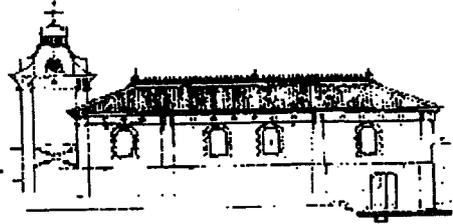


Mt Wilson Historical Society



President's Report

This newsletter has been produced as a memorial to our friend, benefactor, and Patron, Bill Smart, whose death on 15 July shocked us all and left us bereaved. Contributions have been made by Society members, Mt Wilson neighbours, and members of the Smart family. Our thanks are due to those who have contributed to this collection of tributes and memories, which is now added to those other tributes and newspaper articles already published elsewhere to celebrate the life of a most remarkable man.

It may seem that the Society was likely to be stopped in its tracks by the loss of such a friend and Patron. Till that time access to our museum, the Turkish Bath, was through the main gate of his residence 'Wynstay'; visitors came as much to see the Wynstay garden as to visit the museum; the \$5 admission charge all went straight to the Society for further restoration of the building and advancement of our local history projects, and to cover running costs. That's just the barest outline of our dependence.

But he'd have been very disappointed in us if we had not faced the new situation with vigour. We decided not to attempt the usual spring opening of the garden, as a mark of respect to him. We are delighted that his daughter Wendy, who is co-heir to the property with her sister Amne, has taken up residence in Wynstay. She has shown a high degree of friendship to the Society in the midst of all the complications and difficulties of coming to terms with the loss of their father as well as a formidable set of challenges in her new role. She attended our recent Annual General Meeting, like her father before her, to receive the two coins that are the annual rent for the Turkish Bath and its precincts, and graciously returned them to us for reuse next year!

At the same meeting your postal votes for the committee of management were counted, and I am pleased to tell you that there were twice as many votes cast as there were members present, making a vote for almost 45% of the membership. The meeting unanimously ratified the postal method as meeting the objective of enfranchising members unable to attend the meeting itself, and approved of its continued use for this purpose. It also passed a special resolution to increase the number of committee members by two. At a subsequent meeting the new committee elected its office bearers as required by the Constitution.

Our first task is to make a new entrance route into the Turkish Bath, from the Mt Irvine Road, across the slope of the precinct approaching the building from its western side. On Saturday, 9 October, about thirty members of the Society came with mattocks, spades, barrows and chainsaws, to clean up the site and, under the direction of Peter Todd, our heritage architect, to form the new way up, for pedestrians essentially, but also for motor delivery of goods. The best thing about this good day was our heightened perception of what a beautiful property this precinct is. Turn one way and you look up at the Turkish Bath, with its fine backdrop of tall Wynstay trees. Turn about, and there is what must be one of the best views right down into the curved cliffs of the Wollangambe River. What a place for our activities! What a place to sit, look and listen - to the birds, to music, to conversation of friends, while you sit on a rug, or a stump.

Meanwhile fund-raising goes on. A bonfire in the Wynstay paddock, between showers of rain, very well attended, brought in a good \$500. A raffle of a mixed case of wine, all contributed by members, a bottle or two each, did well for us too. And there are big plans in hand, of which more later. In the meantime, if you can't be there to wield a mattock, or sell raffle tickets, let me remind you of our provision for a sustaining membership. This is not necessarily a binding commitment from year to year: its object is to capture the attention of anyone who would want to contribute a bit more than the regular membership when dues are being collected. It gives the Society a reasonable confidence that some of its members will go the extra mile, and contribute \$100. I hope that those of you whose main concern with the Society is through the newsletter might see this as a way of getting more closely involved. Naturally, a visit is our best reward, and we look forward to seeing you at the Turkish Bath Museum, and its precinct, whenever you can make the journey. Please watch out for our announcements of dates and times of opening in your mail.

Postcard from Toronto, 1992

When I was nine we moved from the city to the bush. My Dad was clearing 20 acres of rainforest in the Blue Mountains to move his nursery business there. The war was on and we grew potatoes, turnips and carrots in the rich volcanic topsoil. I was the youngest of seven children, and we all pulled, dug, washed and bagged tons of vegetables, quite literally "to feed the army".

We lived in a two roomed shed while the house was built, and as soon as its location was staked out, my mother started the gardens: camellias, wisteria, roses, lavender and daffodils. In those first years she planted several hundred bulbs around the house, and under the young trees that were now being planted as nursery stock.

Even my Dad had not realised that topsoil so rich and 30 feet deep would soon see maples, beech, sycamore, birch, hawthorns, growing thirty and fifty feet tall. And all around, under and away behind them, spreading outside the fence and into the bush in no time were thousands of golden daffodils, heralding an early spring every September.

My oldest brother married a woman from the neighbouring mountain [Jane Wynne], and they began clearing their own acreage a few miles away at Gowan Ross. By now my mother's daffodils were a well-known sight in the community, and she gave Jane bulbs from our garden to plant around her own new house.

