



# The Mounts

## The Community Newsletter of Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine



**October 2014**

### Welcome

The shock of the recent tragic accidental death of Sebastian St Vincent-Welch has pervaded the mountains in the later part of September. A contractor to, and close friend of, Peter Raines, Sebastian endeared himself to all who met him in his short time at Mt Wilson. Many residents were deeply impacted by the event, despite not personally knowing Seb. These indeed have been dark days.

However, brighter times surely lie ahead. Spring has arrived with her typical flourish. The Photography and Art Exhibition has always managed to capture the spirit of the mountain; there is no reason to believe this year's showing will be any different.

The RFS brigade of the two mountain villages have been honoured with the NSW Resilient Australia Award for the not for profit sector. This accolade reflects the time, effort and passion of many people over many years who were determined to make this a better, and safer, place to live and to visit.

**Tim Gow** Tel. 0412 133 559

e-mail: [timsgow@gmail.com](mailto:timsgow@gmail.com)

### Community Calendar

<b>October</b>	<b>Sun 5th 9.00 am RFS Training Mt Wilson Shed</b>	<b>Fri 10th 9.00—12.00 Bush Care— Wynne Reserve</b>	<b>Sun 12th 3.00 pm Mt Wilson Church Service</b>	<b>Fri 17th Bushwalking Group— Grand Canyon, Blackheath</b>
<b>Sat 18th 10.00-4.00 pm Photography &amp; Art Exhibition, Village Hall</b>	<b>Sun 19th 10.00-3.30 pm Photography &amp; Art Exhibition, Village Hall</b>	<b>November</b>	<b>Sun 2nd 9.00 am RFS Training Mt Wilson Shed</b>	<b>Sun 9th 3.00 pm Mt Wilson Church Service</b>
<b>Tues 11th 10.45 am Remembrance Service Village Hall</b>	<b>Fri 14th 9.00—12.00 Bush Care— Wynne Reserve</b>	<b>Fri 21st Bushwalking Group— Ikara Ridge, Mt Victoria</b>	<b>Sat 22nd 10.00 - 12.30 Historical Society AGM, Village Hall</b>	<b>Sat 29th 6.30 pm Christmas Party, Village Hall</b>
<b>December</b>	<b>Sun 7th 9.00 am RFS Training Mt Wilson Shed</b>	<b>Fri 12th 9.00—12.00 Bush Care— Founders Corner</b>	<b>Sun 14th 3.00 pm Mt Wilson Church Service</b>	<b>Fri 21st Bushwalking Group— Boronia Point &amp; Christmas Party</b>

## **Mt Wilson / Mt Irvine Photography and Art Exhibition**

**All profits for the Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade**

**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> October 10am – 4pm**

**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> October 10am – 3.30pm**

**Mt Wilson Village Hall**

**Entry by gold coin donation**



**Exhibition and sale of Photography, Painting, Metal Sculpture and Jewellery**

**Escorted photography garden tours with Di & Ian English (Sunday)**

**Open gardens: Merry Garth, Nooroo and Withycombe**

**Morning and Afternoon Tea and Lunch available**

**To commemorate one year since the State Mine Fire impacted on Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine**

**you are invited to a Saturday evening function from 4.30pm to 7pm**

**Celebrate our winning the Resilient Australia Award NSW**

**Bruce Kerridge will speak about his photography**

**His evocative photograph at Mt Irvine just after the fire is hanging in the Mt Wilson Village Hall**

**Wine and finger food will be served - entry \$10**



**Ian English has spent considerable time this year capturing the rebirth of the surrounding bushland following last year's October fires.**

**More of Ian's work will be displayed at the Photography and Art Exhibition.**

## MOUNT WILSON PROGRESS ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE NEWS

### Coming Events

Remembrance Day Service – 11th November, 2014 at 10.45 a.m. Please bring a plate to share for morning tea.

Community Christmas Party – Saturday 29th November, 2014 at 6.30 p.m. in the Mount Wilson Village Hall.

### Annual General Meeting

The AGM was held on Saturday, 20th September. Thank you to all who attended. It was the largest attendance for many years with 49 members and eight visitors present.

The new Committee for 2014/2015: President Richard Beattie, Vice President Alison Halliday, Treasurer Libby Raines, Secretary Moira Green, Committee Members Brian Abrahams, Nancy Fox, Ted Griffin and Peter Laving.

