

The Mounts

The Community Newsletter of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine

October 2010

Welcome

For the first time in six years, this newsletter appears without the inimitable editorial style of Joe Landsberg. Joe, as most of you may know, has relinquished his role as guiding hand; he leaves with the community's sincere appreciation for his efforts and dedication over the years.

The highlight of the recent past was the now traditional Willy to Billy Bush run. This annual event swells the villages' population by over 200% for a few manic hours on a Saturday morning every August and provides a major fundraising activity for the RFS, as well as significant focus for a very energetic, broad and generous community involvement. Robyn Scrivener has written a story elsewhere in this newsletter about the involvement of one local resident that will amaze and inspire.

The upcoming book launch for Alison Halliday and Joanne Hambrett's ***A Passion for Place*** on Saturday 16th October (6—8 pm) at the Village Hall is generating considerable interest and a keen sense of anticipation; www.apassionforplace.com provides a tantalising preview. Continuing matters literary, Michael Pembroke's ***Trees of History & Romance*** is now in its second print; happily, it appears there is indeed a flourishing niche market for Australian gardening books that look beyond an ephemeral weekend makeover.

The fire season is fast approaching — the Bush Firewise Action Planner that has been mailed or letter-box dropped to all a week before this newsletter was published should be mandatory reading for all residents. The RFS urges you to undertake advance planning as outlined in that document.

The question of electronic distribution of community information has again surfaced: in the absence of definitive figures, it appears the community is evenly split between those residents who are comfortable with receiving email content and those who either do not have access to a computer or prefer to receive the newsletter (and other community correspondence) by hard copy. The reality is that printing costs and distribution effort are significant and that, over a period of time, it appears that electronic distribution to the majority of residents is inevitable. We are undertaking a four month trial of dual hard-copy and email distribution; unambiguously, those people without computers will **always** receive hardcopy. Feedback on this trial will be most welcome and will be shared before a final decision is reached.

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Community Calendar

October	Sat 2nd Mt Irvine Progress Assoc AGM 4.00pm	Fri 8th Bushcare Group — Sloan Reserve	Sun 10th Mt Wilson Church Service 3.00pm	Fri 15th Bushwalking Group — Blue Gum Forest	Sat 16th Book Launch — A Passion for Place 6.00pm	
November	Tues 2nd Melbourne Cup lunch 12.30pm	Sun 6th Mt Wilson / Mt Irvine RFS Training 9.00am	Thu 11th Remembrance Day Service, War Memorial 10.45am	Fri 12th Bushcare Group — Wynne Reserve	Sat 13th Mt W Village Hall Com'tee Meeting 10.00am	Sun 14th Mt Wilson Church Service 3.00pm
Fri 19th Bushwalking Group— Ikara Ridge (Mt Victoria)	Sat 20th Mt W / Mt I Historical Society AGM 10.30am	December	Sat 4th Community Christmas Party, Mt W Village Hall	Sun 5th Mt Wilson / Mt Irvine RFS Training 9.00am	Fri 10th Bushcare Group — Wynne Reserve	Sun 12th Mt Wilson Church Service 3.00pm

Mt Wilson & Mt Irvine Historical Society

Powerhouse Museum Visit to Mt Wilson

On Thursday 9th September, members of the Management Committee for the Mt Wilson & Mt Irvine Historical Society welcomed Kate Chidlow and James Elwing from the Powerhouse Museum to the Turkish Bath. Kate is the Regional Services Coordinator and James is an archivist, paper conservator and book binder. The aim of the visit was to give us advice on the care and display of the collection and museum and information on digitising the photographic collection. Florence Smart, John Cardy, Mary Reynolds and myself met the visitors at a chilly Turkish Bath.

Naturally they were impressed with the building and more impressed when they realised that we were already using dehumidifiers throughout the museum. However, they noted that we did not collect any information on the environment within the museum. Did we know what was happening with humidity at 3am? Well, no. James pulled a possible solution from his pocket – a data logger. It looks like a whiteboard marker with a USB port on the end. It can be set to record humidity at particular times of the day or week and the information collected can be downloaded to a computer. James also gave useful advice on displaying information in the basement. We have plans to mount a display describing the technology of the Turkish Bath, although as yet the process is still imperfectly understood.

It was on to a much warmer Study Centre, where Helen Cardy had prepared morning tea, and to view the archive and photographic collection. Kate has written an article and made a video on the scanning of photographs. We discussed the purchase of an archival quality scanner, where would the backup files be held, who would do the scanning, could we contract it out and could we apply for a grant? Digitising the photographs will help preserve our collection, give us back up in case of disaster and, once our website is up and running, allow easier public access. They also gave us advice on storage of the original photographs and a database to record the holdings.