After her parents died, Jane and my brother bought her family home and moved there, selling Gowan Ross to John and Nora McGuire. In the same rich soil, the garden they had started was now so abundant that you could no longer see the house from the road, and the entire hillside, down the slope, and off into the bush was a sea of daffodils every spring.

Three years ago Nora McGuire died from cancer. John and Nora had been through several years of living with the disease, and had been learning about the work of cancer society volunteers, the funds needed for research, and the programs that were available for them and others who found themselves living with cancer. John had read about the Canadian Cancer Society's highly successful annual daffodil campaign, and after Nora's death he decided to organise his own family and friends as volunteers to pick, bundle and sell the Gowan Ross daffodils to raise money for the New South Wales Cancer Council. The idea has blossomed, just like the daffodils themselves, and now volunteers are picking and selling thousands of blooms on the other side of the earth to raise money for cancer research and services.

Isn't it a small world? I work here with the Canadian Cancer Society, and my mother's daffodils from my childhood are working for the same cause, in Australia.

This was written in 1992 by Florence Smart, while she was living in Toronto and working with the Canadian Cancer Society. It was published in that organisation's National newsletter.

Postscript - In September 1999, The NSW Cancer Council's annual fundraising Daffodil Ball was decorated with over 1000 fresh Gowan Ross daffodils, generously donated by Alison and Alan Heap, "in memory of Bill Smart of Wynstay, Mt Wilson".

Bill - Nurseryman, Neighbour and Friend

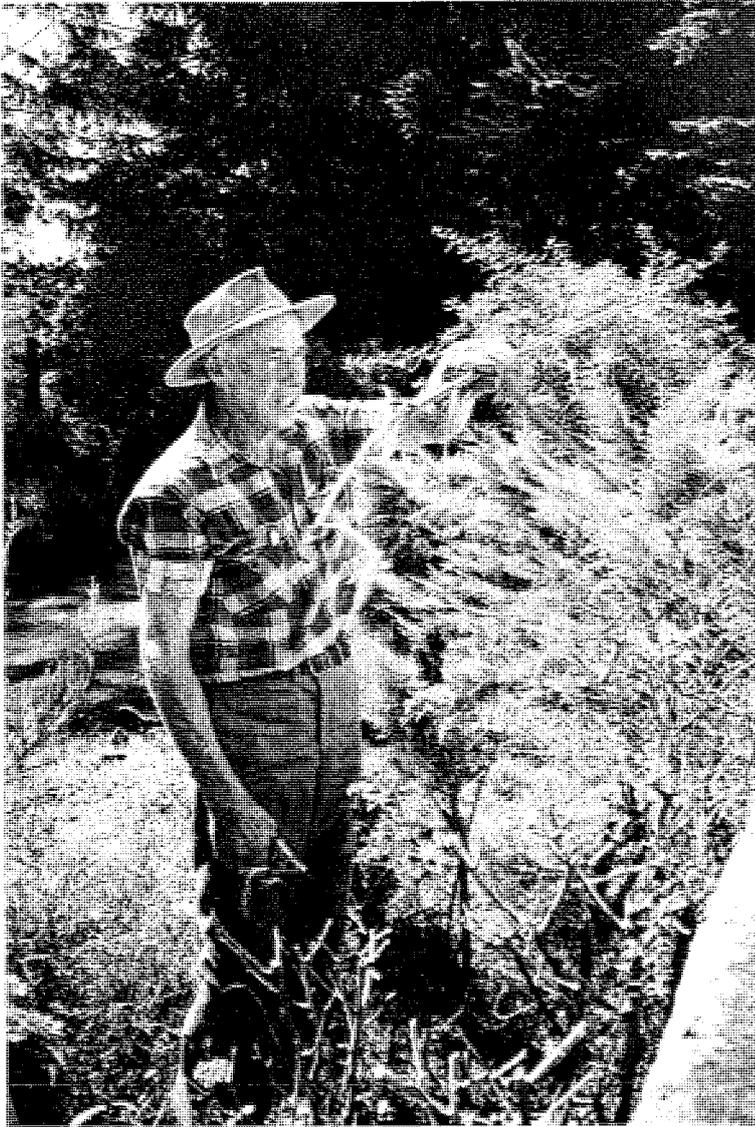
by Libby Raines, 'Merry Garth', 15 Sept 1999

One always felt on the roof of the world at 'Carisbrook'. It is situated on the top of Mount Irvine and in the old days the narrow winding Dane's Way was either very dusty or very slippery and boggy, depending on the season. One felt close to the elements of nature here too; sometimes the wind howled in the great gum trees, clouds chased each other across the sky, rain beat down on the tin roof, lightning struck the big trees in awesome storms. But the mornings could be sparkling and crisp with frosts and the nights silent and still, while the sky above was alight with shining stars, the distant hills blue and the depths of the canyons of the Wollangambe nearby deep in shadow. Other days all would be shrouded in a white blanket of mist, the heads of the trees lost in the clouds and everything dripping softly.

It was to this wild, remote and beautiful place that Bill came as a fifteen year old to live. The family cleared the land, built their home, planted the garden and created a nursery, specialising in cold climate plants. In his spare hours Bill would explore the surrounding bush forever observant, learning about the plants, watching the weather; totally attune with nature around him.

