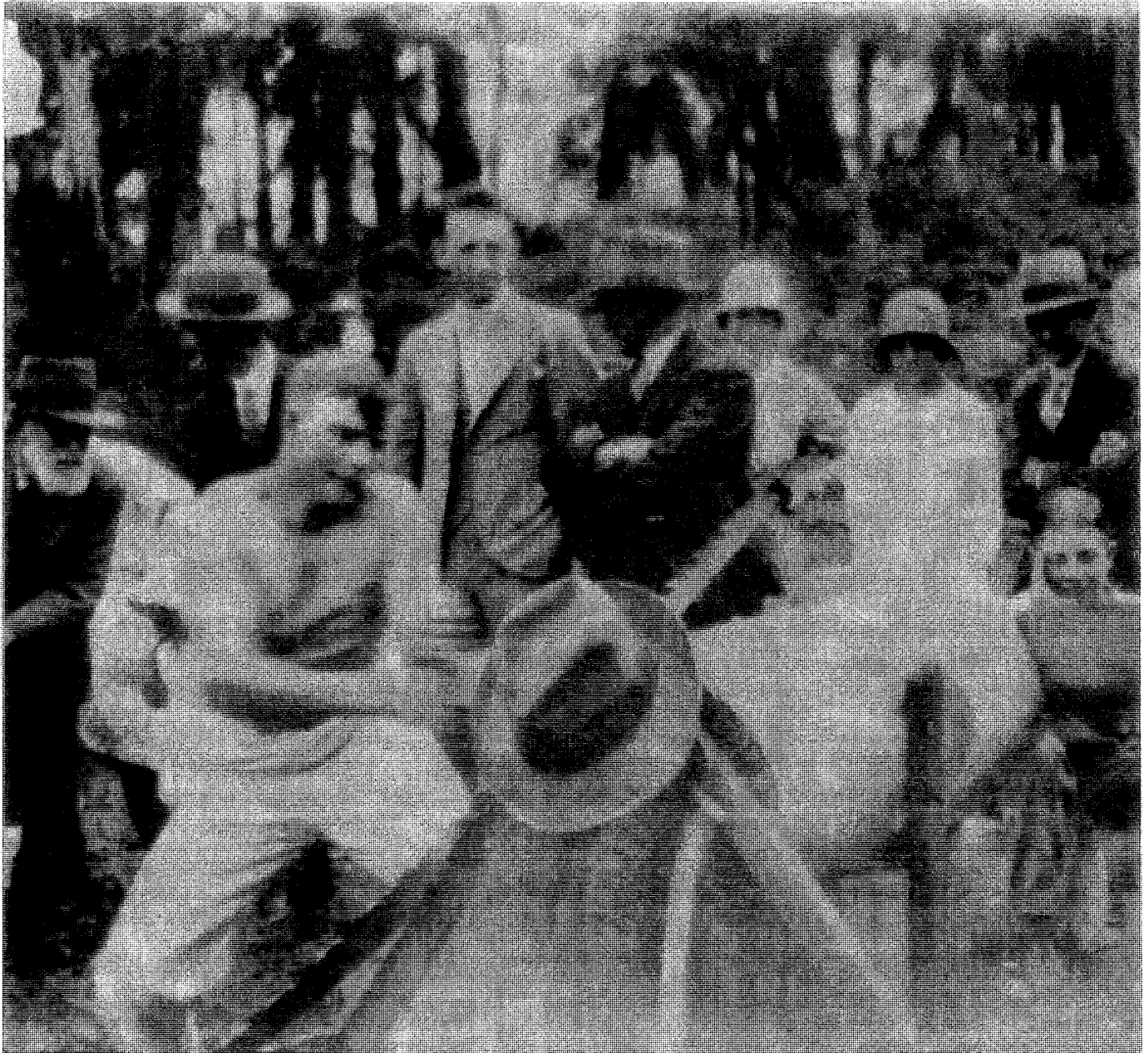
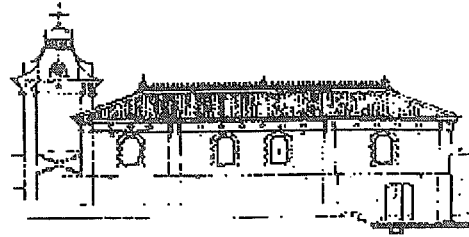


Mt Wilson Historical Society



This photograph was taken in Mt Wilson in the 1930s. The people within the frame appear indifferent or unaware of the photographer and seem more intent on watching the boy in the foreground of the photograph sawing a log of wood. Who is this young man and why is the activity he is undertaking of such interest to the gathered onlookers? [continued on page 3]

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Spring Opening at Wynstay

The Turkish Bath and Wynstay gardens will be open again this spring for four weekends during October. The dates are October 3rd, 4th and 5th; 10th and 11th, 17th and 18th, 24th and 25th. As these twice-yearly openings are our main fundraising events, we hope that all members will come along to view progress on the restoration of the Turkish Bath and to see the gardens showing off their spring blossoms after the cold winter.

Each season we depend on volunteers to join the roster for staffing the gate, directing visitors and serving teas on the lawn. We hope you will join us for one shift, for a day, or even for a weekend - join in the fun, meet with other members and friends, and help raise necessary funds for the Turkish Bath project and the Society's other objectives.

If you are able to contribute in any way please contact Julia Reynolds on (02) 947630 to sign up.

Martin Scorsese Meets Blue Mountains

On Sunday 23rd August 1998, all the beautiful rain turned to beautiful sunshine and I and many others took this opportunity to sit inside in the dark and drink hot chocolate and devour far too many Maltesers. The Mt Wilson Historical Society's latest, and very successful, fundraiser was the showing of Martin Scorsese's "Kundun" at the Mount Vic(toria) Flicks. The film, essentially the story of the fourteenth Dalai Lama, was a fascinating while also highly disturbing dramatic documentation of previous and ongoing injustices against the once independent and peaceful Tibet, now under the hand of communist rule. As written in a review of the film in *Time Magazine*, it was certainly: "For the open mind and eye, this is rapture in pictures". However, I am no film critic, and just a lowly editor, so I'll move on.

While the sorts of things that qualify for being "a moment on the lips and a lifetime on the hips" were being sold for certainly my, and others', grateful consumption before the movie commenced, the best was yet to come. Florence Smart



assured us prior to the film that if we stayed on we could all follow a complex system of lining up, and receive a glass of champagne, wine or a choice of other beverages and a plate of sandwiches and a dessert. She wasn't lying. The Mt Wilson Historical Society catering group and other volunteers outdid themselves yet again, and many thanks also go to the owners of the Mount Vic Flicks, Ron and Diane Bayley, who kindly allowed us to use the theatre. Mt Boyce Nurseries donated three gorgeous plants for the raffle, the first prize won fairly (I think) by our new president's son, Nick Delbridge. All three prize winners were blooming pleased with their good fortune.

Ed

[If anyone would like more information on Tibet, please write to the Australian Tibet Council, PO Box 1236, Potts Point, NSW, 2011 or telephone on (02) 9283 3466, or email at tibetcouncil@peg.apc.org.]

Silva Plana

(A forest or a wood on a plain or level ground)

Mt Wilson was first settled around the 1870s. The subdivisions surveyed by E S Wyndham in 1868 were not bought in 1870 when put up for auction. However in 1875 these same blocks were sold with comparative ease. The land which was to become known as Silva Plana was no exception. Crosbie Blake Brownrigg was granted June 1875.

