



the MOUNTS

THE COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER OF MT WILSON AND MT IRVINE

April
2017



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ATN*

The column formerly known as "Ask the Neighbours"

This month's cover photo was taken by David Howell of the main waterfall on the Waterfall walk during the rains in March. If you would like to send in a cover photo for the June Edition please send it through to us at themounts2786@gmail.com



Photos: Dahlias at home in the garden, storms out to the north of Westring and our outdoor 'rocket stove' made by Scott Leonard

APRIL 2017

As the warmest season comes to an end and Autumn brings the promise of longer nights and cooler days, a shadow falls over the Mounts.

Residents know to expect it, some may even welcome it, however we all feel its impact: congested and dirty roads and that feeling of not wanting to leave the house. This year we are seeing greater volumes than ever. I am (of course) talking about the rain!

And hasn't there been a lot of it? I'm sure it must've broken some record, and although many of us may have complained during the deluge it is wonderful to have full tanks and lush green gardens to welcome the Autumn season. The leeches must be pleased as well.

It certainly didn't dampen our community's engagement, with many residents attending the MWPA and Village Hall meetings despite the unholy downpour and generating lots of content for the latest edition of The Mounts.

Joe Landsberg has written a very fitting article on the rain, we have all the latest from the Brigade and the associations and plenty of photos taken by residents and the RFS.

It's going to be another bumper issue. I'd like to say thank you to everyone who's provided content, and apologise to those who were hoping this edition might be slightly less voluminous.

Perhaps consider making a cup of tea and possibly cutting a slice of Robin Leonard's Deep Dish Apple Pie Cobbler (P.30) and settle in next to the fire with the April Edition of The Mounts.

Jess Delbridge

AROUND THE MOUNTS

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

APRIL	MAY	JUNE
Sunday 9th Church Service St Georges 3:00PM	Friday 12th Bushcare 9:00-12:00 Wynnes Reserve	Friday 9th Bushcare 9:00-12:00 Hay Lane
Good Friday 14th No Bush Care	Sunday 14th Church Service St Georges 3:00pm	Sunday 11th Church Service St Georges 3:00pm
Sunday 16th Easter Day Church Service St Georges 3:00PM	Friday 19th Bushwalk	Friday 16th Bushwalk
Friday 21st Bushwalk Bald Head Blackheath	-----	-----

BIN CALENDAR

13 TH APRIL
20 TH APRIL
27 TH APRIL
4 TH MAY
11 TH MAY
18 TH MAY
25 TH MAY
1 ST JUNE
8 TH JUNE

 Recycling
  Green Waste

ELLY GUNN THANKS FRIENDS IN THE COMMUNITY FOR A WONDERFUL FAREWELL

The 14th of January was an emotional time for me. It was a farewell party for me as I was leaving Mount Irvine after many years. It is something I will never forget.

Both Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine came together to wish me well; there were so many generous people.

I would like to thank Robyn and Allen Hyde, Ray Harrington, Huw Evans, Helen Naylor, and Henric Nicholas for the wonderful day as well as all those who attended.

I am settling down in Lithgow quite well but it isn't Mount Irvine. I miss the area and the community very much; however I am doing well.

- Elly Gunn



GARDENING AUSTRALIA VISIT LANDSCAPE DESIGNER MICHAEL BATES' MOUNT IRVINE GARDEN

Costa Georgiadis and the Gardening Australia team visited landscape designer Michael Bates' Mount Irvine garden for the first episode of Gardening Australia for 2017 which broadcast at 6.30pm on Saturday 4 March.

Michael Bates started his career at grass roots level as an apprentice at Swanes Nursery. He launched Bates Landscape in 1992 as a one-man show, with the business growing steadily to become known as one of Sydney's leading landscape contractors.

Michael Bates' landscape design is also featured on a recent episode of Dream Gardens, an eight-part series hosted by Michael McCoy, one of Australia's most well known landscape designers. Each episode follows the transformation of a garden and the family behind it and in Episode 4 'Connells Point' Michael Bates and his team are tasked with creating a beautiful resort style garden at a new waterfront property at Connells Point.

To watch either of these episodes (Gardening Australia Series 28 Ep1 or Dream Gardens Series 1 Ep 4) or any other episodes of the series visit the ABC iview website: <http://iview.abc.net.au/>

GOOD NEWS AT LAST ON PUBLIC TOILETS

We have just been advised by Daniel Long, Manager Parks and Support Services at BMCC that there will be eight temporary portable toilets installed at Mt Wilson over the autumn period.

Two will be placed near the RFS station and six at the Cathedral of Ferns. They will be installed on 11 April and be in position until 2 May and will be serviced twice a week.

The various public toilets around the mountain have also been pumped out in anticipation of the possible crowds during autumn with both school and the public holidays.

The cost of the portable toilets is \$11,000, and they will be funded by the BMCC. Many thanks to Dan for waving a magic wand over this ongoing issue.

-- Alison Halliday

EPA REVISES LICENCE FOR CLARENCE COLLIERY TO PROTECT WOLLANGAMBE RIVER

The NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) has imposed a legally-binding Pollution Reduction Program on the environment protection licence for the Clarence Colliery, to improve water quality in the Wollangambe River.

The Pollution Reduction Program, which has been developed over the past year, sets stringent new limits for Clarence Colliery on 13 metals, including zinc and nickel, using ANZECC/ ARMCANZ (2000) water quality guidelines as a benchmark. Setting the limits to the national standards was recommended by the Office of Environment and Heritage following a comprehensive report prepared for the EPA on the condition of the Wollangambe River.

EPA Regional Director for South and West Gary Whytcross said the revised licence was a major step forward in improving the river's health.

"We have worked closely with local community groups, researchers and other agencies to bring about these important changes that will help protect the Wollangambe River for future generations," Mr Whytcross said.

"The EPA is committed to improving the quality of Clarence Colliery's water discharge so that it matches the sensitive ecology of the nearby Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. We will continue to talk with all of our partners as we monitor the recovery of the river."

The EPA will also be issuing Clarence Colliery with another legally-binding Pollution Reduction Program in the coming months that will focus on reducing the salinity levels discharged into the river, Mr Whytcross said. The EPA has advised the company that it must keep salinity below 100 EC (electrical conductivity).

Further information can be found at:

www.epa.nsw.gov.au/epamedia/EPAMedia17031701.htm

- EPA Media release: 17 March 2017

SEARCH, SELL AND SHARE

New residents may not be aware that free trees are available from Cherry Cottage, 21 Queens Ave Mt Wilson. They include flowering cherries of various colours, maples and several types of conifers. They range in size from a few inches to advanced. They are ready to be dug after the leaves fall, roughly early May. It is understood that the digging will be done by the recipients. Thanks - Call 47562067

- Richard Prentice

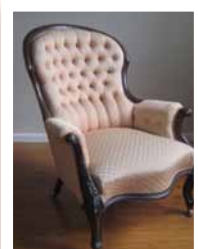
For Sale:

Original C19th Victorian Grand Father & Grandmother Chairs

Both chairs in excellent condition, have ornately carved mahogany legs and frame, upholstered in a quality silk - satin damask fabric.

