



The Mounts

The Community Newsletter of Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine



February 2014

Welcome



A creative piece of chain-saw art along Danes Way amid the rapidly recovering bush. Time, and some steady recent rain, is a great healer for the landscape that was so devastated by fire only four months ago. It is a very welcome sight!

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Community Calendar

March	Sun 2nd 9.00am RFS Training Mt Wilson Shed	Sun 2nd 9.00 am Clean Up Australia	Sun 9th 3.00pm Mt Wilson Church Service	Fri 14th 9.00—12.00 Bush Care— Sloan Reserve
March	Fri 21st Bushwalking Group— Blue Gum Forest	Sat 22nd Mt Wilson Village Hall AGM Mt Wilson Village Hall, 4.30 pm	Sat 22nd MWPA General Meeting Mt Wilson Village Hall, 5.30 pm	
April	Sun 6th 9.00am RFS Training Mt Wilson Shed	Sun 13th 3.00pm Mt Wilson Church Service	Thu 17th Bushwalking Group— Wollangambe	Fri 18th 9.00 am Good Friday Church Service
April	Sun 20th 3.00 pm Easter Day Church Service	Sat 19th & Sun 20th Dennarque Open Garden for the local RFS Brigade		

Village Hall Jottings

You are invited to attend the
Mt Wilson Village Hall Management Committee
Annual General Meeting
to be held on
Saturday 22nd March 2014 at 4.30pm
in the Mount Wilson Village Hall

The agenda of the meeting will include reports from the committee's executive .

*Please join us after the meeting for afternoon tea before the Mt Wilson Progress Association
General Meeting at 5.30pm*

Mt Wilson Progress Association Committee News

Coming Events

- Clean Up Australia Day – 2nd March, 2014 at 9.00, Meet outside the Village Hall.
- Mount Wilson Progress Association **General Meeting** – 22nd March, 2014 at 5.30 p.m. at the Mount Wilson Village Hall.

Local dirt roads have been sealed

Council is in the process of sealing the unsealed roads of Mount Wilson. Wynnes Rocks Road, Applecot Lane, Du Fours Road and Hillcrest Lane are completed. Work is progressing Farrer Road West as gravel has been laid and culverts are being repaired and formed there. It may even be completed as you read this.

Mount Wilson Leisure Library

Because the library has been so rarely used lately it has been decided that it will be closed for a while. However, as the book collection is of an excellent quality, we would encourage people to continue to borrow. That can be done by contacting Moira on 4756 2162 or Milba on 4756 2120 to arrange a convenient time to access the library.

Christmas Party

It does seem such a long time since the party, three months in fact. However, it was a most successful evening combined with the Photographic Exhibition. It was well attended with lots of good food, wine, chatter and laughter, a great way to relax after the tension of the fires. Thank you to all who helped make the evening so successful.

Photographic Donation

The Mount Wilson Progress Association has donated to the community a framed photograph taken by Bruce Kerridge of the recent fires. It will be hung in the Mount Wilson Village Hall and will provide a visual historical record of the result of the fires.

New Members

Don't forget, if you are a property owner or reside in Mount Wilson you are eligible to be a member of the Association. If you are not a member and wish to join please contact me. Membership fees make an important contribution to the work of maintaining our village and providing contact with residents through the production of such things as newsletters, the phone book and the website. The more members there are, the more we can do for you.

Richard Beattie (President)

Moira Green (Secretary)



Clean Up Australia Day

Sunday, 2nd March, 2014

9.00 a.m. till 12.00 noon.

Your assistance for all or part of this time would be appreciated.
Meet at the Mount Wilson Village Hall to decide areas of preference.
You will need gloves, sun screen and hat
Collection bags will be provided and
a rubbish skip will be located at the Fire Station.

For further information please phone Brian Abrahams on 4756 2119.

This is an activity of the Mount Wilson Progress Association Inc.

