

The Mounts Spring 2023

Community Newsletter of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine



Wattle on the five mile, courtesy Alex Halliday

EDITORIAL

Driving cold winds, freezing mornings, ice on puddles and dark evenings – all part of winter. And now it is time for spring, but it seems to be a little muddled: days are too warm too early, some flowers are not only here but gone, while others are huddled into buds reluctant to begin their annual journey. What is common to all is the lack of rain. After three years of well over average rainfall we are now faced with a dry time again. Rainfall varies even across one mountain. If you thought this year has been a lot dryer than last year you are quite right. Here in Hillcrest Lane in 2022 from Jan to end June we had 1224ml. But this year for the same period we have had 463ml. We have gone from damp ground to really dry. I am sure I am not the only one perturbed and distracted by the smell of eucalyptus burning in the back burns of late winter. Our more public garden places with trees and waratahs along the verges are doing well – enjoy them as you walk around the village.

VALE WENDY SMART

Wendy Jane Smart (23/1/1958 - 22/8/2023) has passed away in Lithgow hospital after a short illness.

Wendy was the youngest daughter of Bill and Jane (née Wynne) Smart. She was the fifth generation of the Wynne family to live at Wynstay. The property was founded in 1875 by Richard Wynne. Wendy went to primary school in the one-teacher school at Mt Wilson. As a child she is remembered as a 'sweet shy clever girl'. She became a 'soft, kind, wonderful woman'.

After finishing school Wendy tried her hand at various jobs, working as a receptionist in Katoomba, working for Home Care in Katoomba, then travelled overseas working as a nanny in the UK for a few years, before returning to Australia where she purchased a house in Leura.

Wendy's love of cooking led to her training as a chef at TAFE in Orange, where she lived and worked for several years learning the trade from renowned chefs. She worked at several restaurants across the Blue Mountains, notably at Echoes restaurant as the dessert chef, a role she was passionate about. She delighted in making new desserts which went onto the menu after a tasting. She was skilful and talented and, with characteristic modesty, described herself as a cook.

Wendy returned to Wynstay in 1999 to care for her father in his final illness and did not leave. Wendy loved Mt Wilson, her mountain home, and animals. She had a small herd and stud of Devon cattle which were meticulously cared for. She tested the pasture to make sure it contained the necessary minerals and trace elements needed for healthy cattle. The annual calving gave pleasure to the many local residents who enjoyed walking past the paddocks.

Wendy will be sadly missed by her partner of many years Keith Parker and his family, her sister Amne Hughan and her family, Aunty Flo, other family members and all who knew and loved her. Wendy was privately cremated.



MWPA PRESIDENT'S REPORT

What a winter! From balmy days to blowing a gale, Mother Nature can't figure out which way to go. We have spring flowers in July, goodness knows what the real spring will bring.

To that end, we have arranged for the first of our garden series with a workshop on Propagation to be held on October 14, 2023 at Merry Garth. Micah Fink will be the instructor and he will teach standard propagation as well as division and some other methods so stay tuned for the email with the invitation. It is open to all Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine residents and their families. Perfect timing for the spring. Many thanks for the grant funding by the BMCC as part of our resilience programs from the bushfires of 2019.

The MWPA continues our project to continue planting the avenues of Mt Wilson and we look forward to creating some new canopies around the village. We are also planting amongst the older trees to restore some of the pockets in the older avenues.

The MWPA has organised 30 additional waratahs for Anniversary Walk and a few for around the village. Merry Garth will be doing a bulk order so if you wish to buy additional waratahs for your garden, please contact Pete Raines.

Lastly, we continue working with BMCC on potholes, toilets, signage and other glamorous matters as well as trying to influence the Nancy Byrd/Western Sydney flight paths over the mounts. We will continue to distribute information on where you can obtain additional information on the level of noise we may experience. The concept that we have little ambient noise other than birdsong, seems to be lost on them. But Allen Hyde of Mt Irvine Progress Association and I will persevere.

Enjoy the Spring when she arrives!

Nancy Fox

BASTILLE DAY MAINTENANCE FRIDAY DINNER

Baguettes and berets were present a plenty. Thanks to all who contributed to a Bastille Day dinner on 14 July.



BUSHCARE NEWS

The Mt Wilson Bushcare Group spend a few hours together each month helping to reverse the damage done to the environment by invasive weeds in bushland in Mt Wilson. During this time we carefully remove weeds and encourage native plants to grow, using the principles of bush regeneration to guide our work.

BMCC provides all equipment, including gloves, secateurs, spade, herbicide, kneeling pads etc. Those interested should check the calendar on the Mt Wilson Mt Irvine community website to determine the location each month. Covid safety precautions have now eased so there is a chance there will be a delicious home-baked cake at morning tea! Please bring your own tea/coffee.

Bushcare is held on the second Friday of each month, between 9am and 12 midday. It is an enjoyable morning and a great way to learn more about the native flora including beautiful rainforest trees, shrubs and flowers.

For residents who are wanting to identify and control weeds in their gardens, the booklet "Bushland Weeds of Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine" can be found in the Bushcare section of the community website. The booklet is also available from the MWPA, if residents would like a free copy please contact Sue Woolfenden on 4756 2046.

Everyone is welcome, hope you can join us!

Enquiries:

Mt Wilson contact: Alice Simpson (0414 425 511 or 4756 2110)

Council contact: Tracy Abbas (0428 777 141)

Alice Simpson

GREEN BIN COLLECTIONS

Extra weekly green bin collections in September – two extra green bin collections will happen during September up until 2025 for all residents, to support residents with bushfire season preparations. The weekly collections for 2023 will happen between 4 - 29 September.