\$1,800 (the pair) - 0402 251 949
louiseweingott@hotmail.com

- Louise Weingott



Seeking - Left over / scrap timber for amateur woodworking projects. Happy to pick up - thanks!

- Ash Phillips 4756 2063

BOWENS CREEK FIRE TRAIL UPDATE

THIS IS AN UPDATE BY ELIZABETH MONTANO ON BEHALF OF THE MT WILSON/ MT IRVINE RURAL FIRE BRIGADE AS LEAD COMMUNITY ORGANISATION ON THIS ISSUE.

Since my last update in the February 2017 edition of The Mounts there has been significant progress on this issue.

Blue Mountains City Council passed a Motion on 28 March reaffirming its commitment to working with Hawkesbury City Council on a joint project to restore the route as an emergency vehicles access route. That positions BMCC to work with HCC to access the Federal Government's 2016 Election commitment to provide \$100,000. That funding will allow BMCC and HCC to undertake a feasibility study and costings so that they will be positioned to seek further funding for the restoration works.

We have received strong support in this from all our Ward One Councillors, Kerry Brown (who lodged the Motion), Kevin Schreiber and Don Mc Gregor as well as from Mayor Mark Greenhill. That support extends to them reaching out to their HCC counterparts to seek their support for this project which will benefit both BMCC and HCC community groups.

I am advised that BMCC and HCC Council Managements are already in communication to progress this and that there are also meetings planned between Mayors and Councillors.

To support and provide assistance to BMCC and HCC, I have also met with Federal Minister Paul Fletcher's office to obtain further information on how BMCC and HCC can access the \$100,000 through an application process to the Federal Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development. You may recall that Minister Fletcher made the Election commitment in his former role as Minister for Major Projects, Territories and Local Government along with

former MP Louise Markus. Minister Fletcher has been very helpful and continues to take an interest even though his portfolio responsibilities no longer include this issue.

Federal Member for Macquarie, Susan Templeman MP continues to provide support and has made representations to Minister Fiona Nash, Minister for Regional Development and Minister for Local Government and Territories, who is now responsible for this Federal Government support for this type of regional infrastructure project. Minister Nash is a Senator for New South Wales, so we are her direct constituents.

We also continue to encourage the RFS Blue Mountains District to pursue this with Hawkesbury RFS District. We continue to note that the Brigade and community are not advocating that the route be restored as a public road. Rather, we see its strategic value as a piece of infrastructure for fire hazard reduction work (not firefighting) and access for ambulance and police rescue vehicle when Mt Wilson Rd is not available due to severe weather and fire events and helicopters are not able to fly or are unavailable due to competing demands.

It's worth remembering that our Brigade plays a role in many types of non-fire events, such as assisting other authorities in motor vehicle accidents and rescues as well as undertaking emergency clearing of fallen trees where they block roads along our only access route of Mt Wilson Rd and around the two villages.

Our Brigade is also the home of our NSW Ambulance First Responders group which works with the Ambulance Service to provide initial emergency medical assistance in our isolated location.

AROUND THE MOUNTS

BOWENS CREEK FIRE TRAIL cont.

As we do play this broad role in supporting all our emergency services as well as Blue Mountains City Council, we are also looking to engage with the Blue Mountains Emergency Management Committee to raise awareness and support for the restoration of this route as an important piece of local infrastructure for a variety of emergency situations.

In past updates we have asked residents, our visitors and all interested parties to write to BMCC, HCC, State and Federal Ministers and local Members to urge them to cut through any cross-jurisdictional impediments and restore the route as a fire trail for emergency vehicles.

While we've made a lot of progress on this in the last year, we need to keep working at it. So, even if you've already written, please write again. And if you haven't done so, please let our various levels of government know of your support for this. It may be your life or the life of a loved one which is saved through the availability of this route in emergency circumstances.

Please look at the community website for contact details.

- Elizabeth Montano
Member of the Executive
Mt Wilson / Mt Irvine RF Brigade



SAVE THE DATE - SPRING BLOSSOM FESTIVAL



The Spring Blossom Festival which will be the RFS' major fundraiser for the year will take place on the weekend of 23rd and 24th September 2017.

Please Save the Date in order to support this important local fundraiser either as a volunteer or as a patron.

For more info please contact Sarah Howell
sarahhowell@ozemail.com.au

FROM THE SEAS TO SYDNEY: MOUNT WILSON PART TIMERS RETURN FROM EPIC OCEAN CROSSING



Bryce and Tim Waters, sons of Keith and Saskia Waters from Kilaloo sailed their grandfather's boat all the way from Vancouver to Sydney with their two friends Buddy and Matt. Bryce was the skipper and taught his brother and two mates how to sail before they left - Bryce being the only seasoned sailor among them. It honoured their grandfather's voyage from South Africa to Vancouver many, many years ago. The voyage took about three and a half months and they are all now back in Sydney.

Bryce, a Naval Architect and Tim, a Civil Engineer started working shortly after they returned and Buddy and Matt are now back at university.

The boat owner Hans Schermacher, the boys' grandfather, also loves Mt Wilson. Aged over 75 he built a track for the family in the rainforest section of the Kilaloo grounds a few years ago.

Below are links for more information on this incredible story: www.abc.net.au/radio/sydney/programs/evenings/sailors/8072940

www.dailytelegraph.com.au/newslocal/manly-daily/mates-back-on-dry-land-after-epic-adventure-that-took-them-across-the-pacific-ocean-from-canada-back-home-to-sydney/news-story/b31c7e2859d844a6d60e949ae96e69bf

SPECIAL BUSHCARE MORNING ON MARCH 10TH

Our small Bushcare group was thrilled when on Friday 10 March we were joined by young people from Alexander Montano's workplace. Alexander asked if a group of his fellow workers could come to Mount Wilson to carry out community service. It was suggested that the Bushcare group would be the ideal group to help.

Our Bushcare officer Tracy Williams was very keen. The group could be given instructions as to what to do and also be covered the BMCC insurance.

The March Friday was chosen and the site, Merewether Lane, where there are large areas of ivy, honeysuckle and holly growing.

It was a lovely sunny day and our little group of Jane Maine, Alice Simpson and Sue Woolfenden were joined by more than 10 young people and two extra helpers from the council. Tracy organised the morning tea and a most successful morning's weeding followed.

After the Bushcare morning was finished, the group went around to Holly Ridge where the Montano family gave them lunch. I would like to thank Alexander for suggesting and organising the group to come and help us, and thank the group for their help.

We hope they enjoyed their day at Mount Wilson.

- Libby Raines

THE GREATER GLIDER

On Friday 10 March, when the Bushcare group and its visitors, who were helping us on that day, walked down Merewether Lane they came across the remains of a dead animal lying on the ground. This creature was a Greater Glider, which must have been killed by a fox during the night or early morning.

The Greater Glider is a rare and beautiful little creature, with a small possum-like head, a great flap of skin between the front and back legs and a long, long tail. They are usually black and white in colour. During the night, they climb the tall eucalyptus and they glide down, spreading out their legs and letting the flap of skin support them in the air, landing on the ground or on the trunk of another tree.

This one had been partially eaten by the fox but most of its body and long tail remained so the group could see it and learn about it and the devastation foxes do to our native animals.

