



the MOUNTS

THE COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER OF MT WILSON AND MT IRVINE

October
2017



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This month's cover photo was taken by Jess Delbridge of the flowering rhodo at Westring. If you would like to send in a cover photo for the next edition please send it through to us at themounts2786@gmail.com



OCTOBER 2017

One of the things which I have found the most difficult while living here is having to leave the mountain everyday for work. When you live in such a beautiful place it is hard to find the will to drag yourself away when you would much rather spend the day pottering at home or working in the garden.

The only time when I find this not to be the case is during Spring, when the daily drive through the village brings joy at witnessing so much change in our surrounds. The pops of colour and lush new greenery make me smile and I quickly forget the cold and the bare winter branches.

With this buzz of new activity the community gears up for the end of the year - the AGMs, the end of year luncheons and Christmas parties as well as preparations for fire season.

Thankyou to all who submitted content during this busy time, I hope you all enjoy the October edition of The Mounts

Jess Delbridge

*Photos: Spring blooms and
happy foraging chickens*

AROUND THE MOUNTS

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
Sunday 8th Church Service St Georges 3:00pm	Tuesday 7th Melbourne Cup Lunch	Friday 8th Bushcare 9:00-12:00 Wynne Reserve
Friday 13th Bushcare 9:00-12:00 Hay Lane	Friday 10th Bushcare 9:00-12:00 Hay Lane	Sunday 10th Church Service St Georges 3:00pm
Friday 20th Bushwalk Boronia Point Mt Wilson	Saturday 11th 10:40 Remembrance Day Service War Memorial	Friday 15th Bushwalk and Luncheon Knight-Brown FT & Ramparts Mt Irvine
-----	Sunday 12th Church Service St Georges 3:00pm	Saturday 23rd Carol Service St Georges 7:30pm
-----	Friday 17th Bushwalk Lunch Rock Bell Christmas Party	-----

BIN CALENDAR

26 TH OCT
2 ND NOV
9 TH NOV
16 TH NOV
23 RD NOV
30 TH NOV
7 TH DEC
14 TH DEC
21 ST DEC

SEARCH, SELL AND SHARE

DO YOU HAVE USE FOR:

- Large brown aluminium frame window with two openings and timber surround – 1800 mm wide, 1240 mm high
- Double bowl kitchen stainless steel sink with double drainer – 1500 mm wide

Please contact Jane or George Mayne on 47562035

Seeking - Left over / scrap timber for amateur woodworking projects. Happy to pick up - thanks!
Phone 47562063

- Ash Phillips

AROUND THE MOUNTS

NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFER PLACE - MOUNT WILSON VILLAGE HALL

The NSW Rural Fire Service is finalising plans for the Mount Wilson Village Hall to be designated as a Neighbourhood Safer Place (NSP). This will require strategic management of the vegetation in the vicinity to minimise the impact of bushfire.

On Friday 6th October representatives of the Mount Wilson/Mount Irvine Fire Brigade, the Village Hall committee, the Mount Wilson Progress Association and the Mount Wilson Study Centre were invited to meet with Jim Killen NSW RFS Community Protection Planning & NSP Officer, who is managing Neighbourhood Safer Places in the Blue Mountains. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss how the proposed work would be done.

The group walked through each area and Jim outlined how the RFS contractors intend to clear, and answered questions. The surrounding public precincts and private property will not be completely cleared of all vegetation. Some trees will be removed, canopies will be thinned and the undergrowth will be reduced by approximately two thirds. Contractors tendering for the work have expertise in working on Asset Protection Zones and bush regeneration.

Jim expects the work to commence at the end of November.

All residents will receive official notification of the work from the NSW Rural Fire Service.

You can read more about NSP's in the RFS article on page 14

- Sue Woolfenden

NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFER PLACE - MOUNT IRVINE VILLAGE HALL

Mt Irvine is to have a Neighbourhood Safer Place established by the RFS at the Mt Irvine Public Hall.

The environmental approval process has been signed off by the RFS and agreed by the Trust, for the hall to undergo the necessary modifications for this designation.

The procurement strategies and contract documentation have now been completed. Tender selection processes are underway for the vegetation clearance works around the hall. It is expected that these works will be undertaken in mid to late November.

Once the clearance works are complete, it is expected the hall will be formally designated a Neighbourhood Safer Place.