Two new initiatives of the Association were announced:

- **The MWPA Constitution.** The Committee strongly believes that this needs to change to keep us up to date and to allow a member resident or owner who wishes to continue as a member after leaving Mount Wilson may do so. Ted Griffin with his legal background and experience preparing new constitutions for two other associations will use the relatively new 2009 NSW Associations Incorporations Act's model rules as the foundation of a new constitution to be put to members at the General Meeting in March, 2015.
- **A video of Mount Wilson.** A survey completed by members in 2012 showed the response to three of the questions asked:
 

• Should we try to increase visitor numbers?	Yes 73%
• Would you like to see more B&Bs?	Yes 73%
• Should we promote garden visits?	Yes 79%

A first step to achieve these objectives has been to commission a two minute promotional video on Mt Wilson. The production is taking place this spring. It has a forties-something couple with two children visiting gardens and with shots from sunrise to sunset and including some older visitors admiring what a wonderful place Mt Wilson is. There is no narration, just music, and a simple graphic with words like: *Mt Wilson – Discover the Beauty*. The clip will have a prominent place on our website homepage, hopefully by the end of the year, and we'll be working to have it used by the NSW Tourist Commission, other sites like that of Blue Mountains, Lithgow and Oberon Tourism Ltd, the Council's site and any garden organisations we can interest being linked with us.

Other issues raised by those attending the meeting are:

- **Choir for the Remembrance Day Service.** Anyone interested is invited to come to practices at *Bisley* on 1st and 8th November. Contact Beverley Thompson for more information.
- **Bisley open garden.** Because the Open Garden Scheme has ended the Thompsons have generously planned to open their garden for the community on Saturday 11th October.
- **Speeding Vehicles.** Reports have been made of speeding vehicles in the village and on Mt. Wilson Road, particularly during the period 3.00 to 4.00 pm and a resident was run off the road. If anyone encounters similar situations, please record the registration if possible and contact the Lawson Police Highway Patrol. It was suggested that property owners who employ contractors ask them to observe the speed limit and drive with consideration for others who share the roads, both drivers and pedestrians.
- **Holly.** To preserve our beautiful rainforest for future generations, property owners are asked to remove holly and other contaminating weeds from their property.

The draft minutes of the AGM are available to MWPA members signing in to the website.

### **Bins, Bins, Bins**

What would we do without our Council serviced garbage and recycle bins? A hole in the ground is no longer an alternative in Mt Wilson. But neither is dumping, or having a contractor dump, a big pile of rose cuttings in a Cathedral Reserve bin while leaving more of the thorny trimmings scattered about the bin! And neither is it OK to shove the remains of a garden arch in a bin with a big piece stuck out so the bin could not be emptied and other bits of the arch left on the ground. Alan Gunn had to get a portable grinder to cut the arch frame into small enough pieces to properly fit in a bin.

Bins in the public reserves are primarily for visiting members of the public. If they are used by residents please use, or have your contractors use, them thoughtfully.

### **Logs, Logs, Logs.**

Blue Mountains Council has provided the treated timber logs for the Cathedral Reserve Campgrounds which were positioned to keep the campers from driving on the grass. They are no longer providing this service. If you have long logs at least 3 metres long you are willing to donate, please contact Nancy Fox on 0411 251 743. Do not dump logs at the Reserve - please contact Nancy to determine if they are appropriate. We need a lot of logs!

### **Mount Wilson/Mount Irvine Phone Book**

The new Phone Book has been delivered to every letterbox in Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine. If you did not receive one please contact me. Anyone requiring a second copy can purchase one for \$5 each.

Please correct the following phone numbers:

- Angela and Bob Korogiannis. The local one is 4756 2145. Delete the off mount number, 4388 6244.
- Louise and Paul Weingott. The address is 236 Mt. Irvine Road and delete the local number, 4756 2124. Louise's mobile is 0402 251 949.

### **Mount Wilson Leisure Library.**

I'd like to remind residents that due to insubstantial use of the library, it is not opening on a regular basis. However, it is always open on request so please contact Moira Green to arrange a time to borrow books.

### **Council By-Election**

Following the resignation of Councillor Robert Stock, there will be a by-election for the Ward 1 electorate i.e. Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine. This will be held on Saturday, 15<sup>th</sup> November, 2014. Nominations are now called for the position. If you are interested, nomination forms and information can be found at [www.elections.nsw.gov.au](http://www.elections.nsw.gov.au)

### **New Members**

All residents and property owners are eligible to join the Association. Please contact me on 4756 2162 or [rm.green@bigpond](mailto:rm.green@bigpond) if you are not members and wish to become members. The more members we have the better we can represent the community.

**Moira Green, Secretary**

### **ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH**

Following the retirement last February of John Gaunt, the Church has been well looked after by two interim retired ministers. However, a new rector, Reverend Tim McIvor is now preparing to take up the position as rector of the Blackheath parish of which St. George's, Mount Wilson is a part.

His first service in Mount Wilson will be on Sunday, 9<sup>th</sup> November at 3.30 p.m. You are invited to come along, meet Tim, his wife Jodie and little son Raphael and welcome them to Mount Wilson.

## Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade News

The start of the fire season is always a busy time for the brigade, so much so that I needed help in keeping up with all the activities. Thanks to Kim, Rosie, Alice, Thom and Johanna for their contributions.

### Success for Grant Application

The Mt Wilson Progress Association has received a grant of \$8,246 for emergency location and bushfire preparation signage. The signs will be managed by the Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade. There will be 12 regularly changing signs attached to the Fire Danger Meter at the Mt Wilson Station advising residents of the need to plan and prepare their property for the bushfire season. The other signs will be temporary signs for use at key locations during incidents such as fires, windstorms and rescues. At these times we have a number of emergency services assisting our community who are not familiar with local places eg do you know where Esme's Lookout, Houdini Trail and Clinker Point are?

This project has been funded jointly by the NSW and Commonwealth Governments under the Blue Mountains Flexible Community Grants Program. This program is part of a Community Recovery Fund established by the NSW and Commonwealth Governments to assist in the recovery of the Blue Mountains community after the October 2013 bushfires

### But There's More!

The Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade has been awarded the NSW Resilient Australia Award for the not for profit sector. The Resilient Australia Awards recognize and promote activities which support communities to be better prepared for natural disasters and to be more disaster resilient. The award ceremony will be held at NSW Parliament House on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2014. Our award is for the Brigade's community engagement plan which was very much tested during the State Mine Fire. The judges were impressed that so many residents contributed to the response to the fire including many who are not active members of the brigade. So, congratulations everyone!

### Street Coordinators

Do you know your street coordinators? During emergencies they are your contact point for information on your area and to advise them of your circumstances so that we know where everyone is and that they are safe. Street coordinators look after between 20 and 30 properties so it is not feasible for them to ring everyone individually when a disaster threatens. If you receive a message or learn that Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine are threatened please contact your street coordinator to advise your situation and intentions.

<b>Area</b>	<b>Street Coordinator</b>
Mt Irvine	Brian Carrigan, Ray Harrington
Wynnes Rocks Road; Mill Road; Mt Wilson Rd; 4-10 Queens Ave	Ron Green, Peter Laving
11, 31, 36, 68 The Avenue; Hay Lane, Queens Ave; Wyndham Ave; Waterfall Road; Applecot Lane	Anne Pigott, Kim Gow
Church Lane; 50, 60, 64, 77, 79 The Avenue	Robert Nichols, Peter Anderson
Beowang Rd; Davies Lane; Galwey Lane; Hillcrest Lane; Lamb's Hill; Shadforth Rd; 85-117 Mt Irvine Rd	Richard Beattie, George Mayne
Farrer Rd; Smith Rd	Judy Tribe, Wendy Holland

### Operation Wynnes Rocks Rd

Brigade training for September involved a joint operations and community engagement activity looking at the defence of Wynnes Rocks Rd, one of the few areas not burnt during last year's fire. Brigade members considered the strategic issues in defending the area, identified the water sources and talked to residents about their role in preparing their properties. There was much to admire in the way that residents had landscaped and maintained their properties in the event of fire. However, the main problems identified in property maintenance included mulch, trees and shrubs too close to houses and windows and gutters and valleys of roofs full of leaves. For more

information on how to prepare for the bushfire season please check our website. Our friends from Mt Tomah and Bell Brigades joined us for this exercise.

### **Firefighting and Nutrition**

Firefighting is a tough business and Catering Officers have a huge responsibility for keeping the forces fit. There is nothing more comforting to an exhausted firefighter with hours still to go on their shift than a delicious and nourishing hot meal. However, way out in the bush the possibilities for whipping up a gourmet meal in minimum time are limited. Ever on the lookout for solutions to this problem, Deb Griffin organised a degustation at our usual maintenance night of a new product that, by just adding water, creates a hot meal. Vegetable tagine, 2 beef and 3 chicken meals were on the menu.

The instructions were something of an intelligence test that, eventually, all participants passed. The wrapped meal and additional paraphernalia are placed in a thick plastic bag, water is added and, hey presto, steam arises much to the astonishment of onlooker and apprehension, no doubt, of those holding the bags. We guessed that some sort of chemical reaction was happening but agreed that it was safer not to seek details. Chilli beef and vegetable tagine were the winners.

### **New members**

A record number of residents have joined the brigade. Rosie Walsh, Alice Simpson and Thom and Johanna Renton describe how they survived the basic firefighter course:

"Our training programme got off to a very intense start with attendance required on both Saturday and Sunday in May. As time went by the training schedule became less frequent with training sessions twice a month more or less.

