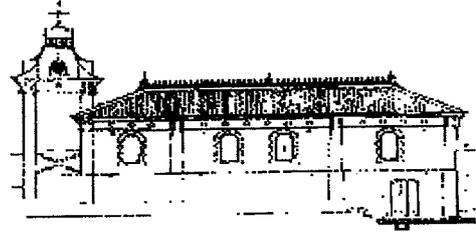


Mt Wilson Historical Society



More Lore on Du Faur

At about 11.00am on Saturday 6th February 50 members and friends gathered in the Mt Wilson Village Hall to enjoy firstly a social cup of morning tea or coffee and then to be entertained and informed by Dr Joan Webb. After 22 years as a Science teacher in NSW secondary schools Joan became a lecturer in Science Education at Kuring-gai College of Advanced Education, from which she retired in 1991. During her time there she established a Centre for Environmental Studies for the general community at the College. From 1980 Joan visited Thailand each year to conduct workshops for Thai teachers in environmental education. She worked at Pranakorn Teachers' College, helping the staff there to set up a Centre for Environmental Education. Since leaving Kuring-gai Joan has had three biographies published. The biographies are of Minard Crommelin of Pearl Beach, George Caley and Thistle Harris. These are just a number of Dr Joan Webb's achievements.

Joan spoke with humour, warmth and a depth of knowledge on a man who deserves to be known about far more - Eccleston Du Faur. It is our intention to publish her talk in full in the next newsletter. Here we can only give some idea of the range and depth of her excellent presentation.

Those who know even a little of Mt Wilson's history will recognise the name Eccleston Du Faur. However, very few people who live elsewhere know the name.

Joan pointed out in her introductory remarks that we

know the names Henry Lawson and Banjo Patterson as being traditionally linked with the Australian bush. But what of those in the urban setting who also made a remarkable contribution to Australian culture? When Dr Joan Webb told people she was researching Eccleston Du Faur, they would question "Ecc.. who?". Sadly neither at the Art Gallery of NSW nor in the Kuring-gai National Park was his name well known. Nor were many people aware of the valuable contribution this man has made to the establishment of both of these vital institutions. Dr Webb stressed that in her research she found considerable evidence of the public image of Du Faur but little or nothing of the private man. (continued on page 15)

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Autumn as it Oughta'

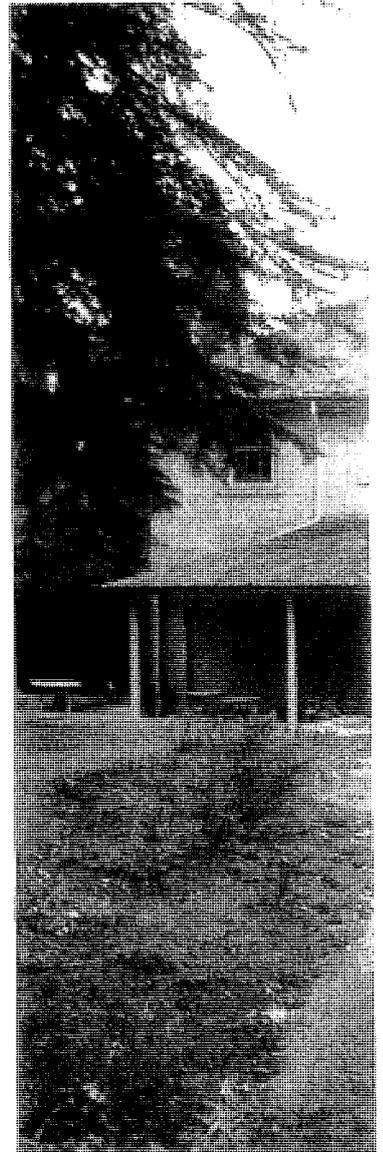


Again this year the last day of daylight saving was given over to the swinging strains of **The Bloweys**, that well known multi-instrumental traditional group led by Bill Boldiston of Leura. This was the third annual jazz event held in Wynstay historic gardens, and everyone agreed that it was the best yet, so jazz on the lawn is definitely a fixture on the calendar for the last weekend in March every year.

More than 100 fans gathered to spread blankets alongside the massive conifers and settle back for four hours of all the old favourites. Bill and his group on brass, strings and their own rather unique percussion played solo and group numbers with commentary and vocals from their leader. We enjoyed an added bonus this year as the regular Bloweys alternated with a threesome featuring Murray Child on electric piano and vocals. The group's versatility makes for great entertainment, as they switch leads and cover their varied repertoire. In recognition of the success of this annual event, with all the musicians donating their services for the day, we announced honorary membership in the Historical Society for each of the players. Many thanks to Bill, Terry, Peter, Alan and Murray.

A sausage sizzle, delicious dessert table and drinks were available throughout the afternoon, and the sale table sold out quickly with popular locally made products. Our grateful thanks to the catering troupe, who again outdid themselves with homemade treats and desserts. A beautiful Easter basket of goodies prepared by Robin Leonard was raffled, and raised an extra \$230. Well done!

Many of the jazz fans wandered over to the Turkish Bath to see the progress which has continued over the last months. Its public support for events like this that make it all possible. Altogether this very relaxed and successful event raised more than \$2,500 to help with the ongoing restoration work and establishment of the collection. We look forward to seeing everyone back for a repeat performance next year; a great way to celebrate 2000!



Life Membership of the Mount Wilson Historical Society

It is very pleasing to announce to our members that the Society has awarded Life Membership to the following members. All these people have made an outstanding contribution to the Society financially. The Society wishes to express its deep gratitude to these people:

Prof Arthur Delbridge
Mr Nick Delbridge
Dr Hiroo Inoue
Mr John and Mrs Robin Leonard



Mr Bill Smart, who is also our patron
Mr Ron and Mrs Dot Smart
Mr John Valder
Dr Peter Valder

Workshops in 1998

Our Historical Society has been assisted in all kinds of ways by various organisations, particularly Museums Australia (NSW) whose Outreach Officers are of great value in guiding work in establishing small museums such as ours. This society is now a member of the Macquarie Chapter of Museums Australia (NSW), which covers an area from Penrith through the Blue Mountains, Lithgow and even Glen Davis. The Chapter meets briefly every three months at different venues and provides an important opportunity for exchange of ideas and knowledge and the discussion of problems each museum faces in gaining help from Local Government and in raising funds. At the

moment the Chapter is formulating a joint brochure, to cover all the museums in the region, for circulation, particularly at tourist centres and other suitable outlets.

Once a year a Workshop is organised through the Chapter with the help of officers of Museums Australia (NSW). Last year the Workshop theme was 'Exhibitions' and was conducted at the Arms of Australia Inn - the museum for the Nepean Historical Society - on Saturday 14th November 1998. Four members of the Society attended: Arthur Delbridge, Mary Reynolds, Bruce Wright and Pauline Michell. These workshops are all day activities and there is an enormous amount of information to absorb. The topics covered included: exhibition planning and development, including storylines, educational objectives, labels, design and fabrication, budgets and scheduling, publicity, installation and evaluation; revamping existing displays; planning temporary exhibitions; and preparing travelling exhibitions.

Field Visit is another benefit available through the Macquarie Chapter and Museums Australia (NSW). Last year it was held on Friday 13th November in the Turkish Bath. Two Outreach Officers, Peter Scrivener and Phillipa Charley, attended and gave us their undivided attention for over three hours. We had indicated the areas we were concerned about and these were then dealt with systematically. We then received a detailed report some weeks later providing advice and much information. The report covered matters of strategic planning, mission statements, collection management, oral history and cataloguing photographs.

We hope the following information provides some insight into the diversity of tasks that the Society undertakes and highlights the support it has from highly respected and well established organisations in the field of both history, museums and heritage in the State.

If you would like to participate in one of these activities please contact Mary Reynolds on (0247) 56 2006 (phone and fax). We certainly need members who would be interested in this work.

Workshops and the State Library

The State Library conducts highly specialised workshops concerned with the conservation of archives, maps, documents, photographs, art and books. A workshop in 1998, for example, dealt in detail with identifying and dating historic photographic prints and preserving collections, preserving archival records, including plans, maps and certificates and preserving family history. These workshops are held throughout the year and are usually conducted from 9:30am to 4:30pm. To assist with these expenses we applied to the Royal Australian Historical Society's Small Grant Scheme and it is pleasing to report that the Society was successful in its application, receiving a grant of \$500. We thank the Royal Australian Historical Society for its support and positive help. A fourth workshop will be attended this year, dealing with the conservation of old books.