- Carol Carrigan

MT WILSON & MT IRVINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY AGM

Members and friends are cordially invited to the Annual General Meeting of the Society. To be held in the Mt Wilson Village Hall on Saturday 18th November 2017 at 10.30am to 11.00am for morning tea followed by the business meeting and a guest speaker, who will be Mary Reynolds OAM, reflecting on Mt Wilson's history.

Mary was the Research Officer for the Society for many years along with holding other official positions until she had to leave Mt Wilson sadly in January 2014.

MT WILSON MT IRVINE COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS PARTY



Everyone is warmly invited to

The Mount Wilson Mount Irvine Community Christmas Party

Saturday 25th November 2017
at 6.30 pm

Venue: Mount Wilson Village Hall

*Please come along for Christmas cheer, carols and fun for the
children*

Finger food and drinks provided

R.S.V.P. by 18th November to
Bruce Kerridge P: 4756 2131 E: bdkerridge@gmail.com
Robyn Scrivener P: 4756 2136 E: secretarymtwilsonmtirvine@gmail.com
Sue Woolfenden P: 4756 2046 E: secretarymwpa@gmail.com

Mount Wilson Progress Association Mount Irvine Progress Association
Mount Irvine/Mount Wilson Rural Fire Brigade



BOWENS CREEK EMERGENCY VEHICLES ACCESS ROUTE 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.

In addition to maintaining contact with BMCC on its part in undertaking the feasibility study to restore this route for emergency vehicles access and with our MPs Susan Templeman (Federal) and Trish Doyle (State), I have also more recently been liaising with Peter Conroy, the new General Manager of Hawkesbury City Council.

As lead local Council on the joint work by BMCC and HCC to explore restoration of the route, HCC has lodged an application with the Federal Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development for the \$100,000 grant promised by the Federal Government (and supported by Susan Templeman) at the last Federal Election to fund the feasibility study into the restoration of the route.

The preliminary work undertaken by HCC itself to support that bid has provided a ballpark figure of \$3.5 million to have the route restored. That figure is, of course, subject to more detailed geotechnical and other studies.

We will continue to work to have our community and visitor needs taken into account in the ongoing work and to facilitate full engagement by the emergency services (RFS, NSW Ambulance and Police Rescue) in providing not only advice on their technical needs for the route but also their views that this is an essential piece of emergency services infrastructure which must be restored to alleviate the significant risks to our community and visitors arising from its closure.

Looking ahead, presuming that the grant for the feasibility study is made and the feasibility study does conclude that this route must be restored for public safety, then we – as a community – will need to work very hard to support BMCC and HCC in identifying and obtaining funding for the route's restoration.

We will also need to continue to brief and engage with our MPs, who to date have been very supportive.

Our persistent and strong advocacy has brought us this far. The campaign goes on.

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



STUDY CENTRE COMMUNITY UPDATE

As many in the community will already know, the Study Centre, which comprises the old Mount Wilson School House and adjoining Headmasters Cottage, has been operated for some years now by a not for profit association known as The Mount Wilson Study Centre Inc. That association is made up entirely of local residents who have an interest in the preservation of these historic buildings as part of what is increasingly being regarded as the Mount Wilson Community Precinct (together with the Fire Station and the Village Hall).

The buildings have been used for visitor accommodation and occasionally for community activities and have been available for such purposes as accommodating visiting firefighters and university study groups. Many members of our community have from time to time used these buildings as overflow accommodation for guests.

The modest funds raised as a result have been used to maintain the buildings and generally keep them operating.

However, the point has now been reached where the level of available funding simply cannot keep up with the structural work which has become

necessary as a result of a combination of age, dry rot, subsidence of foundations and past and recent termite activity. So far, requests to the Education Department, which remains the owner of these buildings, for assistance have not borne any fruit, but that process is ongoing.

In the meantime, we feel that the prudent course is to suspend the use of the buildings. As a result, a notice will be placed on the Mt Wilson website that the Study Centre has been temporarily closed.

We are also exploring alternative methods of funding the required works and to that end have recently made application for a Local Heritage Strategic Project Grant. That type of grant may be available because the buildings are listed as buildings of significance in the Blue Mountains LEP. However, whether any funds will actually be forthcoming, and the extent of work that may be funded if they do, is yet to be seen.

We will let the community know how we go.