'Carisbrook' was an impressive nursery when I used to go there in the early 60s. I often helped Bill and Hugh, his brother, with the work which was going on. The plants, mostly Conifers, were grown in long rows in the open ground, all evenly spaced, and kept free of weeds with a sharp chipping hoe. It was all very orderly and tidy. There was a glass house where the cuttings were struck and a potting shed adjoining where there was much activity on wet days. The plants were mostly sold to nurseries or landscapers in Sydney and were delivered in the old Chev truck over the Bowens Creek Road. Plastic pots were still a thing of the future so each plant, when ready for sale, would be carefully dug with a sharp spade to get a firm root ball; hessian cut to the correct size would be carefully wrapped round the ball and it was then tied firmly with twine and placed on the truck.

There was no electricity at Mount Irvine in those days. 'Bunnerong' was their aptly named source of power which Ron, another brother, built. It was a 32 volt battery system wired to the house, giving out a weak light, until electricity reached Mount Irvine in 1962. There was an old Silent Knight kerosene fridge and they still milked the cow and kept hens.



By then Bill and Jane were married and living at 'Gowan Ross'. Gradually the nursery at 'Gowan Ross' became bigger and eventually the new wonder glass house was built with help from Ron. Through modern technology it provided heat and mist which made it very efficient. I worked there often in the glass house, in the bush house or on the terraces. Plastic pots were around by then so all the plants were container grown. Nursery work is very exacting and one must be very disciplined. Bill was a master at it. He worked very efficiently and he was an expert, meticulous and particular about every part of his work. He had a great reputation in the trade as being able to propagate the difficult plants. Bill's advice was often sought by propagators and also scientists as he did a lot of research work on soils, their nutrients, microbes, fungi and plant diseases over the years. He was an excellent teacher too, kind, patient and encouraging. One always learnt a great deal about all sorts of things when one was with him. I also got to know Jane and the young girls, Amne and Wendy, well too. They were happy days.

Bill and Jane's move to 'Wynstay' came much the same time as Keith and I were married. The glass house there was Bill's grand dream house. It was large and modern with hours of thought spent in its planning. Bill worked with the builder during its construction and together they designed and worked out the best way of doing

things. It had two intensive rooms with heat and mist where the cuttings were rooted, a large area of warmth and light with sprays where the rooted plants stood and to grow conifers which don't like the mist. The plants were then all moved out of the warmth to the Bush House to harden off before they were sold. It was impressive and worked well. I was able to work here too, making cuttings and potting conifers. By then Bill was selling his plants to Dick Harris (Mt Boyce Nursery, Blackheath) as tube stock and many of the cuttings came from 'Merry Garth'.

Jane had watched me grow from a young girl. I had seen Amne and Wendy grow up into fine young women and now it was Bill and Jane's turn to watch and help our little family "down the hill"; they played a big part in my children's growing up as 'Wynstay' gave another dimension to our lives.

Bill and Jane were wonderful neighbours and there were happy years of caring and sharing. We saw a lot of Jane and kept in daily touch with her; this continued with Bill after Jane's death in June, 1995. The boys, Peter and Rob, and Elizabeth often went to 'Wynstay' to help Bill with all sorts of jobs. They learnt how to drive the little old Rover first, then the tractor and later the old truck; they worked with the cattle and did many jobs with Bill around the village, so many shared experiences to remember.

Bill's knowledge and experience were invaluable to Keith and me when we began our tiny nursery. Bill was always helpful and generous with his good advice and practical knowledge. We will always be grateful to him for all he taught us and helped us with over the years. It was during this time that Bill and I did so much together around the village. The new tree plantings were all carefully measured, and watered; we walked all the built walking tracks and decided how best to repair and conserve them. We looked after the Church grounds, worked on the weeds program and did many other tasks together. Bill was totally committed to the village, quietly going about doing things when he saw they needed to be done.

It is as a friend our family will miss Bill most, just as we missed Jane when she died. They were so much part of our lives and their friendship was warm and generous to us all for so long. Bill was really like a kind brother or good uncle. As we had so much in common, we talked about all sorts of things, learning from each other and respecting each other's ideas. We laughed and reminisced about the old days, sharing our joys and sorrows along with many a cup of tea at 'Merry Garth'.

Life is full of the unexpected. One day, years ago now, Bill and I were looking for his elusive cattle out along the Southern Fire Trail beyond the Old Mill below 'Merry Garth'. It was a very damp day and we had trudged all about the bush, down the long ridges, along the cliff tops but there was no sign of any cattle. We had decided to abandon the search when we spied something moving in the bushes below. It came slowly into view and we were amazed to see a great old black and white billy goat with a huge white beard and a long scruffy wet coat appear from behind the bushes! We did not find the cattle that day but later we thought of the old billy goat alone in the bush and we had many a laugh about his unexpected appearance.