Kate and James congratulated us on our work so far ('well above average') and the management committee has been left with some new ideas and expenses to ponder so as to better preserve, record and display our community heritage.

Kathleen Oakes

Village Hall Jottings

An ongoing issue for the Village Hall is the kitchen roof, which is in urgent need of repair. This will be expensive work and no funds appear to have been allocated by Blue Mountains City Council. If the repair work is not carried out shortly we are looking at real structural damage. Over many years we have found Terry Cameron, our Community Facilities Coordinator, a pleasure to deal with, positive and ready to help when she can. However, getting maintenance work done, even essential maintenance, is proving elusive. A new round of discussions with Council will hopefully see a result.

On Friday 25th September a working party of Beth Raines, Helen Freeman, Mib Mewburn, Moira and Ron Green planted a handsome *Nyssa Sylvatica*, weeded the front garden between the gates, swept the patio, removed the hundreds of new shoots and suckers on the lower Rhododendrons, sprayed the weeds in paths and driveway and generally had a good time.

If you would like to come to the Melbourne Cup Lunch in the Village Hall on Tuesday 2nd November, RSVP to Judy Tribe: email jtribe@ozemail.com.au , or phone 4756 2096

Judy Tribe

For sale:

Yamaha upright piano in excellent condition; black finish. \$5000.
Contact Arthur Delbridge & Florence Smart on 4756 2063, westring@bigpond.com

Mt Wilson Progress Association Annual General Meeting

The meeting was held on Saturday 18th September with 38 members attending. Much business was covered, many decisions made and a good time spent socialising afterwards, with wine and cheese.

Some issues that were discussed were:

- The proposed installation of the emergency generator by Integral. Members voted unanimously to support it.
- Future plans for the newsletter were explained by Kim Gow. Thanks were expressed to Joe Landsberg for his success as editor for the last six years.
- Mount Wilson Community Website, www.mtwilson.com.au. Stephen Dean and Tim Gow reported the results of the committee's discussions over the past year and a half. It was originally set up for the use and information for visitors to the village. The plan now is to make it a more useful mechanism for locals by including a community diary, notice board, minutes of meetings, newsletter, RFS information, a live link to the Mt Wilson RFS weather station and, potentially, a community forum. For ongoing sustainability, the operational model needs to change and it is recommended that a professional website designer be employed to design, host and provide future additional functionality to the site. Management and updating of the content would remain with the community. Approval was given to the committee to call for tenders. It is thought that the costs of this will be covered through advertising and savings in printing and postage of documents.
- Libby Raines spoke about three prominent weeds in Mt Wilson: sycamore and *acer negunda*, both of which form thickets in the rainforest through airborne seeds. Treatment for these is to cut and poison the stump immediately (within seconds) or to kill the tree by drilling holes low around the stump and filling them with neat Round-up (or a cheaper generic Glyphosate herbicide equivalent). *Vinca* – or periwinkle – is a ground spreading perennial, which forms dense mats, smothering everything. The crown and root can be dug out; it can also be sprayed with very strong Round-Up with Pulse (or detergent equivalent) added. Libby thanked the Bushcare Group, property owners who have been working so well to remove weeds and the Council Bushcare Team.
- Peter Mann, Program Leader for Sustainable Towns and Villages in BMCC, addressed the meeting. He recognized that Council was slow in its response to questions raised and requests made, due in part to manpower and financial restraints. However, Council is moving forward as it is setting up a new program with a more strategic view for all townships and villages. In response to some specific requests, he indicated that the drainage outside the hall would be given priority and there is some money available for it. While working on this, the poor patching on the Zigzag would be examined. Fallen and dangerous trees have been referred to the person responsible for trees. Sealing of Farrer Road West is not of high priority as there is no funding for it in the short term.

Management Committee for 2010/11

The new Committee for 2010/11 will comprise:

President Bill Ryan **Vice President** Richard Beattie

Treasurer Libby Raines **Secretary** Moira Green

Committee Members Brian Abrahams, Kim Gow, Alison Halliday

Robert Chesney decided not to stand for election again. A vote of thanks was expressed at the AGM. for his service to the community for the last eight years. The Committee is grateful for his wonderful contribution. He has been responsible for the organization of the Remembrance Day Service and the Clean Up Australia Day each year.

Mount Wilson Leisure Library

The library list has been updated. If you would like a hard copy or an emailed version please contact Judy Tribe.

