



FRIENDS OF MOUNT PAINTER NEWS

December 2011

THANK YOU TO ALL THOSE WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED THIS YEAR TO THE WORK OF FRIENDS OF MOUNT PAINTER, WHETHER AS WORKERS OR SUPPORTERS OF THOSE WHO WORK.

HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL AND TO EVERYONE WHO USES AND ENJOYS THE RESERVE.

JOIN US ON SUNDAY, 11 DECEMBER, 9am – 12 noon TO CELEBRATE A BUSY AND SUCCESSFUL YEAR (and cut out some woody weeds) IN THE WILDFLOWER TRIANGLE.

- Meet:** Where the bicycle path leaves the Wildflower Triangle to go through the underpass under Bindubi Street
- Wear:** Hat, long-sleeved shirt, pants, and sturdy footwear.
- Bring:** Water to drink and some food to share for our Christmas morning tea.

Apart from enjoying our morning tea, we will be cutting out the many small hawthorn seedlings and a few larger trees.

JANUARY'S WORK PARTY

The January work party will be held on Sunday, 8 January, from 8.30am – 12 noon, along the summit track. We will be watering the daisies, lilies and Hardenbergia planted last winter, and weeding them and the area around them.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

We are looking for someone who would be able to put a new handle on to a mallet.

AND

We would you like to hear from anyone who would like to adopt a few of the plants we put in along the summit path last winter. Would you be willing to water some of them from the tank nearby?

We are thinking of changing our monthly work party day from the second Sunday of each month to the third, starting in February 2012. Would this inconvenience anyone who likes to attend?

Please contact Sarah with any offers, comments or inquiries on 6251 2228 or 0424 263 565 or email sarahnatiuk@yahoo.com.au.

FRIENDS OF MOUNT PAINTER CONTRIBUTION TO THE 2011 ISSUE OF PARKCARE'S PUBLICATION, *SCRIBBLY GUM*

2011 was a rather different year for Friends of Mount Painter (FOMP) from recent ones. In the first place, the dense, tall saffron thistles that covered most of the hill restricted our activities, from November 2010 to August 2011, to the areas of native vegetation near the suburb. As a consequence, the weeds in these areas received much more attention than usual. The thistles also seriously limited the mapping of rabbit burrows last spring, and we were unable to do our annual count of kangaroo numbers.



photo: Charles Tambiah / ANU

Secondly, we did much more planting than usual. The Lonsdale family grew 450 grass plants for us, which we used in patches of bare ground in our enclosure and where we had weeded intensively in the Wildflower Triangle. At two community planting days during the winter, more than 600 low-growing plants were put in along the summit track. This effort complemented the Parks and Conservation Service's (PCS) big planting program that has seen pink tree guards now dotting Mount Painter's slopes. Thirty-two people turned out to plant in May on a perfect day; they also enjoyed a splendid, home-cooked morning tea prepared by Nina Bruns, the ranger then in charge of Mount Painter. The weather for the second planting day was everything that the May day was not: damp, very cold and extremely windy. Notwithstanding, 25 Friends of Mount Painter and Aranda Bushland (FoAB) turned out to plant, spurred on by FoAB's delicious morning tea.

Other FOMP activities during 2011 included:

- Preparing a brochure about the reserve. Charles Tambiah took the photos and put them and the text together to provide us with a very professional publication.
- Participating in several activities with our neighbours, the Friends groups from Aranda Bushland and The Pinnacle, most notably in our joint staffing of a display at Jamison Plaza about our reserves.
- Supervising groups from Greening Australia, the Green Jobs Corps and Conservation Volunteers Australia who watered, weeded and planted.
- Adopting a weed management plan developed by John Busby that provides a simple but effective way of recording the weeds in different parts of the reserve and tracking the effectiveness of our weeding.
- Assisting PCS in the drafting of their operational management plan for the Mount Painter reserve.



photo: Jean Gelle

Two highlights that deserve mention are the 2011 ACT Individual Landcarer Award to FOMP'S convener, and the appearance of a eucalypt seedling in the enclosure, around three mature yellow box trees, that was designed to foster just such regeneration.

We know that there will be no shortage of work for FOMP in the future, especially in light of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment's finding that of all Canberra's reserves, only Mount Painter is in a critical condition, and 'loss of vegetative cover leading to soil erosion is so severe that the ability of the land to recover after removal of grazing pressure is unlikely without significant intervention'.

A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY

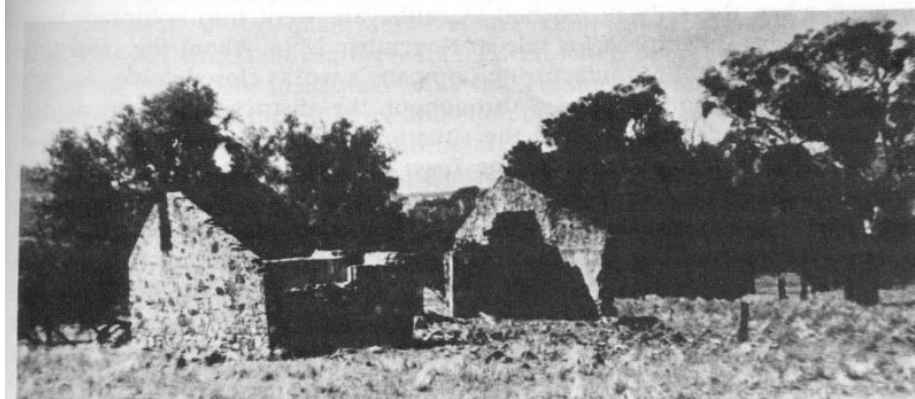
These photos appear in *Canberra 1820 – 1913* by Lyall Gillespie, AGPS, Canberra, 1991, p. 205.

The stone house belonging to Donald MacDonald stood on the eastern slope of the hill in what is now one of the horse paddocks. The house site was east of the hairpin bend in the track round the base of the hill, sheltered to the west and south by a belt of trees. A round, grassy hump, presumably of rubble from the walls, is all that is now left of it. This hump is just visible in nearmap.com and Google Earth images.

Does anyone know where the Young's house was situated?



173. James Young and his family at their Round Hill (Mount Painter) home



174. Ruins of Donald MacDonald's home, Ashton, at Round Hill (now Mount Painter in the suburb of Cook)