When Jane became ill and needed blood transfusions, Bill felt he should give some of his blood to the Blood Bank as a way of saying thank you. He joined me every ten weeks to do this and this time became the mornings when we would scout out a new bush walk for the Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Bushwalking Group also and then go on to give blood. Bill enjoyed light music like that of the 'Seekers'. While we drove to Katoomba and back we would happily sing 'Red Rubber Ball', 'Puff the Magic Dragon' and many other familiar tunes. Like all the Smarts, who were brought up with singing around the piano, Bill had a good deep voice and enjoyed singing.

As soon as Bill joined our Bushwalking Group, I placed him at the back of the group to be our "whip" as I knew he would not let anyone slip behind him and that he would stay there, keeping a watchful eye on us all. He never let me down and the bush walks were a highlight of his month!

I have only mentioned here a very small part of this kind, gentle, generous, knowledgeable and interesting man's life. I could recall many other things Bill was involved in, especially in the Village and the way he helped many people with all kinds of different things. We will hold dear our own memories of him, forever grateful for the enrichment to our lives that his friendship gave.

Bill Smart

[A service entitled *Thanksgiving for the life of William Hubert Smart 1925-1999* took place at the Anglican Church of St George in Mt Wilson on 20th July, followed by the burial in the church grounds. The eulogy was presented by Arthur Delbridge, who has kindly provided the script of his speech]

The Smart family have asked me to give the address at this service, and I do this readily, but I am very conscious that there are many people at this service today whose knowledge of Bill and the strength of whose friendship or association with him would add immeasurably to anything I might say. I have known Bill as neighbour and friend for 30 years, and for the past three through Florence, my partner and his sister, this knowledge has become much more intimate and has extended to many members of the Smart family.

It would be understandable that for some of you here, the last month of Bill's life has been something of a closed book - because after a short stay in Lithgow hospital he was moved by ambulance to Sydney, and (as it turned out and much against Bill's wishes and hopes) he was not physically up to the journey back to Wynstay at any time after that. He did not see Wynstay again; however, some of his mountain friends were able to visit him in Sydney and he

enjoyed their visit greatly. For those who could not do that, I'd like to say that he died as he lived, responsibly, thoughtfully and hopefully. Responsibly may seem an odd word to use of somebody in the process of dying. But he certainly took the responsibility in his own hand as I think you would expect. He had doctors and nurses, but he never truly became their patient. They simply offered him choices of treatment and care. And he chose whether to be at home or in the hospital; whether to take morphine or not to take it, and whether in high doses or low. He refused to let himself become drugged, because a drugged Bill Smart was not Bill Smart. It was not through pride, but out of a sense of responsibility. When he felt, right at the end, that they had done all that could be done, that was enough. So last Monday morning (apparently early and although he hardly had the strength to move), he got out of bed and neatly packed all of his things in his bag and said to Florence when she arrived at the hospital: "I had been hoping to go home". That was Monday; he died at 10 to 9 on Wednesday evening.

But the time of waiting was not idle time. He was thinking, partly about himself, partly about his family and about Wynstay. Like most of us seniors, he had known the death of loved ones already. But now, and I quote his very words, it would be interesting to see for himself what death was like. Many times he roused himself out of a sleepy state to say something important to the people at his bedside; to Greg Kiddle, about the cattle, to me about the exact boundaries of the land leased along with the Turkish Bath. In these moments he was extraordinarily lucid and detailed. And hopefully; he and I (he said) would establish the markers and pace out the distances together - when he got back. It was always when he got back to Wynstay.

But I must tell you that for his last month he was (in Wilga's words) in very loving company. For two weeks out of the four he lived with Florence and me in Wahroonga. Wilga was a constant visitor and his daughters, Amne and Wendy, stayed with us. And Flair, his little dog, was by his side night and day, looking very swish after a visit to the local poodle parlour. Wendy's dog Bobby was there too, and even Louis our cat, went along quietly with this canine occupation of his space. Every day, Bill was visited by members of the support team from Neringah Hospital, all anxious for him to have at the one time, both the comforts of home and the benefits of their care.



I think the members of Bill's family would want me to stress their admiration and gratitude for the absolutely first-rate medical, nursing and technical care offered by the Royal North Shore Hospital, a hospital no doubt under the strain of economic cuts, but which never the less couldn't be faulted on efficiency, genuine sympathy and sensitivity to the needs of patient and family. The nurses at Clinic 21, and even Bill's oncology specialist, used to ring up, of their own accord, to ask after Bill or to suggest some further steps in his care. They truly were magnificent, and this was a public hospital offering services as they were required, humanely and indeed lovingly given.

But I am not here to bury Caesar, but to praise him. So let me recount some of his achievements. Remember that he was indeed a self-made man. His formal education came to an end at Hornsby Tech. At the age of 14. That was when he came with his father and brothers to Mt Irvine to clear and cultivate a tract of virgin land and turn it into a nursery. Since then, that's about 60 years ago, he has lived on these mountains all the time, never leaving except for short holidays reluctantly taken. When he was an age for war service, he was in fact refused by the army, because by then the Carisbrook property was producing vegetables to feed the troops, and he was deemed essential to this work. In 1946 the whole family, mother and the younger children of the 7, moved up to Mt Irvine, living at first in a two-roomed hut of re-cycled galvanised iron, until the house, that romantically beautiful house Carisbrook, was ready to be occupied. This is the time when Bill and the whole family began a life-long association with the neighbours who became friends, among the few permanent residents of Mt Irvine and Mt Wilson. The Morleys, Scriveners, Knight Browns, Clarkes and the Kirk family.