Don't forget, the library is open every Saturday morning from 10.00 to 11.00 so do drop in for a browse through the bookshelves. If you wish to come at another time, please contact Moira on 4756 2162 and it can be arranged.

Join the Mount Wilson Progress Association Inc.

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.

Moira Green

Why on earth would you run in the Willy to Billy?



Sharing my admiration with the other volunteers of the pluck of those hardy souls making their way on the Willy to Billy along the track was part of the pleasure of the event. To make it a bit more special, one pair of hands reaching for a drink were familiar.

Richard Hitchens (picture at the finishing line) is the son-in-law of long term Mt Irvine residents Sandra and James Telfer. He had never previously participated in a 'run'; this year he set about a training regime and an equally determined fund raising drive which resulted in \$5000 being pledged from his friends and colleagues upon his completion of the race. This extraordinary sum has been very generously donated to the Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine RFS brigade. Along with his respect for Rural Fire Brigade, Richard's inspiration to participate is best summed up in the email he sent out to raise those funds.

"It comes down to family. My wife's Ali's great, great grandfather Charles Scrivener was the surveyor general and he surveyed the land around Mount Irvine. His son (also Charles) settled there with

his family in 1897. For four generations they have grown produce and run sheep on their properties there and Ali's great uncle and aunt are still there today well into their 80's tending to the land. The run tracks past and through a number of the family properties, which is why it appeals to me."

It is participation like that which has transformed the Willy to Billy from a fun run into a community and running event of increasing renown.

Robyn Scrivener

Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigades

Blue Mountains RFS Assessment held at Mt Wilson

The weekend of 11 and 12 September saw a hive of activity around the Mt Wilson Study Centre as nine candidates for the specialist Remote Area Firefighting Team (RAFT) were assessed. Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine RFS members Vic Zhukov and Peter Dempsey were amongst those involved in the exercise, Beth Raines was Deputy Operations Officer, and Peter Raines accompanied one of the two teams as an assessor.

The exercise was supported by the Communications and Catering divisions of the Group Support Brigade who set up operations at the Study Centre. After a detailed briefing and dinner, the candidates embarked on a night exercise returning to spend the night at the Study Centre. The following morning saw the teams once again set off into the bush to accomplish a set of prescribed exercises returning in the late afternoon. Further assessment will take place over coming weeks. All involved with the exercise were impressed with all that the Study Centre had to offer and the beauty of Mt Wilson in the early spring.

Communications Tower soon to be operational

Mt Wilson will soon be able to operate as an independent communications centre thanks to the new tower behind the Mt Wilson Fireshed. Spotted by Barry Freeman on the edge of the newly finished M7, the redundant tower was donated to the RFS by Leighton Construction. Transported in pieces to Mt Wilson, the tower was reconstructed and installed on a purpose-built concrete slab by Owen Haviland and willing volunteers. Owen also negotiated with the Blue Mountains City Council for the required Development Application to erect the tower.

Equipment is currently being bolted on to the tower to enable both the RFS and the Ambulance Service to more effectively co-ordinate a local incident. More complete radio coverage will enable both services to co-ordinate search and rescue missions in the Wollangambe River gorge and firefighting in the local area. It is expected that the tower will be operational by the start of this fire season.

Additions to Mt Wilson Shed

As announced at the recent Annual General Meeting of the RFS, plans are under way to build an addition to the Mt Wilson Fireshed. The proposed building, designed by architect Owen Haviland,

will comprise garage space which will double as a training room with attached communications room. Plans which were available for public comment at the AGM will now go to Blue Mountains Fire Control for their approval before being lodged with Council.

Funds are available for the building's construction but further fundraising will be needed in order to fit out the building fully.

Bowens Creek Bridge

The campaign to repair the Bowens Creek Bridge has found an influential supporter in the newly elected member for the seat of Macquarie, Mrs Louise Markus. RFS President, David Howell wrote on behalf of the brigade to the Liberal, Labor and Greens candidates for the seat during the election campaign requesting their assistance. Mrs Markus replied saying she was "a great supporter of the RFS and a member of the Oakville RFS" and undertaking to find funding for essential bridge repairs should the Coalition win government. Since the Government was sworn in, David Howell has written again to our new local member inviting her to visit our brigade and to see the state of the bridge for herself.

Brigade Training Update

Thanks to all brigade members who have taken part in our training exercises. Nine members turned up for the July training day, 17 in August, 19 in September, and 9 for the West Sector exercise on 19 September.

Members of the brigade have been busy during the winter training months taking part in Village Firefighting and Village Crew Leader courses. Assessments for these courses are coming up and names of the successful candidates will be published in a future newsletter.