Several years ago, when I was riding my bicycle near Tolimount in Stephen Lane I found a dead glider, in perfect condition beneath the electricity wires. It had obviously been electrocuted. I picked it up and brought it home on the handlebars of the bike.

This photo was taken by a visitor who happened to be in the garden and had his camera with him.

I rang the National Parks at Blackheath and they suggested I put the glider in the freezer to preserve it until I took it to them. I hope they were able to treat it and then use it in one of their exhibitions, as it was in perfect condition.

Several years later we found one alive in the lane caught up in the barbed wire fence. We were able to rescue it and we were delighted to see it running off through the ferns in the rain forest.

- Libby Raines



This photo was taken by a visitor who happened to be in the garden and had his camera with him - Libby with the Greater Glider

FUR AND FEATHER RESIDENTS OF THE MOUNTS : JEDDA THE KELPIE

Our Jedda was quite the adventurous pup in her youth.

After waiting for me on one uneventful day at the RFS shed, she decided to seek out some action and took herself canyoning with an unsuspecting group. She eagerly led the group into Du Fours canyon, racing ahead and back again repeatedly as if willing them to follow her.

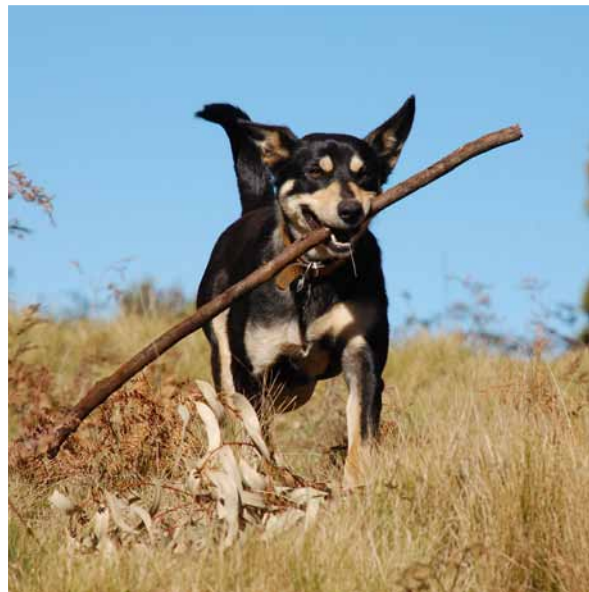
Despite their attempts to discourage her, Jedda persisted and in the end, she was accepted into the group. One generous canyoner even let Jedda share her rubber lilo.

Meanwhile back at the station, I became aware she was missing and deduced that she had taken off with a group somewhere so proceeded to post 'missing dog' signs around the village. Four hours later, a canyoner came forward and said he had seen Jedda in Du Fours canyon earlier that day.

I hastened into the canyon down the exit track where I discovered her with the group. I collected my exhausted pup and we left them to complete the canyon without distraction. Jedda left the group a note with beer and biscuits to thank them for a great adventure.

Another tedious day when I was sleeping after night shift, Jedda latched onto a pair of cyclists heading for Sydney. She managed to get halfway to Mt Tomah, at which point the concerned cyclists called the pound. And so, her next adventure was a night in puppy lockup!

After her junior years of misadventure and action, Jedda seemed content to finally settle down.



Without too much thought, she settled on Laddie from Gowan Ross.

I came home one afternoon to discover Jedda and Laddie on the front porch of Wynstay Lodge looking extremely pleased with themselves... and soon thereafter they were joined by Megsy!

Now retired, Jedda spends much of her days playing ball with two ankle-biters and lazing in the sun. Perhaps she also reflects upon the adventures of her youth. Every now and again she stretches her legs with a quick escape to Merry Garth.

- Peter Raines

If you would like to write a short piece about your fur or feathered companions living on the Mounts please send us an email with any photos you would like included - themounts2786@gmail.com

WHAT'S ON APRIL / MAY 2017

IRONFEST - LITHGOW APRIL 22ND + 23ND

The 18th annual Ironfest 2017 will be held at Lithgow Showground over the weekend of April 22 & 23 featuring art exhibitions, stalls, live music, street performance, historical re-enactments, blacksmithing demonstrations, workshops, automotive displays, educational, historical and technological displays and lots, lots more! Tickets avail. online

Visit www.ironfest.net for tickets and further information

Sat April 22 9am – 5pm Sun April 23 9am – 5pm

Location: Lithgow Showground



WOLLEMI ARTISAN MARKET KATOOMBA 10^{AM}-3^{PM} APRIL 22ND

These curated markets feature artists and designers from the Blue Mountains, Sydney and West of the Divide.

Don't miss out on the live music, food and beautiful quality products.

Location: Cultural Centre 30 Parke Street Katoomba



AUTUMNFEST - MAYFIELD GARDEN OBERON APRIL 30TH

AutumnFest gives access to explore Mayfield's 160 acre garden plus performances in front of the Mayfield Obelisk & Pond featuring the 'not so reckless' legendary Aussie rocker James Reyne as well as Boom Crash Opera, Matt Boylan-Smith and dynamic duo, Smith & Jones. It's a line-up not to be missed.

Children 0-6 years - Free 7-17 years - \$35

Adults - \$85

Location: Mayfield Gardens, 530 Mayfield Rd, Oberon





FEATURE ARTICLE

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Photo credit left to right:

Ash Phillips - clouds at back of Westring,

David Howell - Paddocks at Wynstay.

RAIN, RAIN, MORE RAIN

When I was a boy, growing up on a farm in the middle of Africa, we experienced a serious drought. It was a seasonal rainfall area and the summer cash crop which was our only source of income, was badly affected. We just made it, and managed to stay on the farm, but the growing anxiety and tension as, day after day, the rain didn't come, was hard-wired into my psyche, so that rain drumming on a tin roof became, for me, the most welcome of sounds. Years in the UK largely cured me of that, and the Blue Mountains — particularly our recent weather — have confirmed the cure. Mind you, it got very dry here in 2004 and 2006, in common with the rest of eastern Australia.

People often talk about average annual rainfall as if that's the amount we can reasonably expect each year, but of course the amount of rain that actually falls on a particular place varies enormously from

year to year. Here at Mt Wilson, rainfall in the years 2004 to 2016 (inclusive) has varied from 780 mm in 2004 to 1775 mm – well over double – in 2007. The average over those years was 1200 mm.

For those who might be interested in these things, this month (March 2017) has been the wettest we have recorded in the 13 years for which we have been taking records: so far we have had 462 mm, and the month hasn't finished yet. It has included the wettest week in those 13 years: we had 340 mm rain between Monday 13, when we got that storm that did so much damage, and the morning of Monday 20. In contrast, there have been a few months, over the years, with no rain at all, including a two month spell (July, August) in 2012 with zero. And yet February 2012 was the wettest month we had had (434 mm) until this current one.