Bill's father suffered from heart disease, and died when Bill was 27. I spoke earlier about responsibility - Bill now assumed the role of head of the family, bearing all the responsibility for keeping up the family business and supporting his mother and the younger children.



Later that same year, Bill married Jane Wynne, and together they built the home and nursery at Gowan Ross. It was here that Amne and Wendy were born and spent their early years of schooling with other children of Mt Irvine and Mt Wilson at the local school. It was here too that Bill developed his extraordinary skill as a plantsman and propagator. Over time he earned a wide reputation in the industry, especially because he could propagate plants that nobody else could master. Here he built his first revolutionary glasshouse. When he and Jane bought the Wynstay property, on the death of Jane's mother in the early 70s, he designed and built at Wynstay an even more advanced glasshouse, with computerised misting, watering and temperature control systems. It created great interest among Australia's nurserymen, and was admired throughout the world.

It was at about this time that he began to be very much involved in the life of Mt Wilson village. I would find it impossible today to do justice to the huge and indispensable contributions he has continuously made to the life of this community, using his own time, his own hands, his own tools, his own materials, and his unique knowledge of the bush, the seasons, the soil, and everything that grew in it. I have used the word indispensable, though there is an irony in that, as is well known.

From the time of the disastrous bushfires of 1957, he contributed energetically to the Bush Fire Brigade, and maintained this involvement actively in the senior ranks until last month's AGM. He advised and helped local residents with their hazard reduction, always declining to be paid, but

suggesting instead a donation to the Brigade.

His care of the village was a daily pre-occupation: to check the garbage bins at Silva Plana, to pick up fallen branches on the roads, to keep an eye on ailing trees, to plant, water and fertilise new street trees - sassafras for the Sloan Reserve, eucalyptus oreades for the Cathedral Reserve and many more. He worked voluntarily with Alan Gunn on the design and installation of public seats and tables, bollards, bridges, walks - all the features that help to give Mt Wilson its special character. Every day for four years he read the traffic flow counter that gave a statistical account of road use in and out of the village. He worked on every working bee for weed and rubbish removal, and was made the Council's weed officer for Mt Wilson, and was much respected for his knowledge in this field. He kept an eye on the upgrading of the village walking tracks, often in cooperation with Libby and Peter Raines. He was a churchwarden in the early 70s, and remained a great supporter of the church of St George and its Rectors. I hope that one day we shall be able to make and publish a full documentation of his continuous responsible care of the village.

But it went beyond the village. Such was his reputation as a plant and tree man, that he gave periodic help to the students in the Ryde School horticultural courses during their regular visits. And the tree surgery students and their teachers came twice a year to practice their craft on both the Wynstay and the village trees. He was one of the earliest and longest serving members of the NSW Nurserymen's Association, and together with his brother Hugh, was one of the original 16 members who set up the Association's trade days 30 years ago. Bill was often sought out as an authority on many subjects, and if he hesitated for a moment to reply, it was because he wanted to be sure his answer was right first time. And of course, it always was.

Here's just another example of his own personal sense of responsibility. At the beginning of Jane's long illness, she had received blood transfusions from the Red Cross Blood Bank, so Bill decided that he must support the Blood Bank by giving his own blood. And he did this every three months, right up until his own illness put a stop to it.

I don't know where to put this bit, but Bill was great to have at the dinner table. Amusing, with a joke for every



occasion, a judgment to make on every wine, and an appreciation of every dish, except pasta! I hope you too have been privileged to hear him recite long ballads remembered from the early family days before television when singing around the piano and reading aloud by the fire were how many evenings were spent.

I would like now to just mention the numerous organisations he gave his time to as member and worker.

Here in the village: The Trust, The Progress Association, The Historical Society (of which he was in every sense the revered Patron), The Fire Brigade, The Rate Payers Association, The Anglican Church of St George, The Bushwalking Group (as whip), and The Land Care Group, recently formed by Elizabeth Raines.

And beyond the village: The Nurserymen's Association, The Blue Mountains Greenery Growers Group, The Blue Mountains Rhododendron Society, The University of Western Sydney's Horticultural Research Centre, The Botanical Gardens and the Mt Tomah Gardens (as a friend), and The National Party.

I would be surprised if this list is either complete or wholly accurate.

On Sunday I met Elizabeth Mason at the Wynstay gate, and she simply said: "Things will never be the same again". I'm sure every one of us here feels the same, and will carry off an image of Bill as the indispensable good man that he was,

mourn his passing, and extend heartfelt sympathy to his daughters, his brother and sisters, and indeed to all those who have loved him in this life and now celebrate it together in this service of thanksgiving.

Vale Bill Smart

I have been acquainted with Bill for over thirty years, but formed a true association only over the last six, through closer contact with him in the Bushwalking Group, the Brigade, the Progress Association and especially the Historical Society.