NEWS FROM ST GEORGE'S

Regular Services

Church Services are held on the 2nd Sunday of each month at 3pm followed by a friendly cup of tea. Everyone is welcomed at St George's.

Working Bee

A working bee is held 9am-11am on the 1st Wednesday of each month depending on the weather. We mainly work on the garden, pulling weeds, pruning, raking leaves etc and would welcome anyone who can help, morning tea is provided.

Helen Freeman, Warden

MUSIC TO SOOTHE THE SOUL – SYDNEY PHILHARMONIA CHOIRS RETURN



St George's Church resounded recently to the virtuosic voices of selected singers from Sydney Philharmonia Choirs as they presented the latest concert in the Music to Soothe the Soul series for the local community. Originally designed to benefit residents after the bushfires of 2019 and 2020, thanks to the generosity of local donors, the series has taken on a life of its own and continues to lift the spirits of audience and performers alike.

In considerably more welcoming weather than their first visit in March 2022 when both the Hawkesbury and Windsor bridges were under water, the singers presented a varied program entitled Songs for the Winter Solstice conducted by Elizabeth Scott and accompanied by Tim Cunniffe on piano. During the performance members of the ensemble stepped forward and very

engagingly introduced the next bracket of songs. Of particular interest to the audience were four songs inspired by Grimm's Fairy Tales composed by Luke Byrne, the talented son of Louise Byrne of Mt Irvine. After sustained applause, the performance ended with an infectiously animated encore rendition of Chili con Carne by Anders Edenroth. Described by one audience member as "moving from poignant to funny and downright wonderful" the program was welcomed enthusiastically by a full house of close to 100 residents and friends.

Once again the Mt Wilson Progress Association kindly hosted a gathering in the Mt Wilson Hall after the concert, providing an opportunity for audience and performers to mingle. The concert was a truly community event with many locals assisting with catering, deliveries, cleaning up, and in the case of Barbara Landsberg and Merrick Howes, generously opening 'Withycombe' for the singers to use as a green room and dressing room.

The next concert in the Music to Soothe the Soul series takes place at **3pm on Saturday 21 October** in St George's. Acclaimed percussionist and composer Claire Edwardes will perform a program named Songbirds inspired by birdsong and environmental themes along with Jason Noble on clarinet, and Lamorna Nightingale on flute. Save the date now!

Sarah Howell

MT WILSON / MT IRVINE BUSHWALKS WITH THE UPPER MOUNTAINS BUSHWALKING CLUB

- Fri - 15-Sep** [Bungleboori Creek South Crossing](#)
Peter Raines Bungleboori Creek South Crossing - From Dumbano Firetrail across
3 MX - Day Walk Bungleboori South picking up an old logging track on the south side back to Waratah Ridge Approx. 10km great pogoda country, partly off track and on overgrown trails. (This walk is subject to road conditions on Dumbano and Waratah ridges) Alternative walk is Deep Pass and River Caves.
Map: *Wollangambe*
- Fri - 20-Oct** [Mt Wilson - Waterfall Creek and Southern Firetrail](#)
Peter Raines Mt Wilson - Waterfall Creek and Southern Firetrail - Follow the waterfall
3 M - Day Walk walk into the rainforest, then onto old bullock logging along waterfall creek before joining the Southern Fire trail, returning to Mt Wilson via Daintree Road. approx. 8km
Map: *Mt Wilson*
- Fri - 17-Nov** [Kanangra Walls – Plateau Walk / Cottage Rock](#)
Peter Raines Kanangra Walls – Plateau Walk / Cottage Rock 9km Walk Kanangra
3 M - Day Walk Walls Plateau out to Cottage Rock return by the same route. Open Plateau Walk - Great Views.
Map: *Kanangra*

Peter Raines



MEMORIES OF SEFTON HALL: A CHILDHOOD WONDERLAND

Earlier this year, James and I had the great pleasure of accepting an invitation to spend an evening with Jill Mullens (nee Clark) and a couple of her close friends. Perched above a bustling Sydney Harbour with ferries and work boats darting this way and that, it was a world away in both time and place from the bucolic mountain home, Sefton Hall, that Jill so adored – the place that created the bond between us. Custodians past and present exchanging stories of Sefton, now and then. Jill, the great-granddaughter of Henry Marcus Clark, was the last of the Clarks to own Sefton before the property's first public sale in 1995 by Sotheby's.

A successful writer and journalist, Jill wrote the following article, published in Vogue Australia the year after Sefton was sold. She handed me a photocopy of the piece, almost as an afterthought, as we were saying our farewells that evening. Jill has kindly allowed the Society to re-publish her short memoir here in The Mounts. Enjoy!

Peter Resanceff

Ah, nostalgia - wondrous memories of the way things weren't. But no matter how the years change the truth of times long past into warm glowing images, no-one could ever call our family home beautiful.

Built by my great-grandfather, it was an architectural combination of Last Outpost of Hill Station Raj and Edwardian Berserk, complete with corrugated iron roof festooned with Carpenters' Gothic peaks. Inside the big dark rooms, intricate, splendid panelling and hand-carved lion fireplaces, over whose heads were often placed brown paper bags so their ferocious glowers wouldn't scare the wits out of the family babies, emitted a heavy scent of wax, vinegar and wood paraffin oil.