Initially the trainees were bombarded with written and verbal information by the various RFS officers, but over time, with practical training and face to face coaxing by the ever patient mentors, the earlier information slowly became more clear and indeed we learned there was a reason for everything we had been taught even "Every Saturday I Eat A Pizza" - would that not be bliss in Mt Wilson - but it's actually an acronym which stands for Eliminate, Substitute, Isolate, Engineering, Administration and PPE; as well as LACES, IMSAFE and SMEACS !!!! So much to remember!!!! Having finalized academic learning many years ago, the prospect of sitting for a theory and a practical exam seemed quite challenging.

We also mastered the skills in rolling out the hoses, rolling in the hoses, rolling out the hoses and rolling in the hoses!!!! And then learning each truck, each pump, step up, one lick and that certainly had nothing to do with ice-cream.

As it turned out all who had finished training passed the exams with flying colours. No small credit to all our wonderful teachers who encouraged us, extremely patient with our errors, gave up their time and methodically answered all our questions and queries time and time again. In addition to all of this we had a great time with lots of laughs and made new friends.

On one precious maintenance Friday after a gruelling training session rolling out the hoses, rolling in the hoses, rolling out the hoses, rolling in the hoses in the very cold shed, we were relieved to hear we had been invited by Deb Griffin to do a taste test on the new food going on the trucks for the fires to have as dinner out in the field - sorry Deb, you haven't lost your job, we love the catering at Deb's Cafe!!! But lots of fun was had by all.

Camaraderie among team members was an important factor in the learning process; we also learnt how to work with other brigades.

A huge "thank you" to all the dedicated RFS volunteers who helped us attain our qualifications, especially Graham, David, Sarah, Michael, Barry and Beth, together with the RFS officers from the Bell and Mt. Tomah stations. The dedication of all of these volunteers, the time they make available is quite unbelievable and all of this to make Mt. Wilson & Mt. Irvine a safer place for all of us. Words are totally inadequate to express our admiration and gratitude."

## **Workshop: Surviving Bushfire: What we learned from the State Mine Fire**

Kim Gow reports on the community workshop:

On Saturday the 13<sup>th</sup> September 2014 a Community Workshop was held in the Mt Wilson Hall. Beth Raines and Kathleen Oakes kicked off the workshop by emphasising the three step action:

### **Prepare, Act, Survive.**

Here are some of the stories of preparations, and actions of residents.

**Deb and Ted Griffin** delivered a well thought out and detailed presentation of their Bushfire Survival Plan. After assessing the risks particular to their property they estimated that they would be confident enough to stay and defend. This became Plan A. However, they made a plan B in case they decided to leave. This included writing a comprehensive list for a kit to have at the house and another to pack in the car, and careful consideration about who was responsible for each item/task.

**Judy and Graham Tribe** have had their general plan in mind for some time. After the 2007 fire they felt that working together with their neighbours was a large part of their proposed activity. Though their plans had become more specific with time, the State Mine Fire put the implementation in very sharp focus. Although they understood their property well, this fire came from a direction that was not expected.

**Richard Beattie** spoke from the perspective of a street coordinator. He contacted his residents and told them what he could see from his own property. This was much appreciated by the large number of people in his area who had decided not to come in to Mt Wilson. His early detailed communications regarding the local situation were also invaluable to the Brigade, since official communication had taken some time to be formulated and sent out.

**Nancy Fox** was on the front line with the flames fast approaching her home. She had undertaken a lot of site preparation and understood the risks at her property but was surprised by the ferocity of the fire advancing from down in the Wollangambe canyon. There was little time to think and make final preparations as the fire had arrived. Though the Brigade was able to get through and assist, Nancy needed to activate her personal preparation (and the family pet) and be ready to leave.

**Belinda Fagan** was at *Carisbrook* as the wall of flames advanced quickly. She told of the surreal atmosphere as final preparations were completed. The property had a sprinkler system but since the power was off, it could not be activated. Though good plans had been made, Belinda described how she heard the call of reality and urged the family to leave without delay.

These residents have learned much from their experiences – we are sure these stories will help others reflect on what they would do themselves.

**No matter what the risk, we can make a difference, and if we can work together the community is stronger.**

**Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine may be more vulnerable than some of the other bushfire prone areas in the Blue Mountains, but we have proved to be aware, self-reliant and resilient.**

**Kathleen Oakes**  
**Community Engagement**



Anna Cavanagh from the University of Wollongong attended the RFS workshop and has asked for our help in her research project. Details are set out below.



## INVITATION TO TAKE PART IN A STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF THE OCTOBER 2013 BLUE MOUNTAINS BUSHFIRES

### WHAT IS THE STUDY ABOUT?

You are invited to take part in a survey about the impact of the 2013 Blue Mountains bushfires on your community's mental health and wellbeing. Your input is important in order for us to understand your experiences and needs following exposure to bushfires.

### WHY SHOULD I PARTICIPATE?

The information you provide will be used to improve support and services to men and women in the community following bushfires in the past and future. You will remain anonymous and will not be able to be identified by your information.