- Joe Montano
Chair, Mount Wilson Study Centre Inc

REMEMBRANCE DAY 2017

Every year the community from Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine gather at the War Memorial at about 10.40 am to remember the sacrifice and celebrate the lives of those listed on the Memorial. There will be a brief service, followed by a memoir of one or two of those listed on the Memorial; and then morning tea. The order of service will be dropped into your letter box a week or so before the date.



INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW COMMUNITY WEBSITE



As many of you may know a new community website has been developed for the use of residents. To ensure the community gets the most out of this website, the MWPA and Imaginarium IT will be running an information session for everybody wanting to find out more about this extremely useful resource. These sessions will be fun, informative and free, and refreshments will be provided. It is not essential to bring your own laptop or tablet but it is recommended

COMMUNITY WEBSITE INFORMATION SESSION TIMES

Saturday 27th of January
10am - 1pm

Monday 29th of January
10am - 1pm

Location:
Mount Wilson Village Hall

For further information
please contact:

- Ash Phillips - 4756 2063
- Sue Woolfenden - 4756 2046
- Graham Tribe - 4756 2096

WHAT'S ON OCT / NOV 2017

TARANA COMMUNITY FARMERS MARKET

Tarana Community Farmers Market is held on the 4th Sunday of every month from 10am to 2pm in the grounds of the Tarana Fire shed. The market raises funds for the Tarana Rural Fire Brigade.

Tarana is about 1¼ hours drive from Mt Wilson between Lithgow, Bathurst & Oberon. For more information: www.taranacommunityfarmersmarket.com

Seasonal fruit and vegetables, lamb, pork, beef, jams, wine, brewed beer, bread, chocolates, coffee plus items that have been grown, produced or made in our local area.



AROUND THE MOUNTS

THE SECRET GARDEN

We have our own secret garden on Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine which is a wonderful sight in late October and early November.

Drive out on the Mount Irvine Road past Farrer Road West and Zircon Creek is a wide curve on your left with a small green tank nearby.

Either leave your car here and walk back to the fields selection fire trail on your right as you drive out towards Mount Irvine or drive down this fire trail for some 300 metres. There are patches of mint bush growing here and then you suddenly are surrounded by Boronia (possibly Boronia Deaneii) over two metres and covered with soft pink fragrant flowers.

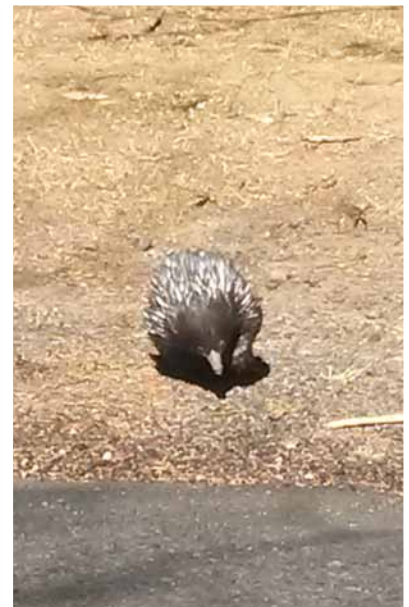
Do go and enjoy it!

- Libby Raines



ECHIDNA ON THE AVENUE

Here are a couple of photos which were sent in by Peter Raines of a little fellow that Micah found crossing The Avenue between Milparra and the War Memorial.



Celebrate the Race that Stops the Nation
MELBOURNE CUP LUNCHEON
TUESDAY 7TH NOVEMBER 2017 AT 12.30PM
At MOUNT WILSON VILLAGE HALL

ENJOY A CHAMPAGNE AND CHICKEN LUNCH

Watch the race on the big screen
Take part in the sweep and games
Wear your favourite fascinator or make one at the lunch,
Join in the fun

Tickets \$30

RSVP to Judy Tribe by 1st November
email: judithtribe@gmail.com phone: 4756 2096

FUR AND FEATHER RESIDENTS OF THE MOUNTS : ROSIE THE CALICO CAT

"Dogs have masters and cats have slaves"

My life at Mt Wilson commenced in 2013. My predecessor was a classless and ordinary black and white bush cat named Ray, who had a very outgoing personality and considered everyone his best friend (particularly cat haters)! Ray was born on an island in Fiji and flown (first class???) from Suva to Sydney by my slaves – John and Mary Holt. Ray developed dementia and was finally euthanized by my father John (who was a veterinarian).

This left a big gap in their lives as they were total ailurophiles (cat lovers).