He became an assistant to the survey of Mt Wilson (C H Currey). He was Brownrigg who was Australian Agricultural Commissioner from 1852 to July 1856. Like many of the first land holders in Mt Wilson, C B Brownrigg did not undertake any building activities following his purchase, and no one has really been able to provide an answer to why so many first land holders failed to stay.

In 1876, however, Edward Merewether visited Mt Wilson and viewed land belonging to C B Brownrigg - "10 acres priced at 100 pounds but it will cost 15 pounds to 20 pounds per acre to clear it of big timber and undergrowth, ferns". Thus we know leaving all the tree



Above: Silva Plana Sports 'Slippery Dip' 1930s
Previous Page: Tom Kirk in double-handed sawing competition - most probably a CWA sports day (1930s)

ten acres in this area in interestingly, he E S Wyndham after Wilson was completed also the son of Captain Superintendent of the Co from November Like many of the first Wilson, C B undertake any building purchase, and no one provide an answer to holders, similarly,

Edward Merewether reported that he had to C B Brownrigg - pounds but it will cost pounds per acre to and undergrowth, ferns". Thus we know

Silva Plana was covered with forest. The name 'Silva' (wood) is, therefore, entirely appropriate. Edward Merewether, a Superintendent of the Australian Agricultural Co., purchased this land. Soon it was being called Merewether's Paddock, or when it was flooded, Merewether's Lake. As I recall, the last time Silva Plana was flooded was in the April of 1988 when Mt Wilson had over 500mm of rain. Merewether built a small house on this land for his immediate needs while what was to be his main house was being constructed on Dennarque Hill - eighteen acres which he had purchased from Sir Alexander Dean.

Englishman James Inglis, who in 1880 wrote about his 'Australian Cousins', provides us with a vivid picture of his visit to Mt Wilson as he reached the top of what we now call the Zig Zag:

On the brow of the hill we came to a clearing of some 10 acres belonging to my friend, on which had been erected a neat weatherboard cottage. All the tall timber has been cut down, but the tree-ferns have been left. Can you imagine ten acres of magnificent tree-ferns? Nothing else to be seen! - they are as plentiful as cabbages in a garden bed. The sight to me was as rare as it was surpassingly beautiful.

On the opposite side of the road, beside a rudely fenced paddock, and overlooking the bleak tumbled wilderness of distant arid hills, stands a rough log cabin of a primitive bush style. This is inhabited by a decent old Irish woman, who keeps a store for the accommodation of the parties of bushmen, sawyers, rail splitters and road makers that are at work on the various properties on the mountain.

... My friend [E C Merewether] has a magnificent mansion of hewn stone, with convenience of a first-class modern gentleman's seat, erected on one of the most lovely sites in the place. The cost of the house was over 5000 pounds! Other nice houses, though chiefly of wood are being put up in various parts of the mountain.

In 1886 Henry John Wynne, the only surviving son of Richard and Mary Anne Wynne of 'Yarrawa' (Wynstay), cleared, along with Herbert Merewether, a son of Edward Merewether, a section of Merewether's Paddock for a cricket ground, the pitch being near the small house built by Merewether.

[continued on page 12]

Turkish Bath Museum Historical Exhibition

The Society's first exhibition held in the Turkish Bath, in October of last year, was the Wynne Prize Centenary Exhibition of original paintings by former winners of the Art Gallery of NSW's Wynne Prize. The next exhibition, it was decided, should concentrate on the history of Mt Wilson itself. What developed was a predominantly photographic display, which simultaneously presented the Turkish Bath itself in its historic aspects.



Assistance in preparing the bath house for the exhibition was sought from Peter Scrivener, an expert in presentation and a member of the outreach team of Museums Australia. Peter spent two whole days with volunteers from the Society helping to decide on the desired themes of the exhibition and to plan ways of developing these themes in a manner which made use of the architectural features of the bath house itself without disturbing the fabric of the building. Great stress was placed on the need for the Society to use professional procedures throughout. Peter advised on display materials, the choice of historic photographs, captions and text, type sizes and the vital aspects of capturing and guiding the attention of those who would come to see the exhibition. Members of the group had only two weeks in which to prepare their material, then a whole day spent together with scissors, paste, T-squares, photographs, documents, display boards, and the printed caption and text. By the end of the day the volunteers had mounted about a third of the

material, under Peter's guidance. The group was then left to complete the task alone, to be ready in the Turkish Bath in time for the autumn opening of the Wynstay gardens.

The exhibition filled the three main rooms of the Turkish Bath. The entrance room introduced visitors to the Mt Wilson Historical Society - its aims and objectives and its membership - all by means of the displays hung on the walls. In addition, there was a display of archaeological finds unearthed during the recent excavations made during restoration works. In the next room was an account of the building of the Turkish Bath in 1892, with supporting documents. Some original furnishing were also displayed, in particular a large marble slab, one of two provided for the user to recline on during 'treatment' (probably for massage and relaxation). At the other end of the building our third theme dealt with the early European settlement of Mt Wilson: the Aboriginal presence, clearing of the land, building of houses roads and gardens, the provision of services, the early residents, and the pattern of their lives here. This was all presented through historic photographs, legal documents, plans and memorabilia.

During the season, over a thousand people came to the exhibition and most found it fascinating (if one is to judge from their comments both spoken and written in the visitors' book, and from the number of people who decided to become a member of the Historical Society). For those who didn't see the exhibition, don't despair. The material has been safely stored during the winter months, and will be shown again each weekend in October at the Spring opening in 1998, to which all are welcome.

Following are a range of comments written into the visitor's book during the period of this particular exhibition:

It's wonderful to see this special place open for inspection at last. Whenever I've driven or walked past here over the years I've wished to drop in for a look. My expectations have been exceeded.

My second visit. A wonderful, magic place, timeless, with a history that almost breathes.

Wonderful!... Enchanting! Lovely! Magical! Wonderful!

I found it enchanting to touch the buildings, wondering how many people would have done the same. I wonder about their life back then.

Unfortunately, we've had no further visits from Ned Kelly, who this time last year deemed the Turkish Bath "A wonderful place to hide".



Autumn as it Oughta'

Again this year the last evening of daylight savings was given over to the swinging strains of The Bloweys, that well known multi-instrumental jazz group led by Bill Boldiston of Leura. This was the second annual evening of jazz on the lawn in "Wynstay" historic gardens, and such a rousing success that we have decided that it's a fixture on the calendar for the last Saturday in March every year.

More than 100 people made their way through the early autumn evening to spread blankets under the massive conifers and settle back for four hours of all the old favourites. Five of the best on brass, strings and their own rather unique percussion played solo and group numbers with commentary from leader Bill. The group's versatility makes for great entertainment, as they switch leads and cover their varied repertoire.

At intermission there was the usual friendly line-up for free champagne and those popular chicken sandwiches. Our grateful thanks to the catering troupe, who again outdid themselves with homemade treats and desserts, and that wonderful local blackberry jam that sold out in no time.

We look forward to seeing everyone back for a repeat performance next year, again on 28th March. We'll be starting with a bigger and better sausage sizzle, drinks and desserts, free champagne again and more local jams and products for sale, so mark the date as soon as you have your 1999 diary!

