

TOPICS

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HILLTOP: Munibung Hill Conservation Society president Stuart Carter on a ridge on the hill's north-east. Picture: Max Mason-Hubers

Majestic Munibung ancient as the hills

WITH 360-degree views of the Hunter, Munibung Hill is quite the place. From the summit, you can see as far as Port Stephens.

And there's impressive views of the lake and Watagan mountains.

The hill is pretty close to the centre of the Hunter - along the coast, that is.

But being bordered by Boolaroo and the former Pasminco land on one side, meant the hill was suffocated by pollution for decades. And large parts of the hill were quarried for gravel.

Locals hope it can now find a new lease of life. The *Newcastle Herald* recently reported that the draft Munibung Hill Management Plan has been released through Lake Macquarie council.

Having a gander at the plan reminded us how much bureaucratic gobbledegook councils and governments use in their reports and plans. It's mind-boggling stuff.

More to the point, though, Munibung Hill Conservation Society president Stuart Carter has some points to make about the hill, which he described as "an iconic place that deserved better treatment than it had received over the last 100 years or so".

"We are living at a time when, thankfully, we view landscapes like Munibung Hill as

more than sites for mining and exploitation," Stuart said.

The hill is home to various native plant and animal species and has an ancient past.

"The geological and Indigenous cultural aspects need special recognition, with storyboards relating to its 251 million years of age and 65,000 years of Aboriginal custodianship," Stuart said.

"While we acknowledge that some people would like to keep Munibung Hill a secret for their private, personal recreational purposes, the conservation values will be better served by attracting a new generation of custodians."

He hopes that people value the hill for its role as an urban forest, bird and wildlife sanctuary, pollinator corridor, Aboriginal place, health and fitness park and pedestrian-friendly area.

The city council plan states that protection will be given to Aboriginal cultural areas, native vegetation, key ecological corridors and a threatened lowland rainforest.

Also to be protected are habitat for the critically endangered scrub turpentine, powerful owl and micro-bat roosting.

The plan further states that activities such as recreational 4WD and motorbike use are

"not considered suitable within the area".

"The management plan will not enable mountain bike riding on Munibung Hill."

There are concerns that building suitable mountain biking tracks could disturb lead-contaminated soil.

Improved walking tracks with parking and signs seem to be on the cards.

Sadly, there was no mention of the conservation society's previous suggestion of an observatory and planetarium on the hill.

The hill, we hear, is quite the spot to experience the wonders of the universe.

Place Names

Sam Collyer has questioned the inclusion of Jervis Bay in a list of places with names that don't sound like they're pronounced.

"I've been corrected a few times on this by the locals," he said.

"Technically Jervis Bay is pronounced as it is written. It is named after Admiral John Jervis, who was born almost three centuries ago and whose family used the less common pronunciation."

He added, with disdain, that a Scottish colleague used to insist that Newcastle was pronounced "New-cassel". Aussies, of course, pronounce it as "New-carsel".

TODAY IN HISTORY

- 1855** Van Diemen's Land is officially proclaimed Tasmania.
- 1865** *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is published in England.
- 1942** The film *Casablanca*, starring Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman, has its world premiere.
- 1965** France launches its first satellite.
- 2006** Irishman Damien Leith wins *Australian Idol* ahead of 17-year-old Jessica Mauboy.
- 2019** A magnitude 6.4 earthquake strikes western Albania, leaving at least 52 people dead and over 1000 injured.

BIRTHDAYS

William Cowper, English poet (1731-1800); **Maurice McDonald**, US fast food pioneer (1902-1971); **Charles M. Schulz**, US cartoonist (1922-2000); **Robert Goulet**, US singer (1933-2007); **Tina Turner**, US singer and actor (1939-); **Bruce Paltrow**, US filmmaker (1943-2002); **John McVie**, English musician (1945-); **Jacki MacDonald**, Australian television personality (1953-); **Dave Hughes**, Australian comedian (1970-); **Anna Millward**, Australian cyclist (1971-); **Natasha Bedingfield**, English singer (1981-); **Chris Hughes**, US co-founder of Facebook (1983-).

TRIVIA

1. Which artist designed the costumes and sets for Igor Stravinsky's ballet *Pulcinella*?
2. To be certified as Rainforest Alliance coffee, what percentage of the coffee must be produced under the Rainforest Alliance criteria?
3. Who wrote the novel *The Secret Garden*?
4. Mickey Rooney and Frank Sinatra both married which actress?
5. Colcannon is a traditional dish of which country?
6. 'Goedenavond' means good evening in what language?
7. Found in the ocean, the Portuguese man-o'-war is also known as what in Australia?
8. Who directed the 1999 drama *Music of the Heart*?
9. Quoyile, a newspaper reporter on the island of Newfoundland, is the protagonist of which Pulitzer Prize-winning novel?
10. Which actor played the Penguin in *Batman Returns*?

ANSWERS: 1. Pablo Picasso 2. 90 per cent 3. Frances Hodgson Burnett 4. Ava Gardner 5. Ireland 6. Dutch 7. Blue bottle jellyfish 8. Wes Craven 9. The Shipping News 10. Danny DeVito

TODAY'S TEXT

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord.

Colossians 3:23

<http://www.torchtrust.org>

STAR SNAP

ARE Keanu Reeves and Winona Ryder married? Their characters wed in Francis Ford Coppola's 1992 film *Dracula*. Reeves said the marriage was done "with real priests". "Winona says we are. Coppola says we are. So I guess we're married under the eyes of God." Ryder said previously "I think we're married in real life".



Winona Ryder and Keanu Reeves.

WHAT'S ON

TARONGA: *Who's Who in the Zoo* is on NBN at 7.30pm, then *The Sum of All Fears* at 8.30pm. *The Imitation Game* is on 9Gem at 7.30pm. *Enemy at the Gates* is on 9Gem at 9.45pm. *Gardening Australia* is on ABC at 7.32pm, then *Endeavour* at 8.32pm. *Inside Balmoral* is on SBS at 7.30pm, then *Empire with Michael Portillo* at 8.30pm.

ODD SPOT

PILLOW fighting is moving into the boxing ring. The Pillow Fight Championship (PFC) will hold its first pay-per-view event in Florida in January. "It's not something where you sit there and laugh and feathers are flying," said Steve Williams, CEO of PFC. "It's serious. It's hardcore swinging with specialised pillows."