Each of these organisations introduced me to a different side of Bill's character. However, certain aspects were evident in all that he did. Bill was his own man, at no time requiring a Greek Chorus to sing his praises. Indeed, he openly eschewed such behaviour. He was one of nature's gentlemen, sustaining an unshakeable loyalty to his friends, for as long as they earned it. He was generous to a fault, seeking no reward beyond the satisfaction of serving Mt Wilson. Bill was married to Jane, the great granddaughter of Richard Wynne, whose books bear a plate with the motto - *non sibi sed toto*. If there are such things as acquired characteristics, Bill had this particular quality in abundance.

With regard to the Brigade, two particular things must be mentioned which illustrate Bill's total commitment and expertise. Firstly, Bill's supreme concern for Mt Wilson and all of its residents in the face of danger. He spent

Christmas Day 1997 with us; a day of extreme potential threat to the village. Regularly Bill left the table and carried out his patrols to check the fire danger. Secondly, I have met no-one who possessed as great or as detailed a knowledge of every property, reserve, and piece of public land, not only in Mt Wilson but also in Mt Irvine. This knowledge he freely shared with all who were concerned and interested enough to acquire it.

However, it was in the Progress Association that Bill found his greatest fulfilment, and the two years during which he was President and I was Secretary, were two of the most rewarding years of my life. We would meet regularly to mull over the problems of the village, and before each general meeting, Bill would go through every item that I had recorded in my diary, noting each one that had any bearing on the welfare of Mt Wilson. Come the meeting, Bill would carefully present everything that he had noted, and if this prolonged the meeting or if he appeared to be ponderous in his presentation, it was because of his concern that nothing be missed, and his desire to express himself in the clearest way that he could, so as to get it right the first time round.

His work on weed eradication was a highlight of his activity. This is where Bill's local knowledge rose to the fore. He carefully mapped those areas in Mt Wilson which were weed infested; prepared a strategy for the coming year; costed the exercise; and despatched these documents to the Blue Mountains City Council (BMCC) with a request for the necessary funding. The eradication was carried out with the assistance of Alan Gunn. As a direct result of his extensive knowledge and experience, and his meticulous attention to detail, Bill was appointed to Council's prestigious Weed Advisory Committee, which was concerned not only with known and declared weeds, but also with the identification and potential threat to the surrounding bushland and national park posed by garden escapees. Bill served with distinction on this committee, and was greatly respected by all who worked with him.

In November 1993, as part of the 125th Anniversary of the settlement of Mt Wilson, an exhibition of memorabilia, mostly photographic, was displayed in the Mt Wilson Village Hall. So successful did this prove that in February of the following year, the Progress Association formed a Mt Wilson History Group as a sub-committee, which eventually became the Mt Wilson Historical Society Incorporated. At the AGM of the Historical Society in 1994, Bill announced that he and Jane had offered what was to become a 50-year lease on the Turkish Bath in Wynstay as a home for the Society's archival material; a place for its storage and a museum for items directly related to the history of Mt Wilson/Irvine. This munificent offer was enthusiastically taken up and, as a result, the Turkish Bath officially valued at \$300,000, was excised from Wynstay and leased to the newly formed Mt Wilson Historical Society Inc for 50 years. A peppercorn rental of \$2/annum was paid to Bill at every subsequent AGM of the Society and duly handed back by him as a donation to the Society, in what came to be a highlight of the occasion. Bill selflessly opened the grounds of Wynstay during Spring and Autumn, so that visitors to the Turkish Bath could inspect this delightful garden. It goes without saying that he worked hard to keep both the grounds and the garden in top condition throughout the year.

Nor is the Turkish Bath the only grant of property that Bill and Jane made to the local community. The Wynne Reserve, abutting the Church on its western boundary and a strip of land running from the Post House Restaurant to Founders Corner are also among their gifts to Mt Wilson.

This from the man who spent hours each day working for the village he so dearly loved. Nor was any job too small or too menial for Bill. He inspected the general cleanliness of the streets and public reserves; he put out the garbage tins to minimise the work of the Council collectors; he applied for and was granted a traffic counting cable, which was installed at the foot of the Zig-Zag and read personally by him each day for four years. The data collected was collated and published by Bill, with the help of his brother Ron Smart, to show peak periods of traffic. This document was widely distributed throughout the Blue Mountains Tourist Bureau, and other organisations, where it was warmly received.

On the occasions when advertising crews used Mt Wilson to film their product, Bill always approached them for a substantial donation, which he gave to St George's Church (whose services he invariably attended) towards its restoration. He generously assisted the Red Cross calling appeals, and regularly gave donations of blood to the Red Cross because of their support of Jane in her time of need.

His word was his bond and his integrity and generosity legendary. He will not be forgotten by those who truly care for Mt Wilson!

