

MT WILSON & MT IRVINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

Minutes of the 10th Annual General Meeting
held at the Village Hall, Mt Wilson on
18th November 2006 commencing at 4.00pm

WELCOME

The Chairman of the meeting and President of the Society, Professor Arthur Delbridge, welcomed members of the Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine associations, guests and friends, and acknowledged especially the Mt Wilson Mt Irvine fire brigade whose members were out fighting a very serious fire in the Grose Valley.

Arthur spoke on the theme of Village Life. He noted that our villages are isolated and small - we have a church, churchyard and cemetery but no school, pub, tea room or doctor. However, our beautiful landscape, the company of each other and our willingness to 'do for ourselves' more than compensate for what we lack. The programme for the meeting was a celebration of Village Life, including brief histories of the local organisations that have worked for our communities over many years.

Arthur welcomed as special guests, Tanya & Jon Crothers, John Lowe (Local Studies Centre, Springwood Library), Aidrie Martin and Pat O'Toole (Kurrajong/Comleroy Historical Society), Professor Barrie Reynolds (Blue Mountains Association of Cultural Heritage Organisations) and his wife, Ena Reynolds, Dr Peter Rickwood (member of Blue Mountains Historical Society) and Dr Peter Stanbury (Vice Chairman of the International Committee for University Museums and Collections).

APOLOGIES

Jim Angel (Mayor, Blue Mountains City Council) with special good wishes for the day, Kerry Bartlett (Federal Member for Macquarie), Peter and Jenny Benjamin, Suzanne and Tom Bassett, Terry Cameron, Frances Cantwell, Ken and Beverley Carruthers, Nance Cooper, Mid-Mountains Historical Society, Alan Croker, Design 5 Architects, Lawrence Cryer, Suzanne and Denis Daly, Helen and Barry Freeman, Debra and Ted Griffin, Alison and Alex Halliday, Terri Hamilton (councillor, Blue Mountains City Council), Greg and Robin Hart, Sarah Howell, Tom and Carol Hughes, Professor Ian Jack (President Royal Australian Historical Society), Mari Metzke (Manager, Royal Australian Historical Society), Jock Lumsden, Kathleen Oakes, Julia Reynolds, Malcolm Reynolds and family, Sheila Simpson-Lee, Dot Smart, Ron Smart, Wendy Smart, Wilga Smart, John & Judith Teulon, Elaine Turnidge, Paul Weingott, and Irene Wynne.

MEMBERS PRESENT

More than sixty members were present.

9TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 15TH OCTOBER 2005

Darrel Conybeare moved and Helen Cardy seconded that the minutes of the 9th annual general meeting of the Society held on 15th October 2005 be adopted. Carried.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Arthur Delbridge presented his report.

Arthur said that the meeting was a celebration of the Society's 10th birthday. The seeds for its inception were sown in 1993 at the function to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the survey of Mt Wilson. In the following year the Mt Wilson Progress Association established a sub-committee which, in due course, became our Society.

Jane and Bill Smart made a very generous offer of a 50 year lease of part of their property, Wynstay, namely the Turkish Bath and a parcel of land around it, for an annual rent of two dollars. The Society gratefully accepted the offer and has held many events since then to fund the restoration of the Turkish Bath as well as other projects. These activities have involved a large number of people, including many from Mt Irvine, and since the two villages shared so much history, 'Mt Irvine' was added to the Society's name in 2001.

The Society's objective is to record and publicize the histories of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine as a small but essential part of the history of Australia. It publishes two newsletters a year as well as occasional historical papers. Under the guidance of Mary Reynolds it has gathered and catalogued a remarkable archive which is now housed in the Mt Wilson Study Centre. In addition, Luigi Strano, a life member of the Society and resident of Mt Wilson, has advised the Society that he has in his will bequeathed his extensive library to the Society. Arthur thanked Luigi for his generosity and acknowledged the Society's responsibility to his valuable collection.

The Society's tasks are ongoing - preserving man-made structures as well as the natural environment. It is proud of its successes. Arthur thanked everyone - individuals, groups and organizations who have contributed over the years.

(A complete copy of the President's report is held on record.)

MT IRVINE PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

Shane Jeffery presented a short history of the Mt Irvine Progress Association.