As well as varying seasonally, and within seasons, rainfall varies spatially by quite surprising amounts, even over quite short distances. I measure the rain in the middle of our paddock at Withycombe, but if we had comparable measurements up at Wynstay, or at Cathedral Reserve, the chances are very high that the numbers would be different, possibly by quite surprising amounts. I use the word 'comparable' advisedly here: it's actually fairly tricky to measure rain accurately, because the amount caught in a gauge will be affected by the exposure of that gauge and the extent to which the catch is influenced by the proximity of trees or buildings, and also by the height of the gauge. My figures are often different (by varying amounts) from those given on the Mt Wilson website, but since I don't know where those data come from* I can't comment on the reasons for the differences. But, just for interest, the average annual rainfall at Mt Boyce between 1994 and 2016 was 939 mm – less than 80% of ours.

Over larger areas spatial variation in rainfall is easier to explain and generally a bit more predictable, although there are all sorts of interactions between weather systems (frontal or convective) topography and seasonal factors. Here in the mountains we get a great deal of light rain and mist because, when damp air gets pushed up from the coast it cools, water vapour condenses out of it and that's the mist and rain. We also, of course, get spectacular storms. West of us rainfall is generally lower; during the recent wet spell the western areas have remained generally quite dry, and while eastern NSW has been drenched, they haven't seen rain in western Queensland for several years.

And so I could waffle on. Maybe I like numbers like these because of those boyhood hopes and fears. But I also like the way we can do neat sums with rainfall amounts in decimal measure. For example, 1 mm of rain over one square metre is a litre of water, so if you have a plot of 1 hectare (10000 sq m) then 10 mm rain delivers 100,000 litres and the 300 mm we've had recently delivered (obviously) 3,000,000 litres/ha, which is 3 megalitres. Try doing those sums in inches and acre feet, etc. (1 in. = 25.4 mm. Remember?) No wonder the tanks we all depend on up here are quickly filled if you have a decent roof area. And no wonder big rains cause flooding: they deliver a lot of water.

- Joe Landsberg
Withycombe. March 2017

Photo credit Jess Delbridge - Storm to north of Mount Wilson

* Editor's Note:
The weather data on the Mt Wilson website is collected at the Mt Wilson fire station

MOUNT WILSON PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

Committee News



It seems as though it has done nothing but rain – for weeks and weeks. Rainfall records for March have been broken in many places, including, I suspect, on our mounts. Our wonderful basalt soil has soaked it all up, springs are bubbling to the surface and sandstone edges are oozing, dripping and running with water. It may be the end of autumn colour for this year, we shall just have to wait and see the impacts of so much wet. The leeches are happy! Walk anywhere and they quickly find you.

Peter Raines is continuing his work on restoring the local tracks so if it ever dries out go for a walk. After discussion with Dan Long from BMCC we have been given no final date for a change in how our maintenance works but Dan understands how it has been very effective in the past (and continues to be so) in keeping our mountain neighbourhood as good as possible. Please be patient if there are trees or road damage near to you; let the BMCC know and also myself or anyone on the committee.

Many thanks to everyone who came out on a wet evening for our General Meeting where we heard updates and reports from Graham Tribe on the new web site, Ted Griffin on the Neighbourhood Safer Places and Elizabeth Montano on Bowens Creek Road, amongst others. A Council officer who attended the village Hall meeting stayed on and was dismayed to hear of the ongoing saga of the

public toilet. She did say that as the BMCC has little money that lobbying our local members is probably the only way to get a sensible response. We will be writing and individual letters are also important.

Susan Templeman also addressed the meeting and congratulated Elizabeth Montano on the progress she has made campaigning for Bowens Creek Road.

Let's hope for a traffic-peaceful autumn and please remember that our visitors are here for the same reasons that we love this place.

- Alison Halliday



*Susan Templeman addresses the MWPA meeting on March 18th
(Photo by Jessica Delbridge)*



MOUNT WILSON AND MOUNT IRVINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Recent Events and Comments

May I express the warm appreciation of our small committee to those members who have renewed their membership recently in response to a letter sent out in late January. Thank you to those who generously added a donation to the Society. Thank you too to current members who expressed their support by letter or by email or by phone.

Our membership has increased to 80 plus, not including our very loyal Life members who number thirty one.

We hope you will receive a newsletter soon either by email or by post. There has been some confusion in the past about addresses and emails. We hope that has been sorted so that no one will miss out on receiving newsletters and /or notices of events and meetings.

It has been pleasing that there has been an offer from a local resident to assist the committee. Anne Mayall will bring years of artistic talent, creative ideas and organisational skills and she is most welcome.

Turkish Bath Museum Roster:

While the roster has been filled to Sunday 23rd April we would be delighted if it could be covered for the dates from ANZAC day 25th April, Sunday 30th April and the Sundays in May i.e. 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th May.

Please can you help?

Later in the year we are hoping to return to a general Meeting in June or July where issues can be raised and discussed and determined along with a significant speaker. We hope to be a participant in the Spring Festival in September.

- Mary B. Reynolds

Vice President

TURKISH BATH OPENING DATES

Calling all volunteers! Can you open the museum on any of these dates?

If so please contact Zaharah
Braybrooke (4756 2149) or Mary Reynolds

Tuesday 25th April 12.30 - 3.30pm (Anzac Day)

Sunday April 30th 12.30 - 3.30pm

Sunday May 7th 12.30 - 3.30pm

Sunday May 14th 12.30 - 3.30pm

Sunday May 21st 12.30 - 3.30pm

Sunday May 28th 12.30 - 3.30pm

RFS NEWS:

All the latest news from the brigade



Bushfire Season is over – time to pile burn!

When a fire is on its way the safest thing to do is leave early. Experience here at Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine has shown that you may not always have the luxury of choice. We are in a very risky position with only one road in and out and if that is closed soon after the fire starts you are stuck here. The most sensible thing you can do to protect yourself, your family and your home is to prepare your property for bushfire and this time of year, now that it is cooler and the rules are less onerous, is the best time to start.

Permission for us to do pile burns is a concession from Blue Mountains City Council and, as concessions can easily be revoked, it is vitally important that we adhere to their conditions. During the non-bushfire period (usually 1 April to 30 September) the process, in brief, is as follows:

1. Give your neighbours and District Office (4784 7444) at least 24 hours' notice of your intention to light up. District Office hours are 9-5, Monday to Friday. Please remember this if you plan to burn at the weekend. You can advise District Office of up to a week of days if you are unsure of exactly which day will be the most suitable for a pile burn.
2. On the day of the burn, advise District Office that you are lighting up and when you have put out the pile burn (do not burn overnight). These calls can be made at weekends as volunteers staff the phones at this time. There is a requirement for a responsible adult to be present at all times, an adequate water supply to be available and the pile must be 20m from the nearest residential building.
3. Ensure that your pile burn abides by the document Standards for Pile Burning, available from the RFS website, http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0012/13323/Standards-for-Pile-Burning.pdf, District Office or your Brigade Community Engagement Officer. In brief, material must only be vegetation from your property, the pile should be no greater than 2m in length or width and must be no greater than 1.5m high, material must be dead and dry and no logs over 150mm in diameter.
4. Please note that if we have a major fire in the Blue Mountains then no pile burns are allowed. This happened last August with a totally unexpected fire at Wentworth Falls.