As a result, the Society has begun purchasing materials to help with the preservation and storage of photographs, maps and documents. These materials are not cheap, as you will observe from the financial report, so if you could make a donation towards their cost it would be of enormous benefit.

Recently, the Royal Australian Historical Society conducted two more workshops on Managing Small Archives and Photographs. Again, our Society was represented at these on Saturday 13th February and Saturday 13th March, 1999. One of our members, John Cardy, attended the one on 13th February and is so enthused over it all that he is writing a detailed report to put into action in the near future.

The Historic Houses Trust

At the end of July, 1998 a team of curators visited Wynstay for a weekend and with help from about six or seven members in freezing weather demonstrated to us how to sort and deal with the many items stored in 'Old Wynstay'. It was an amazing experience for everyone and an exciting one as well, as old artefacts were identified to add to the knowledge of this remarkable property. Our grateful thanks to Tamara Lavenric from Government House and Lyn Collins of Rouse Hill House, the leaders of this team and the six other members. This was not a project within the Society's program, but it does help the Society to recognise even more fully the amount of valuable local history to be found in the older properties of the area.





Hot Air From the Turkish Bath

Turkish Bath Progress Report



1. Council Development Application

During 1997 the Mt Wilson Historical Society Inc applied to the City of Blue Mountains Council for a permit to develop and utilise the Turkish Bath for the Society's purposes. In March 1997 the Council gave its approval, subject to a set of twelve conditions.

Early in 1998 the Architect, on behalf of the Society, lodged objections to two of these conditions on the grounds that they would be too restrictive to the Society's pursuit of its objectives.

Those conditions were amended by the Council on 18th November 1998 as follows:

Item 10

Original Wording (in part) - The building shall be open to the public for no more that eight (8) weekends per year and only in conjunction with the open garden days, and otherwise used for private research and storage of archival records and artefacts.

Amended Wording - The building may be opened to the general public on Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays. Otherwise it shall only be used for private research and for storage of archival records and artefacts.

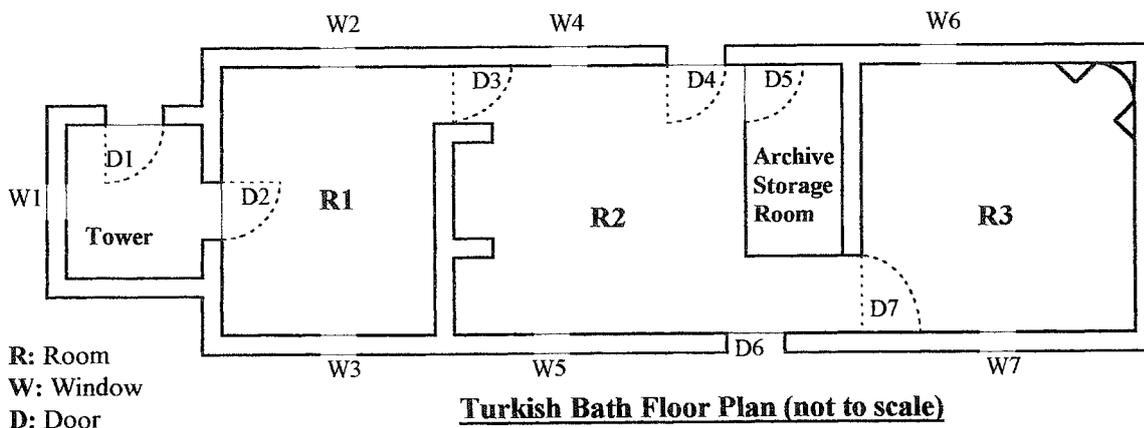
Item 12

Original Wording (in part) - All parking associated with the building shall take place within the existing parking area [within the Wynstay grounds].

Amended (in part) - When the Turkish Bath is open in conjunction with the Wynstay gardens, all associated car parking shall take place within the existing parking area adjacent to the entry drive off Waterfall Road, which is currently used in conjunction with the open garden days [within Wynstay grounds]. In the event that the Turkish Bath is opened not in conjunction with Wynstay garden, visitors will be able to park in The Avenue or in Waterfall Road.

The Executive Committee is pleased with this outcome as it provides for much greater and more flexible use of the building by members, interested visitors and academic researchers. The assistance given to the Society in this matter by our City of Blue Mountains Council representative, Terri Hamilton, is gratefully acknowledged.

2. Turkish Bath Renovations



On 15th January, 1999 Stan Hellyer, the builder, had an in-depth on-site conference with Peter Todd, the architect, and on 8th February work commenced in earnest with three tradesmen on site. The work which has since been undertaken and work to be done in the near future was outlined in the Project Director's Report, dated 18th March 1999:

Ceiling - Sagging sections of the ceiling throughout the building have been propped up, from the floor, and secured from above to roof timbers. The temporary plasterboard sections have been replaced with new board and fixed flush

with the original ceiling and new battens have been fixed across plasterboard joins where appropriate. A new hatch cover has been provided in the tower.

Frieze - New decorative ventilator covers, matching the existing design, have been fixed to apertures where they were missing. In Room 3 the crumbling plasterboard above the northern window (W7) has been replaced and the joins made good with plaster.

Brickwork - Slumped and cracked interior brickwork below the southern window in Room 3 (W6) has been mortar patched.

Doors - It has been our intension, during the current Program of Works, as an important preliminary step towards effective temperature and humidity control to provide effective draught-proofing for the two doors in Room 2 (D4 & D6). This is required for the comfort of people working in the building, for the preservation of materials displayed on the walls, and more importantly, for the preservation of the archival materials which are to be stored in the Archive Storage Room (D5). Some work has been carried out on both of these doors. 'Raven' draught excluders have been recessed into the bottom edges and some foam strips have been attached to the frame on one door but at present much more needs to be done to provide an effective draught seal. This matter has been discussed with both Stan Hellyer and Peter Todd.

Rewiring - The temporary wiring which was installed to meet the immediate requirements of the Wynne Prize Centenary Exhibition is to be removed and replaced by a permanent inside power-box, lighting, power-points and switching. If the electrician's assurances coincide with reality, then the electrical work will have been completed by 19th March.

Tiling - The tiles in the Archive Storage Room have been pulled up and recemented.

Work to be Done

Doors - Draught-proofing (as described above). Patch rotted section of frame of tower door (D1).

Picture Rails - The picture rails in all rooms are to be repaired, reinforced with suitable metal channel along the upper edge, and secured firmly so that they can safely take the weight of framed pictures of the size of those displayed in the Wynne Prize Centenary Exhibition.

Windows - The shatter-proof laminated panels which have been manufactured to fit by *Sun-screen* are to be collected and secured with special brackets between the existing outer plain-glass and the stained-glass panels. The original window sash is to be reinstated in W7. Where appropriate, any spaces between the outer window frames and the brick apertures are to be sealed so that they are completely draught-proof. The existing hinges and catches are to be used as far as possible and (in consultation with the architect) new compatible hardware is to be used elsewhere.

Archive Storage Room - In November 1998, Peter Todd, Mary Reynolds and I held an on-site planning discussion concerning the appropriate readjustment of the shelving, the purchase of a suitable filing-cabinet and the construction of a suitable storage hopper or bin. This work still has to be undertaken. The door to this room (D5) is also to be draught-proofed, and the junction of the brick walls with the paster frieze is to be sealed or covered with a batten to provide dust-proofing.

Ceiling Insulation - At this stage insulation batts are to be installed only above the Archive Storage Room, as a matter of priority so that this area can be used as early as possible. However, at a later stage batts will extend over the whole ceiling area.

Chimney Cavity - The metal sheet, which formerly prevented dust and fragments of mortar from falling into the display on the stove-top, is to be reinstated. The edges between the brickwork and the metal sheet are to be secured and sealed in such a manner that no further flaking can occur.

Painting - External: Following repair, all un-primed exterior surfaces is to be painted.

Internal: All new plasterwork and battens to be painted to blend with existing finishes - the colour is to be confirmed with the architect on site.