Charles Scrivener settled in Mt Irvine in 1897. By 1905 Mt Irvine had one of the first Progress Associations in New South Wales. The Association exists to advance the interests and welfare of the residents and landholders of Mt Irvine District, and to deal with community matters. Shane traced the introduction of the mail service, the construction of Bowens Creek Road, the establishment of a school, the commencement of a telephone service and, in 1962, the arrival of electricity. Shane noted that the quarterly meetings of the Association are very well attended which is a testament to the vital role that it plays in the community.

(A complete copy of Shane's presentation is held on record.)

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer, Ellis Reynolds, noted that the accounts are always open for inspection by any member of the Society. He thanked Avis Bills and also Kathy Harrington for their assistance with treasury matters and acknowledged the Society's gratitude to David Gordon-King who acts as our accountant.

The Society's membership stands at 198. The yearly jazz concert was again most successful and generated necessary funds for the Society's ongoing work. Ellis drew the meeting's attention to the Income/Expenditure statement for 2005/2006, the Reconciliation for Total Expenditure and the Term Deposit held by the Society.

Balance of Account as at 01/07/2005	\$26 968.30
Income from 01/07/2005 to 30/06/2006	\$28 814.80
Total Assets	\$55 783.10
Expenditure from 01/07/2005 to 30/06/2006	\$33 264.96
Balance shown in Account Book as at 30/06/2006	\$22 518.14
Balance shown on Bank Statement as at 30/06/2006	\$24 830.14

The difference of \$2,312.00 is made up of three cheques which had not been presented for payment as at 30 June 2006.

Ellis proposed and Libby Raines seconded that the Report be accepted. Carried unanimously.

TURKISH BATH RENTAL CEREMONY

Ellis Reynolds handed over \$1.00 to Amne Hughan, the daughter of Jane and Bill Smart and now the owner of Wynstay with her sister, Wendy Smart. Amne accepted the rent and then returned it to its presentation box. This exchange was recorded in a receipt book adorned with the Wynstay motto.

ST GEORGE'S CHURCH

Libby Raines presented a short history of St George's Church situated in Mt Wilson.

Work on the church started in 1915. It was built in memory of Henry Marcus Clark by his family on land donated by Richard Owen Wynne. The builders were an elderly man (who had worked on Sefton Hall for the Clarks) and Albert Kirk. Most of the building materials

were imported. Cliff O'Rourke's horse team transported them from Bell Railway Station to Mt Wilson.

The church was consecrated in 1916 by the Anglican Archbishop of Sydney. There were two rectors for the first forty years. There have been twelve since 1957. Services were held once a month, some at Mt Irvine. Jane and Bill Smart's generous donation of Wynne Reserve has allowed the church to sit within a much larger parcel of land. The interior of the church has not been touched to any extent but the exterior has required constant maintenance.

Some local residents are buried in the grounds and the ashes of others are laid beneath the trees. It is very much a village area, reflected by the long list of residents who have worked for the church in some capacity. The current congregation is small and it falls to them to help pay the rector's salary and contribute to the running costs of the Blackheath parish. Given these obligations, the future of St George's is uncertain, particularly since the Anglican Church owns the building and the land immediately around it. St George's survival is very much in the hands of the local community, both in terms of attendance and financial support.

(A copy of Libby's presentation is held on record.)

RESEARCH OFFICER'S REPORT

The Research Officer, Mary Reynolds, spoke about the Land Titles research which she has almost completed. This project has received much financial support from the community.

RURAL FIRE BRIGADE

David Howell presented a short history of the Mt Wilson Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade.

David spoke on 'how far we have come'. Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine are surrounded by National Parks and, historically, residents had to rely on their own devices to deal with fires. When the local brigades were formed in the late 1930s they had no trucks, pumps, hoses or trained personnel but the residents understood fire behaviour and local conditions. Each community gave its brigade financial support. After the bad fires of 1957 the two brigades merged and purchased a truck with money lent by Tom Breen Snr. The area has been threatened several times over the years, requiring all able-bodied residents to help in some way.

A new fire station in Mt Wilson, designed by architect and local resident, Owen Haviland, was built after the severe fires in 1994. The brigade now has two stations, four trucks and more than eighty trained personnel. It is also linked to state-wide co-ordination and can call on satellite infrared mapping and helicopter water bombers. Today, the work carried out by members of the brigade, fighting two major fires burning nearby, is evidence of its ongoing link with the villages.

(A copy of David's presentation is held on record.)

APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE

The Chairman announced the new committee for 2006/2007, namely Des Barrett, Darrel Conybeare, Arthur Delbridge, Patrice Fletcher, Kathie Harrington, Ellis Reynolds, Florence Smart, Louise Weingott and Bruce Wright. The chairman expressed the Society's deep gratitude to Mary Reynolds and Helen Cardy for their dedication to the ongoing success of the Society. Although Mary is retiring from the committee that she helped establish ten years ago, she will remain in her vital role as Research Officer. Helen Cardy plans to continue her hard work for the committee, particularly with the archives and fund raising events. Arthur then welcomed Kathie and Des to the committee. Office bearers will be determined at the Committee's first management meeting in 2007.

MT WILSON PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

Frank Fletcher presented a short history of the Association.

The Association started in the 1920s with Col. Wynne, George Valder and Ivie Sloan rotating executive positions. In due course, Fred Mann, Rev. Dormer and members of the Clark and Gregson families also took up positions on the Committee. The Association met at Wynstay and was primarily concerned with roads, signage, the heritage of the settlement and relations with Blue Mountains Shire Council.

The Association slowed down during the Second World War but got back to speed after it was over. The main issues were rates, maintenance and also the reliability of the electricity supply. Some issues caused more problems than others. Water was one, with a proposal to dam Wollangambe Creek. Another was the matter of cattle roaming the village. In time, the Association fell into a decline. Bill Smart and Libby Raines kept it ticking over. The Association revived in 1990 amid much enthusiasm, and the ongoing issues of services, roads, maintenance, signage, heritage and relations with the Blue Mountains City Council again occupied committee time. The tradition of service to the community has continued since then with many locals putting in long hours and hard work for the benefit of everyone. The Association has had some notable triumphs in recent years, such as the formation of an Archives Committee which subsequently became the Society, and the Association hoped for many more successes in the years to come.

PROFESSOR BARRIE REYNOLDS

Professor Barrie Reynolds, Secretary of the Blue Mountains Association of Cultural Heritage, spoke on the formation of this umbrella body whose aim is to support the cultural heritage work of its members. The Society is one of the two largest historical societies in the Association and Barrie complimented us on our high level of activity and forward-looking approach. He remarked on the high quality of the Scrivener exhibition that the Society produced a few years ago. Barrie thanked the Society for supporting the Association's work on Cultural Heritage Strategy for the Blue Mountains City Council. He outlined the Association's plans for the Heritage Site Monitoring Programme and was pleased with the Society's willingness to undertake a pilot project. Barrie concluded by extending his Association's best wishes to the Society.

UNVEILING THE HISTORICAL MAP

Darrel Conybeare, who is the Society's Project Officer, presented a short history of the preparation of the map.

After the successful completion of the Turkish Bath sign, the Committee decided to consider a Village Map depicting the heritage of Mt Wilson from 1875 to 1945. Darrel spoke of the interpretation which is an inherent part of such a project, the valuable research into land titles that Mary Reynolds had undertaken and the traditional 'baked enamel' process for the map employed by the only firm in Australia still using it. He thanked the Society for the patience required for such an undertaking. He also thanked Tanya Crothers, who designed the map, and Liz Cranfield and other members of the graphics department of his architectural practice.

Tanya addressed the meeting and began by thanking the Society for the opportunity to learn more about the area. She explained a little about the creative process and the intensive research required to interpret and translate all the information into a meaningful, schematic form. She said she loved the mix of exotic and native flora found on the mountain but noted how difficult it was to do justice to it on a map. Tanya ended her presentation by expressing her appreciation for the faith shown in her by the Society and thanking Darrel Conybeare and his staff for their support.

Luigi Strano, who is the oldest member of our community, officially unveiled the map. It will be permanently mounted near the entrance to the Village Hall.

DISCUSSION AND QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

John Leonard asked the meeting to acknowledge the contribution of Mary Reynolds to the Society. He spoke of how proud everyone was of her work over the years. The meeting demonstrated its appreciation in the usual manner.

PRESENTATION OF LIFE MEMBERSHIPS TO MARY AND ELLIS REYNOLDS

Bruce Wright thanked Mary and Ellis for their tireless work in the establishment and ongoing success of the Society - Mary in her roles as Publicity Officer, researcher, guide, exhibition developer etc., and Ellis as Treasurer. It was with great pleasure that Mary and Ellis were presented with Life Memberships.

Bruce thanked those who spoke at the meeting and thus helped to make the occasion such a successful one – a true celebration of Village Life. He invited everyone present to stay for refreshments.

MEETING CLOSED

The meeting closed at 6.20pm

Chairman: _____