



Wolli Creek Preservation Society

Update

June 2016

wollicreek.org.au

FREE GUIDED BUSHWALK

WCPS member and highly experienced bushwalker Ute Foster will be leading a full Valley walk, starting at Bexley North and finishing at Undercliffe, overlooking Waterworth Park.

'BATTLING FOR THE WOLLI CREEK VALLEY'

Ute will give an extensive historical and environmental commentary about the amazing stories of the survival of the Wolli Creek Valley and the various battles fought for it, such as tollroads, urban development, weeds and alienation of public spaces.

Morning tea will be provided at the historic Jackson Place sandstone cottages.

These walks are held infrequently, so grab your chance! Over a dozen people have booked already. If Ute gets a lot more interest, she may schedule another walk later in the year.



SUNDAY 19 JUNE
8.30am to 12.30pm

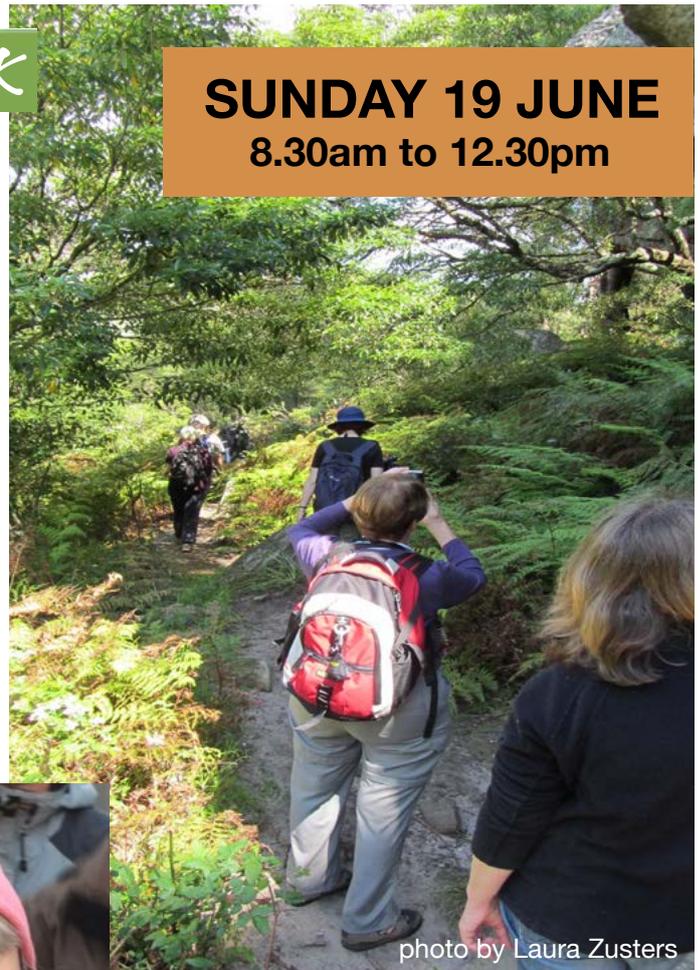


photo by Laura Zusters

The walk is free to members and non-members.

You can join on the day.
Single membership \$10
Family \$15
Concession \$7

If you have never been on a walk through the Valley, or it's been a long time between walks, book now so you don't miss out.



Ute has bushwalked and camped in more fantastic wilderness and Australian bush than the rest of us put together. She also has a long history with the Valley and a lot of information and insight to share.



RECENT ACTIVITY

Canterbury Council Fails Community on Reserves

There was a great deal of interest when Council recently hired consultants to prepare a Plan of Management (PoM) for Gough Whitlam and Waterworth Parks, located at the junction of Cooks River and Wolli Creek. These reserves are under the care and control of Council. Approval from the Minister for Planning is required for any significant developments, as is a PoM, which must include community consultation.

About 50 people came to the Senior Citizens' Centre in Earlwood on 30th March to hear the consultants' presentation about development proposals. Preempting the findings and recommendations of the consultants, Council had already passed a motion that required the consultants to include both an archery range and bicycle safety training circuit in the PoM.

But it was clear that the overwhelming majority of those present were opposed to both the archery range, currently set for Wentworth, and the bicycle training circuit at Gough Whitlam. Neither facility has significant support from locals. There are similar facilities no great distance away.

Public open space is at a premium in the Canterbury Council area. Any proposals to reduce the open space in these parks put at risk the vegetation coverage and protection of the creek banks, the bush feel of the Two Valley Trail, habitat for birds and forage for flying-foxes. The Wolli Creek Preservation Society is also concerned about the constant efforts to nibble away parts of the Valley, its bushland and its open spaces for commercial or private purposes.

Both developments could be part of efforts to free up land, now or in the future, for downgrading and selling off by Council for residential developments.

A Council meeting on April 28 was run on the basis that the outcomes were a foregone conclusion, presumably settled beforehand by a voting bloc of Councillors, 3 ALP, 3 Liberal, who were over-riding other Councillors such as Linda Eisler and taking scant notice of community concerns.