### AM I ELIGIBLE?

If you are male or female, 18 years and older, and live in Springwood, Winmalee, Yellow Rock, Faulconbridge, Mt Riverview, Mt Victoria, Mt Irvine, Mt Wilson, Mt York, Bilpin, Mt Tomah or Blackheath, or lived there at the time of the fires.

### HOW LONG IS THE SURVEY?

The survey takes approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

### HOW DO I PARTICIPATE?

You can access the survey and more information about the project directly at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/8RVVTZF>

Or alternatively you can email or call researcher Anna Cavanagh:

EMAIL: [ac316@uowmail.edu.au](mailto:ac316@uowmail.edu.au)

PHONE: (02)-4221-4164

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*This study is completed in partial fulfilment of Anna Cavanagh's PhD in Clinical Psychology, and is supervised by Dr Coralie Wilson, A/Prof Peter Caputi, and Prof David Kavanagh.*

*This project has received approval by the University of Wollongong Human Research Ethics Committee (Ethics Number: HE14/253).*

*Note: This survey does not replicate but supplements the recent survey conducted by the NSW Rural Fire Service, Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre and University of Wollongong.*



### New Telstra Satellite Service

Telstra has improved their products for provision of internet services through satellite at attractive rates. We have no 4G internet service (or anything else for that matter) on our side of Smiths Road and have had access to the internet only through the Telstra satellite service. However, the Telstra fee was exorbitant ( \$159 a month for 1 GB).

Telstra has recently changed to a different satellite provider and offered to upgrade our equipment for free ( I understand the equipment cost \$2000) to access the new satellite. The fees are also quite attractive with 1 GB now \$69 per month.

More information is available by calling Telstra on 132200.

**Nancy Fox**

### For Sale!

Used John Deer Ride on Mower LTR180, 17 hp 42 inch hydro width catcher plus a metal trailer (10 cubic ft). \$2,000.

The mower has recently had a full service, including new belts and blades.

Contact Nancy Fox 0411 251 743

(Stock photo)



### Book Review

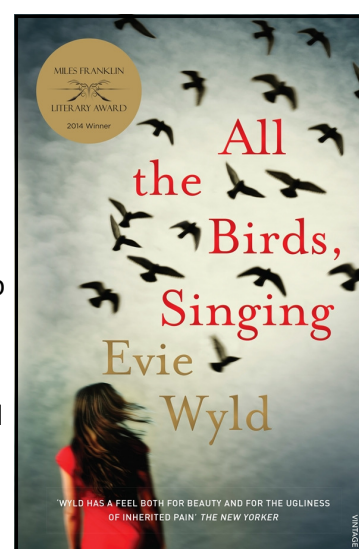
Evie Wyld won this year's Miles Franklin award with *All the Birds, Singing*. It is a compelling dissection of how we are shaped by our early years told in alternating chapters, one of then and the other of now. The book begins in the centre of this two-way time, back into the past and step by delicate step into the future.

Jake is not the typical heroine; girls are not supposed to be good at the things that Jake finds easy; and her social skills are basic at best. She is convinced that she is unattractive, and most of her life events have confirmed this. When we first meet Jake she is living on an unnamed remote island looking after her small flock of sheep.

In this close community she is shunned by the locals, the teenagers mock her, there is something very strange in the woods and her sheep are being killed. In one narrative thread she learns not to be so solitary, so fiercely independent. The alternative thread slowly returns to the beginning of her childhood and teenage years to where it all began to go so terribly wrong in an Australian seaside town. The mood is tense, relieved only by moments of clarity and beauty; and the writing simple yet evocative.

It is a worthy winner, and thank goodness the judges now are a little more tolerant concerning the necessary Australian content.

**Alison Halliday**



## **Bowens Creek Road**

Wednesday, 24th September 2014

To Ms Roza Sage, Mayor Mark Greenhill (Blue Mountains City Council), Mayor Kim Ford (Hawkesbury City Council), BMCC Ward One Councillors Don McGregor, Michael Begg and Paul Rasmussen

Copy to Ms Markus' Office

You are all aware of the need for the restoration of parts of Mt Irvine Road and the Bowens Creek Bridge and the local community's efforts over several years to encourage BMCC and the Hawkesbury City Council to work with the State and Federal governments to obtain funding for this restoration work.

At the height of the October 2013 fires the communities of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine were seriously threatened by the State Mine Fire which, only due to a very fortuitous few degrees wind change, did not overrun Mt Wilson. Instead the fire ran around the base and side of Mt Wilson and hit Mt Irvine. We lost two houses at Mt Irvine and many Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine properties lost outbuildings and infrastructure. We almost lost lives with one family escaping the catastrophic fire front which overran Danes Way at Mt Irvine (where the houses were lost) by, literally, minutes. We also had occasions where the road between Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine was too dangerous for RFS appliances and civilian cars to travel due to the intensity of fire on both sides of the road. Again, loss of life was only narrowly averted.

