more now has this become an urgent concern!

**VIM Application.**—As we were being visited by a consultant from the Power House Museum on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> October, Kimberle Webber, Curator of Social History (as mentioned above), it was felt that we should await her appraisal of our collection before reapplying for funding. Also, there could be further help forthcoming from the Power House Museum 'Regional Services' through Rebecca Pinchin.

**Article in The Sydney Morning Herald.**—James Woodford, a journalist from *The SMH* rang some time ago. He was delighted with his first introduction to Mt Wilson. I provided him with information he had requested. As a result, there was an excellent article in *The SMH* on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2003. I believe we can build on that contact.

**Blue Mountains Tourist Ltd.**—In the Correspondence, it is worth noting that we are now established with the Blue Mountains Tourist Ltd, for no cost, and we are listed on the State Tourism website.

**Request for refund of \$315.**—The Society received this refund at the end of 2003, following our letter of request to the Council. The fee was paid for an application for a permanent sign at the Turkish Bath entrance.

**Seventh AGM and Guest Speaker, David Blair.**—Our 7<sup>th</sup> AGM was in the morning of Saturday November 19<sup>th</sup>, in the Mt Wilson Village Hall, commencing at 11.00 a.m. with guest speaker David Blair, the retired Head of Academic Senate at Macquarie University and the current Director of the Australian National Place Names Survey. The title of his talk was 'Naming Places and Placing Names'. There are many intriguing local names in our district: for instance, do we know the origin of 'Arkenstalls', 'Crab Creek', 'Field's Selection', 'Ryan's Corner'?

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

David Blair, Guest Speaker at the Seventh AGM. His talk, 'Naming Places and Placing Names', began with the portable, perhaps immortal words: 'I've been everywhere, man...'.  
**'I've been everywhere, man...'**

'I've been to Tullamore, Seymour, Lismore, Maroochydore, Kilmore, Nambour, Moolimbah, Birdsville, Emmaville, Wallaville, Cumdamunda, Cundabine, Strathpine, Proserpine, Ulladulla, Darwin, Gin Gin, Deniliquin, Muckadilla, Emmaville, Kullavilla, I'm a killer...' or as they sing in the USA—  
'Been to Reno, Chicago, Fargo, Minnesota Buffalo, Toronto, Winslow, Sarasota Wichita, Tulsa, Ottawa, Oklahoma Tampa, Panama, Mattawa, La Paloma Bangor, Baltimore, Salvador, "Amarillo Tocopilla, Barranquilla, and Padilla, I'm a killer...' &c.

David Blair Mary Reynolds, & Bruce Wright



## DISCOVERIES at 'WITHYCOMBE', MT WILSON

A study of the title from the Lands Title Office for Portion 31, on which 'Withycombe' stands, reveals that in May 1916 Ernest Edward Brown purchased 'Beowang' from: Joseph Ward Airey, R Marcus Clark, and William Edwin Day. Ernest Brown died suddenly, in 1919, and his widow, Harriet Henderson Brown, held the property until 1921, when Victor White and Ruth (née Withycombe) White became the owners. Ruth White changed the name from 'Beowang' to 'Withycombe'. Victor and Ruth White were the parents of Patrick and Suzzane White.

Mr Robert Fitzsimons, of Bathurst, a keen student of his family history, contacted the Society recently. He said that his sister, Elizabeth Hartnell, and he, had some wonderful photographs of 'Withycombe' from before 1921, when it was known as 'Beowang' and was owned by their maternal grandfather, Ernest Edward Brown. They also had stories from that time, which had been left with them by their mother, Eleanor.

Given their family's past association with the property, Robert Fitzsimons and Elizabeth Hartnell wanted to make contact with the current owners of 'Withycombe' so that they could share with them some of their memories and photographs. Very graciously, Diana and Joe Landsberg invited Robert and Elizabeth to 'Withycombe', including Ellis and me in the invitation. Unfortunately, Joe Landsberg could not be there on the day. Nonetheless, a delightful afternoon was spent studying photos and exploring the grounds and the house with Diana, trying to reconnect with the past.