One rainy Thursday morning my mum could not play golf and insisted that they take off for the Cat Protection Society in Enmore for a Ray replacement. Kittens were not an option, and the only suitable adult cat was me. I was in a cage hiding behind my bed with a sign that said:

"My name is Rosie. I am seven years old and have been here seven months. I have mild kidney failure and require to be fed specially formulated kidney diet."

This did not deter John – he loved a challenge!

The trip back to Mt Wilson was never ending and on arrival at "Pine Lodge", having been incarcerated in Enmore for seven months, I was terrified in my new environment. It took several weeks for the slaves to be able to touch me. Eventually I decided I had terrified them for long enough and finally accepted their hospitality. Those were tough days for all of us!

As you can see from my photos I am very beautiful – actually I am an aristocat. I am described as a



calico cat – this reflects my colouring and not my non-existent breed. I weigh 4.8kg – a big girl.

Mt Wilson is catty heaven. I am essentially an indoor cat but sometimes venture outside to the deck to soak up some sunshine. My only predator is Fiona – the housekeeper. My mother thinks she is wonderful and can't live without her, but she terrorises me with a thing called a vacuum cleaner. When she arrives I immediately hide under a large, low coffee table and patiently wait there until she leaves the house.

I love my mum and sit on her lap every night purring endlessly. She constantly tells me I am her best friend and I believe her. I love being in the study in front of the log fire and surrounded by art and books. Total bliss. I am actually very intellectual.

My other slaves that I love are Jane and George (Mayne) who feed me when my mum goes to Sydney and Di, the house sitter who moves in when my mum goes on holidays – no boarding in a cattery for me. I think she is my second best friend as she lets me do anything! She is also on ailurophile and house sits the Culverden cats also when their slaves are away.

Well, that is my tough life in paradise – Mt Wilson.

- Mary Holt

MOUNT WILSON PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

Committee News



The AGM was held in September, and all previous members of the committee were re-elected. Alison Halliday accepted the position of President and Libby Raines remains as Treasurer and Sue Woolfedden is secretary. All committee members (Ted Griffin, Nancy Fox and Robbie Feyder) worked hard during the past year; there are two vacancies on the committee so anyone who is interested in joining should contact either Alison or Sue.

Once again Peter Raines, ably helped by Micah Fink and others, has done great work in keeping the mountain looking beautiful, with a focus on rejuvenating certain walking tracks and repairing and maintaining the various reserves and parks. We have printed a colour copy of the first four walks, complete with maps and useful information, and these are available for a gold coin donation from Judy Tribe, or Alison Halliday.

Telecommunication seems to be an ever-present concern; apparently the tower on Mt Tomah is to be built in 2018, and will be 'on air' soon after completion. Then there is the issue of the NBN, which will be rolled out in Mt Wilson at some stage. Apparently there is a way for us to retain the land line copper network, but the whole community will have to be in support of this. More on this important issue as I find it out.

We are constantly reminded of the importance of volunteers in our small community and the wonderful work by such people at the Spring Fair is evidence of their enthusiasm and hard work. Whatever is done by volunteers benefits everyone – so thank you! The work of the MWPA is also done for all so if you are not a member please consider joining; \$25 a year is not much to have the community's interests negotiated with BMCC, to receive the phone book and The Mounts, and you have a chance to have your say in what we do for all.

- Alison Halliday

MOUNT IRVINE VILLAGE HALL

Recent works at Mt Irvine Public Hall and ... There's more to come!

Over the past few months, Mount Irvine Public Hall Trust has undertaken major internal and external works on the Hall. The Hall Trust received a grant of \$18,480 through Community Building Partnerships and local state member of Parliament, Trish Doyle. These funds enabled us to install an insulated plasterboard ceiling with recessed LED lighting. You can see from the two ceiling photographs taken before and after, all cabling is now concealed within the new ceiling. Externally, the metal roof has been rust treated and painted silver. New, enlarged metal box gutters which are easily cleaned, have been installed. These works have made a real difference to the amenity of the Hall.

The good news is that there is more to come!

The Trust recently received advice from The Hon. Niall Blair, Minister for Primary Industries that our grant application for \$37,810 through the Public Reserves Management Fund was successful. The grant funds will be used to install a drainage system which will capture and reuse all roof water rather than, as is currently the case, the water being mostly dispersed and lost. Also, the Hall will receive a full paint job inside and outside.