Book Review

Many readers keep lists of books read, wish lists of various books for future reading and discuss in various forums books read, liked or unfinished. Romana Koval, now separated from ABC radio, has had a life spent deep in the wonders and delights of books, writers and reading. Her connection to books is the basis of *By the Book: a readers guide to life*. Chapter by chapter she explores how books expanded her world from early childhood, how they provided bridges to relationships with other people, most importantly her mother, and how they have shaped her career in sometimes surprising ways.

Passionate about how reading echoes and guides a life, she links significant events in her life with recollections of books of that time as she traces her earliest days as a migrant child in Australia, her schooling, her university education, largely in science (and in love) and how she came to present The Book Show on ABC Radio National. She says that : 'I've learnt almost everything from the books I've read. As a child I found Franz Kafka's *The Trial* at my local library which introduced me to politics that were mysterious and strange. It whetted my appetite for books that challenge ideas, systems and established ways of thinking. These books are invitations to think beyond our own experience, showing us a larger world.'

In *By the Book* Romana touches on some memorable friendships such as her long relationship with Roger Deakin (who so memorably explored England by swimming the water-ways) and the joys of being with him in outback Australia. She is probably best known for the Book Show and her tactful but insightful interviews and while these do stand as a remarkable record on their own (see ABC archives) this memoir would have been richer for including more of her thoughts on some interviewees and their work. A book such as this can only encourage wider reading, outside our normal reading experiences and choices.

Alison Halliday

Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade

State Mine Fire

Just when you thought it was safe to go to a dinner party at Mt Wilson or Mt Irvine and **not** talk about the great fire of 2013, here we go again with more comment and further increasing the size of the Newsletter. During the fire the number of messages of support was truly touching but the brigade has been overwhelmed by the extraordinary generosity and recognition we have received since. We would like to make it clear, however, that we could not have achieved what we did without the support of non-brigade members of the two villages. It was an outstanding whole of community effort. Susie Hope has been kept extremely busy managing all the donations and has forwarded the following sample of comments that accompanied them:

"The past two weeks have been an extraordinary time in the history of the mountains ,and the RFS and all the volunteers are without a doubt the true heroes of today."

"Beth, we would like to thank you for all the effort you have provided together with your firefighters over the last weeks. It has been wonderful. The information that has been sent to residents has also been most informative and appreciated greatly."

"As a frequent visitor to your lovely community, either renting in the village to photograph the seasons or on the way to visiting family at Bathurst, I would like to commend you for the constant website updates that have allowed me to follow your survival with the bush fires. I realise the monumental work that you have performed and how upgrades to your facilities will make your job that much easier."

"Upon hearing the stories of bravery, commitment and dedication by the members and support team of your local RFS we offer this donation to assist maintain your equipment and facilities."

"We would like to recognise the very substantial and highly professional job which the members of the Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine RFS did during the recent crisis. Your communication with those of us who were stuck and unable to get back 'home' was most reassuring. We had nothing like it during the last big crisis in January 1994! In fact, compared to those days, the level of professionalism and training seems to have reached new levels."

Russell Lea Infants School

"We had quite a few parents who remember camping/visiting Mt Wilson in their childhood and they were most keen to hear how your beautiful area was faring. Our school Principal also has friends in Mt Irvine and she went to great efforts getting the kids involved in today's collection. Good luck again with all your ongoing efforts. We hope life gets back to normal again soon for your community."

"Just a small thank you for all the hard work and devotion to duty of our volunteers."

"My retired Girl Guide leaders group unanimously wanted to thank and help the Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine brigade. They have spent many happy hours together with us while enjoying the wonders of our special part of the world and were so grateful for the extraordinary effort put in by the fire team to protect the area."

"Please accept our thank you and to all your team for your extraordinary efforts during the past fortnight."

Mrs. Stephanie Jackson

"I am aware through my granddaughter Linda Raines of the wonderful efforts of many in your community in fighting the recent bush fires."