Robert and Elizabeth recalled that their mother, Eleanor (born in 1902), played the organ in the newly built St George's Church in Mt Wilson. Eleanor had learned music at 'Abbotsleigh', where she attended school. She played for the first funeral and the first wedding at St George's! The Church was built in 1915-1916 as a memorial to Henry Marcus Clark of Sefton Hall and was consecrated by the Archbishop of Sydney in 1916. —Was the first funeral, as seems likely, for Althea (née Kirk) Manning (or 'Bub', as she was called), one of the two Kirk daughters who died within two years of each other at that time? 'Bub' died on 31st July 1917 and lies buried in the Churchyard.

Elizabeth said their mother remembered the local people coming to the Post Office, which in those days was in the grounds of 'Beowang'. We saw the Post Office building still standing, but it appeared to have been moved from its original site.

Every school holidays the Brown family would come to 'Beowang'. The chauffeur would bring all their gear first, in the car. It must have been quite a trip!

Photographs, preserved in the Village Hall, for instance, which show a car and gentlemen on the road in Mt Wilson, were partly identified by Robert. He said that members of the Brown family were the occupants of the car. An expert on vintage cars, Robert was able to name the two cars parked in front of 'Beowang', pictured in a large photograph. One was an 'S.P.A', with the first torpedo body, marketed by Newton & Bennett. The other was an 'Armstrong Whitworth.' The man at the wheel was their uncle, George Henderson Brown. Robert, Elizabeth and Diana had a marvellous time working out where the drive way had been, originally, and what trees had been planted by Ernest Brown. It was very encouraging to find all the lovely stonework and the two delightful water pools which Diana and Joe uncovered as they removed the ivy from the garden.

Recently, Forestry botanists who were guests at 'Withycombe' were ecstatic about the trees in this old historic garden. They have now identified them for Diana and Joe. Diana generously gave a list of the trees to the Society. One of the trees listed is the Dawn Redwood, which is in the same class as the rare Wollemi Pine.

Robert and Elizabeth have assured us they will send us copies of their priceless photo collection and will keep in contact. Meanwhile they have asked me to draw up a list of the owners of 'Withycombe', starting with the first owner, George Henry Cox. Diana would appreciate a copy of everything too, we are sure.