Glorious stained glass windows and William Morris wallpapers provided an illusion of warmth to the usually freezing bedrooms where we tucked down for holiday nights full of scary owls' hoots and the thunder of possum feet playing in the roof. Best of all, we had a secret passage winding between the room walls where kids we didn't like were treated to thumps and howls which led them to think the house was haunted. They usually prevailed upon their mothers to take them home quite soon.

It was a special house, built by a man who had a Victorian view of family get-togethers, with sing-songs round the piano, picnics among the tree ferns on the lawn, and much interaction amongst all the young cousins who spent their holidays together in a fair resemblance of a riot.

We would arrive in the misty middle of a mountain night from the heat-baked plains of the outback, the old Oldsmobile piled high with baggage and kids, the family pets, thermoses and saddles for our creamy ponies stabled in the garden. The caretakers would have built

blazing fires and filled the house with rhododendrons, towering spikes of red hot poker and sticky-stemmed agapanthus. The arrival at the mountain house always equalled its preceding anticipation, so we'd tumble into our high iron beds warmed with stone hotwater bottles in high excitement for the days ahead.

We were never let down.

My sister, an aunt (a mere 18 months older than her) and I would spend our days riding round the fire trails below the peaks, tadpoling in the tea-coloured streams of icy water, and giving hell to the local wildlife. The rainforest below the house was leech heaven. Those fat shiny-black slugs attached themselves to us very swiftly indeed, and we took great delight in touching the wretched things with the ends of our illicit cigarettes, stolen from Grandfather's Craven A or Ardath tins. Funnel-web spiders, who lived silently, bothering no-one, under the chapel-shaped billiards room in the garden met a similar fate, until one awful day we used petrol instead of kerosene to lure them from their crannies, threw down a match and lost all the eyebrows and lashes from our pre-adolescent faces.

Lyre birds and foxes, bower birds - cursed creatures in our grandmother's eyes because they stole all the blue hyacinth flowers to decorate their circular nests - and kookas, wrens and the great black cockatoos who heralded wild mountain storms, provided the natural music of our days.

Some Saturday nights, after early dinners of Toad in the Hole, or strips of lamb in batter, fried in dripping and topped with dark tomato sauce, the three of us would troop down to the village hall where wartime movies streamed in celluloid bundles from an ancient projector manned by one of a family of local brothers who could fix roofs, cut down trees and rescue children from snakes lurking in the bracken which always appeared just as one was answering a desperate call of nature. In these movies, gallant lads in romantic flying helmets would fly from English fields to do battle with 'Jerry', or a simpering Greer Garson would stroll through a cottage garden carrying a trug of full-blown roses as she waited for the return of the ones she loved the most.

In those long-gone days we celebrated Empire, not Australia, Day - on the 24th of May. In the preceding days, the mountain folk would build a huge bonfire down on the village green. All the kids would gather great armfuls of sticks and dried tree ferns, the women would make a feast of trembling jellies and meringues from their meagre wartime sugar rations, and the village postmistress, normally a formidable figure whom everyone under the age of twenty obeyed without question, would produce bars of hoarded chocolate which she magically managed to distribute to us kids with absolute fairness.

After the culinary treats, the grown-ups lit the bonfire which by this time reached just about as high as the clear starry sky. It ignited with a great whoosh, spinning tiny sparks into the freezing air, crackling in a very satisfactory way until it settled into a steady blaze which usually lasted well into the following afternoon, when the village would yet again gather to throw bananas and spuds into the vermilion embers for another marvellous feast. Then we'd all trip off to the local hall to dance the night away to the tunes of an elderly squeeze-box played by a mountain brother, perched on a high stool. We thought we were very grown-up indeed, especially as we were allowed to stay up till 10pm.

Then we'd troop back to our house and our warm beds, while the grown-ups settled in front of the fire with whisky and cigars whose scent lingered through until the following morning, when it was greeted by much face-pulling and exaggerated "ahs" and vomiting motions from us kids, who could barely cope with the smell of our own stolen nicotine.

The house has seen engagements and marriages, bushfires and droughts, deaths and much, much happiness in its long and loving history.

After 90 years, it finally passed into my hands, and my own children took their own store of mountain memories. Sadly, it had to be sold late last year. None of my extended family is speaking to me.

Jill Mullens (nee Clark), 1996

UPDATE FROM YOUR RURAL FIRE BRIGADE

Busy, busy, busy. That's BAU for us in your Brigade.

Since our last column, we've had the official Opening of the new Mt Wilson Fire Station extension (see top below photo) with some great speeches from our Captain Beth Raines, our President (and the project's manager), Joe Montano, RFS Assistant Commissioner Stuart Midgely (who sang the praises of RFS volunteers and congratulated us on taking the initiative and making the extension possible) , Our Federal MP Susan Templeman and NSW Police Commander for the Blue Mountains Steven Vuletas (who spoke about how respected our community and Brigade are for always being helpful and responsive in search and rescues). Barry Freeman, former Brigade Captain, gave us a wonderful history lesson of life in the Brigade speaking (second photo below) about all the developments since he joined – with many more community members welcomed into the Brigade – even us women! It was a thoughtful reminder of how far we've come in supporting our community and how the new extension is another part of that evolution. As one would expect from a Brigade affair, we had a terrific morning tea afterwards and all in all we had a great time. It was a fitting end to that phase of the new extension's life.





Since then, we've been settling into our new area and seeing the benefits of a bigger training and meeting room, more space for our trucks and equipment and generally getting more efficient at what we do.