A large number of residents opposed to Council's proposals attended the meeting, but were appalled by Council's undemocratic decision-making process

Now that the Baird government has amalgamated Councils and put Councillors out of a job, it will be interesting to read the consultants' draft report when it is submitted.

Canterbury can't afford to lose a single square metre of open space. In fact, it needs to be seeking opportunities to expand it. WCPS will continue to liaise with groups interested in obtaining the best results for active and passive recreation and the natural environment in the area.

Peter Munro of the Mudcrabs: "We can't afford to see any more alienation of public land"

Peter Stevens, WCPS Bushcare: "Both reserves have major riverside areas that need to be protected much better than they are at present".

Chris Maguire, author of Facebook's 'Protect Gough Whitlam Reserve and Waterworth Park' & 800-strong petition, "Once open space is gone, it's gone forever."

It wouldn't be the first time that Councillors in Sydney have served their own interests

RECENT ACTIVITY

PUTTING PRESSURE ON MINISTER DUNCAN GAY

Now that Westconnex announced it no longer requires the Wolli Creek bushland at Bexley North for the M5, The WCPS Committee has agreed to concentrate its energies on making sure that this RMS land is finally transferred to National Parks, as was promised fifteen years ago.

On behalf of the committee, our president Deb Little sent a letter to Duncan Gay, NSW Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight in April, requesting that the land be transferred to the National Parks and Wildlife Service for inclusion in the Wolli Creek Regional Park.

She also invited him to a short walk through this important patch of bushland to the Regional Park.

When plans were drawn up at the beginning of the century for the creation of the Wolli Creek Regional Park, the land, owned by the then RTA at Bexley North, was included in the boundaries of the Park. But the land was never transferred to NPWS.

On 25 June 2015, Gay issued a Joint Media Statement about the new M5, saying: "The location of the western entry point does not require acquisition of residential properties and we can reassure the community that the Wolli Creek bushland will not be affected."

We are yet to get a reply.



NSW Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight Duncan Gay, slamming 'latte sipping inner-city hipsters' as 'anti-road zealots'

SAMPLING MINI-BEASTS IN THE VALLEY



In February and April this year, the Society for Insect Studies came to the Valley to survey some of the invertebrate life here.

<http://www.duttcom.com/Insects/>

Their visit fulfilled a long held desire by WCPS to have this aspect of the Valley's animal biodiversity surveyed – what is often called the other 99% of animal life.

A few members of WCPS came along on the two afternoons and evenings. As well as picking up tips on methods and observing the myriad of insects that were attracted to the light sheet, we were treated to the generosity and incredible friendliness of the study group, who organized a BBQ dinner as part of the exercise.

On the second visit we also met a Turrella local who is an active member of their group, and is among the speakers who give talks at the Society's meetings held at the Australian Museum. They plan to return to the Valley to do more survey work, possibly further west of Girrahween - even if that means foregoing the BBQ!

To develop a meaningful list of species, many visits at different times and in different seasonal and weather conditions are needed, as species found can vary highly, even week to week. They are currently working on the lists from their two visits.

To get involved in their next visit, register your interest with me at Info@wollicreek.org.au

We have also been encouraged to come along to their bi-monthly meetings and talks at the Museum. More information on their website (see link above).

Deb Little



STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

CAN YOU PUT YOUR HAND UP?

**MEMBERS – WE NEED YOUR HELP IN EXPANDING OUR MEMBERSHIP
IT MAY SEEM THAT WE ARE SHOUTING AT YOU. WELL, WE ARE!!**

We are appealing to all our members to make a special effort this year to sign up that neighbour, friend or family member you have meaning to ask about joining WCPS. Our regular membership reports show a decline in membership.

We are planning a stall at Addison Rd markets in late August, as we haven't been there for a while. We will focus on recruitment there, as well as at the Cooks River Big Day Out event on August 21.

Volunteers to staff stalls at both venues will be needed.

As we have limited resources – volunteer time - to attend many festival or market events, these two will be our focus this year. Ideas and actions about other ways to recruit more members are welcome.

In our interactions with politicians, it never takes them long to slip in a question about how many members WCPS actually has. When we tell them, there's a noticeable pause as they absorb the significance of the number, before moving on to the next question.

Please give this some thought. Even better, take action! A good, solid membership base is important for our Society.

Our strength relies on our numbers!

Deb Little (President)



ANNUAL DINNER

In the June Update, we usually give advance notice of the Annual Dinner on the 3rd Friday in October, advising who will be the guest speaker.

However, this year the usual organisers are just too weary, so there is not going to be a dinner, unless there are people willing to take over the reins. If others would like to take over organizing this popular event, they would get guidance and support from the usual organisers and would not be left on their own.

The dinners have become a well-honed activity over the years, so there is a standard procedure to follow.