John Moriarty's Hears at Mt Wilson

John Valder, a former resident who spent his childhood in Mt Wilson in the 1930s and 40s, spoke on his memories of this time in an address at the Mt Wilson Historical Society 1997 Annual General Meeting in the Village Hall on 26th July. This speech was documented in the February 1998 edition of the newsletter under the title of *Tales of a Prior Paddock*, within which John made reference to the "part-Aboriginal children [who] around 1941... came here to Mt Wilson under the auspices of some Anglican church mission. One of them was John Moriarty with whom I've happened to come in contact again just these last few years. He, from this distressing start to life of being taken away from his family at age four or five, claims that his time in Mt Wilson was one of the happiest parts of his estrangement...". In July 1997, John Valder also submitted to the Mt Wilson Historical Society a piece of writing on the early years of John Moriarty's life, and his memories of their time together as children in Mt Wilson].

The Very Early Years

John was born at Borroloola on the Macarthur River of an Aboriginal mother and an Irish father. When John was about four, the government began taking part-Aboriginal children from their parents. John's mother became fearful that they would take John away from her and she moved to Roper River where she thought she and John would be safer. However, one day John was taken away, while at school at Roper River, by truck to Alice Springs with about thirty other part-Aboriginal children. On the way a heavy crate fell on his foot and he still carries the mark of that injury 50 years later.

In Alice Springs he and the other children (mostly older) were placed in the care of an Anglican Church mission which transported them to the eastern states. John ended up at St Thomas' Rectory, Mulgoa, just west of Sydney, with quite a number (perhaps a hundred) of other boys and also girls. [continued on page 14]

And What of 'Denton's World'?

Throughout the Autumn opening of Wynstay, Peter Kingston's silk screen print, 'Denton's World' (donated by Peter) raised \$770 for the society. It was drawn on the last day of the Autumn opening, 1998. The winner was Leanne Togher from Yagoona. Leanne was delighted with her success. She and her husband are great admirers of Peter Kingston's art. Wendy Holland sold the winning ticket, for the second time.

Peter Kingston recently held an exhibition of his works in Sydney, which was most successful. Among his exhibits was a fine painting of the Turkish Bath (priced at \$2,500). Peter, a member of the Society and a loyal friend and supporter, generously gave this painting of the Turkish Bath to Bill Smart, the owner of Wynstay. On 30th May, 1998, Bill presented the painting to the Mt Wilson Historical Society committee, who were quite overwhelmed by this gesture. We welcome members' ideas as to how best to display this fine work of art.

Thanks to Helen Raphael

A special thank you to Helen Raphael for her help as Secretary until February 1988. Unfortunately, pressures of work prevented Helen from continuing on the committee after that month. Julia Reynold's daughter, Mandy kindly offered to be 'Minutes Secretary' for the committee, which is most appreciative of her offer and her assistance.

Individual Donations

Individual donations make up a significant contribution to our funds. The Society wishes to express its deep appreciation to those individuals who have been so consistently generous.

Office Equipment

We need office equipment. Could any member or members help us with a fax machine or a photocopier or, on a more modest scale, a storage cabinet please? It would make such a difference.

Christmas Hamper Raffle

To raise funds, the Mt Wilson Historical Society is planning a raffle



for the Spring Opening of Wynstay gardens and the Turkish Bath in October. The raffle will be for a hamper containing various Christmas and gourmet delights.

If you are able to contribute in any way please call Robin Leonard on (02) 9498 1526 or (02) 4756 2011.

Listed below are some of the delicacies we are looking for to put into this hamper: gourmet vinegars, olive oil, quality mustards and jams, pickles, honey, tinned salmon, asparagus, herbs and spices, sea salt, ground peppers, marinades, chocolate sauce, nuts, muscatels, etc.

Thanks to Norm

Norm McFarlane, a retired chemist in Lithgow, has been copying old photographs for the society for the last three years and this work continues quietly and efficiently as funds are available. Norm has given the society a excellent photo, framed, of the present Wynstay residence c.1921-1923 to be raffled in the spring along with a special Christmas hamper.

The Royal Australian Historical Society Small Grants Scheme

The Society has applied for one of the Royal Australian Historical Society Small Grants to help us with the cost of workshops organised by the State Library and the printing of copies of important photographs.

Officers Elected 5/9/98

At the AGM of this month, the following officers were elected:

President: *Arthur Delbridge*

Vice President: *Raoul Wilson*

Secretary and Public Officer: *Mary Reynolds*

Treasurer: *Ellis Reynolds*

Committee Members: *Robin Leonard,*

Florence Smart and Bruce Wright

Correspondence, Contacts and Connections

From the letters received by the Society in the past six months, those from Beth Goodwin and Patricia Andren have been chosen to be published. They may be found on page 15.

Hot Air From the Turkish Bath - Progress Report and Discussion Paper

Early in May of this year a review meeting was held at the Turkish Bath involving Alan Crocker and Peter Todd of *Design 5 Architects*, Stan Hellyer the conservation builder, Mary Reynolds the Public Officer and past Project Director, Bill Smart the owner of Wynstay, and Bruce Wright - the current Project Director.

This group re-examined the Turkish Bath building as a whole and considered most of its internal features as well as revisited the discussion of the philosophical principles involved in restoring a building such as the Turkish Bath which has undergone a major alternation in its function during its lifetime. These principles have been most authoritatively expressed for the contemporary Australian built environment in the *International Committee on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)* document, which is generally referred to as *The Burra Charter*, and was also the basis for the architects' recommendations in *The Turkish Bath... Conservation Analysis and Conservation Policy (1996)* and the subsequent *Schedules and Specifications for Stage 1 Works*.

In particular, the following Articles of *The Burra Charter* are relevant to this project:

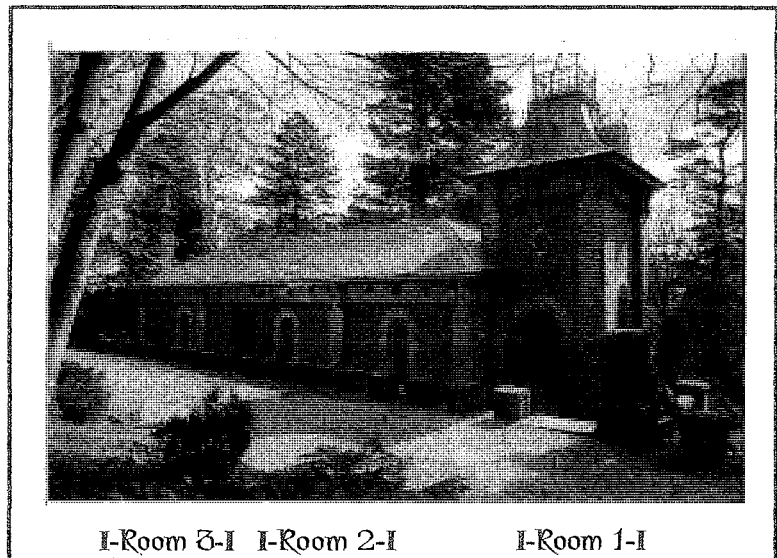
Article 5:

Conservation of a place should take into consideration all aspects of its cultural significance without unwarranted emphasis on any one aspect of the expense of others.

Article 16:

The contributions of all periods to the place must be respected. If a place includes the fabric of different period, revealing the fabric of one period at the expense of another can only be justified when what is removed is of slight cultural significance and the fabric which is to be revealed is of much greater cultural significance.