An event such as the above makes the searching for the past very worthwhile

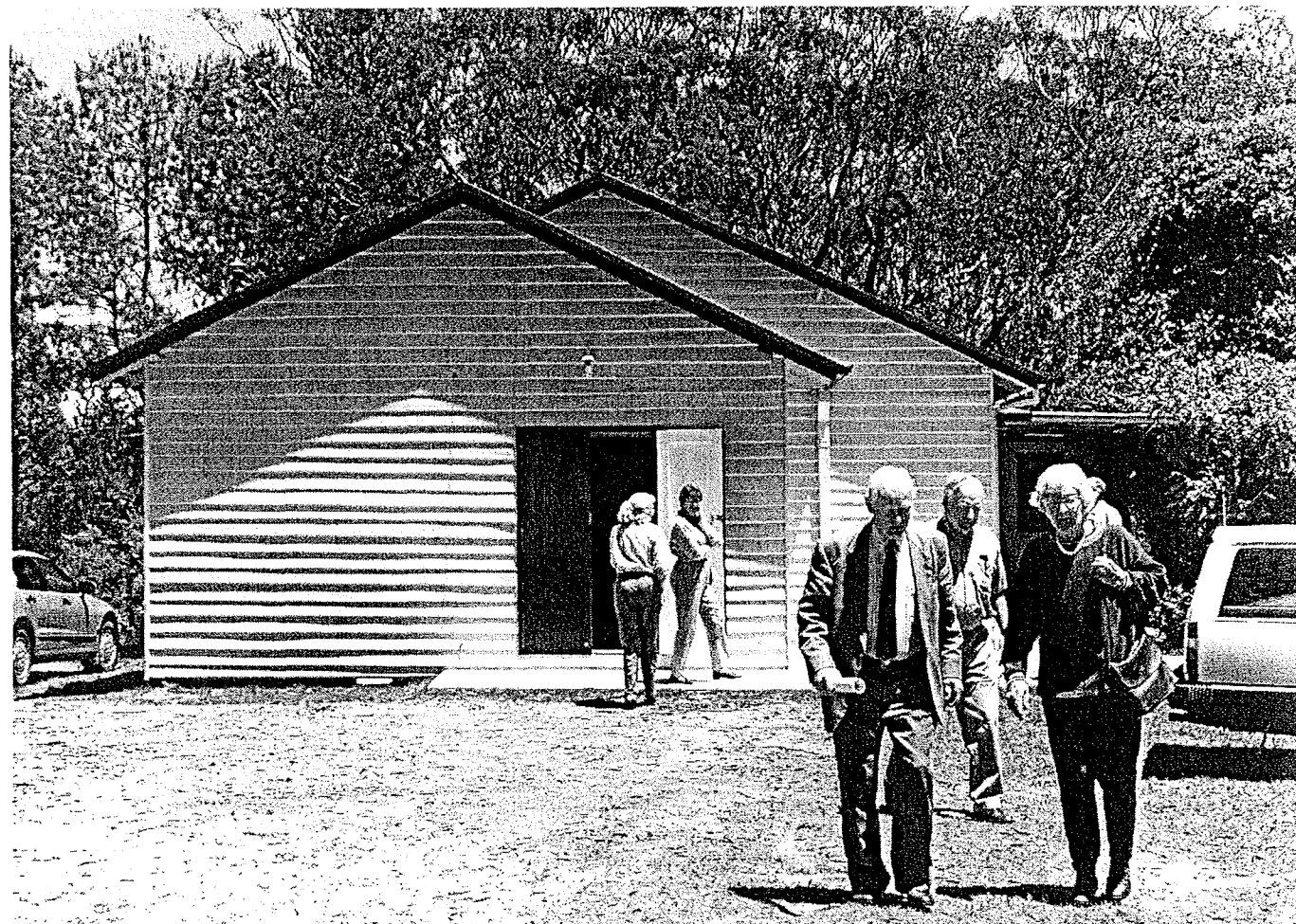
Mary Reynolds.

An extract from the *Lithgow Mercury*, January 17, 1916 reads:

'Mount Wilson—The new Church which was built by Mrs. Clark and family as a memorial to the late Mr. Marcus Clark was dedicated today by the Archbishop of Sydney, assisted by the Reverend T.J. Heffernan R.D. The Church is to be known as St George's Church of England. Mr. R. Clark's son was also baptized by his Grace during the service. January 12th 1916.'







Local residents leaving the Mt Wilson Hall, after the November 2003 AGM

### Mt Wilson Hall Officially Opened!

On Saturday December 6, 2003, the Blue Mountains Council formally opened the Mt Wilson Village Hall after it had been ordered closed and then undergone repair and renovation for three years. The auspicious function was organised jointly by Council's Village Hall Committee and the Mt Wilson Progress Association to coincide with the regular Christmas Celebration at Mt Wilson. The hall had already been used for several functions prior to this, but this was its official opening and many residents of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine attended the festivities, as well as other guests, including Councillor Terri Hamilton and Councillor Hermann Kozelj from Blue Mountains City Council. (See photographs from the event, p. 4.)

(Continued from page 1)

### Hon. KERRY BARTLETT UNVEILS PLAQUE & MEMORIAL SEAT TO BILL AND JANE SMART

Statements by Members: Macquarie Electorate: Memorial at Mount Wilson: On Saturday 29th November 2003

I was privileged to join members of the wonderful Mount Wilson community for the unveiling of a memorial to two of its longtime former residents: Bill and Jane Smart. Bill and Jane lived in Mount Wilson for close to 50 years, during which time they contributed an immense amount to its small but vibrant community. I did not ever have the privilege of meeting Jane, but had the pleasure of knowing Bill for just a few short years before he passed away. Bill was a true gentleman in every sense of the word—genuine, gracious, generous of spirit, gentle but strong, and of unquestionable integrity. By all accounts, Jane possessed an equally impressive character. Together, Bill and Jane shared a passion for Mount Wilson, a passion which saw them actively involved, and often leading the way, in many facets of its life—the bushfire brigade, the CWA, weed control and environmental work, advocacy to the Blue Mountains City Council, and the granting of the land for Wynne Reserve. Of particular note is their granting to the community of a 50-year lease on the heritage Turkish Bath and its precincts so they can be enjoyed by the local community and visitors. Bill and Jane Smart loved Mount Wilson and, in their untiring efforts, epitomised the best of community spirit. Many in the years and decades to come will benefit greatly from their legacy.