This brings the total of grants and donations received in the past two years for Hall works to \$114,167.

Finally, the Trust has been happy to support the RFS towards the Hall being designated a Neighbourhood Safer Place (NSP). We look forward to providing our community with a safer place to gather and support each other in the event of disasters and emergencies.

- Carol Carrigan
Trustee - Grants
Mt Irvine Public Hall Trust

Photos: First photo - ceiling before work, second photo - restored metal roof with new gutters, third photo- new ceiling.



RFS NEWS:

NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFER PLACES

MT WILSON and MT IRVINE

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In the near future you will notice some tree and undergrowth clearance taking place around the Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine Village Halls. This is being done by the Blue Mountains RFS and the BMCC in cooperation with adjacent landowners in order to create Neighbourhood Safer Places (NSP) at the two halls.

Following the tragic Victorian bushfires in 2008 the Victorian Government introduced a number of initiatives including the concept of Neighbourhood Safer Places (NSP) which was subsequently adopted by the NSW Rural Fire Service.

IMMEDIATE NOTIFICATION

- Offer communities with considered and appropriate last resort bush fire options.
- Provide sites that are constructed and/or located to enhance the chances of survival for people when faced with bushfire attack.
- Provide a last resort option for people if their bushfire options (such as leaving the area early) have failed.
- Aid the community in taking responsibility for their own bushfire survival, In the absence of emergency service personnel.

MT WILSON / MT IRVINE RURAL FIRE BRIGADE AND THE NSP's

The local Brigade has had no involvement in the establishment or operation of the two NSP's. This is the responsibility of the Regional Office of the RFS who carry out a formal assessment in line with established criteria, negotiate with council and others and contract out any works that are required.

WORK BEING DONE TO ESTABLISH THE NSP's

The main work will be removal of some trees and understory for a specified distance around the Hall's. No major works are proposed for the buildings although some additional fire fighting equipment will be supplied.

We have been advised that the works are currently out to tender with the NSW Government website and that the works should be completed by the end of December.

For detailed information on assessment criteria please refer to the NSW Rural Fire Service publication;

Neighbourhood Safer Places Guidelines for the identification and inspection of Neighbourhood Safer Places in NSW – April 2017

LIMITATIONS

A NSP is a final resort and is NOT a substitute for being unprepared for fire and having no survival plan and consequently leaving yourself no alternative than to resort to the NSP. NSP's are an excellent initiative by the RFS as a last resort but as they point out in their guidelines they have many limitations .

- Travelling to an NSP is inherently dangerous due to the potential for traffic congestion, poor visibility, fire activity, traffic accidents or fallen trees that may block the route.
- People will need to use judgement and take appropriate action in regards to their personal safety while sheltering at a NSP.
- Sheltering at a NSP may result in physical and/or psychological trauma.
- People are likely to experience extreme conditions including heat, high winds, fire noise, burning embers, radiant heat, smoke and ash while sheltering at an NSP.
- Access into a NSP may not be facilitated by emergency services and cannot be guaranteed.
- Emergency services may not be present.
- There is no provision for pets.
- There will generally be limited parking. Large numbers of vehicles may further compromise what little protection the area affords.
- There may be limited capacity with few amenities.
- There may be little or no capacity to help people with special needs.
- There is likely to be no communication or first aid facilities at an NSP

ACCESS TO A NSP IN AN EMERGENCY

As our two NSP's are buildings (not open areas) the Police will be responsible for making sure they are opened when authorized by RFS Regional Command during a fire emergency.

Please note that all activities undertaken in the Hall's during the year will be unaffected by their possible use as an NSP during a fire emergency.

PLEASE BE PREPARED

Make sure you have a well prepared bushfire survival plan that is based on you taking no unnecessary risks and leaving the danger area early if it is safe for you to do so.

DO NOT RELY ON THE NSP AS YOUR PRIMARY SOURCE OF PROTECTION BUT AS A LAST RESORT.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The RFS guidelines for NSP's mentioned earlier is well worth reading and can be downloaded from their website. For those without access to a computer I will be pleased to forward you a hard copy. I am also available at any time to answer any questions you may have on preparing for fire and the NSP's

- Peter Laving (Community Engagement Officer)
peter.laving@kumahira.com.au

4756 2004 0417478250



THE WALKS OF MOUNT WILSON

Boronia Point

Notes below include extracts from the booklet
"Mount Wilson Walks" by Libby Raines.