"This note is to express my thanks and appreciation for the work you and the active members of the Mt Wilson & Mt Irvine RFS have undertaken so successfully during these last disturbing weeks. The loss of property in Mt Irvine was sad and regrettable but that there was no loss in Mt Wilson was a triumph and great credit to the expertise of the combined RFS members."

"A small 'Thank You' for keeping us out of harm's way and finding the time and energy to keep us informed."

University of Wollongong

"As you may know, my colleagues and I have been interviewing residents in your area for a bushfire research project. In light of the recent fires we have collected donations for the brigades at Bilpin and Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine from our colleagues. All the best with post-fire work and recovery."

"I am writing in appreciation of the superb job of the brigades during the current fire crisis. Especially as I saw the crews defending property along Mt Irvine Road on the Friday, then back again to hazard reduce in the evening till late into the night. To see the dedication and determination of these members is humbling and words are inadequate."

John Colet School

The children of John Colet School in Belrose have elected to donate the proceeds of their charity market day to your RFS.

"A most inadequate thank you for the extraordinary work all the team put in fighting the fire while we helplessly looked on from Sydney. We are forever indebted to you."

"We would like to thank each and every single person involved with the local RFS in their outstanding assistance with the recent bushfires. Congratulations on an outstanding job done. The level of coordination and professionalism was remarkable. Thank you for keeping us up to date with the regular emails as well. We waited with abated breath to read up on the updates as we found this to be more up to date than other means of communication."

"Your dedication, courage and determination deserves medals to all! Thank you so much."

Caroline Frykberg (nee Morgan)

"My husband and I would like to honour the incredible work you have just done to save Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine from the ravages of last week's horrific fires. I have a personal interest in the Farrer Road area as my dear Mum & Dad built *Goonong* there in the early 1980s. My dad Ernie Morgan would have been out fighting with you if he was still alive." (*Remembering Ernie he definitely would have been!*)

"To all the members of the Mount Wilson/Mount Irvine Rural Fire Brigade we cannot thank you enough for protecting our home and so many others. Your dedication and community spirit in the face of such devastating fires was amazing. We are so lucky as a small community to have so many selfless and caring people."

"I would like to express heartfelt thanks and gratitude for the efforts made by all of those involved in the defence of bushland, property and person during the recent State Mine bushfire. The ongoing commitment and service shown for the community is an inspiration to others."

"I was going to stay at Chimney Cottage that weekend (*the weekend of the fires*) so in lieu of that enclose a donation."

Troath Winn, an ex-Gregson now living in England, sent a donation with her best wishes.

"To say that my family and myself were not incredibly impressed, moved and full of gratitude for

the response by your Mt Wilson-Mt Irvine RFS team during the recent October bush fire events, under the superb captaincy of Beth Raines and the unstinting input by all who were involved, would be an understatement. We were all in Sydney at the time, however the daily and even hourly "real time" communications by email, phone and on-line did much to mitigate the distance between us."

"Thank you for all the fantastic work done during the big fires, and of course before."

As Susie says, 'We are fortunate to be part of a very special community'.

Mt Wilson Art and Photographic Exhibition

Now it is the turn of the brigade to thank the community. The Art and Photographic Exhibition, postponed due to the State Mine Fire, was eventually held and proved a great success. Susie Hope informs me that it raised \$7,831 for the brigade. We would like to thank all who exhibited, bought, donated, catered or helped manage the event. There are some people we particularly need to thank:

- Beverley and Phil Woodman for liaising with artists, setting up and manning the exhibition
- Judy Tribe for assisting with management, the rescheduling and the opening night event
- Deb Griffin for backing up after her fantastic effort during the fires with yet another great catering event
- Stephen Dean for his wonderful display screens
- Graham Tribe for the hours he spent getting PAYPAL up and running for the occasion
- Susie Hope for her overall financial management
- All the artists for not only re-scheduling the showing of their works but also for donating so generously to the brigade from their sales takings
- The Barretts, the Raines and the Thompsons for opening their gardens for us on that weekend
- The providores, chefs and sales persons and everyone who helped with the 'manning' of the event

I hope that covers everyone and we look forward to a repeat performance, but without the fires, thanks.