### ERN & MARGARET MORGAN'S 'BLAZED STUMP'

A few years ago, at one of the Society's general meetings, Ern Morgan told the meeting about a significant tree on the boundary of his Farrer Road property, just at the roadside. He said that the trunk had a surveyor's blaze from the Survey made in 1868, and that this made it a very historic object, worthy of notice, and needing to be expertly looked after. So what was the Society going to do about it?

On Saturday November 1st 2003, members of the Society and of the Progress Association met on the road beside the stump. The President officially (as it were) 'opened' the stump, and read out the wording incised in the new bronze plaque set on a handsome basalt rock at the foot of the venerable stump. Thanks were given to Ern and Margaret for their past—and continuing—care of the stump and for their patience during the long negotiations that had brought us all to this point. As well, thanks were given to the members and others who had carried the project through.

Etched into the plaque are the words:

#### SURVEYOR'S BLAZED STUMP

This marks the location of a 'line tree' stump, which was a boundary line mark, not a corner tree. It should have had a blaze on each side to show the way to the next mark. It probably would have had a line of stones or 'lock spits' on the ground at the base of the tree to assist in pointing the way.

As a mark from the early survey of 1868-1870, a blazed stump is an item of historical and heritage significance for the Mt Wilson area.

MT WILSON & MT IRVINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

ERN & MARGARET MORGAN 'GOONONG'

MAY 2003

ASSISTED BY THE HERITAGE OFFICE OF NSW

Between these two events there was a period of checking, assessing, proposing and fixing. The 1868 survey was done for the NSW Lands Department; and the Lithgow surveyors, Craven Elliston & Hayes, have a copy of the survey map on their computer records. The line mark is shown just at the spot where Ern first found the blazed stump.

But what of its condition, and how to preserve it? We needed expert advice on such matters, and we obtained it: in the first instance from Jyoti Somerville, former Heritage Advisor for the Blue Mountains City Council. She inspected the stump, and arranged for the services of Julian Bickersteth, an expert on the conservation of historically significant timber objects, and of Ms Siobhan Flavell, consultant archaeologist. They offered a choice of solutions, which included removal of the stump to an indoor location away from the effects of weather (but no such place could be found locally). In any case, Ern, quite naturally, wanted to keep the stump where it was and to go on being its guardian, following the experts' advice on its preservation. And that's the way it is. He sprays the stump regularly with biocide.

After the opening ceremony we all went back to Ern and Margaret's house, 'Goonong'. It was a beautiful morning, and the garden was a delight. Tea and cakes on the slate terraces of the house brought the whole saga to a very happy end.

The Society's thanks, too, to the NSW Heritage Office which supported the Society, dollar for dollar in the costs.



Unveiling the blazed stump, November 1, 2003

### LOSS OF VALUED MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY & THE SOCIETY

Nell Knight Brown had been a supporter and a member of our Society from its foundation. Although she had not enjoyed good health in recent times, when she was living at Mt Irvine in 'Tallawong', she was keenly interested in our Society and had a fund of knowledge about Mt Irvine's past. She was a member of one of the three founding families in Mt Irvine, as was Gwen Artlett (née Scrivener) and that makes them special. Our condolences go to their families.

Edith Waller and her husband, Neville, had been weekenders in Mt Wilson since 1953 when they purchased their property in Church Lane from Judge Holt. Both Edith and Neville were foundation members of our Society. Edith always helped when 'Wynstay' was open and continued until her health prevented her participating. Neville and his family have our warmest sympathy. We have all lost a good friend. (See Tributes pages 9, 10, 11)