RFS NEWS

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The 10/50 legislation allows residents in designated areas to clear trees 10 meters and underlying vegetation (not trees) 50 meters from their home without seeking approval. There are conditions and a Code of Practice so please check the online tool, Code and FAQs on the RFS website first:

<http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare/1050-vegetation-clearing>

Give us a break – along your boundary, around your house and water supply and through your property entrance

Neighbourhood Safer Places – they are not 'safe'

RFS is working to establish Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine Village Halls as Neighbourhood Safer Places (NSP). Your brigade would like to stress that these NSPs are only a place of last resort, not an essential part of your bushfire survival plan. They maybe be 'safer' but they are not 'safe'. They are for when your plan fails. Our village halls (along with our station!) are located in high risk areas with many residents living some distance from them. Driving in smoke and flames is highly risky and we would recommend that you look closer to your own property for a 'safer' place if required – your own properly prepared home, a neighbour's or an open paddock. Our area is the same distance as from Katoomba to Hazelbrook where there are now 13 NSPs, not just 2.

If you want our villages to have a 'safe' place then you need to build a community refuge like those in Victoria. This is the one at Laverton, the fifth that has been built. The architectural style hardly fits with our heritage villages but it is 'safe' (as long as you can get to it).



Survey Results – Congratulations!

The results of our Residents Bushfire Preparedness Survey are in and the results are terrific. The average rate of response to a survey is usually 10-15%. I never think that residents of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine are average but was delighted with an astonishing 51% response rate! Academics from Wollongong University interviewed residents from Mt Wilson and Bilpin after the 2013 fires. They found that the two major problems for residents during the fire were firstly, water shortages, and secondly, especially for Mt Wilson residents, equipment failure (in addition to not knowing how to work the equipment, hoses not being long enough and the wrong tank fittings). Only 17% of those interviewed by Wollongong University academics had regularly tested their firefighting equipment.

So, how are we faring 3 years later?

Of those who responded:

- 36% have access for a Cat 1 vehicle (a bit concerning as this would indicate that only a third of houses could possibly be protected by the brigade in the event of a fire)
- 97% have tanks that are ¾ or more full (fantastic especially as most replied before the big wet)
- 71% have a fire pump and 83% of them had tested it in the last month (a huge improvement)
- 43% have a generator and 85% of them had tested it in the last month (a sign of how few actually live here?)

A big thank you to those who made time in their busy lives to answer the questionnaire and a huge thank you to street coordinators for their gentle 'nudge' to neighbours in helping them to prepare for bushfire.

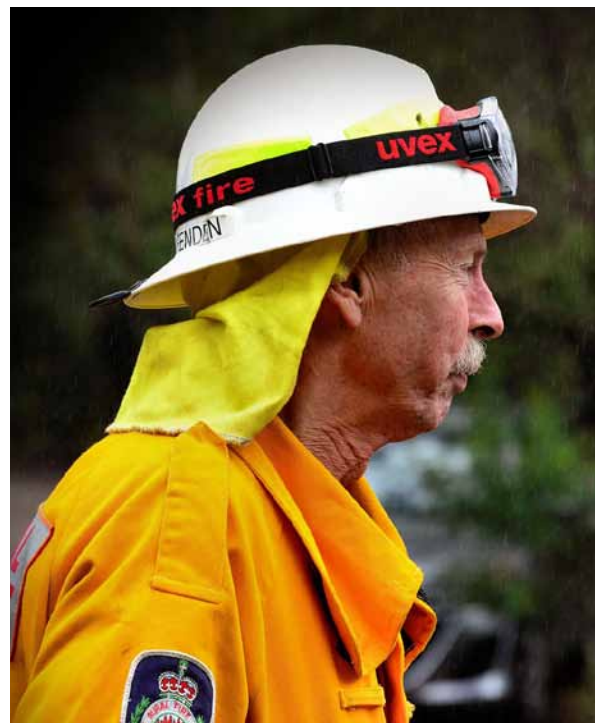
- Kathleen Oakes
Community Engagement Officer



ROGUES GALLERY

A peek inside Brigade activities

The Brigade during hydraulics training and also at the 6 Foot track.



ROGUES GALLERY

A peek inside Brigade activities

More hydraulics training and at the 6 Foot track as well as pump exercises during Brigade training.

Photos credit this page: top left and bottom right Bev Woodman



THE WALKS OF MOUNT WILSON

The Waterfall Walk

Last month in The Mounts Libby Raines wrote about the first 10 walks that are going to be maintained, signposted, put on the web site and form part of a new Mt Wilson bushwalking book. Readers may have noticed coloured arrows appearing around Mt Wilson. These depict the walking trails.

One of these walks is the Waterfall Walk. It is well worth revisiting as it is a really special walk and will be signposted with purple arrows (signage still to be done).

Peter Raines has published this walk and the other Mt Wilson Walks on the Beyond Tracks website. The link for the Waterfall walk is:

www.beyondtracks.com/walks/blue-mountains-national-park/mount-wilson-waterfall-track

Walking notes below include details provided in the Mt Wilson Walks book written by Libby Raines.

The Waterfall Walk

WALK SIGNAGE COLOUR: Purple

LENGTH: 1 km (circuit)

TIME: 45 minutes

GRADE: Easy/moderate

Photos this page: The Waterfall Walk map and the main waterfall

Photos over page: The lower falls and the track as it meanders through the rainforest



Start in the Waterfall Reserve opposite Chimney Cottage. With your back to Chimney Cottage veer to the left across the picnic grounds and you will soon pick up the track. A delightful rainforest walk down to the Waterfall Creek with a lovely rainforest gully to the left. The track is a little steep but it is well formed with good steps and it is well worth it. This is true rainforest: sassafras, giant coachwood, corkwood, tree ferns.

The walk is short enough to do more than once, so next time do it the other way around and get a different perspective.

- Robbie Feyder

Starting point:

Bottom of Waterfall Road in the Waterfall Reserve Picnic area opposite Chimney Cottage.

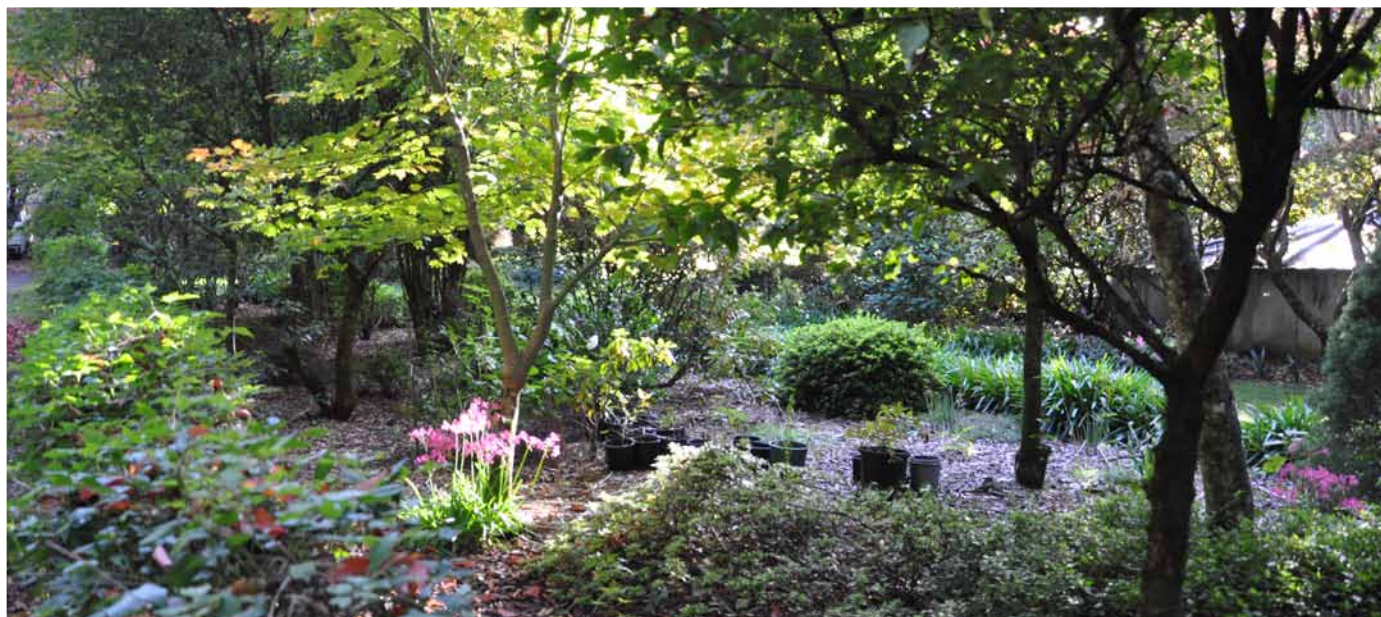
Walking conditions:

- Well formed track
- Good steps
- Steep in sections
- Some slippery sections when wet

Highlights:

- Rainforest
- Waterfalls
- Serenity (feel the serenity)





IN MY GARDEN:

Our garden at Campanella

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Local residents talk about what they are growing and offer advice for gardening on the Mounts

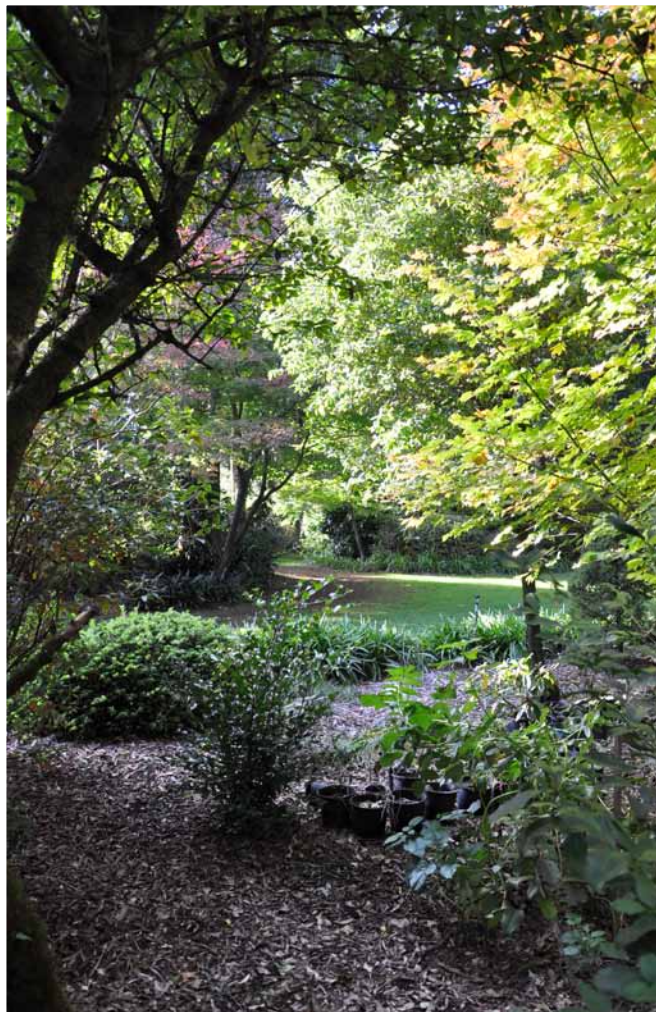
I initially started coming to Mt Wilson in school holidays in 1947 and my family and I have been involved ever since. Tony, my father, bought "CAMPANELLA" in 1951 and the present cottage on Mt Irvine road, was built on the foundations of the original "CAMPANELLA" which burnt down in 1938. The semicircular drive is original and only 8 or 9 trees remain from the early garden. Everything else has been developed post 1955. We tried to avoid clearing any native vegetation. We would buy some plants as money became available, stand the pots where we thought they would be interesting and then we would proceed to plant them. Then we encountered one of the traps of gardening in good soil, with higher rainfall. Most of the potted plants give a guide to growth habits. Don't believe

it. Multiply everything by 3 and you begin to come close to the ultimate height and width in Mt Wilson. An example of this is a Magnolia "Susan" height and width 1.5 metres, after 10 years was 4.5 metres in both width and height. Luckily, this Magnolia copes well with fairly severe pruning and almost enjoys trying to get back to the 4.5 metres. So, when standing out the pots close to their planting position remember to multiply their spacing distance by 2 or 3.

Another trap is weed control in garden beds. We tried to use natural methods such as boiling water and green weedkillers all with little avail and eventually resorted to "Roundup" "Garlon" etc followed up with 8-10cm. woodchip which needs topping up each 2-3 years as a mulch,

IN MY GARDEN

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Currently there are 2 local plant propagators in Mt. Wilson "Merrygarth" and "Windy Ridge" who carry plants suitable for Mt Wilson and Mt. Irvine – use them when you can, as these are plants at competitive prices and accustomed to Mt Wilson conditions.

There are a few other traps out there, so be wary.

- George Mayne

We are always looking for submissions so if you would like to write a short piece about what you're growing in your garden your please send us an email - themounts2786@gmail.com



MOUNT WILSON VILLAGE HALL

News from the Annual General Meeting

Thank you to everyone who came to the AGM on Saturday 18th March. We had a wonderful opportunity to meet Lyn Mitchell, the newly appointed BMCC Liaison Officer, Recreation and Community Facilities. It was lovely to meet Lyn and hear her speak about her role and as our contact point in council. Lyn has gone back to council with some issues to work on solving for our Hall, especially the fragile electricity system and the inadequacy of the toilets when we have an invasion of hundreds of people in peak periods.

There have been a few recent changes at the Hall.

Many thanks to the MWPA and Ash Phillips the new AV system is in place and working well. Council has fitted BAL standard wire screens to all the windows. This was planned as part of the Stage 2 renovation to comply within the latest fire safety standards. The fit looks very neat.

With the Stage 2 renovations completed, 2016 was a time of catching our breath and cleaning up, before we start working on the next initiatives for the Hall. Please let me know what improvements you would like to see at the Hall as we work on our plans for the years ahead.

This was an election year and I am pleased to say that the present committee members are willing to stay on the committee for the next term. A big thank you to the committee, Ted Griffin, deputy chair and treasurer; Helen Freeman, secretary; Mib Kirk, booking officer and committee members Steve Woolfenden and Beth Raines.

Please think about joining the committee. As we all know from the experience in 2001/2002, this community really needs a functioning hall. Being a member of the management committee is not arduous and it is satisfying to see the results of keeping the hall open and improving, being used for meetings, community gatherings like the Christmas party, fundraisers, as well as private functions and very importantly during an emergency.