Boronia Point

Walk Signage Colour: Light Blue

Length: 4.6 km return

Elevation Change: 100 m

Time: 1½ hours

Grade: Easy

Starting point:

Car Park at Junction of Mt Irvine Road and Farrer Road West, about 2 km beyond the Cathedral of Ferns.

Walking conditions:

- Well formed track.

Highlights:

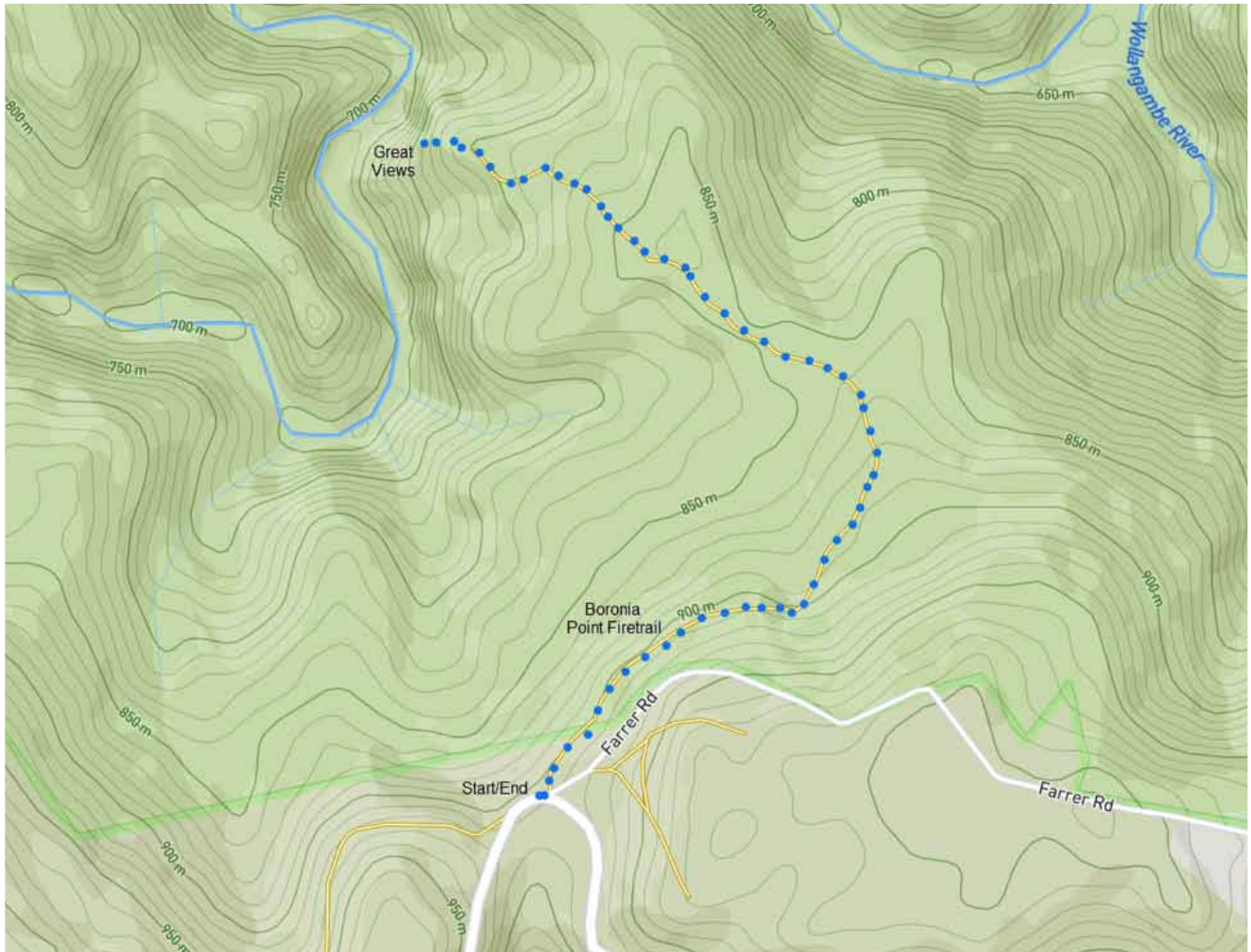
- Great views into the Wollangambe Canyon
- Lovely Wild Flowers
October/November

Photo this page: Views on the Boronia Point Walk.

