



The Mounts

The Community Newsletter of Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine



December 2016

Welcome

Christmas already, apparently. Is it me or has this year flown?

Time is meant to go more quickly as you grow older as a unit of time relative to your age lessens each year. Not so, according to latest research: time moves quickly when you pay less attention to it. Who of us count off the days to Christmas, for example, as we did when children, as our lives become more routine and mundane?

Whilst we were spared meteorological or natural disasters in 2016 (touch wood, given there are 31 days to go, but who's counting?), there has surely been enough significant events at a community level to make the year worthy of permeating our befuddled consciousness.

St Georges Church celebrated its centenary, the Village Hall got its long awaited extensions, there were two highly successful Autumn and Spring Festivals (admittedly, though, some are still recovering from the former), progress, albeit slow, seems to be made on the Bowens Creek fire trail: the Mounts seem to be having a truffle-led revival.

Many thanks to all readers of The Mounts over the years in which I had the great privilege of being Editor. All credit must be given to the contributors, both regular and ad-hoc, to this little chronicle of village life; it would be much the poorer without their generous and lively involvement.

All the best to you and your families for Christmas, 2017 and beyond.

Tim Gow Tel. 0412 133 559

e-mail: timsgow@gmail.com

Community Calendar

December	Sat 3rd 6.30pm Christmas Party, Mt Wilson Hall	Sun 4th 9.00 am RFS Training Mt Wilson Shed	Fri 9th 9.00–12.00 Bush Care— Wynne Reserve	Sun 11th 3.00 pm Mt Wilson Church Service
Fri 16th Bushwalking - The Throne, Mt Wilson. Lunch at Merry Garth	Sat 17th 7.30 pm Carol Service, St Georges Church	January	Sun 1st 9.00 am RFS Training Mt Wilson Shed	Sun 8th 3.00 pm Mt Wilson Church Service
Fri 13th 9.00–12.00 Bush Care— Davies Lane	Fri 20th Bushwalking Group - Mt Wilson Ramble	February	Sun 5th 9.00 am RFS Training Mt Wilson Shed	Fri 10th 9.00–12.00 Bush Care— Wynne Reserve

Everyone is invited to

**The Mount Wilson/Mount Irvine
Community Christmas Party
Saturday 3rd December 2016 at 6.30pm
at the Mount Wilson Village Hall**

Christmas cheer, carols and fun for the children

A gift pack of Fiskars garden tools will be raffled at the party.
(Kindly donated by iRIS property)

Finger food and drinks provided

RSVP to either:

Sue Woolfenden: secretarymwpa@gmail.com

Bruce Kerridge: bdkerridge@gmail.com

Judy Tribe: judithtribe@gmail.com

Mt Wilson Progress Association
Mt Irvine Progress Association
Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade



MOUNT WILSON PROGRESS ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE NEWS

The MWPA, at the end of this year and in 2017 is represented by a small committee, chosen at the AGM. Thankfully, Libby Raines and Sue Woolfenden remain respectively as Treasurer and Secretary, and we still have the valuable services of Nancy Fox and Ted Griffin.

Joining the committee is Robbie Feyder who has put up his hand to liaise with the BMCC.

Please contact myself or any other member of the committee if there is anything you want us to know, or that you wish to discuss – there is no issue too small!

Our activities will range from keeping a watching brief on the installation of the Mt Tomah tower and the ongoing saga of Bowens Creek Road; to ensuring the mountain looks as beautiful as possible, with the able help of Peter Raines and Micah Baker-Fink.

The most significant issue, the change in the method of funding and responsibility for BMCC areas, will be the subject of continued negotiation with the BMCC.

I know we are grateful for the work of the RFB during fire and accident emergencies, and I sincerely hope that they will not be too busy in the coming months.

I look forward to working closely with the community at Mt Irvine. After this edition, beginning in 2017, the editor of *The Mounts* will be Jess Delbridge; so many thanks to Tim Gow for steering this craft with such skill.

I am sure everyone has been enjoying the marvellous spring, and we all wish you a happy and peaceful Christmas and holiday season.