Thank you to those community members who responded to our survey seeking your views on whether you think the extension is helping to make us a safer and more resilient community. The results were overwhelmingly positive. We will include the results in our final report to the Grant authority (you may recall we got approximately \$700,000 from the BLERF grant program, which paid for a bit less than half of the extension with the rest coming from donations to the Brigade over a long period of time and all our in-kind contributions).

On the operational front, since our last column we've attended one motor vehicle accident, one Community First Responder call out and cleared up one tree across a road. We're not complaining about it being a relatively quiet period because we've been busy with lots of training for both new and current members. We have seven new members undergoing their Bushfire Fighting training currently. They're all amazing and can already "bowl those hoses" with great proficiency. We've got another group becoming Brigade members and they will be doing their Bushfire Fighting training early in 2024. We've had a big group of members undertaking various modules of training to become Advanced Firefighters. This additional training equips crew members to provide an even greater level of support and expertise to support crew leaders. It's also a lot of fun – who doesn't want to learn about wildfire behaviour, know more about pumps and hydraulics and learn how to read maps (properly!) and to navigate around the bush?

We've had a West Sector joint training day with our Mt Tomah and Bell Brigade colleagues in which we had a briefing on dealing with house fires where solar panels with or without batteries have been installed and we also did a session on how versatile a pumper truck is in fighting house fires.

Because the RFS relies so heavily on brigades helping other brigades and areas when needed, when we can, we participate in activities such as hazard reduction burns. We had two crews all ready and raring to go on a HR at Hazelbrook recently but, due to weather and other changes, we weren't required. Nevertheless, it shows that we are willing and able to assist others just as they are ready to come to our aid when needed.

Work's been going on getting the Mt Wilson station ready for fire season with tidying up of leaf litter and other fire fuels from around the station and near the Old School. Our regular maintenance nights have also been busy with all the jobs we need to do to keep on our toes. And they continue to provide opportunities for us to connect with social gatherings afterwards.

And on maintenance, are you using these cooler days to do your pile burns and clear your asset protection zones? Apart from the usual message we give (to clean gutters and areas immediately around your houses, making sure you have ember protection and generally getting your houses in the best shape they can be to defend against fire), one of the strong messages we got from that recent West Sector training was about solar panels and batteries.

Bushfire or no bushfire, house owners with solar panels should maintain the areas around them (no leaves build up around the panels and that fittings and connections are in good order and repair) and know where their inverters are and how their systems work. If you've got batteries, then same message – keep areas around them clear and have them protected from fire if you can. It's worth reviewing your systems now and if in doubt, get your systems professionally checked. We do regular maintenance on so many things around our houses but solar panels and batteries rarely get a thought.

The RFS and community are continuing to work on getting approvals to start the new fire station at Mt Irvine. Given our topography, the distance between our two villages and the need for us to deploy where we're needed very quickly, getting this new station up and running is a very important part of our fire fighting strategy. The Brigade continues to support the RFS and community in getting this done.

Our community engagement work is forging ahead with Janet McDonald taking charge. Street coordinators and areas are forming WhatsApp groups and getting used to using them: they're already using them to advise of pile burns. And there's more to do over the next few months – “get ready” is more than a slogan.

Are we tempting you yet? Still thinking about what you could do in your Brigade or to generally support your Brigade? As we say- there are jobs for everyone and even if you're not a member of the Brigade (which we'd love you to join!!), the community's support is vital to what we do – from helping with catering (all you bakers and cooks are amazing) through to people lending a hand in times of crisis. We're all in this together. So, why not make those connections sooner rather than later. And you'll have fun – really you will!

That's our – or rather, your – Brigade's wrap up for now.

Elizabeth Montano

MT WILSON MT IRVINE RFB COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT NEWS

For those that do not know me, my name is Janet McDonald and I am the Community Engagement Officer for the Mt Wilson Mt Irvine Fire Brigade. My role is to act as a conduit between the Brigade and the community, providing the community with the information, tools and skills required to be better prepared for bushfire and providing the Brigade with information about the community.

Area Coordinators and Get Ready Get Togethers

Since 2011 the Brigade has utilised a network of Area Coordinators who assist both the Brigade and property owners in the event of a significant fire threat or other emergency. The Mounts are divided up into areas or precincts and each precinct has one or more Area Coordinators. In the event of a bushfire or other emergency, the Area Coordinators are on hand to give the residents in their patch as much local information as possible to help them make their decisions. They can also provide updates to owners who are not one the Mounts, regarding what is happening at their property and the Mounts more generally. The Coordinators will also update the Brigade on the whereabouts and intentions of people in their area and the conditions at their property to assist the Fire Services in prioritising their operational plans.

Over the last five months, four of the precincts have held 'Get Ready Get Togethers'. These are convivial affairs aimed at getting the people within an area to get to know each other in order to establish or reinforce the 'community within the community'. At the Get Togethers we explain how the Community Engagement Areas operate and introduce you to your Area Coordinators; give you some useful information and resources to help you prepare for bush fires and discuss and plan future activities for the Precinct.

All the Get Togethers held so far have been very successful. The format is: I attend along with our Fire Captain Beth Raines, Deputy Captain Peter Raines and President, Joe Montano and I present a PowerPoint presentation, while everyone enjoys a drink and nibbles or morning tea and cake, courtesy of our hosts (as supplemented by the attendees). We then continue with a few more drinks so all the neighbours can get to know each other.