3. Application for funding

The Executive Committee has been considering the matter of alternative external sources of funding for the Turkish Bath renovation project. This matter has become of increased importance since the NSW Heritage Office informed

the Society that due to the fact that we have already received three grants for the Turkish Bath we were unsuccessful this year in our application. We were also advised that the Society would be unlikely to receive any more funding from that source in the future for this project.

After looking at a range of options it was decided to submit an application to the Commonwealth Government for a **Federal Community Projects Program** grant.

Under this program \$200,000 will be provided to each House of Representatives electorate and there is a \$20,000 minimum for each project, to ensure that projects have a significant impact on the community. The Mt Wilson Historical Society Inc has requested a grant of \$30,000 from this Federation Program, to be matched by \$10,000 cash contributions from the Society's funds and a notional voluntary labour component valued at \$20,000 (the last item being in accordance with the agreed Commonwealth rate which is \$10.00 per hour, the current minimum adult wage rate).

Bruce Wright - Project Director

The Turkish Bath Historical Exhibition

This exhibition, which had been first displayed during the Autumn Opening in 1998, continued to attract much interest from visitors in the Spring Opening 1998. During the Spring there were 770 adult visitors on weekends and some 220 in special interest groups during the weeks Wynstay and the Turkish Bath were open.

Our committee is now determining an Exhibition Policy as guidelines for the future. To maintain continuity with the 1998 Exhibition it was felt that certain features of that exhibition should be retained in 1999. Therefore the entrance room (R2) continues to serve as an introduction to the Mt Wilson Historical Society - its aims, objectives and its membership along with an archaeological display. This includes, this time, other items of interest found near the building during the restoration work.

In Room 1, at the eastern end, the account already displayed of the building of the Turkish Bath remains, as it is highly relevant to the building itself. So too is the large marble slab, one of two originally provided for the user to recline on during treatment.

In Room 3, at the other end of the building the 1998 Exhibition theme was the Early European Settlement of Mt Wilson. For 1999 the theme has moved on to a period following the First World War. Up until about 1914 Mt Wilson's social pattern was dominated by the then owners of the original eight houses. At that time the Mann family owned Dennarque, Nooroo was owned by the Thompson family, Boewang by the Brown family, Bebeah by the Sloan family, Yarrowa (Wynstay) had caretakers, Campanella was owned by the Joshua family and Yengo was still the home of Jesse Gregson. Sefton Hall had been built for Henry Marcus Clark who sadly did not live to enjoy the experience for long, as he died unexpectedly in 1913. However, his family continued to occupy Sefton Hall until 1995.

World War One brought changes in Mt Wilson. One only has to view the local War Memorial and the list of names of those who served in the war to gain some insight into how this devastating war affected the tiny community. The social structure of the community altered quite dramatically. In contrast with the years between 1875 and the first decade of the 20th century some of the owners of the larger properties decided to live in Mt Wilson permanently after WWI and endeavour to make an income from the land. Previously only caretakers and their families, and other workers who kept these large properties functioning, inhabited Mt Wilson during the whole of the year.

The most significant family was the Kirk family. Robert Kirk came to Mt Wilson in the 1870s and settled here when his son Sydney married Mary Marceau and raised their family of seven sons and two daughters. Three of those sons are still alive.

The theme for Room 3 of the Turkish Bath centres around the early 1920s and 1930s and the quite different social fabric and relationships that evolved at that time.

With photographs and documents we hope this rather uncomplicated and attractive society comes to life for you in the Autumn of 1999. The Exhibition is still open for you to see on 1st and 2nd May 1999 from 11:00am to 4:00pm.

The History of Accommodation Houses in the Blue Mountains

[This is the text of a paper written by Gwen Silvey of the Blue Mountains Historical Society in August of last year, following our suggestion that she might speak to us on the history of guesthouses in the Blue Mountains. Wondering how to approach the subject Gwen decided to begin by telling us of the various methods she used in her research on the accommodation houses.]

As habitation, or accommodation, was and still remains such a vital part of Blue Mountains History it was necessary for me to study the whole Blue Mountains story to find the details required for my investigation into the history of accommodation houses in this geographical region of Australia.

Records remaining from the early colonial days of this country are not easily accessible. However, in the State Archives we are privy to the invaluable correspondence of the Colonial Secretary, who wrote and answered all letters to the Governor of the day. Prior to the 1830s, when it became necessary to obtain a publican's licence to operate an inn, a modern researcher can only rely on the letters requesting or granting permission to open an inn in the colony. Due to the inadequate mail service at that time inns were often erected and opened prior to formal permission being received. In fact many roadside grog shanties operated without permission being either requested or granted. At one period the Shepherd and Flock Inn near Medlow Bath was not licensed, but the innkeeper offered to water a traveller's horse for 6 pence, which was another way to manage the unlicensed selling of liquor. Loopholes for tax evasion are certainly nothing new.

Unlicensed stills were also scattered across the countryside, particularly in the days of the gold rush, when the unexpected arrival of a government official on horseback meant a wild scramble of drinkers to disperse and hide their ill-gotten gains, including, no doubt, the still itself.

While the licences are generally quite reliable sources of information, some records have been lost and one is left to examine other sources to establish when and just exactly where any inn existed. These alternative sources may be in the form of letters written by early travellers or the reports of early surveyors of roads and railways. These surveyors often included existing buildings in the area on their maps.

Recently I found an interesting little map of the Blue Mountains region in a book about Sir Thomas Mitchell. It appears that in 1831, whilst staying overnight at the Weatherboard Inn, he issued instructions to the Surveyor Rusdon to provide that particular map. Clearly marked on this map are Gardiner's Inn, Collitt's Inn, the Weatherboard Inn, the Valley Inn and the Pilgrim Inn. This confirms that those establishments were indeed publishing renewals of publican's licences, and

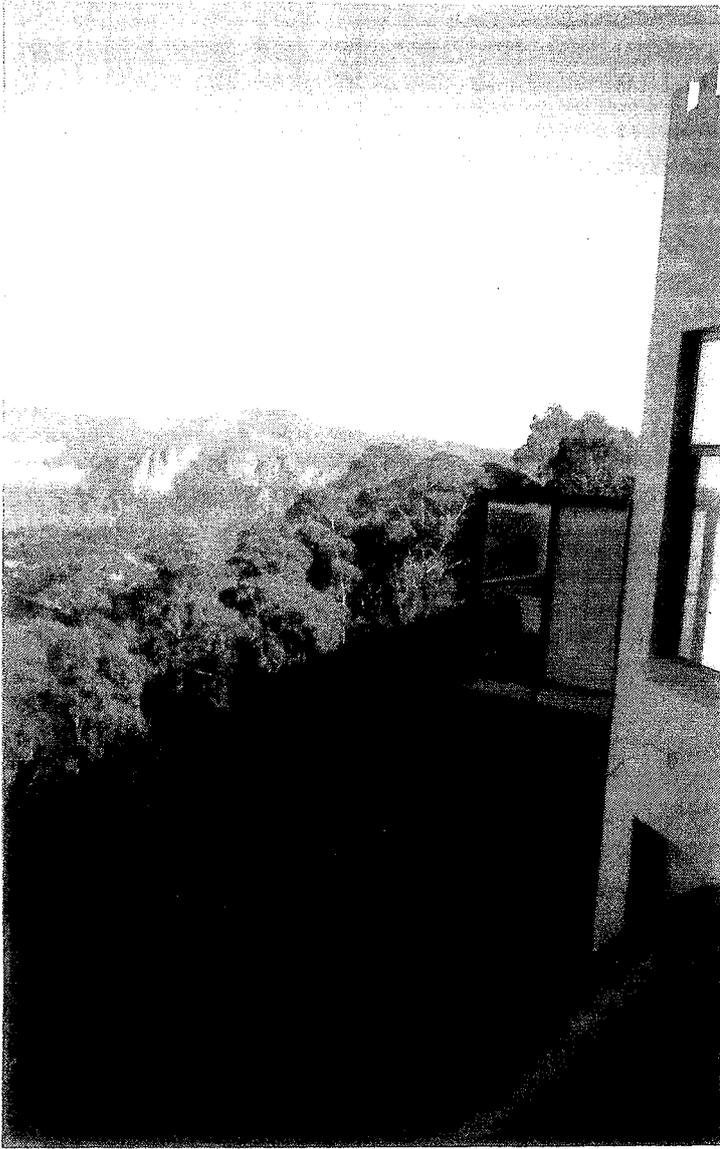
sometimes a newspaper article may refer to a particular inn operating at the time of publication.