At the height of the fire on the afternoon of 17<sup>th</sup> October 2013, the road between Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine was blocked by fire and damaged/fallen/dangerous trees. Neither residents nor the RFS fire appliances working in the area could get from one side to the other. Not only couldn't they assist in fire-fighting on the other side of the blockages, they had no escape route either.

During the first few days of the fires, we had several times when we were a community almost cut off from emergency land assistance. Bells Line of Rd, our only way in and out, was the subject of extraordinary back burning and other protective action. Unlike previous major fires, access was not cut off but it came very close. One large tree fall or one traffic accident between the very large RFS appliances, earth moving equipment and other emergency traffic on this narrow and winding road would have left the community with no way in and no way out.

This is not hysterical conjecture and nor are the risks limited to bushfire events. During the major windstorm of July 2011, Bells Line of Road was cut for several days. In the windstorm, two people at Mt Wilson were injured – one with serious spinal injuries. There were hundreds of fallen trees and it took an ambulance over 7 hours to reach him with the last kilometre being walked by ambulance officers and the local RFS brigade to get him medical assistance and evacuation. If Mount Irvine Rd and the Bridge were useable – even by emergency vehicles only – he would have been retrieved, treated on the scene and in hospital well within two hours.

That is one person's experience. At the height of the 2013 fires, we had over 300 local and other RFS personnel and community members fighting the fires. We could all have waited far too long for help to get to us.

Our RFS and community post-fire assessments have confirmed our views during the fire – we were almost another Kinglake. And, like Kinglake, the high risks for our isolated community are well known. We do not want to read another Royal Commission Report which shows that the risks were well known but no action taken to do something to reduce them. And none of us want to appear before one to recite the sad and frustrating history of our efforts to be heard and to cut through demarcation issues between Councils and State and Federal governments. We don't want to have to show a Royal Commission a map and years of correspondence which evidence that a major cause of inaction to avert a disaster was the local government boundaries. Fire and wind do not respect such boundaries. And we need to move beyond them.

As we prepare for another potentially disastrous fire season and predictions of more severe weather events, such as wind storms, we despair over the state of Mount Irvine Road on the HCC side and Bowens Creek Bridge. What was not too long ago a viable access way for emergency vehicles is now impassable. We desperately need the road and Bridge restored. We are looking for a road which can be used by emergency vehicles whenever needed -not a four lane highway. We are looking for restoration of a road which served both our communities and those of the HCC well in many emergency events over 80 years. We need all of you to act.

Don, thanks for attending the meeting with Louise Markus at Mt Irvine last month. We appreciated your input on behalf of BMCC.

Mark, thanks for the long conversation we had a while ago regarding the restoration of the Bowens Creek Bridge, the maintenance of the BMCC side of Mount Irvine Rd and the local community's need for State and Federal funding for this project.

Michael, I am including you in this e-mail as these issues have implications for all residents and properties in Ward 1.

Roza, thanks for your continuing interest in this subject. We look forward to you working for us in this.

Louise, thanks again for attending the meeting and your guidance on how to proceed. We look forward to your continuing efforts to find a funding solution.

Mayor Ford, again we are sorry you could not stay for the meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> August. We would have liked very much to show you the Bridge, the Road and how we believe this is an important issue for HCC residents around Bilpin and Berambing.

Councillor Rasmussen, I understand you have shown interest in the HCC taking an active role in this work – and we thank you for your observations that this issue is not only about BMCC residents and properties.

This is, of course, a most timely issue to address given the announcement of work towards a Strategic Alliance between BMCC, HCC and Penrith Council. The restoration of the Bridge and Road must surely be a "poster child" for work under the Strategic Alliance. Having said that, as the governance framework of a strategic alliance of this type will take some time, the restoration of the Bridge and HCC's side of the road cannot and should not wait. Fire seasons and severe weather events don't wait and neither does a road and bridge which deteriorate further with every heavy rain storm.

Why can't the Mt Irvine Rd and Bowen Creek Bridge Restoration Project be a "pilot program" showing real action in your efforts to work more strategically? Getting something valuable done here would give real credibility to the sentiments behind the Joint Media Release with the Mayor of Penrith Council.

Please find attached a copy of my notes of the meeting we had with Louise Markus. You will see we agreed on a number of action items for both Louise and the local community.

In particular, Louise's Office is to pursue another meeting with Mayor Ford. We hope that meeting can be attended by representatives from all tiers of government and that the meeting's outcomes lead to real action.

For those of you unfamiliar with the details of the issue I also attach the Background Notes prepared for our August meeting with Louise. I apologise for sending them to those who already have them.

The Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine community and RFS Brigade look forward to working together with you.

Yours sincerely,

Elizabeth Montano

On behalf of the Mt Wilson Progress Association, the Mt Irvine Progress Association and the Mt

**Mount Wilson Bushcare Group**

The local Bushcare Group recently received a certificate from the Blue Mountains City Council in recognition of their 15 years of service. The Group has done a wonderful job over the years, removing many unwanted plants from the reserves, bushland and roadsides.

# Certificate of Appreciation

*Blue Mountains City Council acknowledges*

**Mount Wilson Bushcare Group**

*For fifteen years of consistent care and ecological management of  
our local bushland reserves*



*Mark Greenhill  
Mayor  
Blue Mountains City Council  
31 May 2014*



These weeds have all come from our gardens and now most of the reserves are free of weeds, thanks to the work of this group.

The main problem plants which grow in our gardens, and which will destroy our bushland and rainforest if we don't address the problem are Common Holly, English Ivy, Honeysuckle, Sycamore *Jasminum polyanthum*, and Laurel.

When these plants seed, birds and wind take the seeds all through the surrounding environment, where they grow quickly on the rich soil.

We urge all property owners with these plants to remove them from their gardens.

We are fortunate to live in a unique environment. There is nowhere else in the world like Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine: it is our responsibility to preserve the beauty which surrounds us and the forest from being significantly degraded by the environmental weeds for our gardens.

It is a huge challenge - and a lot of hard work, but most rewarding!

**Libby Raines**



### Slow recovery of some species from the October Bushfires

Whilst most of our surrounding bushland is recovering very robustly from last October's bushfires, some species are struggling.

Michael Chesterman has kindly forwarded some photos of Wollemi Pine and Rock Lillies that have suffered very badly. The Rock Lilly typically flowers at around this time of year but has had a major setback, whilst there is very little regrowth from the Wollemi.

Interestingly, one of the theories as to why the Wollemi Pine survived such a long time undetected to our north is that it was isolated from fire in that particular valley.

It is now twenty years since it was first discovered. The ABC has recently reported that the last two decades have taken their toll on the prehistoric pine and its future is now under threat from the soil-borne pathogen *Phytophthora*, which most likely walked in on the boots of uninvited visitors, causing root rot in several of the pines. To ensure the species survives, an insurance population of 100 young Wollemi Pines has been planted at another secret location in the Blue Mountains.



**HAWTHORN**

Once again the tall gates of *Hawthorn* open their arms and invite us in. The midday light is harsh, yet the garden inside shines with health. *Hawthorn* has put on its best show for the summer holidays.

Dad is first out of the car, inspecting the garden. He checks the vegetables in the potager, the wine barrels brimming with herbs, the arbour weighed down by heavy fruit and all the trees. The trees are his children. He is away from them half the year, so the times when he nurtures them are precious. I look around the garden. It has changed since last holidays. Remnants of the spring holidays: fallen wisteria petals lie on the ground. I miss their vibrant purple, but I have faith in *Hawthorn*; she will bring them back again next year.

Last of all I enter the house. Nothing has changed. The security and familiarity of the house comfort me. The sofas are still close to the fire, board games still tower precariously next to the music collection, our beds have the same covers on them. I know *Hawthorn* has kept safely my brother's room in black watch tartan, my sisters' room in pale blue floral print and my own in pale pink. Nothing has changed about the house, but I know the house has witnessed abundant change.

For twelve years our family has made the quarterly migration to *Hawthorn*. To escape the hot summers, the business and the omnipresent thought of work in Sydney. *Hawthorn* means freedom, happiness and celebration. Every Christmas *Hawthorn* has provided hiding places for big secret presents, had fairy lights adorned on her, supported the laden Christmas tree and provided food for the midday feast. Every Easter, she has nestled chocolate eggs safely for the hunt and been a happy welcome home after the hour's journey to church. Every winter she has provided chestnuts to roast by the fire. Every spring she has provided a cool change from the approaching heat in Sydney. She was the indestructible safe haven for the community in the bushfires of '94, '97 and '01. Her stone walls protected and calmed a fearful community. She has been the second mother to a growing family: she has seen two births, and two infants develop into adults. *Hawthorn* has witnessed the happy celebrations with aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents. Year after year she is visited by growing families who come in to her welcoming arms. She has nourished the families with fresh vegetables and fruit in the spring; and has provided entertainment and nourishment to a happy mob of children and adults. She has put all engines on full steam and geared up for these holidays once again.

But soon the ominous last month of summer will be upon us, signifying the return to work, school, business and heat: Sydney. *Hawthorn* will be looking tired and will need a rest before gearing herself up for the next migration. She would have done her job.