At the time of going to press Get Ready Get Togethers were still being arranged for Mt Irvine and Mt Wilson Central, but by the time it really warms up, all areas will have been covered.

For everyone's information the Community Engagement Areas and the names of the Area Coordinators are set out below.

Mt Irvine (Area 1) – Robyn Hyde, Bruce Kerridge, Mits Delisle, Cheryl Debois

Mt Wilson South (Area 2 – aka the Shire!) - Mill Rd, Wynnes Rocks Rd, Mt Wilson Rd, Hollyridge, Noonameena – Alice Simpson and Johanna Renton

Mt Wilson Central (Area 3) - Queens Ave, Wyndham Ave, The Avenue (Breenhold to Milparra), Hay Lane – Raoul Wilson and Teagan Mitchell

Church Precinct (Area 4) - Church Lane, The Avenue (Fernhill to Mt Irvine Rd), Waterfall Rd, Wynstay

Mt Wilson East (Area 5) - Mt Irvine Rd (Wollartukkee to the Old Mill), Davies Lane, Galwey Lane, Hillcrest Lane, Beowang, Shadforth Rd, Lambs Hill (Area 5) – Alex Halliday and Brenda Ainsworth

Farrer and Smiths Precinct (Area 6) - Farrer Rd East and West, Smiths Rd, Field Selection – Judy Tribe

If you missed your Get Ready Get Together, please reach out to your Area Coordinator or me and we will make sure that you get a 'Show Bag' of helpful information that was distributed at the Get Together.

WhatsApp

One of the new things I have initiated is setting up, after each Get Together, a WhatsApp Group for each area. I have then established a WhatsApp 'Community' with each Group in it, which enables me (but not anyone else) to send a message to everyone all at once.

The WhatsApp Area Groups and the WhatsApp Community will be extremely useful in an emergency, but I am encouraging each Group to use the app for non-emergency community purposes: eg there is a tree down across the road; does anyone have a log splitter we could borrow or, open house drinks at 4pm for anyone interested! 😊 All to foster the 'community within the community'.

For those not familiar with WhatsApp, you can download the app for free onto your phone. The app is encrypted and is not like a Facebook Group - it is just an instant messaging service.

The Mt Irvine and Mt Wilson Central Precincts WhatsApp Groups will be set up soon. If you belong to one of the other precincts and have not been receiving WhatsApp messages, but would like to, please text me on 0410 565 018 or email me on jmcdonald67@outlook.com and I'll add you to the relevant group.

Pile Burns

WhatsApp has been tremendous for notifying neighbours of pile burns: it is **mandatory** to notify adjoining neighbours of a pile burn 24 hours in advance. You must also notify the RFS 24 hours in advance. You can do that online at <https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/fire-information/BFDP/burn-notifications>.

Please note that you cannot do a pile burn without first getting a Fire Permit during the Bushfire Danger period which is usually 1 October to 31 March, but the period can be brought forward or extended, depending on the conditions.

So don't get caught out, set to, like we did at Farcry a week or so ago, and clear up excess vegetation, clean your gutters and take advantage of pile burning season.



Janet McDonald

LEADLIGHT GLASS WORKSHOP

On Saturday May 20th and August 5th a few locals joined Kathy and Morna from the Winmalee Neighbourhood Centre at the Mount Wilson Village Hall for a Leadlight Glass workshop.



After learning how to score and break some glass, our wonderful trainers guided us through the fun process of cutting glass shapes (with the help of a template) before grinding the edges to shape them and make them smooth. We were attempting an alternate technique to using lead where we edged our shapes in foil before re-positioning them in preparation for the final fluxing and soldering step. After some afternoon tea and lots of great story telling from the experts we polished our designs and showed them off proudly, also impressed there were no injuries.

There was plenty of beautiful coloured and textured glass sheets to choose from and during our day together we learned so many interesting things about glass manufacturing, mosaicing, stained glass (pretend lead light as the professionals call it) and how a lead light glass panel gets repaired.



Look out for more upcoming mosaic workshops with Morna. A big thank you to both Kathy and Morna for sharing their passion with us all.

Anton Smith

ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE

From September 2023 to March 2024 we will welcome six artists, staying for one month at the Old School to work on their project. Each artist will present a community event, they are all quite different, e.g. talks, workshops, concerts and you will be invited to every event. I hope you can join at least some of these.

Our first artist in **September** is **Ward O'Neill** an illustrator and artist, who produced watercolour and pen and ink drawings for the editorial, commentary and cultural pages of the Sydney Morning Herald, the Australian Financial Review and The Bulletin magazine. In these drawings he often sought to make a serious point, leavened with a satirical edge.



Then **Frankie Meaden** will be staying in **October**, she is a textile artist from New Zealand, making large artworks from recycled materials (see above), challenging the scale at which embroidery is usually seen.

<https://www.beautifullyfrank.co.nz/>

November is **Johanna Hildebrandt's** month (left). In her application she wrote "bushwalking has always been an intrinsic part of my creative process, and in my many visits to the Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine areas I have been touched by the fragile, but persistent, life of the mosses, ferns and lichens. Moreover, the birdlife and fauna in this landscape is of particular interest to me – I have a great desire to understand and capture the special qualities of this place."

During **January 2024**, **Frankie Dyson Reilly** an interdisciplinary artist, musician and researcher living in Meanjin/Brisbane, will be coming. Her current practice as a Doctor of Musical Arts candidate at QCGU stems from her fascination with the relationship between colour and sound and has led to the creation of an ever-evolving collection of colourful, graphic, and animated musical scores. During her residency, Frankie is looking forward to creating a new graphic score inspired by the Blue Mountains, gathering sketches, photographs, and audio recordings of Mt. Wilson flora and fauna to create an immersive audio-visual composition.