- Judy Tribe
Chair, MWVHMC



Top: Lyn Mitchell, the newly appointed BMCC Liaison Officer, Recreation and Community Facilities addresses the meeting.

Bottom: The new Village Hall AV system built by Ash Phillips

(Photos by Jessica Delbridge)

RANSOMWARE - HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR DATA

With many locals falling victim to these scams, Ash looks at how to minimise your risk

What is Malware?

"Software which is specifically designed to disrupt, damage, or gain authorized access to a computer system." – Google

While computer viruses are nothing new, there is a new type of "malware" that has surfaced over the last couple of years and we have treated a number of cases of it on the Mounts, and it is called Ransomware.

Ransomware is a piece of software that silently infects your computer, and sets about encrypting (mangling) your files, even as you work. Once it has completed this operation, it will then display a notice demanding a (usually large) sum of money to retrieve your files, and often has a time limit attached as well. And while the agreement is sometimes honoured if you pay up, sometimes it is not, and you can be not only left without all of your precious files, but also out of pocket. To add insult to injury, these programs can also be equipped with identity theft payloads that help attackers retrieve sensitive information such as your banking details.

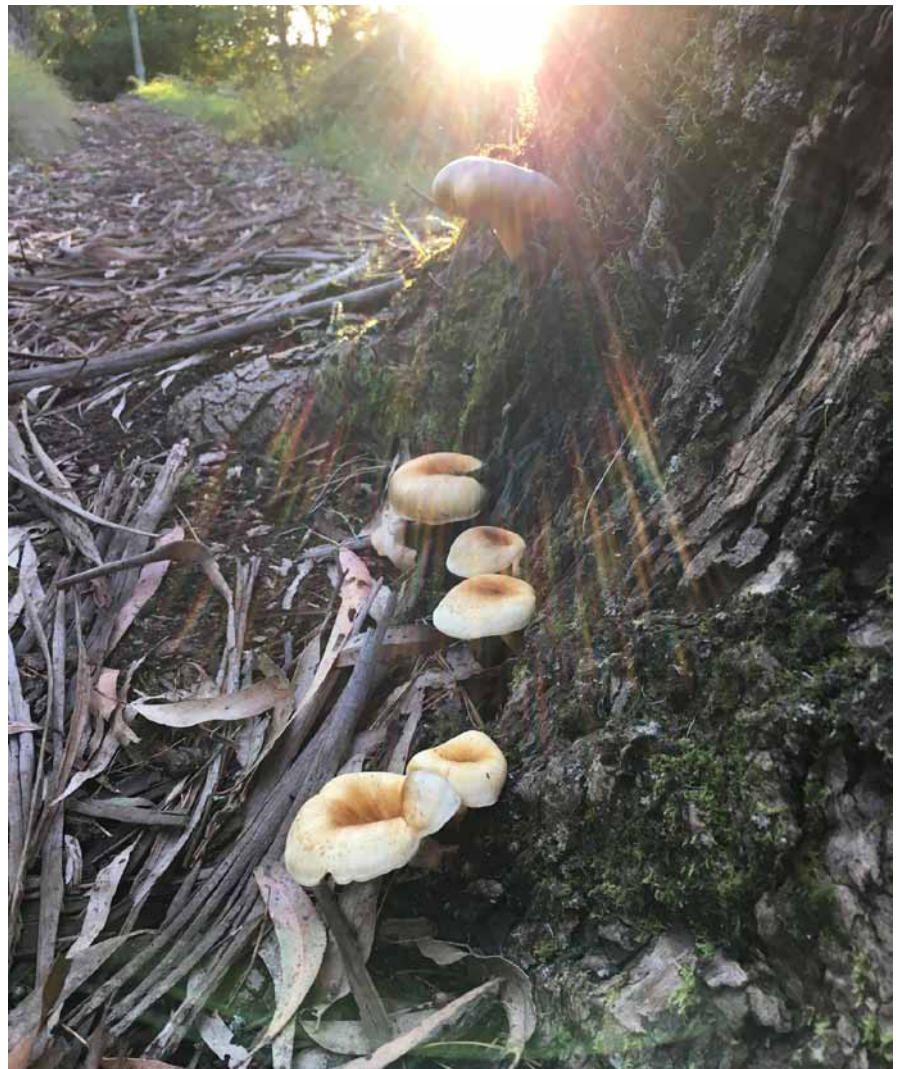
These programs can infect your machine via a few routes, but most often it will enter via your email, or via a website you have visited, and this makes it harder to avoid.

So, what can you do to minimise your risks?

- Keep important files backed up on a separate (disconnected) drive or USB key
- Make sure that any emails you open actually come from who they claim to be. Often, a nefarious email will purport to be from an Australian company (For example, AGL), but the from address will be something totally unrelated or look not quite right. If this is the case, delete it straight away.
- Don't forget that most file types can be infected: This includes (and is becoming more and more prevalent) PDFs! The best thing is to just not take the risk. Avoid opening .zip and .exe at all costs.
- Keep your Antivirus and Security packages up to date. Free versions are fine, but paid is definitely better with better protection / detection levels
- If you have any questions, be sure to ask your local IT company. Forewarned is fore-armed!

So while modern-day computing is sometimes fraught with potholes, some basic maintenance will go a long way to keeping you protected.

- Ash Phillips, Imaginarium IT



THE MOUNT'S MUSHROOMS

Fantastic Fungi in the area

Photos by Robbie Feyder, Tom Bassett and Jess Delbridge



THE MOUNTS MUSHROOM'S Fantastic Fungi in the area

*Photos by Ash Phillips and
David Howell*



THE PATCH

THE PATCH

Deep Dish Apple Pie Cobbler with Upper and Lower Crust

From the New England Cook
Book of Fine Old Recipes

Our amazing 100 year old Bramley Apple tree was probably planted by John Joshua who took ownership of " Campanella " in 1898 and " Sylvan Close" was part of this property.

Our Bramley Apple tree has fruited nearly ever year for the last forty plus years in our garden. The birds are delighted every year!

Bramley apple trees date from 1809 , a pip was sown by a child and it grew into a vigorous sapling and later became known as Bramley's seedling named after Mr. Bramley ,who owned the property. The original apple tree survived until just recently in Southwell, Nottinghamshire.

Bramley apples are culinary apples, with a high level of acidity and are far too sharp to eat fresh. They are ideal for baked apple, apple crumble and apple jelly.

THE PATCH

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Growing a patch full of your own produce on the Mounts or have a great seasonal recipe you'd like to share? Please send us an email with your tips, the recipe and any photos you would like included - themounts2786@gmail.com

Over the page: the 100 year old Bramley Apple tree at Sylvan Close.

This page: Deep Dish Apple Pie Cobbler with Upper and Lower Crust.



INGREDIENTS

- Short crust or puff pastry for pie dish
- 4- 5 cups of apples sliced thin
- 1 cup sugar
- 8 th tsp. salt
- Half tsp. cinnamon
- 8th tsp. nutmeg
- 1 tablespoon butter

I have been cooking this simple and delicious recipe ever since we lived in Boston.

Line glass pie dish with pastry .