Alison Halliday

Acting President

Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade

Water

During the 2013 fires a number of residents found that their water supply was less than optimum and some had trouble starting their pumps. Hence, we remind residents at the start of summer to check this vital part of the defense of their property and life in the event of bushfire.

David Howell has made a detailed study of the water supplies in Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine and has written the following report on this important project:

Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine are unique in many respects, and one aspect which exercises the minds of the RFS Brigade is the lack of reticulated water and the reliance of both villages on rain water, springs and dams for firefighting. Unlike brigades "on the other side", the brigade can't go to the closest underground hydrant to fill up trucks in case of a fire but must find appropriate water resources. With this in mind, a couple of years ago the brigade made a study of all the water sources in both villages, to figure out locations of large amounts of easily accessible water. We divided water sources into three categories ranked by quantity of water (the largest fire truck takes 3,000 litres), the ability of a truck to pull up close to it (ideally within 10 metres), and enough room for trucks to turn around.

The study we conducted showed us that while there are many water sources across the villages, most of it was either in small amounts or inaccessible. We have identified 29 Category 1 water sources – such as the large dam on Breenhold, the tank at the end of Wynne's Rocks Road, and the tank opposite the Mt Irvine Hall.

Each year we check all the sources to make sure they are all still available and then put together a book detailing all 29 sources – including location, type of source (dam or tank), volume of water available, types of fittings on the water outlet and potential hazards.

The "Water Book", as it is called, is then distributed to the surrounding brigades, District Office in Katoomba and there are copies for visiting Brigades should the need arise.

The water study has shown that almost all areas of both Villages are within 500 metres of a Category 1 water source – the exception being the bottom of Farrer Road West and the northwestern quarter of Mt Irvine.

A new tank is planned for the junction of Farrer Road West and Mt Irvine Road to solve one of these problem areas.

The Water Book is of most value during a bushfire when brigades from other areas can use it to locate a water source and refill their trucks independent of locals, without us needing to use valuable time leading them around the villages.

Copies of the Water Book can be seen at the Fire Station and if you have any suggestions for new Category 1 sources please let Beth, Peter, Graham or David know and we will come and check it out.

Flammable Australia

I was astonished to read in the 'Good Weekend' that, according to NASA satellite data, there were 4595 bushfires a week in Australia in 2013. I am not quite sure how they arrived at that figure, presumably an average (?), and fire would range from tiny grassfires to our own huge State Mine Fire.

Nevertheless, that is a big number and one of the reasons that NSW has the largest volunteer firefighting organisation in the world, the RFS.

I know I am not alone in going over the events of October 2013 and planning how I would do it better next time. I also remind myself that I need to avoid the common mistake of a community preparing for the disaster they have just had. Bushfire can start quickly and unexpectedly in our flammable landscape. So, please everyone discuss your bushfire plans with your family and prepare your property. Keep safe this summer.

Thank you, Tim

On behalf of the brigade I would like to thank you, Tim, for the fantastic job you have done as editor of 'The Mounts'. One of the impressive characteristics of our community is the way in which it is very connected and close, a characteristic that contributed to our winning a 'Resilient Australia Award'. Our community newsletter plays an important part in ensuring that we all keep up to date with what is happening and what we need to know – the events, the issues and the latest news - in our mountain home. Your editorial, with its conciseness and touch of humour, was always a pleasure to read. All the best to you and Kim in your new mountain home.

Kathleen Oakes
Community Engagement

A Book Review - The Theatre of War by Bryan Doerries

What Ancient Greek Tragedies Can Teach Us Today

Bryan Doerries girlfriend Laura was slowly dying of an incurable illness. He was full of grief and anger. He found in ancient Greek tragedy characters and events that spoke to him with clarity and urgency. In *The Theatre of War* Doerries records the process which started so personally and ended by taking the stories of Ajax, of Prometheus and of Heracles, among others, to the guilt ridden, distressed and ignored victims of modern warfare and institutions we may prefer not to think about. He developed his own theatre company, Outside the Wire, which sought to allow communities to deal with what they, together and separately, had been through.