<https://www.frankiedysonreilly.com/>

Anna Spencer is an Australian regional artist based between the Pilbara and the Kimberley's in Western Australia and has been a practicing artist for over 15 years.

Grounded in a deep appreciation for the vitality of the natural world, her intricate paintings and drawings elevate the nuances of the environments surrounding her. During the residency at Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine she will explore, collect and compile, producing a body of work that reflects the diversity of the Australian landscape and of her practice. She predominantly works in gouache but will allow time to experiment with other mediums.

Anna's residency is in **February 2024**

annaspencer.com.au

Our last artist for round five is **Peter McLean**, coming in **March 2024**, an artist with a deep affinity for nature and the environment. Working across a range of printmaking techniques as well as drawing and installation, his work explores the materiality of nature and our physical, emotional and spiritual relationships with place. As well as exhibiting regularly, Peter has extensive experience teaching printmaking in a range of settings including festivals, community arts organisations and university based art schools. He is looking forward to walking around Mt Wilson and the nearby trails, listening for the land's voice.

<https://petermclean.com.au/>

I hope you are able to meet these artists, learn about their practice and how they have explored Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine during their residency.

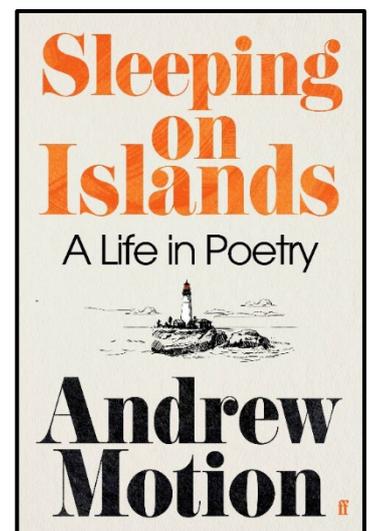
Judith Tribe

BOOK REVIEW – SLEEPING ON ISLANDS BY ANDREW MOTION

Andrew Motion is one of England's most respected poets and in his latest work he gives real and valuable insights into the life of a poet and to the making of poems. The subtitle is 'a life in poetry' and he has dedicated his life to writing poetry – most often concerned with memory, age, death, and love. These are large and complex ideas and here he places them against two major elements of his life: the poets who he knew and revered, particularly Philip Larkin, and the jobs and opportunities grabbed that gave him time to write as well as earning a living. He clearly shows that poetry is a compulsion rather than a career.

He writes with love and grief about the often difficult lives of both his mother and father. His mother spent years in a coma after a riding accident, and this was the focus of his first memoir, *In the Blood*. He feels as though this accident and its terrible consequences determined much of his writing but as Motion ages he comes to accept that his awkward and restrained relationship with his father also underlines his poetry. He touchingly describes his father as 'Old soldier, Brave man. Poor long-suffering soul'

Motion writes about his own poetry with great insight, and a touch of fear. He is fascinating about the importance of structure and the continuing need to grow and change. He also comments on what it means when Frost said 'the sound of sense' was the essential part of poetry. There are only brief comments about his loves, his wives and his children but he does note that family is everything to him. He is also passionate about England and is deeply concerned about Brexit. Ironically at that point he has just moved to Baltimore, USA, so he has to cope with Trump being President and the impact of Covid.



At times I wanted more about his own life but as the book evolves he offers more insights into his own past, his understanding of poetry and poets, and what is essential in his own life. He has to weigh up the importance of solitude against the need to live in the world, his desire for an existence on the periphery against the need to be a part of his chosen world of poetry and poets. These contradictions are summed up with wry humour as he describes his time as poet Laureate.

This book offers a great deal more than many autobiographies as it digs into what it means to be a poet in the modern world.

Alison Halliday

BUSH AND BEYOND – FREE GUIDED WOLLANGAMBE WALKS FOR RESIDENTS

Have you lived or visited the Mounts for years, but never seen the Wollangambe River? Have you wanted to try floating on a lilo down the Wollangambe 1 Canyon, but were too scared or didn't know where to go? Would you like to know how to walk down to the Wollangambe Canyon so you can show it to your family and friends? Are you over fifty (by a little or a lot!) and worried about doing anything too challenging for fear that you might not manage it? Would you like to go on a guided walk with a Ph D biologist who can name and explain the fauna and flora and get you safely home again?

If you answered yes to any of those questions, this summer, your prayers could be answered.

Last year Dr Andrew Mitchell of Farcry in Church Lane, took his long service leave to obtain a Certificate IV in outdoor leadership. Since then he has been gaining work experience at Blue Mountains Adventure Company and in every moment of his free time, he has been exploring the nooks and crannies of the northern Blue Mountains.

This November Andrew will launch his new business "Bush and Beyond", taking groups canyoning and walking, with a focus on slowing down, observing, passing on information about the environment and ensuring that everyone is happy and safe and moving at their pace and abilities. As so many residents of the Mounts have expressed each of the above questions to Andrew, he would like to offer residents the chance to safely explore the Wollangambe with him, for free, before he opens his business to the public at large.

Bush and Beyond is offering four different options to residents this November and December, on a first come first serve basis. Each option includes:

- your qualified and insured guide, Andrew;
- all necessary equipment, including (for options 3 and 4), wetsuits, dry bags and helmets;
- lux refreshments at the end of the trip.