Photos next page: Views on the Boronia Point Walk and Boronia Point Map.

THE WALKS OF MOUNT WILSON

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The fire trail starts at the Car Park and heads below West Farrer Road. This section of the mountain was very badly burnt during the October 2013 fires and you can see how quickly the bush has regenerated.

Keep going to the end of the fire trail. At the end of the fire trail there is a track heading to the left where you can walk right to the edge of the cliff (proceed with caution) and look down into the Wollangambe River where it makes some spectacular S bends. A great spot for tea and cake.

There is an added bonus in October and November when the wild flowers are out as these are very lovely. Return along the same trail back to the start of the walk.

- Robbie Feyder





IN MY GARDEN: Breenhold at the beginning of Spring

The dry winter may not be good news for farmers, but the intense sunshine and heat has made Breenhold's usually florid rhododendrons even more brilliant this year. Our biggest, near the walled Celestium garden, seemed to float away on a veritable crimson cloud. However, the lack of water has started to show on others, and like the old Chinese saying goes, quick to flower, quick to die, which indeed the relentless sunshine has more or less guaranteed.

The weeping cherries, flowering prunus, laurel and lemon myrtle were also in full bloom, as were the dogwood and magnolia. And the unusually enduring staying power of the camellias this year has ensured that the garden was never short of blossoms. Although even some of them succumbed to the heat.

New plans for a raised garden where about a dozen diseased *pinus radiata* had to be removed is a reminder of the continuing cycles of growth and decay in a garden,

which challenged us to turn a bad situation into something positive. Since the removal of the giant old stumps could seriously impact on an adjacent wall, the idea of a raised garden is a creative alternative which could also bring new dimensions to the existing space.

Being a large garden, in need of constant attention, it is only possible to focus on sections at time, giving priority to a selected number of garden management matters. So this Spring and Summer the focus will be on maintaining and enriching the established gardens.

One thing Breenhold has never been short of and that is our feathered friends. Recently, I had the supreme pleasure of spying a bird I'd never seen before. Brilliant blue wings and pale yellow breast with the distinctive profile of a kingfisher, this bird flew from branch to branch, tree to ground, and up to tree again. Each time it flew, the electric blue wings were startlingly bright.

IN MY GARDEN

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Fortunately, with the aid of artist, Fiona Lumsden and her wonderful bird chart, I was able to identify it as a Sacred Kingfisher. That must have been a good omen! Fiona later informed me that it is indeed a migratory bird that is only seen in these parts for a few weeks.

Chuffed with having spotted the Kingfisher, I set about identifying the other birds which regularly graze on our lawn and flit about the trees, some more heard than seen. These were the ones I saw in just an afternoon: the Bassian Thrush, the Eastern Yellow Robin, the Superb Fairy-wren, the Satin Bowerbird, the Crimson Rosella and the Australian King Parrot (which was having a bath in our tin bowl under a dripping faucet. And I heard the constant calls of the Eastern Whipbird and the very shy Superb Lyrebird, as well as the Wonga Pigeon – mostly as it noisily flies away.

Simply glorious!

- Rachael Kohn



THE PATCH

Rhubarb Crumble

Rhubarb is easy to grow and loves the Mountains climate. We tend to do very little with ours, watering it occasionally and splitting the crown into two every few years, and seem to do very well. We also leave ours alone over winter, picking only a few or no stalks during the cold weather as this can stress the plant. Try to pick the stalks younger, when they are finger size, as these cook up better than fatter stalks

- Ash Phillips

NOTES

You can also add sliced apple, raisins and other fruit to the mix. If you add apple, make sure to peel it first!

This makes quite a bit of crumble topping, especially if making in ramekins. If you have too much this can be kept in the fridge for a week or two.

You can also eat the rhubarb stew without the topping for breakfast, serve with greek yoghurt for a great breakfast.