Another way to establish dates for the operation of an inn, hotel or guesthouse is to search for the family history of the proprietor. Perhaps the death of an innkeeper, or the birth of one of his children, was officially registered as being in the locality of the inn, although no licence may be available for that year. Some family histories have been well recorded and dates for the moving of individuals from one area to another are available. Old letters and diaries are also very useful sources for this information.

As the colony progressed and the back country of New South Wales was opened up by the squatters, the road over the Blue Mountains became well used by bullock wagons and horse drawn vehicles. In the 1830s it took several days to travel from Sydney to Bathurst and the few inns along the road were welcome stopping places which soon became unable to cater for the number of people using the road. To cope with the increasing traffic, more inns were opened such as the Blue Mountain at Lawson the Shepherd and His Flock at Pulpit Hill, the Woodman's Inn at Woodford and Boland's Inn at Springwood. During this era the road through the Blue Mountains was being maintained by convict labour and the inns were frequented by the soldiers supervising the convicts. After transportation ceased in 1840 that situation gradually changed and the previously unpaid or very cheap labour became scarce in the colony. This encouraged ship loads of assisted migrants to come from Britain where the Scottish clearances, the Irish potato famine and the industrial revolution in Britain had caused much hardship and poverty.

At that time the authorities had not decided whether the water supply for Sydney should come from the Nepean River or the Hawkesbury River so no settlements except the necessary inns were allowed on the Blue Mountains. Only the innkeepers on the western road, the rough winding track fulfilling the role of a long umbilical cord between Sydney and Bathurst and the little inland towns which were beginning to appear west of the ranges, were really making a living.

Only a few years later, when the gold rush began, the inns really flourished. However, in the next decade the construction of a railway line through the Blue Mountains came to cheat them of their business. By



View from an unused rear doorway of the Hydro Majestic on a clear and freezing cold winter's morning

then the decision to use the Nepean River for Sydney's water supply allowed settlements to take place on the mountains. The navvies building the railway line needed supplies, and a couple of little townships sprang up on the Mountains to provide for them. These settlements generally only consisted of a few houses, little shops and other amenities, but most of the inns closed because they were situated on the old road which was now virtually unused except for travelling stock. Simple accommodation houses like that of Charles Wilson at Weatherboard were erected close to the several railway stations to cater for the rapidly growing population. These were part of the first hotels and boarding houses which opened in the Blue Mountains in the late 1860s.

However, with the western road virtually unused, and travellers riding in comparative comfort over the mountains in the puffing steam trains, which also hauled wool, wheat and manufactured goods, the Blue Mountains were rather quiet for the next few years. The

convicts and soldiers had long gone, the travelling population did not need to stop, and most of the inns were now closed. At Springwood, timber cutters were employed for making sleepers for the railway line, and Wentworth Falls and Mount Victoria housed a number of fettlers and other railway workers. But Blackheath was deserted and Katoomba, let alone Leura, had not been thought of. Only a stone crusher and one or two fettler's huts existed in that area together with the little stone gatehouse where the western road crossed the line amid the bush.

Researching the period that followed was not easy. The Sydney Morning Herald supplied most of the news, as there were not yet any Blue Mountains newspapers. These few quiet years were soon superseded by the period of great activity which began to form the Blue Mountains we know today. There were two main reasons for the changes. Firstly, the opening up of coal and shale mines in Hartley Vale and a few years later at Katoomba, where straggling little villages emerged to house the miners. Secondly, the growing settlement in Sydney produced a number of wealthy citizens, many of whom were distressed by the heat and lack of sanitation which caused much disease and discomfort there in the summer months. Sir Henry Parkes chose to build country homes for himself and his family near Springwood. Not far from the busy timber milling sites in that area, he named his own house Falconbridge House using his mother's maiden name. Parkes had been encouraged to build in the Blue Mountains by Mr Deane, a Sydney solicitor who had bought the old Pilgrim Inn at Lapstone for a summer house.

Following this fashion, some of the other old inns were purchased and restored for summer retreats for Sydney's elite. Gardiner's Inn at Blackheath and Buss's Inn (formerly the Woodman's Inn) at Woodford are two which were resurrected and remain to this day.

This influx of Sydney citizens caused many new homes to be built on the Blue Mountains. Yester Grange and Coorah at Wentworth Falls are examples. Buildings meant tradesmen, tradesmen meant simple houses for their families, families meant shops and, before long, schools, and so it began. The Imperial Hotel and Cooper's Grand at Mount Victoria and the Royal Hotel at Springwood were soon opened and Charles Wilson replaced his original accommodation with what became the first Grand View Hotel at Wentworth Falls.

In Katoomba two small hotels preceded the Carrington. They were Biles Hotel (now Gearins Hotel) and a small wayside inn opened on the Bathurst Road by Mrs Curnow, which was several years later superseded by the Katoomba Hotel which remains at the present

roundabout near the Yearman Bridge. It is interesting to note that those three hotels are the only ones remaining in Katoomba today. For a few years there was a small hotel down near the Katoomba falls which served the miners. It was known as the Centennial, and eventually the Falls Hotel, but the closing of the mines led to its demise, and years later the building burnt down.

In the 1880s, when the Blue Mountains became more popular, boarding houses were plentiful, catering for the single men working on the railway and in the banks, building trade and post offices. Soon that situation changed with more and more people coming to the Blue Mountains for holidays. Wealthy folk stayed at the Carrington and other large hotels. Middle class people also came and needed accommodation, and so began the guesthouse era. Many boarding houses catered for both permanent guests and holiday makers, but before long large new guesthouses appeared on the scene. Fortunately there are plenty of sources for researching most of these guesthouses.

During that decade (1880s) many changes occurred. Firstly, photography was becoming a popular activity. Also, local newspapers began to record in long and flowery reports the new of the Blue Mountains. The Penrith Press was the earliest, and we have library access to their early editions on film. Unfortunately many early copies of the Lithgow Mercury were lost in a fire, which has been frustrating for researchers. However, by 1890 the first Katoomba newspapers were printed, and reading them has been a great source of information regarding the building boom which took place on the Blue Mountains at that time.

In that era a number of men were responsible for the great growth of tourism in the Blue Mountains. George Kitch, one of our earliest photographers, advertised the Mountains in as far away as Chicago, USA where he staged an exhibition of photographs of Blue Mountains scenery. He and Mr Goyder (then owner of the Carrington) did much to promote the natural features such as the Orphan Rock and the various waterfalls, and tourists began to take excursions through the bush to see the Three Sisters from Echo Point. There was much rivalry between Katoomba and the recently opened Jenolan Caves, each bidding for the tourist trade. At that time Katoomba was advertised as the "Queen City of the Hills" and the Blue Mountains were advertised as the most popular holiday resort in Australia.

In 1889 Katoomba was proclaimed a municipality, and rate records from that date are now available on microfiche. These records have been a great source of information regarding who owned what and when.

Although this type of research is time consuming, it is much less expensive than making numerous trips from Mount Wilson to the Lands Title Office in Sydney to glean the necessary details.

Another great boon to researchers became available around the turn of the century. That was the publishing of many forms of guides, including not only business directories, but also the first railway guides which gave details of the early accommodation houses to be found near the various railway stations. Furthermore, the Holiday, Health and Tourist Resorts in NSW began publishing an annual directory. I was fortunate to be able to locate copies of about 80% of their booklets which only ceased publication around 1950. It was from these that I was able to compile such a comprehensive chronological listing of so many guesthouses and hotels which have existed on the Blue Mountains.

Consequently most of the local guesthouses have now been recorded, but there were still quite a number which were not advertised, but relied on word of mouth to attract enough custom for their smaller establishments. I was able to trace some of these from other sources, but quite a few places may never be listed.

Fortunately many of the guesthouses included a photo with their advertisements. This was another source of discovering when and how buildings may have been altered in style and size.