Community Engagement Team

We would really rather not have another fire event like last year's but we are realistic enough to understand that it is inevitable and our recent experience has confirmed the wisdom of prior planning, The Community Engagement Team did an excellent job but we know we can do better (more frequent and detailed updates, more visits, information more widely available etc). However, to achieve this we need to expand our team. To join you do not need to be an active member of the brigade. If you would like to play a role in keeping our community informed and safe, please contact Kathleen Oakes.

Kathleen Oakes
Community Engagement Officer

For many, many years, the Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine RFS section of this newsletter has been gathered, compiled, edited and submitted by Sarah Howell. Her increasing 'day job' with the Song Company has unfortunately meant that she is no longer able to continue with this very important service. On behalf of the community, we thank Sarah for her tireless efforts over the last decade and then some in presenting the latest news and developments in the RFS world in such a lively and engaging manner.

A very special fund-raising event

The owners of *Denmarque* have generously offered to open their beautiful garden over Easter for the Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade.

This rarely seen, but magnificent established garden will be opened on Saturday 19th and Sunday 20th April.

All funds raised will be donated to the local RFS Brigade.

Further details will be advised closer to the event, but we suggest you take this opportunity to mark it in your diary now.

MOUNT WILSON AUTUMN FESTIVAL

We will be holding this event in and around the Village Hall on Saturday 26th April.

The programme will include:

- A market: We are anticipating a mix of local produce, arts and crafts, garden accessories and ornaments, local prints and stationery, antiques, plants, and more.
- Tour of the Turkish Baths and Church, with a talk on their history
- A 'Meet the Author' session, with a chance to talk to local authors and hear them speak
- A wine tasting, with wines from Tyrrells Dry Ridge Estate
- A concert, featuring some of the mountain's best artists, with music for all tastes

Please contact Nancy Fox on 0411 251 743 or nancysfox@gmail.com if you would like to book in as a vendor. If you have local produce or craft items which you would like to donate to the market (i.e. jams, cakes, slices, home grown produce, fresh bread, etc), Helen Freeman will be running a stand with Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine goods. Please bring them to the market on April 26th.

All profits will go towards the refurbishment of the Village Hall.

Diana Landsberg

A Fond Farewell

Mount Donna Buang, east of Healsville in Victoria, rises to 1250 metres. In Church Lane at Mount Wilson, *Donna Buang* sits a little below that elevation. Over many years however, visitors to that Mount Wilson site have been transported to even greater heights by the occupants—Mary and Ellis Reynolds.

Anyone who, over the years, has knocked on the door and responded to the booming, prolonged, yet finely eloquent “COME IN” from Ellis has experienced the generous hospitality of Mary and Ellis. There was no such thing as a quick cup of tea or coffee at *Donna Buang*. One was invariably drawn into conversation covering a most eclectic range of subjects; always entertaining, often amusing, at times provocative yet invariably stimulating. Mary’s extensive repertoire of stories on the history and happenings on the mountain were often interspersed with dry, oft times dark, humorous quips from Ellis; sitting around the table at *Donna Buang* was very rewarding.

After forty-seven years at Mt Wilson, nineteen on a part time basis and full-time for twenty-eight years, Mary and Ellis have reluctantly sold *Donna Buang* with Mary moving to Wentworth Falls, bringing her closer to the care facility where Ellis now resides.

Both Mary and Ellis have made a tremendous contributions to the Mount Wilson community over those years with heavy involvement in almost every, more probably every, organisation on the mountain. They have left their mark.

You have greatly enriched the community, Mary and Ellis, by your contributions and endeavours over those years; a heartfelt thanks from all.

Adieu, au revoir, farewell—you will both be greatly missed.

The Mt Wilson Community.