In addition to its initial functions as a Turkish Bath, and later as staff accommodation, we recognised that the building is being required now to take on a third function, at least in part, as the Mt Wilson Historical Society's meeting rooms, storage, exhibition and research premises - to the extent that this latter use is consistent with the conservation values of the building, and is adequate for the Society's activities. For example, the building is ideal as a small-group study centre and for committee meetings but it is much too small to hold an Annual General Meeting.



All the foregoing issues were taken into account by the group in their inspection and review of each feature of the building, and in the planning for what should happen next.

Original Entry Porch and Tower: The *Conservation Policy* suggested that the two original doors, at present installed at Wynstay, should be reinstated - one at the entry to the porch, and the other in the doorway between the porch and Room 1.

The full opening swing of the entry door to the porch is at present limited by the 1920s bathroom features - the blue-patterned toilet pedestal on the right and the hand basin on the left. If the orch door were to become the regular point of entry and exit there would be considerable congestion in that area, especially in the event of a fire. Furthermore, the bathroom, which is a feature of the building and which stimulates considerable interest and comment from visitors, could not be viewed satisfactorily.

It has therefore been decided that the reinstatement of the original doors should proceed but that the regular visitor entry should remain as at present, through the door to Room 2 on the southern side of the building.

Lead-light Windows: These are to be removed for cleaning and repairs. It was recognised that these coloured panes, which were probably made-to-order in England during the 1880s and 1890s, are very vulnerable to vandalism so it has been proposed that the outer clear-glass panes should be treated with a reinforcing material as a matter of urgency.

Ceilings: It has been suggested that, for Room 1 at the eastern end of the building only, a false ceiling be fabricated in plaster to replicate the original arched concrete ceiling contours. From early architectural drawings, and also from fragments of curved concrete blocks unearthed in 1997 during the clearing of the area in the vicinity of the basement entrance, the curvature of the original 1890s ceiling is now known. Such a replica would be set in the original 1890s ceiling position which was somewhat lower than the present 1920s ceiling. This will provide a more authentic 'feel' for the space within the original Turkish Bath. As there is no urgency about this alternation from a conservation standpoint, there is no immediate plan to proceed with this suggestion.

In order to consolidate the currently thin, and in some places quite friable 1920s ceiling plaster in Rooms 2 and 3, it has been suggested by the builder that the upper surface of the ceiling should be treated with a bonding substance to prevent any further disintegration such as that which has already occurred in the two ceiling panels which have now been patched as a temporary measure. The whole of the ceiling cavity will then be insulated as part of the temperature and moisture stabilisation measures.

The architects, and several other consultants who have visited the building, strongly recommend that we do not paint over the present uneven blue wash on the ceiling and frieze, as this is an authentic feature which has survived, apparently unaltered since the 1920s.

The 1920s Doors - Room 2: It was originally proposed in the *Conservation Policy* (p.69; 6.1; paragraph 6) that the two 1920s doors, one in the northern and the other in the southern walls of this room, should be replaced by replicas of the original arched windows, thus emphasising the original 1890s design. Such restoration would also provide greater humidity and temperature control for the sake of the interior fabric of the building, as well as improving atmospheric stability for the architectural materials which might be stored here.

The builder advised us that the task of restoring this original 1890s feature of the building would be technically very difficult, particularly in the matter of obtaining bricks of identical character and in matching the colour and texture of the finished alteration with the existing weathered facades. He was concerned that, even from the roadway, the restoration on the northern side would be visible as an obvious architectural 'scar'. Nevertheless, the cost of such an alternation is currently being investigated by the architect and the Historical Society might proceed with this restoration at a later stage. In the meantime, consideration was given to the provision of a safe viewing point through the northern doorway.

Because of the need to provide an alternative to the tower porch door as a regular public entrance to the building, it has been decided that the door on the southern side should be retained at least in the foreseeable future.

Kitchen Stove: Since the renovation of the roof in 1997. The chimney above the stove now terminates within the roof cavity. Nevertheless, grains of mortar have been flaking off and falling into the stove-top. Consideration could be given to the application of a binding material to the interior surface of the chimney, or to the insertion of a horizontal panel, out of sight, within the chimney aperture. As the stove surface is one of the few potential horizontal display surfaces within the building, we could consider placing a (removable) perspex panel across the front of the stove-top so that it can serve as a secure display case for documents, books or objects from time to time. On the other hand, it can be argued that the stove-top should be left entirely uncluttered an exhibit in its own right.

Kitchen Sink & Water Connection: As the building is already serving as a regular meeting venue by the Historical Society, and it is intended that it will increasingly serve as a research centre, there is a growing need for the provision of water to a light-refreshment preparation and serving area. The architects have advised

us that the existing 1920s kitchen sink will be quite satisfactory for current use, provided that it is cleaned up, sealed with a protective preparation such as linseed oil, and the small, deteriorated section of wood immediately beneath the tap has been covered by a small protective steel drainage.

Walk-in Pantry: The *Conservation Policy* has suggested that this area originally served as one of the two cubicles in the central room in which the therapeutic treatments were provided, with the recipient lying on a marble slab set against the wall. During the 1920s modifications the original tuck-pointed brickwork was extended (somewhat less skilfully) upwards to contact the new plaster-board ceiling. The existing wooden shelving was then added to convert the area into a kitchen storage pantry.

It has now been suggested that with appropriate modifications to the design and spacing between the existing shelving, and with the addition of lighting and perhaps with appropriate temperature and humidity control, the area may now serve as a very simple archival storage facility.

Picture Rails: The 1920 timber picture rails have become quite dry and brittle and have suffered some damage during attempts to hang items for the recent exhibitions. If the building is going to be used for either permanent or periodic exhibitions it is important that we are able to provide satisfactory hanging facilities without further damaging the fabric of the building. After considerable discussion it was suggested that a steel rail should be attached to the studs, behind the existing wooden rails and projecting a few millimetres above the top to provide a firm attachments to which exhibits can be suspended securely.

Electrical Work: Electric power was supplied to the building during the 1997 works program and temporary light-fittings were installed for the Wynne Prize Centenary Exhibition. This electrical work will be extended in the current works program with additional power-points and lights.

Temperature and Humidity Control: Although the roof is now sound, the interior of the building is by no means sealed against the external weather conditions. Moist air from inside can gain ready access through spaces around the doors, through the wall ventilators near the top of the walls and through the water-drainage apertures at the base of the walls in each of the three main rooms. Now that the Historical Society wishes to hold occasional exhibitions involving the display of pictures and written material on the walls, and to store research materials in archive boxes, it has become essential for adequate temperature and humidity control to be provided for the building in the near future.

Paving and Access Path: The area between the southern wall of the Turkish Bath and the Wynstay driveway retaining wall was originally brick-paved (probably in the 1890s) and concreted over to improve its stability at some later stage. The concrete has now cracked and spalled off in numerous places. For the safety of visitors a decision needs to be made at some time in the future as to whether we should restore the area to its original brick, or repair the later concrete surface.

The steep, cobble-stone pathway at the western end of the building is difficult to negotiate for some elderly people who nevertheless want to go down and have a look at the basement. This architect suggested that a bollard-and-chain support on one side of the pathway should solve this problem.

The siting of the route for a walking path, from Mt Irvine Road to the Turkish Bath, was also considered. At the steep, upper end of such a path, several steps will no doubt be required.

Archaeological Investigations: During the trenching to bring electrical and telephone cables into the Turkish Bath from the road-way during the 1997 works program, a considerable number of pottery, ceramic, glass and metal fragments were turned up from below the soil. These have been set aside for further examination in accordance with the requirements of the *Conservation Plan*. Several pieces of the metal, originally part of the ornamentation on the tower or part of the roof-crestring, were found in the soil with the help of a metal detector and these have all been restored to their rightful places.