The naming of houses caused quite a few problems, especially prior to the time when street numbers were introduced. The number of places named Hillside or The Pines sometimes drove me to desperation. It must be remembered that many names were taken from location to location - sometimes even in a different village - as proprietors moved to more suitable buildings, taking the guesthouse name with them. A few places were even moved physically from one area to another, and sometimes joined with houses next door. New proprietors often changed the name of an establishment when they took over the ownership or management.

Not only did houses change names, but of course people did also. It took me some time to work out that the Chateau Napier in Leura, built for the McSweeney family from the Goulburn area, was operated for many years by Mrs McManus who was actually a married daughter of that family. It took me even longer to establish that she was indeed the same person, having been widowed and remarried, as the Mrs J O'Brien who advertised it later.

All this research gave me good insight into many aspects of the guesthouse world. The changing fashions

in clothing, food, transport and architecture were clearly shown. And most of all the varying forms of entertainment over the years were mentioned in great detail. Concerts, dancing, bushwalking, skating, tennis, fancy dress parties, musical evenings and picnics were advertised by the guesthouses. One or two brave establishments even promised moonlight picnics. Just how these were organised, even a few hours in advance, in Blue Mountains weather stretches the imagination.

The introduction of motor transport - "own car to the caves" - and such new fangled ideas as phonographs, moving pictures and mini golf are all dated by the guesthouse advertisements, with telephones and radio programs preceding the introduction of television, the latter of which marked the 1960s.

World wars and depressions had serious effects on the guesthouses. The loss of so many young men during WWI meant that a number of the thousands of bereft single and widowed women found they could combine the necessity of earning a living with the comfort of pleasant company by running a guesthouse. However, the Great Depression of the 1930s saw guesthouse numbers fall. In 1934 at Katoomba only 70 were advertising as opposed to the 100 listed in the hey-day of the early twenties. It was the shortages of both labour and maintenance materials during WWII that really brought to an end a great proportion of the accommodation houses. Some of the larger establishments, such as the Hydro Majestic, California and the Ritz were taken over either as military hospitals or hostels for war workers at the Lithgow Small Arms Factory. Others were used to house students sent away from Sydney due to the fear of further bombardment from Japanese submarines.

By the time the war ended other changes had taken place, especially the greater use of motor cars when the Holdens were manufactured here. This new lifestyle meant holidays further afield from Sydney than the Blue Mountains, and also the introduction of day trips to the mountains. People coming for the day by car and bringing picnic lunches with them meant the closure of many guesthouses, corner stores and tearooms.

Caravan parks and flats also began to cater for the tourists and holiday makers who continued to come to the Mountains, although in less numbers and with much competition from the newly flourishing coastal resorts. From then on it became very difficult to research individual accommodation, as most were advertised in newspapers, tourist brochures or phone books by only providing a telephone number. Even current television advertisements show only a photo or special feature

offered with no details of specific location or ownership.

In the 1950s, after all the turmoil and changes caused by the war, the fashion was "out with the old and in with the new". Many attractive and basically good buildings had fallen into disrepair, and housing was at a premium for the thousands of newlyweds who were producing the baby boom children. Up went great numbers of quickly (and often poorly) built cottages of fibro cement and weatherboard, with many used for holiday letting. The balconies of double storey buildings were closed in with fibro, often covering fine old wrought iron lace. Down came many of our elegant old buildings, like the Council Chambers, which had also once been a guesthouse decorated with fine wrought iron. Down came Montrose, one of Katoomba's earliest guesthouses, decorated with wrought iron like its near neighbour Balmoral House.

A few of the famous old guesthouses such as the Burlington, Sans Souci and Eldon at Katoomba, and the Ritz at Leura, as well as several other smaller establishments at Wentworth Falls have been converted into nursing homes. Some other old establishments in Blue Mountains towns are now used as hostels for disadvantaged people, and others have been converted into flats. A few inns and hotels were burned in bushfires in the early days. We still do not know the complete circumstances surrounding the old Weatherboard Inn at Wentworth Falls which disappeared after a fire around 1880.

Many guesthouses burned down in what was surely an epidemic of fires after the guesthouse era waned and the buildings deteriorated for want of maintenance. The Grand Hotel at Lawson, Bon Accueil at Springwood, and Toll's Hotel at Wentworth Falls all suffered that fate. In Katoomba other examples were Westella, Essendene, Rubystone, Stretton Hall and the first Clarendon. One other in Katoomba Street, near Westella and the Palais Royal, was the smaller guesthouse named Carinya which existed from 1912, and later enlarged and modernised. It burned down in 1959 when owned by an Hungarian, who had anglicised his name to Stephen Bradley. Apparently that so-called "disaster" did not solve his financial problems, because a few months later his name hit the headlines as being the man who kidnapped for ransom the young Graeme Thorne, who was found dead in the boot of Bradley's car. Graeme's parents had recently won the lottery, and the fact was publicised in the newspapers. That tragedy was the reason that we are now given the option of having our names withheld from publication when we win lottery

prizes. Stephen Bradley was arrested at Colombo on his way back to Europe, and eventually died in prison.

Happily many of the remaining smaller guesthouses, plus older private homes, have now been restored as Bed and Breakfast accommodation, and they, together with recently build holiday cabins and the new large Convention Centres, are now forming the next phase of Blue Mountains accommodation.

It was not until the 1980s that a resurgence of tourism came to the Blue Mountains, bringing with it a welcome

restoration of some of the larger accommodation houses such as Lillianfels and Balmoral at Katoomba, Leura House at Leura and Whispering Pines and the Grand View Hotel at Wentworth Falls, plus the Imperial Hotel and the Victoria & Albert at Mt Victoria. A number of the main hotels including the Hydro Majestic, the Oriental at Springwood and the Alexandra at Leura are all currently undergoing restoration, which will further improve the lately sad and downgraded downs on the mountains for their entering into the next century. ✨

From Want of Proper Postal Arrangements

[This is an elaboration of the impromptu address Mary Reynolds gave at the general Meeting of the Mt Wilson Historical Society on 7th February, 1998. Mary is the Secretary of the society.]

My attention was first directed to research in this area when Ian Holt from the Lithgow & District Historical Society rang me in 1997 to ask a question about the possibility of a post office having been in Mt Wilson in the area we now call Silva Plana. He had been undertaking research into the history of Postal Services in the Lithgow District at the Australian Archives in Pitt St near Central Railway in Sydney. These archives, under the control of the Federal Government, contain postal history.

On my next visit to Sydney I rang Australia Post in the hope of some further enlightenment, and obtained a phone number for the Australian Archives. The staff were most obliging in explaining the procedures to me.

Within a towering structure of glass and steel, I took the lift to Level 17. I was permitted to enter the inner sanctum for research. Ian Holt had given me the code numbers for Mt Wilson Post Office and for Bell. I was handed these folders with strict instructions to only write with pencils as biro can cause damage to fragile papers.

So began a discovery of letters, written over 120 years ago and revealing new insights into the life of the European founders of this tiny community, so isolated and so secluded. It was soon apparent that the folder marked Bell held the key to the beginnings for Mt Wilson's postal history. Bell began as Mt Wilson Platform... but more of that story later.

I found an original letter written by Richard Wynne, the first by Richard Wynne I had ever seen and handled. It was dated 7th February, 1876 and addressed to the Post Master General in NSW, the Honourable JF Burns. Remember, this was before Federation. It read:

This time last year the Government (NSW) disposed of 65 lots of land at Mount Wilson ranging from 10 to 50 acres at one pound to two pound ten shillings per acre. Myself with others have settled here and are now building but we feel great inconvenience from want of proper postal arrangements. Our letters being now carried by the Pick Up or Goods Train and cast onto the platform to be blown away, or picked up by strangers or saturated by the rain.

At my own expense I have fixed a strong cedar box with lock and hinges and a hole to put letters in on which is written 'Mount Wilson Letter Box'. I have two keys one we keep and one I now enclose you in hopes you will be so good as to give instructions to have all letters and papers for this place deposited therein as well as all those from here removed to the General Post Office for distribution.

This letter illustrates the willingness of people of Richard Wynne's position to use the political processes of that time. What is also revealed is that the Superintendent of the Postmaster General was dealing with Mr Wynne's Letter on the 8th February, 1876, the day after it was written. This is comparable with the speed of mail travel today. Considering the mode of transport in 1876, for Mr Wynne's letter to reach the Postmaster on 8th February, seems almost a miracle.