Friendship Day

The members of Friendship Day celebrated the marvellous and varied contribution of Mary Reynolds to our community by combining a farewell with their regular meeting day.

Over 20 ladies (plus Bill Raines) attended to hear Libby Raines give a speech of thanks to Mary and share a splendid array of cakes, biscuits and slices. Mary replied in her inimitable manner and thanked her many friends for their contribution to our community and encouraged the next generation to carry on the good work.



Friendship Day is held on the second Wednesday of every month at 12.00pm for anyone who would like to attend. For further information please call Libby Raines, Helen Freeman or Wendy Holland.

A New Life Unfolds

Lis and Paul Gow, with their two sons Tim and Trevor, first came to Mt Wilson in 1967. They purchased the overgrown gardener's cottage of *Sefton Hall* at the end of Church Lane. Together they transformed their five acres into a delightful Edna Walling style garden, with rambling pathways edged with dry stone walls and planted thousands of exotics.

In 1980, they acquired a further five acres, the horse paddocks next door, purchased from Julian Heale. This acreage was also soon burgeoning with new growth. This they mostly achieved on weekend visits. Tim and his wife Kim with son Toby were regular visitors and assisted with the garden, while Trevor built many garden structures.

I met Lis in 1975 when she was my next door neighbour in Punch Street, Balmain. I enjoyed many times with her during school holidays at *Sefton Cottage*. Lis was a highly respected maths teacher at Barker College, later at Kambala Girls' School and lastly at Newington. She raised the maths standard of the girls at Kambala to new heights as reflected in their HSC results.

Lis and Paul moved permanently to *Sefton Cottage* in 1995. Thus began a new endeavour for Lis. Her energetic, creative and gregarious nature led her to begin offering refreshments to garden visitors. This developed into hosting catered garden weddings and lunches for bus groups requiring a revamped kitchen and assistance often from Beth, Kathleen, Helen and many others over the years.

Although determined to remain in her beloved *Sefton Cottage* following Paul's death in September 2013, this former strong energetic woman realised the winter cold, isolation, huge garden and diminishing abilities, were too great a challenge.

On a recent visit to Norfolk Island with Tim for a holiday with Trevor, Lis so enjoyed the climate, daily swims and the social interaction, that the decision to permanently live there evolved. Trevor plans to build her a house close to his own home.

We wish her many happy sunny days on Norfolk in this new life adventure.

The era of almost 50 years of the Gows at *Sefton Cottage* has ended.

Barbara Harry

Two Unusual Plants

The vegetation in and around Mt Wilson has interested botanists for many years. This summer two plants have caused residents to ask the question "What plant is that?".

The first plant is a rainforest vine *Parsonia brownii*, commonly known as Mountain Silkpod.

In some years during December and January, Davies Lane is carpeted in a silk-like down which settles thickly on the ground, giving it a cream, almost snow-like appearance. It is especially noticeable on the bitumen in the early morning before the cars have made tracks over it.



This is the seed from the Mountain Silkpod which has long, silky hairs which are released from the 5–8 cm long pods high up in the rainforest trees. This summer has been a great year for the seeds. Some days the air is full of their soft silky seeds which settle softly on the ground and bitumen - quite beautiful!

The second unusual plant is seen at the bottom of the Zig Zag on the left (heading out of the village), not far beyond the Mount Wilson sign and beyond the track going down to the waterhole nearby. This plant - *Calomera amaranthoides* or the Plume Bush - stands about one metre high with large soft green leaves held close to a single stem.

When flowering in January, the red brown flowers hang rather like a curtain on long drooping stalklets so it is very striking. You may have seen it as you drive past. *(It can also be seen on the left hand side of Bells Line of Road on the cutting high above the road at Mt Bell as you head towards Mt Wilson - Ed)*

It is a rare and not long lived plant which usually grows on the edge of the rainforest on volcanic soils.

Hopefully it will still be there next summer, bigger with a more conspicuous eye-catching red-brown flowers hanging like a delicate veil around Christmas time.