Forthcoming training opportunities:

Sunday 3 October at 9am – pre-season pumping exercise

Sunday 17 October at 9am – Station Officers' familiarisation training

Sunday 24 October – Catering co-ordination

Sat 30/Sun 31 October – Basic Firefighting

Sunday 7 November – Combined West Sector exercise at Mt Tomah

Sunday 21 November at 9 am – Community Liaison co-ordination

Sunday 5 December at 9 am – Trails and mapping training

Please contact Graham Tribe with any training queries on gtribe@bigpond.com or 4756 2096.

Call Out Log

The brigade was called out five times during July and August 2010 to one fire and four medical incidents. Our thanks go to Brigade members who responded to the call: Beth Raines, Libby Raines, Barry Freeman, Diana Landsberg, Peter Dempsey, Stephen Dean, Suzzane Daly and Vic Zhukov

Bush Firewise Family Action Planner

Research shows that buildings are more likely to survive a bushfire if someone is there to actively protect them. Resources obviously don't allow for a fire truck at the gate every property so it is the direct responsibility of every member of the community to prepare their property.

Most buildings lost in bush fires ignite from small fires caused by sparks and embers. By extinguishing those ignitions, adequately skilled and equipped people can save a building that would otherwise be lost in a fire.

The most important aspect of preparation is the creation and maintenance of a defensible space. Staying to defend can involve grave risks. You need to seriously assess your property for defendability against a fire, assess the adequacy of the house to provide shelter, and assess your ability to deal with a fire event. It is imperative that you and your property are properly prepared beforehand

Please read and review the simple but thorough checklist sent previously —it is vitally important that preparation is done in advance, rather than when an incident is imminent. **Sarah Howell**

16th Annual Willy to Billy Bush Run

This year there was a record 350 entries, though 288 actually started; it is thought the Federal Election may have caused a last minute change of plans for some runners.

The race was won by David Criniti in 2:15 minutes. The first woman across the line was Liz Miller in 2:37 minutes. The race record stands at 2:07 minutes.

Comments from the runners are so flattering – many say this is their favourite race because of the lovely scenery, the warm hospitality and the hot showers at the end. The scones at the start get a big thumbs up as well. Twenty two dozen were made – a huge number, so we 'firies' had our eye on the left overs. Not this year – they were all gone by the start of the race.

A very big thank you to all of the volunteers at the Silva Plana start, the five drink stations and various points along the way, most of whom return each year and put in a wonderfully enthusiastic effort to make the event such an outstanding success.

Final tallies have yet to be done but we have raised in the vicinity of \$6,000 for the local RFS brigades. The money raised received a huge boost by the donation of another \$5,000 from Richard Hitchens of Mt Irvine.

Michael Garvan from the Bilpin Fire Brigade, who has been the main organiser of this event for four years is stepping down from the position. We wish to thank him for his real dedication over the years. He has had a great association with the runners through their website **CoolRunning** and we know they appreciate his warmth and humour. Michael will be missed by all.

Thank you to everyone who helped make the day a big success.

Kim Gow

"Another fantastic W2B under the belt - unfortunately the scone PB did not get a shake as I was too busy socializing to make a real go at it. Next year I will find a quiet corner of the field and give it a real scare.

SlowManiac"

"THANK YOU!!! RFS & VOLLIES. This is my favourite "short" course event on the running calendar. I love it. The trail, the people and the wonderful community atmosphere. Even the folks at the Mt Wilson polling booth were wishing us good luck. Trailpuddin"

"I ran W2B on the weekend after an absence of a few years and found it had retained its essential informal and laid back character but had a much more professional feel in the background. This shows that the organizers have listened and acted on the feedback received for the betterment of the event. It's still a runner's event but the support and effort by the volunteers is world class. This is an outstanding and unique event and I will be back as often as I can. Wazza"



Runners line up on Silva Plana for the start of the 16th Willy to Billy run. This year's run was the first to incorporate electronic timing—runners attached a tiny chip on their shoelaces so that starting and finishing time for each runner was automatically recorded and logged.



Two photos above are taken from the www.bilpinbushrun.com.au website. Registration for the August 27th 2011 run are now open!

The photo below shows a large crowd of spectators, children, assorted dogs and the two famous horses following the runners from Silva Plana after the start. Eve and Ace - ridden respectively and respectfully by Andy and Phillip - act as 'sweepers' along the 34.4 km course to Bilpin to pick up the seriously fatigued.



Love to cook?