INGREDIENTS

For rhubarb stew:

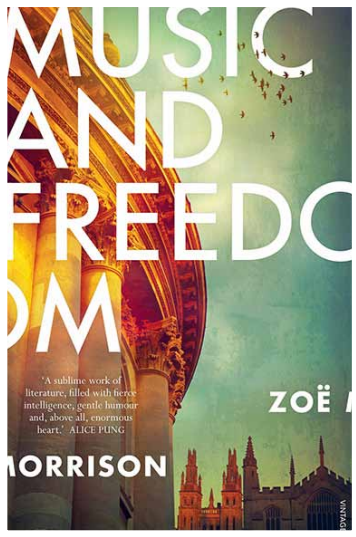
- Rhubarb (6-7 stalks at least)
- Juice of an orange (or lemon)
- Splash of water
- 3 tablespoons honey (More if you prefer it sweeter, less if you don't)

For crumble topping:

- 150g Butter, chilled and chopped
- 1 cup flour
- Pinch of cinnamon
- 1 tablespoon caster sugar

METHOD

1. Roughly chop rhubarb stalks and place in a saucepan
2. Add juice from orange, and a dash of water
3. Place over low heat, and cook, covered, until the rhubarb has almost completely broken down.
4. Meanwhile, rub butter, flour, sugar and spices together until crumbs form. You may have to add more butter, or more flour, depending on the weather and the flour.
5. Pour cooked rhubarb mix into ramekins (or one larger ovenproof dish), top with the crumble topping, and cook under a medium grill until golden and crispy.
6. Serve with double cream or icecream



One of the best books I have read about music – both listening to and composing – is Bernard McLaverty's *Grace Notes*. An exploration of the difficulties and pleasures of composing music is traced through the early years of a girl and young woman determined to succeed. This is a lesson in never making absolute declarations for I have just finished reading *Music and Freedom* by Zoe Morrison.

MUSIC AND FREEDOM

by Zoe Morrison

As in *Grace Notes* the focus is on a woman but here she is a piano player, not a composer. From a struggling apple orchard in Australia where her parents are unhappy, each in their own way, and where her mother is a marvellous teacher of the piano, to the struggles of being one of many novice musicians, the novel traces the fortunes, loves and failures of Alice Murray.

The arc of her life touches on many of the issues that will be recognised by today's reader – ambition marred by social shyness, a search for love that ends badly, the importance of friendship and health. Her desire to play and perform as a concert pianist and a yearning to return to the place of her childhood, half a world away is never forgotten. However it is increasingly difficult for her to remain focused as so much seems to conspire against her.

Then one day the walls of her house begin to sing familiar piano tunes to her. The novel switches around in time and as Alice grows older the past is layered and folded over the present. It is only at the end of the book, and in the present time that Alice finds a different path and clarity in her emotional life.

This book reminds me of *Atonement* with its focus on the difficulties of being a girl growing up clever, talented and naïve; and also because of its ending. *Music and Freedom* is a complex novel linked and supported by a continual interest in music and the role it may play in one life and in the cultural world.

- Alison Halliday

ATN*

The column formerly known as “Ask the Neighbours”



Can't do a long column this time, Jess. Yes, I know you depend on ATN to provide our dear Readers with high quality real life media content.

But, the world is calling, Jess. And it's saying “Why can't you give the world the same kind of high production values entertainment as you give Australia? Why can't you educate us all to the dangers of seemingly cuddly looking wildlife? Why can't you invent some kooky yet endearing characters who represent those poorly showcased groups who never seem to get a look in through (mainstream) streaming?”

You know the ones Jess. The slovenly washed-up disgraced detective who takes the troubled young punk under his wing to teach him everything he knows, who forges a bond with said troubled young punk only to die at the end of the pilot episode.

Or, the cool mature females working in a male dominated industry where they effortlessly (and still in their stilettos) run rings around the blokes every week – and yet are still underrated, frustrated and reduced to wry punchlines at the end of each episode.

So, we're off to the World, Jess. Well, when I say “us” – actually, that's me. I got the call, Jess. No, not the heavenly type. THE call from a really big streaming service – so big that it's more like a river than a stream, more like a torrent than a trickle, more like a downpour than a misty rain.

We're (that's me again) taking Murderous Mounts: ATN international. In fact, that's a catchy name. Forget all those entertainment brands which try to reinvent themselves by having a brand new (usually younger) cast in an exciting new and dangerous geopolitical setting (like, say Los Angeles). We'll go really global with the new Murderous Mounts: ATN International.

But most importantly, Jess – we won't forget the little people as we reach for the stars.

So, despite that we didn't receive even one response to last column's request to our dear readers to name our new spin-off streaming service offering, we're offering yet another unique opportunity – where should we set Murderous Mounts: ATN International ?

- Elizabeth M “Real Crime” Editor

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