Libby Raines

Ask the Neighbours

Well, Tim. What a Summer it's been. It's been so dry, the RAATS* patrols and our aerial surveillance teams (the Blue Wren squadron) have observed that both of our arch enemies (the Leeches and the Antechinus) have largely been missing in action.

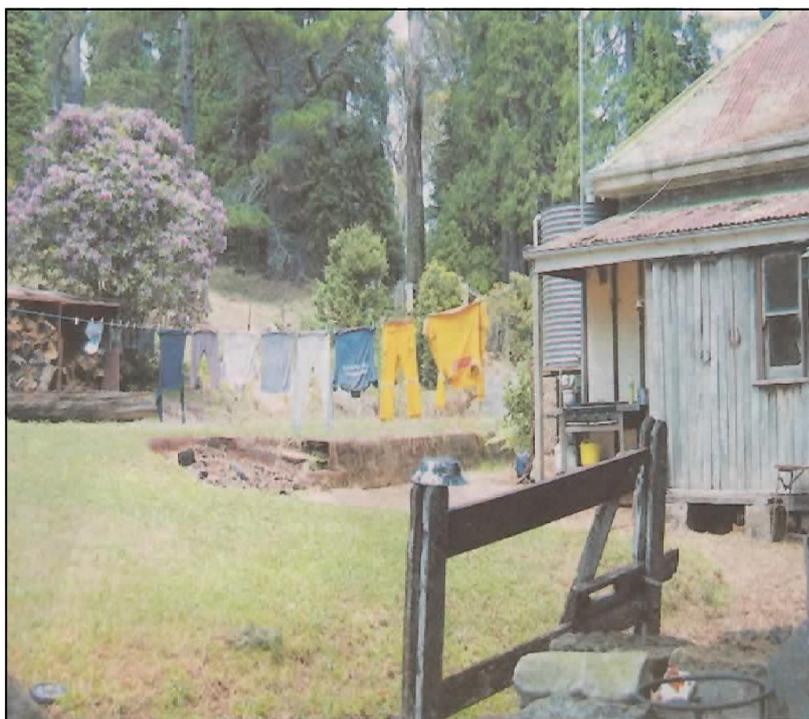
But, as they say - the price of freedom is eternal vigilance. Only the other day I was watering a garden bed when I saw a leech out of the corner of my eye (not literally, Tim – that would have been icky). It was at the very end of the water spray reach, sitting up as if it were begging for a drink.

It gave me an idea. Double agents! If we could "turn" a leech by offering the inducements of regular watering and an occasional blood meal (we'll have to organise a roster for that job), we could infiltrate Leech HQ. We could have our double agent place bugs at their meetings (they'd fit right in) and we could monitor their ongoing liaison with the Antechinus. I don't care what the psychiatrist says –it's only a matter of time before they join forces and are upon us.

Speaking of Antechinus - I was informed by one of this column's regular admirers (yes, we do have some, Tim) of an interesting side effect of those electronic anti-rodent devices. Seems they also bother some visiting relatives who say they can hear the high pitch sounds the devices emit. Think of the potential. Visitors wearing out their welcome? Eating you out of house and home? Turn your anti-rodent devices to full volume and they'll be packed and out the front gate before you can say "it's our turn to donate blood at the double agent leech's safe house".

Elizabeth Montano

*RAATS – Rural Anti Antechinus Training Service. Calling for new members now. Be part of a vibrant community group working tirelessly to keep those furry foes out of our houses and sheds. Training sessions on the second Friday of the month – at Tim's place. You're OK with that Tim, aren't you? Tim?



Washing day: Finally the fire clothes can be cleaned... In a backyard at Mt Wilson.

From *Blue Mountain Gazette*, 13th November 2013: rarely displayed dirty linen at Mt Wilson!



Mary Reynolds and Libby Raines at the February Friendship Day at *Merry Garth*.

Suggestions, comments or contributions warmly welcomed!