The RFS has a wonderful opportunity for someone who enjoys working with food. The role of Catering Officer would suit someone who would like to assist the Brigade but not at the business end of a hose. As well as some food preparation and provisioning, the Catering Officer's job involves co-ordination of a band of volunteers to prepare meals and to keep the ration boxes on the trucks stocked up. If you are able to help with this important role, please contact Beth Raines or David Howell.

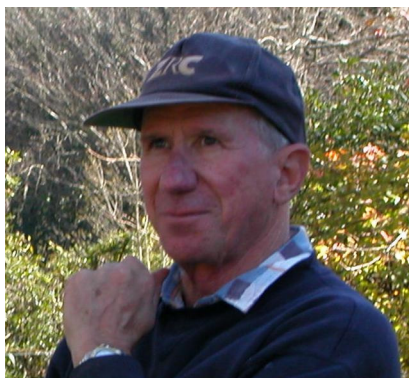
A New Path to Walk in the Village

For those who like to walk around the village, you can now walk along Walford Lane between **Rimon** and **Chimney Cottage** beneath the power lines. Please close all the gates behind you. This track leads to the bottom end of Applecot Lane. Take a sharp turn to your left into Applecot Lane, again beneath the power lines, cross over the creek and make your way up the lane to Wyndham Lane. This walk can of course be done in the reverse direction. **Libby Raines**

Chimney sweep, anyone?

Spring has sprung! Time to clean that chimney - prevent chimney fires & do it now!
Peter Dempsey has found an excellent chimney sweep who is willing to travel to Mt Wilson. Peter has very kindly offered to co-ordinated interested parties - call him on 0415 701 261 to arrange a group booking - works best for 4 households per day

**Joe and Diana Landsberg
'WITHYCOMBE'**



For Joe, leaving Canberra and its vibrant scientific community, and for Diana, leaving her very involved community life, to come and live in remote Mt Wilson was indeed a great sea change. But strong people are very adaptable, and as will be related, any misgivings are long gone.

Joe was born in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and following school, went to Natal and gained a degree in Agricultural Science. It was here he met Diana who was studying for an Arts degree. After several years working in Rhodesia, time was spent in South Africa and then followed three years at Aberdeen University on a fellowship. With a very low stipend, this was a period of hardship, but was very worthwhile for Joe with his research on the physiology of forests. Ten years was then spent at Bristol on apple research where he gained his Ph.D. Together with four daughters, Diana found time to teach English and Physical Education.

They eventually settled in Australia and Joe was appointed Chief of the Division of Forest research in C.S.I.R.O. During their twenty one years in Canberra, he spent several years as director of natural resources of the Murray Darling Basin Commission, and also spent time with N.A.S.A. in Washington D.C, and in Canada working on boreal ecosystems.

Diana meanwhile became very involved in working with a youth group within the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. This award was initiated over thirty years ago to foster youth involvement in the community, both physically and for social development in activities. Diana's group went bushwalking, abseiling, canoeing and were involved in the eradication of feral animals. Over seventeen years she helped train over a thousand young people attaining graded levels of competence. For this splendid involvement she was awarded an Order of Australia medal in 2000.

Daughter Barbara and son-in-law Merrick Howes purchased 'Withycombe' in 2002. Joe and Diana came to care for, and help develop the property into the magnificent place it is. Barbara, as a landscape architect and Joe, with his knowledge of trees, were a perfect combination for this venture.

While busy with the property, Joe still found time to co-author a major text book titled ***The Physiological Ecology of Forest Production***. He edited the Mt Wilson Community newsletter for six years - an act of real community involvement. Diana was a member of the Mt Wilson Progress Association committee for five years, and is a member of the Rural Fire Service, the community First Responders for local medical emergencies, and is President of the Blackheath Women's Golf Group.

John Holt

Speaking of wombats... from the SMH September 15: "Usain Bolt, in Sydney for the Olympic anniversary celebrations, is the fastest man alive and a thrill to behold in full flight. But he'd struggle to beat a humble Aussie wombat over 100 metres - and have no chance over 200 metres. Before your cornflakes flood out through your nose, read on. According to www.sportsscientists.com Bolt's top speed when he smashed his own 100m world record in Berlin last year, in a blitzy 9.58 seconds, was 43.93km/h. Pretty nifty, but a peak speed, not maintained throughout. His average speed was 37.58km/h. Now to the tubby, bumbling wombat. According to Gary Humble on the Scribbly Gum section of the ABC Science website, a wombat "can maintain a speed of 40km/h for 150m", a figure also referenced elsewhere. That would be nine seconds flat for the 100m - astonishing for a marsupial with shabby training habits and no sneakers - but from a running start."

Suggestions, comments or contributions warmly welcomed!