The further archaeological work will include an examination inside the roof cavity to see whether any evidence of the nature and location of the hot air and/or steam circulation ducting remains; an excavation adjacent to the

northern wall in order to see whether there are any signs of air or steam ducting associated with the drainage apertures at floor-level in the three main rooms; and a closer look at the various features of the basement and the adjacent fill beneath the foundations of the upper rooms.

Future Utilisation of the Turkish Bath: During the past 12 months the building has served as a venue for:

- the Wynne Prize Centenary Exhibition
- the Historical Society's exhibition and planning meetings
- spring and autumn fund raising - Wynstay Garden open days
- Historical Society's Committee Meetings
- other workshops and meetings
- student group visits and other organised tours.

Other proposed functions for the building include:

- an archival storage facility
- a research centre for the use of people in the community and for history scholars generally
- a centre for permanent and semi-permanent exhibitions depicting the research interests of the Historical Society
- a venue for periodic exhibitions of the work of artists working in various fields with appropriate remuneration to assist with funding the Historical Society's further work
- an educational role in promoting local history and broader heritage values within the community

Discussion: It may be argued that the Turkish Bath building is unique in Australian architectural history and as such the building should be restored back to its 1890s form, with all later modifications being removed. The 1920s builders' accommodation facilities are clearly of lesser architectural and historical significance. However, this opportunity is denied to us because the whole of the hardware which enabled the building once to function as a Turkish Bath is now missing - including the furnace, water boiler and/or hot air producing apparatus, and the piping which distributed water, steam and heat throughout the building. Neither have any architectural drawings or even builders' sketches come to light. Nor has any helpful nonagenarian come forward and offered us his recollections of having played with that old apparatus in the basement when he was a child, while his older brothers were away at The Great War!

As the opportunity does not exist for the building to be restored and displayed as an intact exhibit of nineteenth century technology, even if not as a functioning Turkish Bath, then there is clearly an argument for treating the 1920s modifications with equal respect, as recommended in Article 5 of the *Burra Charter*.

The current and proposed utilisation of the building as a facility for some of the activities of the Historical Society will only involve very minor modifications to the fabric - but may include the connection of a new water supply to the existing sink tap, sink drainage, a few more lights and power points, possibly modifications or replacement of shelving in the pantry so that it can serve as an archival storage area, and certainly humidity and temperature control.

At the conclusion of the wide-ranging discussion the architects undertook, in consultation with the builder, to rank in order of priority and provide a costing for the bulk of the further works indicated above. These priorities and costings have now been prepared and the work which is to commence at the beginning of September 1998 includes: repairs to the fibrous plaster and insulation of the ceiling; additional electrical works; painting of the remainder of the external metal and joinery surfaces; repairs to the internal brickwork where appropriate and refixing of the storeroom tiles.

[A more detailed version of this article, the *Report and Discussion Paper*, was presented to the Executive Committee and several other members of the Society at a planning day on 30th May 1998. The purpose of the document was to report to the Committee on the site inspection, and to stimulate discussion among the members on the various issues which have been raised. A copy of that paper will be made available to any member who would like to have one, by phoning me on 047 390 290].

Bruce J Wright - Project Director

[Thank you, Bruce, for such an interesting and detailed report. Ed.]

Financial Statement from 01/07/97 to 30/06/98

Income \$	96/97	97/98
Term deposit matured	35,000.00	
Theatre party at Mt Vic Flicks	2,270.00	
Jazz concert at Wynstay	3,654.55	3,566.20
Spring opening at Wynstay	8,388.10	16,067.20
Autumn opening at Wynstay	10,788.85	5,692.15 ¹
Additional inspections of Wynstay	1,743.20	978.75
Department of Planning grant of \$15,000	9,447.50	5,552.50
Membership subscriptions	845.00	1,060.00
Donations	5,960.00	7,337.00 ²
State Government contribution to Wynne Prize Exhibition		750.00
Bank interest	2,372.08	91.19
Gross Income	80,469.08	41,094.99

¹ Includes \$770.00 raised from raffle of Peter Kingston's silk screen. Special thanks to John and Marcia Moulton for selling tickets in their gallery.

² Includes donations of \$4,500 from the estate of the late Hugh Smart; and \$2.00 refunded by Bill Smart for the Annual Rental of the Turkish Bath and Precinct.

Expenditure \$	96/97	97/98
Incorporation costs	332.00	
Valuation of Turkish Bath for insurance	550.00	
Legal expenses to Bill Akhurst	1,500.00	
Theatre party to Mt Vic Flicks	930.00	
Jazz concert at Wynstay	1,206.59	1,143.00
Spring opening of Wynstay	3,678.76	7,197.28 ³
Autumn opening of Wynstay	3,334.15	2,313.22
Legal Expenses to Greaves Wannan & Williams		9,040.00
Insurance on Turkish Bath / Personal liability	798.76	1,397.30
Architect's fees	1,952.50	1,728.75
Builder's fees	19,015.00	16,524.54
Archival research	1,448.90	1,666.88
Newsletters (two)		995.00
Postage	265.40	256.40
Phone Calls	270.30	904.45
Electricity supplied by Integral Energy	51.45	86.30
Capital equipment purchased	827.66	127.25
Office expenses	600.24	959.00 ⁴
Expenses incurred in 'Flowers for Jane' raffle	182.85	
Framing of Peter Kingston's 'Denton's world' raffle	150.00	
Tributes to deceased members	98.50	50.00
State government charges on accounts	108.48	107.64
Gross Expenditure	37,301.54	44,497.01

³ Includes 'Wynne centenary exhibition'

⁴ Includes \$2.00 rent to Bill Smart for Turkish Bath and Precinct

Reconciliation Statement for Period 01/07/97 to 30/06/98

Income for period 01/07/97 to 30/06/98	\$41,094.99
Expenditure for period 01/07/97 to 30/06/98	\$44,497.01
Balance	\$3,402.02 (debit)
Plus balance of accounts as at 01/07/97	\$28,438.67
Balance of accounts shown in bank statements dated 30/06/98	\$25,036.65

Ellis G Reynolds - Treasurer

Silva Plana [continued from page 3]

New Years Day, 1887

Miss Helen Gregson described it in the following way:

It became the social event of the year. A local team played against one got together by the postmaster at Mt Victoria. The visitors drove about seventeen miles in a four horse drag and lunch was served.

From the Lithgow Mercury of January 1898 there is a description of the match held exactly one hundred years ago. Sadly, on that occasion Mt Wilson only managed one innings. We were soundly defeated by Mt Victorians and Blackheathens (as they were so quaintly known). The following review of the cricket match was found in the Lithgow Mercury 28 January 1898:

There was quite a picnic on Wednesday at MT WILSON, when a combined team of Mounts and Blackheathens played a match against a team of Mt Wilson, Hartley Vale and others. Two coaches left here (Mt Victoria), one full of cricketers and the other of ladies. On the grounds a good lunch was provided and a 10 gallon keg of ale for the thirsty ones. A most enjoyable outing was experienced and all returned in safety by 8.00pm. Mt Wilson only enjoyed one innings. The Mount winning the toss and going in first won 21 runs in the first innings. Mt Victoria scored 57 in the first innings, Woodhead with 13 being the highest. Mt Wilson only put up 36, of which J. Barnett was highest with 9. In their second innings Mt Victoria got 89 - Woodhead 23; Hall 19 and Neate not out 15 and Goodire 12.