Ellis Reynolds

Memories of Mt. Irvine

by Florence Smart, October 1999

In my view, you don't feel like a part of history-in-the-making when you are the youngest of seven children and almost all the others seem to be totally grown up. A child's world doesn't focus much on history. So it didn't occur to me that I had been living through the early days of Mt Irvine until 1998, when the residents gathered to celebrate 100 years of settlement. It was only then that I realised that my family had been part of this tiny community for more than half of its first century. At the age of nine, it seemed to me that the Scriveners, Morleys, Knight-Browns and Clarkes had always been there, and there were half a dozen or so weekenders whom we also came to know. If I was lucky, three or four children came to Mt Irvine during school holidays and I would have some company of my own age for a week or two. For the rest of the year I had schooling by correspondence, studying alone and learning very little, really, as I had been removed from the companionship of the classroom after year four, and trying to learn from books, by myself, was quite a challenge.

Everything about our early life at Mt Irvine was a challenge, I suppose, particularly of the physical kind. Clearing virgin land, removing huge eucalypts, blackwood, sassafras and coachwood, then burning the stumps before ploughing and planting was very heavy work. My father was not well by this time, with angina and sciatica placing severe limitations on his activity, so the hard work was all carried out by three of my older brothers: Bill, Ron and Dick. Strangely, I don't remember Ron and Dick being there very much – Ron went off to University and Dick to other pursuits. So the one I remember as always there, always working hard, always thoughtful, helpful, knowledgeable about absolutely everything and stepping in as head of the family was my big brother Bill. In my eyes he was the one I could depend on for advice about day to day living in the bush with snakes, dingoes, foxes and other wildlife, as well as the cows, horses, dogs and cats that became part of our newfound rural lifestyle.

The most amazing events were now part of our everyday life, and my question was then, and is now: how did he know how to do all these things? Because if I was nine when we came to live at Carisbrook, then Bill must have been only twenty one, and he had already been there for a few years with my father, starting the clearing and building two sheds out of re-cycled timber and iron. The sheds are still there, carefully preserved by the history-minded present owners. So Bill had come to these mountains as a teenager, and hardly spent more than a few days away over the next sixty years or so. And to me, he seemed exactly the same, for all those years. He was never young, and never old. He answered all my questions, knew how to do everything and was remarkably knowledgeable about past and present world events. We disagreed on politics – he discounted my views entirely, but that didn't matter.

I intend to include just one or two illustrations of Bill's resourcefulness in those early days. We had an old jersey cow called Rosie, rather bony and no longer very productive. Bill knew about these things, so Rosie was dispatched and the carcass used for dingo bait. Rosie's hide, though, was pegged out on a frame to dry in the sun, cleaned and tanned by hand and cut painstakingly into fine strips. Some of them were dyed a dark red and some black, and Bill spent every evening for months braiding by hand a wonderful bridle and all the pieces of harness needed for his mare Queenie. How did he know how to do it?

As the nursery at Carisbrook was established, the trees and shrubs grew quickly and conifers would be dug with a huge ball of earth wrapped in hessian, ready for shipping to retail nurseries in Sydney and across the state. The old Chev truck would be loaded the night before and Bill would set out before daylight to deliver a heavy cargo to various destinations. This happened in winter time, and the ground would be white with frost by the time the lights of the truck could be seen glimmering through the trees as he made his way home late at night after an eighteen or twenty hour day. Bill's cattle dog Cobber would hear the engine long before the sound reached human ears, and he would bark to let us know and set off along Dane's Way to welcome Bill home. The last few miles could take hours, as Dane's Way was famous for deep ruts and slippery hills. Chains would often have to be fitted to get up two steep pinches, and sometimes the chilly mist would be so thick there was no chance of seeing the road in front. Bill took me with him sometimes; I can remember when there were no windows in the cab, and driving along the ridge at Bell, the sleet would drive straight in one side and out the other.

Of course there was no electricity in those days, although we had a generator that sometimes produced rather dim lighting. We used Tilley lamps and kerosene lanterns, a petrol iron and a radio that ran off a car battery. Our favourite entertainment on long winter evenings by the open fire included my father spinning yarns about his younger days as a farm hand at Michelago, or telling ghost stories that all came from his very own experiences. We believed every word. Sometimes Bill would read whole books aloud to us – my favourite was Will Lawson's *The Lady of the Heather* (1945). My mind recalls a whole variety of family music making. We had the piano, two



Bill at 22, pipe in mouth, building a new body for the old Chev truck

organs, two violins, a flute, two guitars, various tin whistles, jews harps and kazoos, and we all sang everything from the White Horse Inn to Don Giovanni. Bill didn't sing solos, but he excelled at reciting long epic ballads and endless humorous tales while we sat spellbound awaiting the inevitable punch line. Right up until a few weeks before he died, he could recall some of these from fifty years before, and come out with them around the dinner table, to our endless delight.

And so, I suppose, the Smart family was indeed part of the early history of Mt Irvine, and later of Mt Wilson. Bill most of all. He loved the mountains and never wished to leave. Over his lifetime he learned a great deal about the bush, and about the gardens that grew so well in that unique combination of climate and soil. And he shared his knowledge widely. He dedicated his life to his family, friends and community, with no wish for personal gain or public recognition. The verse chosen for the service sheet at his funeral was just as he could have said: "I live for those who love me".

A Moment Not Forgotten

"I must never forget this moment!" - so I thought all those years ago as we drove down the familiar road, from 'Carisbrook' to Mt Wilson, for a Younger Set occasion. Bill at the wheel, Rose, Ron, Dick and myself with him, all singing. This, and the beauty of the night, lit by moonlight, the mountains standing so clearly in that bright light, white mist lying in the valleys - all remembered with pleasure to this day.