On 8th February, 1876 the Superintendent seemed to be quite sympathetic about Richard Wynne's complaints. However there appeared to be some worries with the Railways' cooperation. The Railway Officials refused to stop at Mt Wilson Platform. So letters were as hitherto sent to One Tree Hill (Mt Victoria):

Our mail guards state that the night train has never stopped at this platform and a suggestion was made that the Post Master at One Tree Hill might make up a "Bag" which could be brought down by the Goods Train in the morning.

On 10th February, 1876 a Minute appeared saying 'Ask the Delivery Dept. and inform Mr Wynne how the matter stands'. Five days later another minute was written:

Act at once and send the key by tonight's post to the Post Master at One Tree Hill station that the suggestion will be adopted and ask him to hand the key to the Station Master to be given to the Guard of the train. Add that we have communicated with the Railway Dept. on the subject.

It would be helpful here to explain how the Mt Wilson Platform came to be built. It was constructed in 1875 probably at the suggestion of Edward Wyndham who surveyed Mt Wilson and the track from Mt Wilson to the Darling Cause Way. The place where the road or track met the railway line seemed a sensible place for the platform. It was of course the railway line that really gave people access to Mt Wilson in spite of the fact that it was 10 miles from Mt Wilson. The determination and strength of those early settlers must be admired when one considers the obstacles that had to be overcome in transport. It must be remembered the route from Kurrajong to Hartley discovered by Archibald Bell in 1823 (now the Bells Line of Road) was barely a drover's track in 1875.

We now return to Richard Wynne, his key and his letter box. A week later the Secretary of the Post Master General was assuring Mr Wynne that the Railway Dept. had been asked that instructions be given to the Guard of the Goods Train to convey correspondence to and from Mt Wilson. On the same day the Post Master at One Tree Hill was told to make up a private bag containing correspondence for Mt Wilson. He was to hand this bag to the Guard attached to the morning Goods Train along with the key of the box to the Station Master at One Tree Hill to be given by him to the Guard with instructions. The mail for Mt Wilson would be taken out of the box by the Guard. It all seemed to be solved. However, on 18th February, 1876 Mr R Wynne was again writing, asking when;

...your Dept. have made arrangements with the Railway Commission for the delivery and removal of the letters and papers to and from Mt Wilson Platform... .If you will be good enough to cause your Postmaster at Mt Victoria [note that he used that name, not One Tree Hill] to deliver all papers & letters to the Station Master before 9 o'clock every morning he will send them on by the Luggage train which calls at the Mt Wilson Platform. He could at the same time take on to Bowenfels all letters which could go down to Sydney with the mail from that place.

You could make this suggestion.

Be so good as to have the matter attended to without delay and oblige.

Yours Truly

R Wynne

Mr Wynne firmly believed that his ideas were the right ones and furthermore he wanted and expected prompt action, a reflection to some degree of his status and position in society at that time.

It is not surprising that the Secretary of the Post Master General on 24th February, 1876 issued orders to comply with Mr Wynne's suggestions and to inform Mr Wynne. However four days later problems had already emerged, for here was a letter from the One Tree Hill Post Master to Mr Lambton, the Secretary Esq. of the Post Master General:

He has made up a private bag for Mt Wilson and there is a box securely fastened to Mt Wilson Platform, acting as a letter receiver but it is too small to allow the private bag to be placed inside... therefore it would have to be thrown on the platform and remain so till someone came for the letters... . By simply tying the letters together they could be put into the box and thereby be more secure and only to be put out by those persons holding duplicate keys.

Mr Wynne says that a bag is not necessary if this were done, especially as there would probably be some difficulty in returning the empty bag, there being no residents nearer than 8 to 10 miles from the platform.

Please find further instructions.

The enclosed key broke while the guard was endeavouring to open the bag.

*I remain your most
obedient servant.*

Two critical problems had arisen with what seemed to be a practical solution for the delivery of letters to the Mt Wilson Platform. The Mt Wilson letter box was too small and the key failed to remain intact.

In spite of these serious setbacks further orders were issued on 11th March, 1876 for the Guard of the Goods train to take a private bag from One Tree Hill to Mount Wilson Platform and to clear the Letter Box at the latter place. So a bag was used and letters from Mt Wilson were being placed in the Box.

At this point the Commissioner of Railways had his say in a letter which clearly says:

... in order to remedy the inconvenience the residents of Mount Wilson are subjected to in consequence of the want of proper postal arrangements that a private bag for Mt Wilson be made up at One Tree Hill Post Office and conveyed thence by the Goods train in the morning, and that the Guard of such train be instructed at the same time to take on any correspondence that might be in the Letter Box at Mt Wilson.

I have the honour to inform you that as the Traffic Manager has no objection to offer, instructions have been given to put it into force at once.

*I have the honor to be
Sir
Your Most Obedient Servant
John Rae, Commissioner*

Copies of this letter went to One Tree Hill, Mr R Wynne and the Secretary of the General Post Office.

There does not seem to be any doubt as to the Commissioner's support for the scheme. Yet although the Chief had spoken, the word did not always reach the lower ranks.

On 24th March, 1876 Richard Wynne wrote to JF Burns, the Post Master General, with appreciation for what had been achieved and added that he now had two extra keys made for the Letter Box at Mount Wilson Platform. The letter included: "it is my opinion that the loose letter system will answer the best until we get a Post Boy from the Mountain to the platform". Wynne also indicated that from 1st February to the date of his letter 130 letters had been dispatched, and 113 received by him, which did not include the letters from others on the mountain. The Letter Box was also used by the persons employed on Bells Line of Road and in the vicinity of the platform. He ended this letter with the words: "Thanking you on behalf of the Public and myself for your courtesy in this matter".

At this point in time, how were the letters picked up from Mt Wilson Platform? The closest residents lived 8 to 10 miles away from the station. It would seem that the residents themselves performed this duty. I wonder how often? Probably every day. One is also reminded that this was the era of the letter, with the number of letters Wynne indicates that he wrote being between 1st February and 24th March of the same year.

A few days later in March, 1876 there is a memo to the following effect:

that Mr F.G. Davies, store keeper might go up to Mt Wilson (platform) on Thursday and see the box fixed on Friday. This step will render a good deal of correspondence unnecessary. Mr Davies can spend a few shillings if needed in getting box fixed.

Inexplicably there is a gap of some months in the correspondence and it seems that it was not until early in 1877 that we catch up with Mr Davies again. Below is a letter of 17th January, 1877 signed by Mr Davies:

According to instructions I affixed the Letter Receiver to the Mount Wilson platform and from a conversation I had with Mr Du Faur, I learned there were three families residing in the neighbourhood viz:- Messrs Du Faur, Wynne and Merewether, the residences of each varying from 5 to 9 miles from the platform. I was also informed by the same gentleman, that the Box erected by Mr Wynne had not been used for some time past in consequence of the Railway Authorities objection to call at the platform; and the want of security for letters so posted.

The key of the receiver, and a card for time of clearance I gave the Mt Victoria Post Master with a request that he would hand the key over to the Railway Guard; and ascertain the most convenient time for clearing

the Letter Box and notify the Department of same. Perhaps it would be advisable to write to the Commissioner of Railways on the subject.

Mr Wynne and family were absent from home - I was therefore unable to deliver the duplicate key. Messrs Wynne and Du Faur intend seeing the Secretary in reference to proposed Telegraphic Communication between Mt Wilson and Sydney. The key could then be handed over to Mr Wynne.

This letter provides valuable information about those first years at Mt Wilson. In 1877 in January only three families were residing there (Wynne, Merewether and Du Faur). There is no mention of the other families who came to settle. This certainly reinforces the theory that Richard Wynne was the first to settle. It also demonstrates a connection between Richard Wynne and Eccleston Du Faur. Evidence of this sort has been lacking up to this time. Furthermore the letter reveals that the system of receiving letters proposed by Wynne was not proceeding at all smoothly owing to lack of cooperation by the Railways and the lack of security for the letters posted. In other words the Commissioner of Railways' instructions in 1876 were not being adhered to.

On 29th January, 1877 the Secretary of the Post Master General commented:

The key may be sent to Mr Wynne with a letter and he had better be informed of the 'uncertainty of the train stopping'! He can then see the Railway Authorities if he wishes.