Postal Services

Meanwhile, a different from of activity, the ongoing struggle to gain better communications for this rather isolated and tiny community, was taking place, also on Silva Plana.

In December 1888 a dramatic change took place in the postal arrangements for Mt Wilson. Mrs Aida Elizabeth Mahoney was appointed to a receiving office in Mt Wilson which was, in fact, in the house on Merewether's Paddock. Tucked away in the Australian archives was a letter written by Richard Wynne which explains why Mrs Mahoney lived in that house - her husband worked for Edward Merewether. Richard Wynne described Mrs Mahoney as "fairly educated and trustworthy". Later in that same letter he stated that "Mahoney is living in a cottage of Merewether's rent free".

Between 1876 and 1888 there existed continued pressure to improve the postal service to Mt Wilson. Up to that time, it had operated from Mt Wilson platform (Bell). The appointment of Mrs Mahoney was a major advance. However, Richard Wynne had asked that this office be called Irvine as this was the name originally given to the parish of Mt Wilson by Sir James Martin's government. This proposal aroused the Honourable G H Cox to protest against the change of name in the strongest terms. He stated that it was altogether against the wishes of the residents "with the exception of Mr Wynne, all the other residents without exception Justice Stephen, Mr Merewether, Mr Gregson and members of my own family strongly deprecate the change of name which we trust will not be sanctioned". The Hon G H Cox's protestation over the change of name was successful and 'Irvine' was changed to 'Mt Wilson' on 9th January, 1889. The old office of Mt Wilson railway platform became Bell, which was also a suggestion of the Hon G H Cox. A postal service between Bell and Mt Wilson was established with John Hall carrying the mail on horseback six times a week between October and April, and once a week for the rest of the year.

Mrs Mahoney, the ROK (Receiving Office Keeper) until January 12th 1890, left a note behind her one day which read: "I don't wish to have anything to do with the letters...". She went off to Sydney and, to the consternation of the residents, particularly Mr Richard Wynne, told neither the residents nor even her husband James. This, in effect, ended the link between the postal service and Merewether's Paddock. The Honourable G H Cox stepped into the breach and the postal service commenced at 'Beowang' under the charge of his daughter Miss Lucy Cox.

Following the death of Edward Merewether in 1893, the land was bought by James Elliot Mann, and the small house on it was then named 'Silva Plana'. There is little doubt that cricket matches continued on New Years Day during his lifetime. Before long, James Mann's daughter, Esmay, realising the great community



Left: another view of the double-handed sawing competitions held on Silva Plana at Mt Wilson. This photograph was probably also taken in the 1930s.

benefit that this land provided, gave four acres, two roods and two perches of it for community recreation after WWI, just as she gave land at the same time for the War Memorial.

It would seem that the idea for a sports day evolved after the establishment of the Country Women's Association (CWA) in Mt Wilson/ Mt Irvine in 1929. At the first meeting of the CWA on 16 May 1929, Mrs Norman Knight Brown proposed that a sports meeting be held at Mt Wilson during the Christmas holidays. Mrs King seconded the proposal. In 1930 it was held on January 4th most successfully. But in October 1932 it was recorded in the minutes of the CWA meeting of the month that followed that residents such as Miss Helen (Nellie) Gregson and Mrs Draper were present. In this meeting Mr Valder, Mr Gregson, and Mr Wilson were appointed to the Sports Committee to organise the program of races while Miss Gregson, Miss Sloan and Mrs Draper became the Catering Committee. Miss Joshua was to conduct the soft drink and sweet stall. Precise gender lines were in place. The younger set were to clean the ground and make it ready for the races. The recreation area of Silva Plana was used throughout the 1930s, 1940s and the early 1950s for cricket matches, wood chopping contests, gymkhanas and of course the lively and versatile the CWA Sports day.

Among items acquired by the Society from the Huber estate of Windy Ridge in 1995 was a pamphlet announcing the day's activities [see loose sheet in newsletter].

The details of this pamphlet record a colourful set of events at that time and also show the personality of Fred Huber. Fred was a remarkable gymnast, well known in the country of his birth, Switzerland, and in Sydney among the Swiss community. In Mount Victoria, he established a gymnastic club. Here on Silva Plana he was able to demonstrate his skills and to bring an enthusiastic group together to participate in the experience.

In the 1951 program there was an exhibition of wood chopping and wood sawing arranged by Tom Kirk and his brothers. By that time Tom's name was legendary in the wood chopping world. He was later to travel to the USA where he was proclaimed world champion. It was fortunate that Tom, Peter (now 90 years of age) and Cecil (93 yrs of age) are still here to tell their stories.

Today we enjoy the return to our past which the annual sports days, commenced in 1994, bring. These add another dimension to our own experiences of Mt Wilson, and provoke us to dwell more closely on those who played and laughed and established that sense of community in the century past, and enriched this very special place.

[The Mount Wilson Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the assistance provided with obtaining this information from the following sources: C H Currey (Mt Wilson); the Australian Archives; Mr Michael Mann; H Naylor; the Kirk family.]

John Moriarty's Years at Mt Wilson [cont. from p.5]

Altogether John spent about seven years at Mulgoa during which time he spent twelve or eighteen months at Mt Wilson with about ten other boys. Again, John was one of the youngest and my own mother, now aged 98, remembers him well as 'little Moriarty'.

The Mt Wilson Years

At Mt Wilson they lived at Sylvan Close with the Reverend Harry Cottrell-Dormer and his wife Dorothy. John seems to have largely happy memories of Mt Wilson. He recalls there being plenty of food with such delights as Dorothy's blackberry pies made of blackberries they picked in the bush and along the roadsides. It was at Sylvan Close that they first tasted butter and honey. At meal times the Cottrell-Dormers were insistent on teaching the boys how to handle their cutlery correctly and the other fundamentals of 'good' table manners.

John Moriarty also recalls coming to my family's place, "Nooroo", and playing with our Dinky toys and reading comics - pleasures denied to them by the Cottrell-Dormers. At "Nooroo" the bigger boys helped my father pick peas and harvest other crops which my family grew during the war years. Their reward was sometimes to feast on large quantities of our fresh sweet corn.

Among the boys' duties at Sylvan Close was clearing the paddock across the road of bracken. John still has a clear recollection of a particularly virulent stinging nettle patch in that paddock. The

boys were also in the habit of walking barefoot through the bush and gullies to Crab Creek and the Wollangambe where John first learnt to swim. They speared crayfish and fished using grasshoppers as bait. John also recalls a lot of black snakes. He retains vivid memories of the local bird and wildlife of Mt Wilson, of lyre birds dancing in the bush, calling dingoes in the gullies and hearing them howl back, and so on. Naturally the boys living with the Cottrell-Dormers walked widely about Mt Wilson itself and when on the road below Wynstay they always walked on a particular side because of 'bad spirits'.

Harry Cottrell-Dormer, himself a keen athlete, got the boys into fitness training for which John is duly grateful as it started off his sporting career which was to lead him to becoming a top soccer player. He rose to represent Australia in soccer in the UK.