Combine apples ,sugar,salt,cinnamon and nutmeg.

Place in pie dish ,dot with butter.

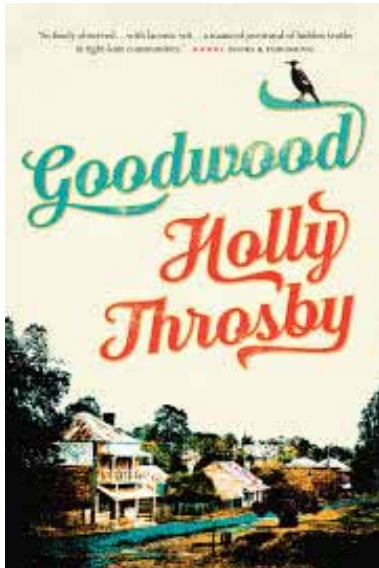
Cover with the other crust, fastening the top to the bottom at the edges with cold water, press edges together with prongs of a fork.

Slash top in several places to allow steam to escape.

Bake in a hot oven, 200c until pastry begins to brown and then reduce heat to 180c and continue to bake for 30 mins.

Serve warm with cream or ice cream.

- Robin Leonard



Cover: *Goodwood*
by Holly Throsby

“ This first novel offers far more than a simple mystery story; there is humour, vivid descriptions and a deep sympathy for how and why people connect and live with each other, while knowing the best and the worst about the township.”

GOODWOOD

by Holly Throsby

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Life in a Country Town...

Tucked between a mountain and a lake the town of Goodwood is like any other country town – eccentric residents, a long history, challenged from the nearby much bigger town, a pub, some shops and a struggling dairy farm. One day the steadiness is shattered by the separate disappearance of two residents: a teenage girl and the popular butcher. Everyone knows everybody in Goodwood but these two people just vanished and nobody knew where or why they had gone. The ripples from the disappearances spread through the community as the overworked local policeman attempts to untangle the thickening knot of gossip, suspicion and speculation.

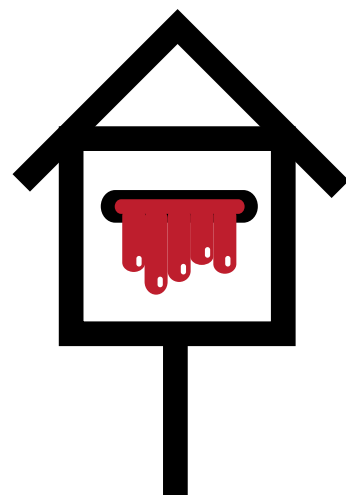
Our narrator is teenage Jean, living with her mother and going to the local high school. In her journal she records her thoughts, emotions and the stuttering progress of the investigation into the missing residents. Holly Throsby has created a wonderful commentator in Jean who has a wry voice, an acceptance of life in Goodwood and a keen desire to find out what happened. Jean's own story of friendships, and love runs counterpoint to the growing uneasiness among the community.

Increasingly the residents turn from talk to being caught up in the investigation. Jean, and the reader, learn about what has been hidden in families and what is now uncovered as secrets and unexpected connections are revealed. The ending is unexpected but oddly satisfying. This first novel offers far more than a simple mystery story; there is humour, vivid descriptions and a deep sympathy for how and why people connect and live with each other, while knowing the best and the worst about the township.

- Alison Halliday

ATN*

The column formerly known as “Ask the Neighbours”



Yes Jess, well might you say that MurderousMounts:ATN has been a huge hit to the high end drama-starved citizens of our sleepy, yet amazingly photogenic, locale.

Here at MM:ATN's production office we've been inundated with props for future story lines. Nothing else could explain the influx of imaginative offerings coming through our mailbox – literally in one case. To whoever put the odorous remains of their tomato crop in our real world letterbox – don't do it again. CCTV is being considered.

Actually Jess, the writers' room (aka the potting shed) has been concerned that some of our fans may have missed the memo on the MM:ATN vision thing. Were the decaying tomatoes in the letterbox an indicator of a sinister yearning for those scary dramas which have preceded MM:ATN ? Which ones were they? You know them: horses' heads as cuddly bedtime toys, severed ears and digits delivered fresh in the post (that one's obviously high fiction) and postmen who always ring twice (ours just usually leaves a card). Either that or we're already at death threat levels - quite an achievement only one episode in.

So, listen up neighbours- we know that the ATN Squad are young and hip (literally, most of them have new hips) and at the cusp of exciting careers starring in HBO shows with their names in the titles. However, we don't want the story lines to be too exciting or dark. Forget film noir. We're after geographically and demographically relatable story lines. Think more along the lines of crimes which a secateurs-wielding Jessica Fletcher or a mulch-covered Colombo would want to investigate. But with some edgy and disrupting touches.

To illustrate, here's a snippet from our next episode:

Scene One: It was a crisp and foggy morning (see Jess, no dark, stormy or post meridiem settings) when this episode's unsuspecting victim totters out to inspect whether the noise they heard at four AM was the rubbish collector or a band of ICE-fuelled antechinus.

Viewers can see straight away that this character lives life dangerously and with a complete disregard for decorum and societal norms – they're wearing a flowery nightgown, ratty old coat and bright yellow gumboots with Dorothy the Dinosaur pictures (product placement).

In a cameo performance by our beloved former Editor, Tim - He opens the garbage bin lid to reveal



(camera zooms in but strangely doesn't pick up the detail at the bottom of the bin).

Scene Two: The ATN Squad's HQ –

Captain: "It's a crisp and foggy morning out there, people. I wonder what sort of criminal has been lurking out under cover of that little meteorological set of climactic circumstances?"

Just then (or as soon as those slackers in the Sound Department can get it working...) the phone rings – it's the "Mexican Jumping Bean" song.

Captain: "You guys!" she chuckles..."I thought I told you to take that wacky ringtone off and replace it with something with more gravitas and decorum... like the theme from The Flintstones...always a classic"

The Deputy Captain (and rival for both first place on the credits and the biggest trailer):

"Can someone just answer the phone? Who knows what concerned citizen is trying to reach us? We need to be ready to jump in our cool MM:ATN ute (another product placement opportunity) and speed to their rescue with sirens blazing and our hair streaming in the wind."

See Jess? Wholesome real life dilemmas as seen through the prism of a cast of authentic, original, totally believable and talented artists who have

honed their stagecraft over a lifetime of community Christmas carol performances.

We're already being asked to explore a spin-off series - MM:VB. The Mt Vic community thinks they'll be amused but Mt Boyce is blowing hot and cold on it. It's still in development: enormous beer ad placement opportunities.

But, back here at the original and best- MM:ATN, our questions for the Neighbours this edition:

What was at the bottom of Tim's bin?

And, here's one for the lawyers, to what extent has he been contributorily negligent?

Here's a spoiler for the next episode: Tim did forget whether it was recycling or green waste bin day.

So, there it is Jess. What was that? Oh, yes- the writers are still working on your first scene. We're workshopping it – fun, young new small town newspaper editor almost gets run off the road after thorny questions at a Bush Care group meeting. Was it coincidence, tradie knock-off time or something more sinister?

- Elizabeth M

"Real Crime" Editor

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