Here is a subtle change. The Secretary seems to be saying that he has done all he can, and after all the Railway Commissioner had assured everyone that all would be well in 1876. It was therefore up to Wynne to tackle the Railway Authorities. For much of 1877 this system, with the uncertainty of the train stopping and lack of security for letters, staggered on.

On 23rd March, 1878 there was a long letter in the Archive File revealing that a remarkable change had taken place. Michael Hogan had been appointed by the Railway to operate at the Mt Wilson Platform since the Platform had become a Crossing Station. I wonder what was meant by a Crossing Station? More significantly Mr Hogan was looking after 'the box' for the residents of Mt Wilson and they were most pleased. Now they could consider a qualitative leap forward had occurred. The next letter began with the words: "We require a Post 'Office' at Mount Wilson Platform".

This will be taken up in our next episode.

With many thanks to the staff of the Australian Archives.

Mary Reynolds

A Tribute to Isa Valder

On February 8th, 1999 Isa Valder passed away in Lulworth House in Sydney at the age of 99 years. Until July 1989, Isa lived in Nooroo in Church Lane, Mt Wilson and had been part of the life of this mountain since 1925 when she came here in 1917 as the bride of George Valder. The father of George Valder had purchased Nooroo, one of the original houses built in Mt Wilson, in the early 1880s.

This brief appreciation cannot in any way do justice to the contribution Isa Valder made to the Mt Wilson community. When her elder son, Peter Valder, returns from China and John Valder, his brother, is available we hope to be able to produce a full record of her achievements.

In 1929 the Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Branch of the CWA was formed and Isa Valder was present at the first meeting. From that time she was an active worker in the organisation, holding official positions and finally becoming a Life Member. She participated in the life of the St George's Church especially when the children were young. She and George Valder worked in the small Mt Wilson school when Peter and John attended there and continued to help there years afterwards. Isa also assisted when a committee was formed in 1936 to raise the money to build a Village Hall. The hall was finally built in 1951-2. Isa also played a part in the idea of opening gardens and having wonderful flower shows which were a feature of Mt Wilson in the 1940s and 1950s. She was a very active member of the Mt Wilson Progress Association and greatly concerned for the protection of the heritage of Mt Wilson and the conservation of the bushland.

In an interview in 1984, this is what Isa had to say about those earlier days in Mt Wilson:

In the old days we knew everyone. There were tennis parties, dinner parties, the CWA and other local interests, card parties, sports days. There was a big event on New Years day and some people came from other mountain towns. Some locals were very good [athletes] even though they were not trained. There were flower shows, equal to those in England. The flower shows were lovely... held in the Village Hall which was built by us with money we raised ourselves. There are none of these activities now. People here today are not interested in that sort of thing... It was a very nice life.

Fay Hargreaves (nee Gunn) worked at Nooroo in the mid fifties and wrote a note for the farewell to the Valder family (1993) telling how she loved working with Mrs Valder picking flowers, spring cleaning, preserving fruit, making jam and keeping the grounds of Nooroo immaculate:

To have lived on Mt Wilson is one thing but to be associated with Nooroo and the Valder family and not forgetting Mrs Valder's sister, the late Miss Watson, is something I have and will cherish for the rest of my life.

We too cherish these very special memories of a fine, spirited and remarkable woman and the tradition she left behind for us to preserve.

(Mary Reynolds)

More Lore on Du Faur (continued from page 1)

One of the highlights of the meeting was when a local resident, Luigi Strano, a remarkable student of the classics, showed those present his copy of Eccleston Du Faur's translation from Latin to English of the Latin Poet, Horace's 'The Odes', 'Epodes' (selected) and 'Carmen Saeculare'. Du Faur did this translation in 1905 after he had retired. There in the front of the book was Du Faur's own signature. Mr Strano very kindly lent the book to the Society for a few days so that we were able to obtain important information from it.

Through the means of a date line commencing at 1853 when Du Faur arrived in Australia, until his death in 1915, Joan outlined first some of Du Faur's outstanding achievements and then dealt with a selection of those in detail. There was the story of Andrew Hume and Lewis Thompson and the Leichhardt Expedition and how Lewis Thompson came to reside in Mt Wilson for two years. Linked with that was the exploration of Govett's Leap and the setting up of camps for 'gentlemen' in the Grose Valley as well as Du Faur's Blue Mountain Craze - a venture which led to the collection of materials such as photographs and sketches, for the Philadelphia Exhibition at that time which was to publicise the Blue Mountains at home and overseas. Joan commented that Du Faur's relationships were 'horizontal' rather than 'vertical' in society.

Joan described the fascinating relationships Du Faur had with leading figures in his attempts to first achieve the best for the International Exhibition in 1879 and then with his efforts towards what was to become the Art Gallery on the Domain site. For twenty-two years it was only the internal walls which stood. Du Faur finally succeeded in his advocacy for the entrance portico - a Greek temple of art.

With the Kuring-gai Chase, Du Faur was equally persistent, constantly



Thompson's Shack c.1875

Eccleston Du Faur built this shack at Mt Wilson for Lewis Thompson. Thompson spent two years (1875-1877) as a storeman, caretaker, supplier of goods and worker for the new settlers at Mt Wilson. (See p.20 for a closer and more detailed view of the same photograph).

applying to the then Premier. When the NSW Government rejected him, Du Faur invited the Governor and the Earl of Jersey, to visit and enjoy a picnic. The Governor and his son were temporarily lost in the bush! However, in 1894 the area became a park. It was first called The Federal Park. However, Du Faur objected to this name and it was changed to Kuring-gai Chase.

We hope that this glimpse of Dr Webb's story of Du Faur will arouse your interest. Certainly the questions which followed her talk demonstrated how involved the members of the audience at the meeting had become. The first tourist map of the Blue Mountains drawn by Eccleston Du Faur was also on display at the meeting.

Financial Statement from 01.07.98 to 06.02.99

	Income \$	Expenditure \$
Fixed Term Deposit (30.11.98 - 31.03.99)	5,000.00	5,000.00
GMT Central Corporate Services Unit	874.00	
Spring Opening of Wynstay	5,377.00	2,135.79
Arranged Inspections of Wynstay	867.00	
Raffle (Christmas Hamper)	836.00	76.87
Theatre Party ("Kundun")	1,579.00	593.65
Membership Subscriptions	2,595.00	
Donations	1,046.00	
Bank Interest	51.85	
Work on Turkish Bath		1,190.00
Architect's Fees		2,453.00
Insurance		1,036.53
Archival		1,368.00
Affiliation Fees		128.80
Workshops		670.00
Establishment of Petty Cash Fund (25.09.98)		250.00
Dept of Fair Trading (Submission of Form 12)		55.00
Hire of Village Hall (AGM - 05.09.98)		9.00
Appeal against D/A		100.00
Electricity		21.35
Telephone		403.58
Postage		87.75
Floral Tribute (Helen Freeman)		50.00
Bank Charges		39.54
Capital Equipment		1,549.79
Newsletter No.3		423.43
Total	18,225.85	17,642.08

Petty Cash

	Brought Forward \$	Expenses \$
	250.00	
Dairy Products for Spring Opening of Wynstay		25.80
Manual for Small Museums (plus postage)		20.00
Minute Book for Society		17.60
Address Labels		21.95
Electricity Account (Integral Energy)		22.50
Total		107.85

Balance in Hand - \$142.15

Reconciliation Statement for Period 01.07.98 to 06.02.99

Balance of Accounts as at 30.06.98	\$25,036.65
Income for Period from 01.07.98 to 06.02.99	\$18,225.85
Expenditure for Period from 01.07.98 to 06.02.99	\$17,642.08

Excess of Income over Expenditure	\$583.77
Fixed term deposit	\$5,000.00
Balance of Accounts as at 06.02.1999	\$20,620.42

Ellis Reynolds (Treasurer)
6 February, 1999

A Word from the President

Our fundraising for the year has already started, with the jazz concert on 27 March. The Turkish Bath and the Wynstay garden will be open for most of the April weekends and again in October. How, you might ask, does all the work of preparing the sites get done?

At the best of times there's a huge amount of organising to be done - planning suitable sites, sending out flyers, putting ads in newspapers, getting scones made for the teas, ordering meat and drink for each day's events, preparing a roster for volunteers to fill the many places for each day's operations. And so on! Even at the best of times the work of preparation is done by just a small number of members.