Harriet Pembroke  
2001

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This short work was submitted by Michael Pembroke, who came across the essay written by Harriett as a schoolgirl. Harriett had kept it to herself for some thirteen years.

Writing must run in the family - Michael's recent book *Arthur Phillip - Sailor, Mercenary, Governor, Spy* has received critical acclaim from a variety of very well known literary luminaries as well as been spotted on Sydney Airport newsagents' bookshelves next to Bryce Courtenay's offerings.



### Vale Sebastian St Vincent-Welch 1991 -2014

Sebastian St Vincent-Welch tragically died in a bob-cat accident on the afternoon of Tuesday 16th September. Seb, as he was known, had been working as a contractor for Peter Raines for about six months.

He arrived in Mt Wilson after working on rural properties in the Northern Territory. He instantly found the local area very much to his liking and threw himself into work and life on the mountain with great energy and vigour.

Seb was perhaps not known to many people on the mounts; those who met him were immediately impressed by his easy charm and energetic demeanour.



A public celebration of Seb's life was held on of those sublime early Spring afternoons on Tuesday 23rd September on Peter and Linda's property on Smiths Hill. Much of Seb's work on the mounts involved pile burns; a huge bonfire was constructed and lit on that afternoon in his memory, whilst his family, relatives and many friends spoke movingly, and bravely, of his all too short life. Our deepest condolences go to not only to Seb's family and relatives, but also to Peter, Linda, Beth, Libby and Keith who treated Seb as one of their family.

He will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

### Mt Wilson & Mt Irvine Historical Society AGM

The Society's AGM is to be held at the Village Hall on Saturday 22nd November, 10.00 - 12.30.

The guest speakers for the morning will be Ian Wright and Nakia Belmer from University of Western Sydney who will present their research findings of the effect of the 2013 bushfire and other environmental impacts on the Wollangambe River. Is the Wollangambe really as pristine as we would like to think?



Please join us for a most interesting and topical talk as well as catching up on the latest on the Society's work. Refreshments will of course be provided.

## Ask the Neighbours

I was going to do it, Tim. Really I was. I'd drafted it and everything.

See – this is what I WAS going to write:

"In the last edition of this column, colourful claims were made about the anti-social behaviour of certain individuals identified as "LB" and "Mr W". The author has been advised that such comments could be interpreted as bringing into disrepute the entire species\* to which LB and Mr W belong.

To wit, the author has received readers' advices" (*delivered at the end of long dinner parties following the consumption of significant amounts of alcohol, Tim*) to the effect that the species to which LB and Mr W belong make significant contributions to our environment. And, on that basis, (*to paraphrase these bleeding hearts, Tim*) having them dig up a few plants or eat a few vegetables is a small price to pay.

The author has further been advised that certain other species, members of which have been identified in previous editions of this column, have also claimed that observations made in respect of certain members of their species, namely leeches and antechinus, could also bring their entire species into disrepute." (*got themselves an ambulance chaser spruiking a class action, Tim*)

The author advises that the comments made in previous columns were made in jest in a futile attempt at humour and without any malice or ill will against entire species. If any species was offended by said columns, the author apologises unreservedly."

That was what I fully intended to do, Tim. But, having surveyed further carnage last weekend, I've changed my mind. "Publish and be damned" as they say. Dig up a few plants? It was acres and acres of hedging. Eat a few vegetables? It was enough to feed an army of vegans, Tim.

They've dug in and around the wire mesh designed to protect the new hedges. They've removed plants UNDER the mesh and left it otherwise undisturbed. It was as if those plants had never been there. What were they doing, Tim? Auditioning for Mission Impossible 10?

I can see it now, Tim – under the cover of darkness, they are hoisted down from the edge of the retaining wall secured only by thin stainless steel lines dangling in mid-air like contortionists from Cirque de Soleil. They skilfully avoid the wire mesh and its anchoring rocks, perspiration dripping as they slowly reach under the wire mesh (jolly hard to do without hands, Tim). Once in position, they cruelly rip the tender young plants from their assigned spots tossing them heartlessly into the air before slinking away into the night to plot tomorrow night's foray into the vegetable enclosure - it's three tumbler lock no match for them. And all the while, dramatic theme music echoes around the mountain...

It's not as if I hate all animals, Tim. After all, didn't I lead the push for motorised wheelchairs for all those French frogs? Didn't I raise money for the lambs' dialysis machines after seeing their kidneys available on menus? I am an animal lover not a hater, Tim. But sometimes, animals can be ... well, beastly.

**Elizabeth Montano**

## The Blue Mountains Gazette

Just a reminder that the weekly edition of the Blue Mountains Gazette is available from the bench on the Mt Wilson Fire Station each Saturday - twenty copies are brought back from Blackheath by those on the village roster for those who crave their weekend papers.

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