All you need to bring is water and lunch or morning tea and wear appropriate clothing.

Each option has a maximum number of people. Andrew will take one group on each adventure. If you would like to take part, email Andrew at bushandbeyond2786@gmail.com. It's first come first served, so don't delay. This is a one-off offer before Andrew charges at commercial rates.

Option 1 – Wollangambe Walk 1 (6 km, 4 hrs) – Sat 25 Nov

Recommended for those who have never taken the track to the Wollangambe River and want the convenience and security of a well maintained and signposted trail. This walk will start at the

Fire Station and descend the Wollangambe 1 entrance track with the Horseshoe Bend variation. View the Wollangambe River cliffs and have morning tea at a beautiful river beach. There are



steps the entire way, so no scrambling is required. Return the same way.

Maximum group size: 12 (no age limit)

Walk 2 – Wollangambe Jump Rock (8 km, 4 hrs) – Sat 9 Dec (below)

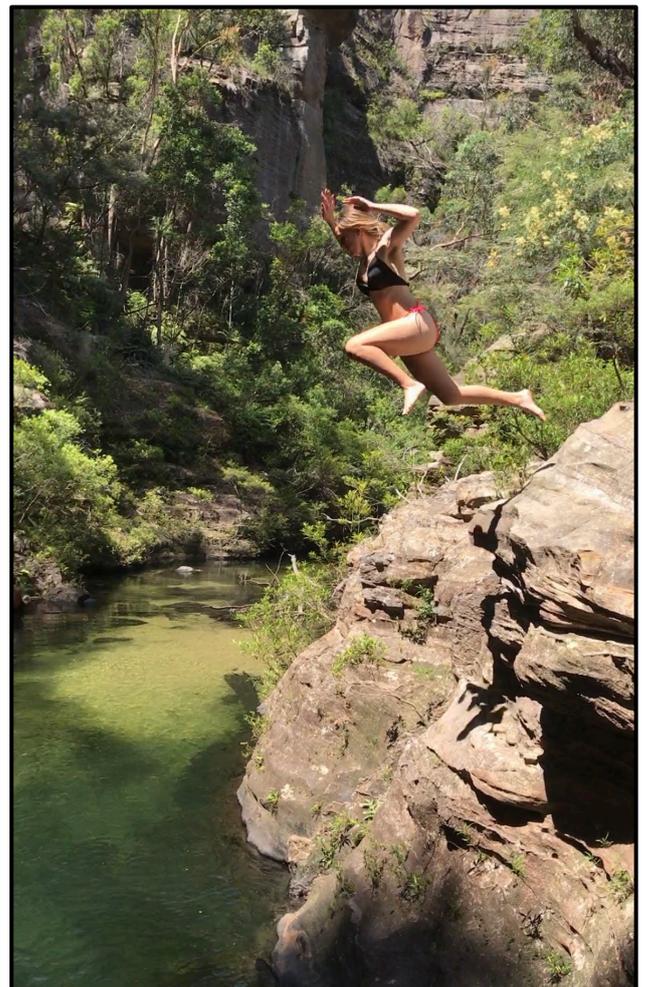
Recommended for confident walkers who don't mind a bit of a scramble, this walk follows the Wollangambe 2 entrance track (= Wollangambe 1 exit track) initially, but branches off to the east following a track without steps which becomes very steep above the river (the scrambly bit). This avoids the big 3 m step in the former track where you would otherwise have to downclimb on tree roots and a handline. Instead, you scramble down a steep path to "jump rock" with its optional 4 m

jump into deep, cold, clear Wollangambe water. It's a great spot for lunch appreciated by canyoning groups and waterdragons alike. Maximum group size: 8 (no age limit)

Option 3 - Wollangambe Canyon 1 (10 km, 8 hrs) Wed 27 Dec (photo next page)

Go Canyoning – Wollangambe 1! Walk, wade, swim and paddle on a lilo. Although ropes are not required the Wollangambe River should not be underestimated. Lots of scrambling over slippery rocks, wading, and swims. Best to use a lilo to float through the sections where the canyon walls close right in to deep water. It can be a big effort, but it's well worth it. You have to be able to haul yourself up the 3 m drop mentioned above, holding on tree roots and a knotted rope. But Andrew will help you and if need be can slip a rope harness onto you to give you some extra security.

Maximum group size: 8 (12 yo+)



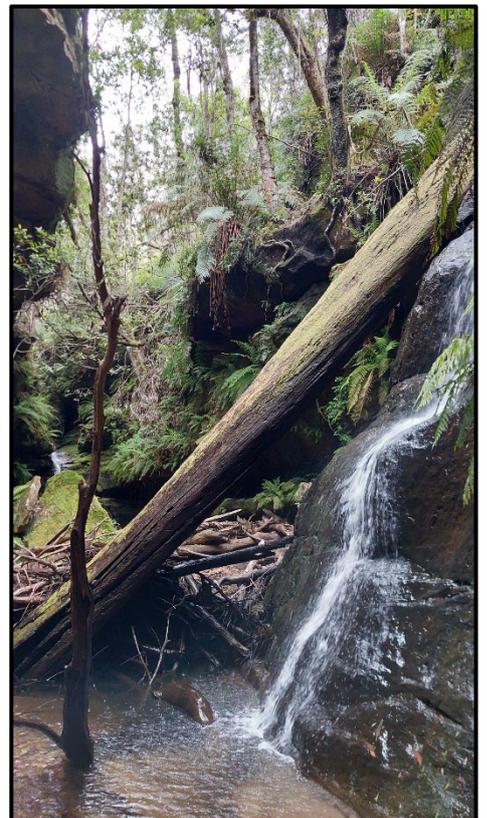


Option 4 - Serendipity Canyon (abseiling trip, 7 hrs) – Fri 29 Dec (below)