With the Cottrell-Dormers, the boys regularly travelled to places like Mt Victoria, Lithgow and Blackheath where Mr Cottrell-Dormer sometimes conducted church services as acting clergyman. They travelled in his brown Dodge utility truck. John can even recall the registration number of GN373! They were also frequent visitors to the Kirks' sawmill just down the road from Sylvan Close. There they would follow bullock teams into the bush hauling out sassafras, turpentine and other logs. They enjoyed the crack of the whips, the shouts at the bullock team, the straining and grunting of the animals.

It was in this region that they found the slender young trees that they would shape into spears and which they would then heat over fires to straighten and strengthen them. They practised spear-throwing in the paddock opposite Sylvan Close and gave lessons to my brother and me and others in spear-throwing using woomeras. My own memory is that I, at least, was a bit better at boomerang throwing than spear throwing! Again, the boys made their own boomerangs. John remembers throwing boomerangs so that they would run along the ground end-to-end. He still wears a scar on his forehead from spear-throwing in that paddock all those years ago.

These are just a few of the memories that John Moriarty recalled in a meeting of less than an hour in his office in The Rocks area of Sydney. But his remarkable memory provides a quite vivid picture of life at Mt Wilson as he saw and experienced it back in the 1940s.

From those very modest and difficult beginnings John has gone on to become one of our leading Aboriginal/Australian citizens with a range of government and other appointments. In business, he and his wife, Roz, have built up a highly successful design company, Balarinji, first established in Adelaide and now based in Sydney.

I am pleased to say that John is now in the process of writing a book about his extraordinary life, which is due to be published in the very near future.

Correspondence, Contacts and Connections [continued from page 6]

For the Mt Wilson Historical Society meeting of the 7th Feb, 1998, John Moriarty, the Chairman of the Aboriginal Arts Council and a successful businessman, was to have been guest speaker. John spent part of his childhood in Mt Wilson with other Aboriginal boys - part of the 'stolen generation' of that time. Unfortunately, at the last minute he was unable to be with us. A teacher at Tranby Aboriginal Co-operative College, Glebe, Beth Goodwin, gave us a moving account of her research in Canberra into the background of those boys. Beth helps adult Aboriginal students who have difficulties with their English. Her letter to the Mt Wilson Historical Society committee after this meeting is as follows:

Last Saturday, when I went to your meeting to hear Mr John Moriarty... speak, it never occurred to me that I would be saying a few words to your members, due to the cancellations of Mr Moriarty's presence on that day. It is good to hear that the Mt Wilson residents are acknowledging the presence of Aborigines before and after 'white' settlement.

A gentleman in the audience asked me the question: "What do you mean by "lifted" children?". I went on to explain, very briefly, the policy of the Australian Government (from the 1920s on till just recently) that is now well-known as "The Stolen-Generation" Policy.

On reflection later, I felt the following analogy would have been more appropriate and clearer to your audience, the members of which are vitally and sensitively attuned to plants. I wonder could you share this analogy with them at the next meeting, please?

Analogy

A striking feature of the landscape approaching Mt Wilson after you turn off the Bells Line of Road, is the prolific output of waratah. I never cease to be uplifted by the stateliness, health and lushness of the waratahs lining the road for kilometres. It is obvious that they have all they need; the right soil, the right light, the correct fungi etc. In Sydney, we all know how difficult it is to grow waratahs - almost impossible to provide artificially what has been supplied for them by the natural environment, if in the 'correct' situation.

If one were to be so violent as to rip up those waratah lining the road to Mt Wilson and say: "I will transport you to the soil I want and I'll turn you into a daffodil!", we all realise what a monstrosity that would be - audacious and quite futile.

Agricultural technology can do extraordinary things, but to play with the natural genetic structure of the plant and thereby do violence to it, would be to distort a most wonderful plant, which grows only to its fullness in its natural habitat.

And so likewise with the Aboriginal culture - so vastly different from European culture - surviving well for thousands of years here long before we came to offer (impose) on them a 'better' way of life. A government lifting Aboriginal children of tender age (like John Moriarty and the other 14 boys who stayed at Sylvan Close for 18 months at Mt Wilson), has in it the same insensitivity and violence that could be done to the lifted waratah. It doesn't really matter how "successful" the new forced genetic "strain" might appear to be - a mutilation has occurred. The 'white people' are only diminished by the loss of a different culture - a difference which enhances the variety of culture within all life forms.

I do hope that the sensitivity which your members seem to be showing towards Aborigines will grow deeper.

Each in his/her own way, I feel, will be enlarged if we can find a way of "paying back" the land we took and making up for the treatment which our ancestors delivered the Aborigines. Although this was in the past, the effects well and truly linger on in the present.

Aborigines have shown remarkable tolerance and forgiveness for what has been done to them and their ancestors.

I would hope that each of us now living, find his/her own way to extend a hand of friendship to any Aborigines we meet. We will not be diminished by such an effect. We will not have to give our properties (as has been maliciously suggested). But we are called to change our attitudes and

acknowledge the misdeeds of our ancestors in the past. Then, and only then, can we become fully human. If you do get permission to look further at information about the Mulgoa Mission and the boys who were sent to Sylvan Close, Mt Wilson the contact is:

*The Secretary
AIAPSIS
GPO Box 553
Canberra ACT 2601*

You would have to ask them permission for research.

Yours truly,

Beth Goodwin

Patricia Andren, a member of the Mt Wilson Historical Society, wrote to the committee earlier in the year in reference to Aboriginal sites and artefacts in the Blue Mountains. Her letter, for which we are most grateful, is as follows:

I was most interested that a member of the historical society had found Aboriginal artefacts on her property. It led me to consult a member of the National Parks and Wildlife Service at Bathurst. His name is Bill Allen, a member of the Waradjuri people. The Waradjuris inhabited a great area west of Lithgow. Parts of the Hartley area were inhabited by both Waradjuris and Gundungurrah people. The Blue Mountains were inhabited by the Gundungurrah people while the area around Mt Wilson was the domain of the Daruk people. In some of these areas the boundaries appear to overlap and there are records of trading areas and sites of these three great tribes around Clarence.

Since 1974, the 'ownership' of Aboriginal artefacts was vested in the Crown. Finders are asked to please not disturb artefacts or sites but to consult a person skilled in their preservation and care. By doing this, the history of the place can be recorded before any disturbance occurs. The main aim of Bill Allen is to record the past history, and with the help of these relics 'in situ' where possible. Should you have picked up a relic or have some that your forbears have found, would you be able to map the area in which it was found, before the knowledge is lost?

Bill Allen has asked me to pass on the fact that finding an Aboriginal site or artefact does not mean that a native title claim will be slapped on your property. He has asked that should anyone need extra information or help to consult him at:

*Central West District NPWS
203-209 Russel St
Bathurst NSW 2795
Tel: (02) 6332 9488
Fax: (02) 6332 3735*

...I will include a booklet and pamphlet supplied by Bill. He has given permission for us to copy the pamphlet. I feel the more we know about preserving these relics, and working together to do so, the more practical the reconciliation process!

Sincerely,

*Patricia Andren
28 March 1998*

[Note: The spellings of these above mentioned Aboriginal tribes are phonetic and differ from other publications]

The pamphlet which Patricia referred to in her letter is a NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service information booklet entitled "Taking Care of Aboriginal Sites". The contents, which are relevant to all those living in Australia, are as follows:

Aboriginal sites: Aboriginal people in NSW once lived in clans. The clans had very large areas through which they travelled for hunting and gathering. They lived in harmony with the environment.

It is important to understand that Aboriginal people today retain a strong attachment to their environment through their land and culture.