It was when the war ended and we moved into our newly built home, Carisbrook, that the young people of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine formed a Younger Set, meeting fairly regularly for a dance or a picnic tea in the bush. Wynstay's long back verandah first provided a happy venue when Mrs Wynne organised a fancy-dress ball. Cherry Cottage also comes to mind as we worked hard with a white powdery substance one evening, trying to produce a slippery surface on the linoleum covered floor. The old school house at Mt Irvine (burned down in the terrible fires of '57) was also a venue for our dances.

Our music came from an old home-made wind-up gramophone connected to a radio (created by Ron). But a more popular provider was Cecil Kirk, with his piano accordion. Encouraged by cries of "Keep her going, Cecil!" whenever he appeared to be flagging he would play on tirelessly. We were all adept at doing a little skip in the barn dance to pick up the step again at the point in the music where he regularly missed a beat!

Perhaps our most enjoyable occasions were picnic teas, setting off as darkness fell sometimes by car, then walking to the chosen spot (Fields Selection and Smith's Hill were the favoured places) or on horseback when enough mounts could be rounded up. Our camp fire lit, billy boiled, we would linger under a starry canopy listening to the sounds of the night and Bill reciting Paterson, Lawson, Adam Lindsay Gordon, as the mood took him.

The world was before us then, but now we look back with gratitude for those early years - the pleasures and the hardships we shared with family, neighbours and friends, and the beauty with which we were surrounded.

And to those dear ones now departed, we say "Thank you and rest in peace".

Wilga Smart

Funeral Blues

Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone,
Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone
Silence the pianos and with muffled drum
Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come

Let aeroplanes circle, moaning overhead
Scribbling on the sky the message: He is Dead
Put crepe bows around the necks of the public doves
Let the traffic policemen wear black cotton gloves

He was my North, my South, my East, my West,
My working week and my Sunday rest
My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song,
I thought that love would "last forever". I was wrong.

The stars are not wanted now; put out every one;
Back up the moon and dismantle the sun.
Pour away the ocean and sweep up the wood,
For nothing now can ever come to any good.

W.H. Auden



Formalities such as the Christmas Raffle

Last year the Mt Wilson Historical Society ran a most successful Christmas raffle. The amount raised was over \$800. The raffle this year will be a hamper containing wine, champagne, jams, mustards, and other delicacies. If you are able to contribute in any way please contact Robin Leonard on (02) 9498 1526 or (02) 4756 2001. Listed below are some of the delicacies we are looking for:- Gourmet vinegars, olive oil, quality mustards and jams (especially home made), pickles, honey, tinned salmon, asparagus, herbs and spices, sea salt, ground pepper, marinades for meat, sauces, nuts, muscatels, glace fruits, teas and coffees or any other delicacy you can contribute.

Donations must reach Robin by 12th November.

A special thankyou to everyone who supported us last year.

New Committee Members

<i>President</i>	Arthur Delbridge
<i>Vice President</i>	Robin Leonard
<i>Secretary</i>	Mary Reynolds
<i>Treasurer</i>	Ellis Reynolds
<i>Member</i>	Pauline Michell
<i>Member</i>	Ben Scheuler
<i>Member</i>	Florence Smart
<i>Member</i>	Raoul Wilson
<i>Member</i>	Bruce Wright (Project Director)

Financial Statement from 01.07.98 to 30.09.99

Reconciliation Statement for Period 01.07.98 to 30.06 99

Income for period 01.07.98 to 30.06.99	\$31,085.10
Expenditure for period 01.07.98 to 30.06.99	\$47,052.65
(Debit) Balance	\$15,967.55
Plus balance of accounts as at 01.07.98	\$25,036.65
Balance of accounts shown in bank statements dated 30.06.99	\$ 9,069.10

A Note from the Editor

Thank you to those who contributed to this newsletter, especially Libby, Florence, Wilga, Ellis and Arthur.

I have only known Bill for a few years through both the historical society, and also through a family connection with Florence. One of the things I admired in Bill was his ability to only speak when something was worth saying. And Bill, of course, was also the epitome of a gentleman, displaying a level of etiquette far surpassing anyone else I knew. For this reason, it sometimes took me by surprise. One evening, a couple of years ago, Bill came down to dinner at Arthur and Florence's house just down the road from Wynstay. I was out on the back deck with Bill's sister Wilga when he arrived, and he came through the house, Flair under one arm, to greet us. Wilga and I then took the opportunity to remain standing to admire the view across the valley from the deck. About five or ten minutes later, someone beckoned Bill to have a seat after his day of work and recent trek down to the house. From behind me I heard Bill say, quite calmly, "well, when Wilga and Elspeth sit down, then we'll be able to" (the 'we' referring to Flair still tucked under his arm).

May I offer my deepest sympathies to Bill's family and friends, and hope that through both the reading and writing of the pieces contributed to this newsletter you may be, somehow, further able to farewell Bill.

Elspeth Callender