Serendipity Creek is a minor tributary of the Wollangambe. The catchment is the eastern part of the northern fire trail. It is one of the most popular Blue Mountains commercially guided canyoning trips and for good reason. There are four abseils/lowers one of which is into a narrow slot with a cave-like grotto at the bottom, a few short swims and a walk through a beautiful open section of creek. Abseiling experience is not required, but you must be reasonably fit and adventurous. The return trip is via Jump Rock on the Wollangambe River.

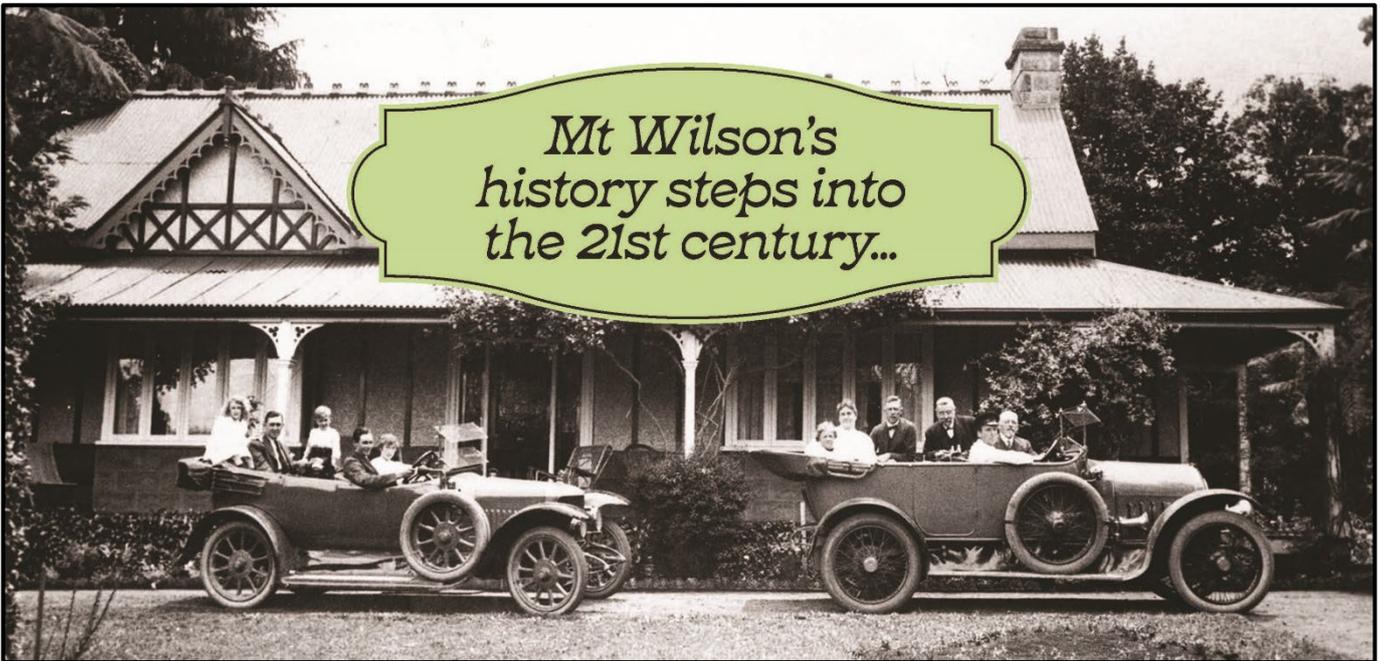
Maximum group size: 4 (14yo+)

Andrew Mitchell



POSTCARD FOR MT WILSON HISTORICAL VILLAGE WALK APP

Later this season you will find postcards in your letterbox to pass on to friends and family about the new Village Walk app.



Travel through our village's past with the Mt Wilson Historic Walk app

Join us on an audio-visual walking tour of Mt Wilson with our GPS-based app that guides you from stop to stop!

Discover the fascinating and often entertaining history of our village, introducing you to the unique cast of characters who played an important role in the village's formative years from the late 1800s to WWII.

22 individual historical sites of interest.

15 audio-recorded narratives.

Photographs from the Historical Society's archives throughout.

Search for 'Mt Wilson Historic Walk'



Mt Wilson & Mt Irvine Historical Society Inc.  ARNO: 22 842 754 931



SATURDAY 11 NOVEMBER – REMEMBRANCE DAY

This year Remembrance Day falls on a Saturday so we hope the weather will cooperate and attendance will be high. The day starts with a service at the War Memorial at 10.30 and then on to the Village Hall for a presentation and morning tea.

FEEDBACK AND SUMMER EDITION

The Mounts is edited and compiled by Alison Halliday and Matilda Halliday. Your feedback and comments are always welcome, please send to themounts2786@gmail.com.

The closing date for the Summer edition of The Mounts is **Friday 17 November 2023**. Please send submissions in Word format to themounts2786@gmail.com. Images of local events, wildlife and flora are also welcome.

Contributions from members of the community are always welcomed – this is *your* newsletter. The email address for queries and contributions is themounts2786@gmail.com.