But these are not the best of times! The long wet summer has produced extraordinary growth and the rain has reduced the number of days when work is possible. The weed growth around the Turkish Bath is almost incredible. Inside the Bath electricians and others will be working at the present stage of the restoration plan, right up to the first day of opening. And worst of all, and saddest, our benefactor and patron, Bill Smart, has not been well, and for one thing that makes us all realise the enormous effort he has always put into the general task of preparing the garden and the Turkish Bath for the openings - mowing the great lawns, trimming the hedges, raking the paths, weeding the beds, starting a new rose garden for us, as well as the other major tasks of garden reconstruction - all extra to his one-man operation of the oldest and largest of Mt Wilson properties.

Over the last few weeks our working parties, including people with dicky hearts and pacemakers, have been toiling with mattocks, spades and rakes around the Turkish Bath. Some of the same people are also hard at it preparing the historic material for our forthcoming exhibition "Mount Wilson in the Twenties", with computers, glue brushes and scissors running hot. And our editor is busy with the next newsletter, reporting our efforts to add to the historical record.

One of our troubles, you see, is that only a handful of our membership of about 200 actually live full-time in Mt Wilson. The others are in Sydney all the week, or spread around NSW. So emails and faxes fly, and that helps, but there are many tasks that could do with more hands. So please, when you fill in your roster form for volunteering, let your heads go, and ask yourself if there are yet other ways you can help to advance the work. A day's work in beautiful Mt Wilson? Money? Help with organising? Publicity? Printing? Any of your special skills? Please ring me on (02) 9489 2230.

Meanwhile, our thoughts are with Bill and his illness, and our fervent best wishes for him during the long period of treatment to come.

Arthur Delbridge.

A Word from the Editor

As you can see, the newsletter is getting bigger with each edition. However, I do hope nobody is under the impression, or illusion, that my job is difficult. I simply arrange the pieces of written material that I am sent, then decrease the margins, reduce the font and try and fit the whole thing into a 45 cent envelope. Please don't be shy in forwarding articles or suggestions for the newsletter to me. As of yet, nobody has been rejected. Please also remember that if you have a computer, send me a copy of what you've written on disc so that I avoid six monthly bouts of RSI and so that the newsletter can be released at a more respectable date than late April.

Elsbeth Callender



Mediterranean Baths

The "Turkish Bath" Visits Europe and North America

by Mikkel Aaland 1997

In 1850, anything oriental was in vogue and bathing caught the attention of Europe. David Urquhart, author of *The Pillars of Hercules*, spent much time in Greece and Moorish Spain where hammams still enjoyed popularity. He was impressed by their extensive use by the poor and included detailed plans for the construction of a hamman or, as he coined it, a "Turkish bath".

Urquhart believed if a comparable structure could be built in the smoke-blackened towns of the British industrial centers, perhaps the filthy plight of the workers could be alleviated. So he offered a plan to establish 1000 "Turkish baths" for the two million inhabitants of London. He offered the bath house as the weapon in a "war waged against drunkenness, immorality, and filth in every shape".

Urquhart's book received wide acclaim. One of the new enthusiasts, a Charles Bartholomew, with Urquhart's help, built one of these "Turkish baths" in his home. Bartholomew was suffering from a bad case of gout at the time. But soon after taking regular baths, he was cured. He became an instant prophet. He entertained many visitors at his bath and many left as converts. "I went there on crutches, but after a few baths, I was dancing to the bagpipes", wrote General Abraham Sir Roberts.

Urquhart's book inspired Dr. Richard Barter to build the first "Turkish bath" in Ireland. St. Ann's Hydropathic Institute opened in 1856. He built ten more such institutions before he died. Barter's biography says, "What the secret of the transmutation of metals would have been to an alchemist of old, what the discovery of America was to Columbus, the Hot-Air Bath became to Dr. Barter".

By 1862 this "Turkish bath" had appeared in Germany, England, America and Australia. The bath's prototype was modelled after the bath Urquhart described. Air was saturated with steam. But Barter was able to improve the bath by raising the temperature and creating the effect of a dry bath. It was called the "new and improved" Turkish bath, the Turkish-Roman bath, or the Roman-Irish bath.

In 1862, the Illustrated London News reported a company by the name of London and Provincial Turkish Bath was formed for the purpose of "realising Mr. Urquhart's wish in the establishment of a genuine 'hammam' or 'hot-air bath'". Urquhart became head of the company, and under his supervision the baths at St. Jermyn Street were built.

Medical journals were full of glowing accounts for, and acrimonious accounts against, the Turkish baths. Pamphlets were published, lectures held, and discussion groups assembled. "The Turkish baths cured everything," some said. "Urquhart was a charlatan," said others. General Sir George Whitlock said, "I was confined to my bed as a result of a kidney and liver infection, but after the third bath, I could ride my horse home at 3:00 in the morning all by myself".

Some doctors claimed the Turkish bath was a good treatment for mental illnesses. And Dr. Robertson from Essex said the bath was good for "constipation, bronchitis, asthma, fever, cholera, diabetes, oedema, syphilis, baldness, alcoholism, and not to mention the fact that the health of the average bather was improved."

Soon Turkish baths appeared in Europe. They sprang up in Paris, and German towns such Friedrichshafen and Wittenberg. The Swedish balneologist, Carl Curman, encouraged the construction of two Turkish baths in Stockholm. In 1871 he wrote *Om Bad* (About Baths), one of the

first comprehensive studies of bathing habits, which lauded Urquart for introducing the Eastern bath to the West.

In America

In America, the Turkish baths never gained more than tentative popularity. The Industrial Revolution in Europe brought thousands of immigrants daily into the United States. Most of them were absorbed in the fast growing factories.

Socio-political adjustment and reform had a difficult time keeping up with the overwhelming numbers. Bathing facilities were sparse and the practice of bathing was endured rather than enjoyed. Five out of six city dwellers had "no facilities for bathing other than such provided by pail and sponge", claimed a survey in the 1880s. A warm bath was for the infirms: otherwise, a small basin of cold water and a wash cloth sufficed.

Tenement housing sprang up in industrial centres, but never included bathing facilities and little was done to provide them. Mass production of the tub and invention of the shower found immediate acceptance - an innovation consistent with the accelerated life style.

Whatever interest there was in public sweat baths waned as industrialisation of America voraciously consumed most of the people's free time. The few Turkish baths that did exist were usually for the wealthy or for therapeutic institutions, not for the general public.

In 1913, an American writer attempted to popularise the Turkish bath. J.J. Cosgrove, in his book, *Design of the Turkish Bath*, complained that Turkish baths were only accessible to the elite. "The Turkish bath by right must become a regular part of all hospitals, hotels, homes for the aged, even private homes." He offered blueprints for building inexpensive Turkish baths in the home. But for every Cosgrove, there were a dozen politicians and writers suspicious of foreign customs, waving the flag for showers and tubs.

In *Innocents Abroad*, Mark Twain sarcastically laid out his expectations of the Turkish bath in Turkey. "When I think how I have been swindled by books of oriental travel," he lamented, "I want a tourist for breakfast. Here endeth my experience of the celebrated Turkish bath, and here also endeth my dream of the bliss the mortal revels in who passes through it. It is a malignant swindle. The man who enjoys it is qualified to enjoy anything that is repulsive to sight or sense, and he that can invest it with a charm of poetry is able to do the same with anything else in the world that is tedious, and wretched, and dismal, and nasty".

Prevailing American sentiment in 1914 was capsulized by Dr. William Paul Gerhard in a report to the American Association for the Promotion of Hygiene and Public Baths: "Since the sweat bath is a very efficient cleansing bath, simple Turkish baths or hot-air rooms, should be included in municipal bath houses. I fear, however, that the added expense in construction and maintenance, which is not inconsiderable, would rule them out. Unless Turkish baths are very well patronised they are likely to prove a financial failure. There are few such establishments in the United States. They are not so necessary in our country, because of the universal use of bathrooms in the homes of the middle class and the rich . . .".

At a time when cities were vaguely interested in providing public baths in America, members of the medical profession advocated the more "economic and sanitary" shower over the communal sweat bath.