The plays were only partially acted but they were read by professional actors with all the skill and understanding of their art. The audiences, after each performance, were encouraged to respond to what they had seen by commenting and asking questions. Doerries had gone back to university to study the ancient Greek tragedies of Sophocles, Euripides and Aeschylus under the insistent eye of a scholar and together they took each work in several translations and examined every line in minute detail. He was told that the 'secret of reading is to close the book' and so he made his own translations and took these simple and often violent performances to people, usually men, who were locked in suffering that impacted on themselves, their families and their careers.

Ajax, a warrior under Achilles, vents his anger and rage at being denied his just reward, on a flock of animals which he thinks are people and then, aware of his madness during this slaughter, he commits suicide. This play was presented to veterans from every arm of the defence, sometimes to small groups and later to auditoriums full of listening soldiers, navy personnel, airmen, families, and generals. Slowly people began to talk of how they understood what Ajax went through, how, as one young man said, '[Sophocles] wrote these plays to morally instruct his soldiers in what they should and should not do.'

The impact of these performances grew, and Doerries used other plays, including stories from the Bible and from Japan to talk to prison guards, prisoners and dying people in hospices. The plays acted as a key to allow expressions of personal anger, identification, pleas for help and ultimately hope. The book weaves Doerries actions with the story of poignant examples and his own love for the lost Laura.

This wonderful and unforgettable account is the perfect answer to those who ask what is the purpose of literature and theatre; it is to offer examples of fellow sufferers and to give hope to those in very dark places.

Alison Halliday

ATN***The column formerly known as "Ask the Neighbours"**

Treachery, Tim. Yes, I know it's fashionable and virtually *de rigour*, for lifestyle genre media offerings such as ours. There's nothing like an explosive walkout, tantrum or celebrity desertion to a rival program to whet an audience's appetite. But Tim, I know this may be hard to understand - brace yourself - they're not real. They're only pretending so that their ratings go up.

There's really no need for you to follow through on your Media Release/ Facebook post/ tweet/ carrier pigeon announcement of earlier today. Apart from this being such a well-known ploy for attention that it just won't work, I know you couldn't possibly abandon us at RAATS to become the founding Editor of BRATS' (Blackheath Rural Antechinus Togetherness Society)* new newsletter - "*The BRATS Bulletin*". (Attentive readers will remember our December 2015 column in which we recorded BRATS' shameful attempt to take over RAATS at our 2015 Annual General Meeting.) It's such a preposterous idea. No doubt you're warming me up for a pay rise. What's that? Speak up, Tim. Yes- I know we don't actually pay you anything now anyway. Mmmm. With that in mind, I'm prepared to offer you a 20% - no make that a 50% - pay rise to stay. What do you think about that, Tim?

What do you mean "It isn't about money?" Tim, everything in lifestyle genre media land is about money. What else is there? Dignity, you say? Dignity!? When have we ever compromised your dignity on ATN? Well, apart from that Grecian gown entry you wore in our search for the new RAATS' uniform? (You know you looked lovely) And, the leech and legume log you tried out for our RAATS in the Rotisserie cookbook? (It helped you reach that weight loss goal, didn't it?) Pleeese, Tim - you are my muse. You are Dora to my Picasso, Yoko to my John. The wind beneath my wings. You can't leave me (ummm), us. Who will road test new RAATS strategies? Who will faithfully rush in to ensure that every ATN column is a ratings winner? Who will be chief taster on the next edition of the cookbook? Who? Who? Who?

Hello Jess. I see a bright future for you in the lifestyle media space. When you have a few minutes, can I walk you through a few ideas? We could take a few concepts out for a spin. Get a new focus group set up. I've always liked the name "Jess". It's fresh. It's new. It's got four letters instead of three.

Ohh, ohh, yes. Sure, Jess. I understand. Busy getting settled in as a serious editor. I totally understand. Deadlines to meet. Front pages to hold. What's that? You think I should do a hand over pack and run it past Tim first? Tim who?

I'll just wait for you call then, will I? Jess? Will I do that? Jess? Jess?

WARNING!

Serious bit follows.

Tim, a really big thank you! You've been such a good sport as "Ask the Neighbours" morphed from a genuine Q & A column into the ridiculous nonsense it is today. You've borne it all with great humour and style. And you haven't been half bad as Editor either!!

Elizabeth M

Lifestyle Editor and RAATS President

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Suggestions, comments or contributions warmly welcomed!