Many of the State's Aboriginal sites and places are significant to particular Aboriginal communities as they provide a direct link with their traditional culture.

Aboriginal sites are the physical remains of a unique culture which is more than 40,000 years old.

What is an Aboriginal site or place?: An Aboriginal site is any place which contains the remains of traditional and historic occupation by Aboriginal people. The word 'relic' is applied to material evidence of past times. Aboriginal sites in NSW range from large shell middens on the coast to small surface scatters of stone on the inland, semi-arid plains. Aboriginal sites are found in towns and cities, on beaches, along river banks, on open plains and in dense forests. This is because Aboriginal people lived throughout NSW. Different environments and different Aboriginal practices resulted in different types of sites.

Who is responsible for the protection of Aboriginal sites?: The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) consults regularly with Aboriginal communities to ensure that as many Aboriginal sites as possible are preserved. Sections 86, 90 & 91 of the *NSW National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974* provides for the protection and preservation of all Aboriginal relics and places throughout NSW.

The NPWS and the Minister for the Environment are responsible for the protection of relics. Relics are deposited objects and material evidence of Aboriginal life before European settlement and during co-occupation with people of European origin.

Ancestral remains are looked after as relics under the Act.

The Minister may also declare a site an 'Aboriginal place' when it is of special significance to Aboriginal culture.

The 'ownership' of an Aboriginal relic is vested in the Crown, with the NPWS being the responsible authority. It is illegal to disturb, damage, deface or destroy a relic without the prior written consent of the director-General of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.

How to preserve an Aboriginal site or place: Aboriginal sites and places are fragile and subject to weathering and natural erosion. You can help to preserve them by following these guidelines.

- Avoid touching the site with your hands or feet.
- Do not try to re-groove the site.
- Do not draw or put chalk on the site.
- Avoid placing any water or sand on the site.
- Leave any artefacts, vegetation or rocks as is.
- Take your rubbish with you.

NPWS Aboriginal Sites Register: The NPWS maintains a register of known sites in NSW. The number of Aboriginal sites or places which are currently registered with the National Parks and Wildlife Service is 30,000.

This number is increasing as a result of:

- greater willingness by Aboriginal people to share information about their sites;
- increased awareness of, and willingness by other community members to record and register sites that exist on private and Crown land;
- improved ability of the community, Service staff and Aboriginal people to recognise and report Aboriginal sites and places to the NPWS Registry.

Some sites and places in the Register kept by the NPSW include middens, rock engravings, rock art, fish traps, carve/scarred trees, ceremonial grounds, stone arrangements to mark special sites, quarry sites, stone tools and workshops, axe-grinding grooves, spiritual and mythological sites.

Along with traditions, spiritual and mythological places were an integral part of Aboriginal people's religion, commonly known as 'the Dreamtime'. Access to the NPSW Aboriginal Sites Register is restricted due to the confidential nature of most of the information.

Caring for Aboriginal sites: The primary purpose of Aboriginal Sites Officers is to care, protect and manage Aboriginal sites as part of the statutory responsibilities of NPWS under the National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974.

Aboriginal Sites Officers are also responsible for teaching visitors about Aboriginal sites and Aboriginal culture so that the community is made aware of, and develops an understanding of the issues relating to Aboriginal cultural heritage.

How to gain access to an Aboriginal site: If you would like to visit an Aboriginal site, contact your local NPWS office, Head Office, an Aboriginal Sites Officer or your Local Aboriginal Land Council.

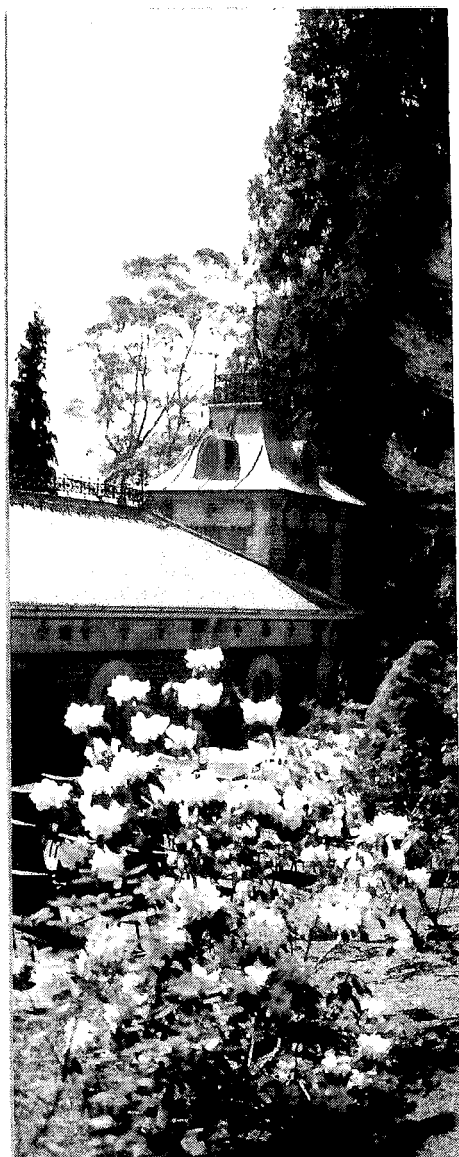


A Word from the Editor

Firstly, I would like to welcome new members to the Mt Wilson Historical Society and beg you not to judge the Society solely on the calibre of its newsletter - I assure you I am not an appropriate example of the fine, intelligent and sophisticated human specimens which make up this organisation.

Thank you so much to all those who have contributed to the newsletter, and may I strongly encourage everyone to consider the prestige of being published in the Mt Wilson Historical Society Newsletter and the satisfaction you will feel in making a young editor very happy. I have moved house yet again so please feel free to write to me at my new address: Elspeth Callender, 22 Pitt Street, Concord, NSW, 2137 or phone me (or my answering machine) on (02) 9743 2910 or contact me via email at ajandel@ozemail.com.au. I would greatly appreciate that any material sent to me for the newsletter be, if possible, on disk or sent via email.

This poem by Judith Wright captures for me the unique Australian summer, which is rapidly approaching:



The Cicadas

*On yellow days in summer when the early heat
presses like hands hardening the sown earth
into stillness, when after sunrise birds fall quiet
and streams sink in their beds and in silence meet,
then underground the blind nymphs waken and move.
They must begin at last to struggle towards love.*

*For a whole life they have crouched alone and dumb
in patient ugliness enduring the humble dark.
Nothing has shaken that world below the world
except the far-off thunder, the strain of roots in storm.
Sunk in an airless night they neither slept nor woke
but hanging on the tree's blood dreamed vaguely the
dreams of the tree,
and put on wavering leaves, wing-veined, too delicate to
see.*

*But now in terror overhead their day of dying breaks.
The trumpet of the rising sun bursts into sound
and the implacable unborn stir and reply.
In the hard shell an unmade body wakes
and fights to break from its motherly-enclosing ground.
These dead must dig their upward grave in fear
to cast the living into the naked air.*

*Terrible is the pressure of light into the heart.
The womb is withered and cracked, the birth is begun,
and shuddering and groaning to break that iron grasp
the new is delivered as the old is torn apart.
Love whose unmerciful blade has pierced us through,
we struggle naked from our death in search of you.*

*This is the wild light that our dreams foretold
while unaware we prepared these eyes and wings-
while in our sleep we learned the song the world sings.
Sing now, my brothers; climb to that intolerable gold.*