As things currently stand, the committee has decided to go for a Bi-annual Dinner, but even that depends on new volunteer organisers.

Would you like to step up and take charge of organizing the Dinner?

WCPS Committee

BUSHCARE

GRANT FOR PAPERBARK CREEK RESTORATION

Thanks to the hard work of Sarah Zanni, who put in a lot of work on the grant application, the Wolli Creek Preservation Society has received a grant of \$63,423 from the NSW Environmental Trust for a Restoration and Rehabilitation project entitled Paperbark Creek: restoration of a neglected catchment - Phase 3.

This will enable us to considerably expand the area under active management. Much of the new area is adjacent to where we have worked before on the right bank of the creek. This area proved to regenerate so well, so it is an exciting prospect.

This work will be well supported by a team of professional regenerators, but it highlights the need for continued volunteer work at our other sites, where numbers have dropped and we don't (yet) have grant support. This is particularly the case at the eastern end of the valley, at the Undercliffe Track and Wolli Bluff sites.

These two sites are particularly close for volunteers from Marrickville. Any volunteers from there would be very welcome. We have many names on a list of people who have expressed interest in working there, but not many are actually coming to join us. It's only for 3.5 hours a month, really pleasant to spend time in the bush and you can learn a lot about plants.

We also need some additional volunteers to organise or assist with morning teas for some of the sites - this can be a commitment of as little as about an hour a month and needn't involve any bush regen work at all, if that fits best.

Please let me know as soon as possible if you are ready to begin, reignite, or increase your volunteer commitment.



To our surprise, 17 volunteers came and they were tigers for work.

Our Johnston Street bushcare group had an arranged visit from a group of Chinese volunteers, who came with an interpreter, as their English was about as good as my Mandarin.

Since the Johnston Street group of WCPS volunteers has a Chinese speaker among them, we are hopeful that this may actually result in some new volunteers for us and an ongoing relationship.

It was a scene of partially organised chaos in which a large number of Asparagus ferns met their demise, opening up a space for us to nurture the expected regeneration.

There was a second group, in more manageable numbers, joined our volunteers on Friday 15 May and together this outcome, which has been in the pipeline for three years, will enable me to acquit a grant from CCC which we had three years ago. This was under CCC's local grants scheme which provides up to \$2000 for local groups.

We can't apply for another grant until this one is acquitted.

**Peter Stevens
Bushcare Coordinator**



In the Valley...

On 9th April, the Sydney Fungal Studies Group (SFSGI) and WCPS held a joint fungal foray in Wolli Creek. 16 people came for the foray, picking samples of fungi in the morning, stopping for a well-deserved lunch at the Girrahween picnic tables and then getting down to identifying the specimens.

After such a wet summer, the tracks through the Wolli Valley are ripe with fungi. Its been a fantastic season for fungi spotting.

The group also spotted a dung beetle doing what it does best, in this case, with a lovely spherical ball of dog poo!

The Insect Studies Group got a beetle expert at the Museum this member of the Scarab Beetle family, who says it is the endemic, flightless *Cephalodesmius armiger*, native to NSW and S. E. Queensland. Our own native Dung beetles, like this one, prefer the dry pellets of our native fauna, not the big sloppy ones of cattle.



photo by David W Noble

DUNG BEETLE INVADES WOLLI!

This beetle apparently has an interesting behaviour which you could check out on the web. CSIRO introduced about 40 different species of dung beetles in the 1970's & 80's, 23 of which now call Australia home.

Joanna Robinski

CLEAN UP WOLLI BLUFF

Many people may know Wolli Bluff at the eastern end of the Wolli Creek Regional Park near Tempe Station, with its sandstone rock faces and beautiful native bush.

But not many know that nearby is an old dump site where huge amounts of illegal building waste, appliances, broken tiles, furniture, crockery as well as bottles and cans and other rubbish were thrown into the bushland in years gone by, only metres from the popular bushwalking track.



photo by Laura Zusters

Wolli Creek Preservation Society volunteers have been doing bushcare in this area, removing weeds to give the native vegetation a chance to thrive and so the Society always takes part in Clean Up Australia Day, with the help of many wonderful volunteers.

This is the third time that we registered this particular site, hoping that this year we would get to the bottom of it.

23 Volunteers aged 7 to 70 came along and, assisted by the local National Parks ranger, removed 55 bags of rubbish - an estimated 700kg at least - plus two utility truckloads of old bricks, large metal objects and other waste from the bushland. It was hot work, and unfortunately more rubbish kept being found below the obvious stuff. It was an impressive result.

A big Thank You to everybody. And a special thank you to Canterbury City Council for supporting our efforts again this year and picking up all that rubbish we carried out.

Ute Foster

BATS GONE SOUTH AND NORTH

In early April, the Grey-headed Flying-fox (GHFF) camp at Turrella emptied of Flying Foxes. This is the first time since September 2012 and since it became a permanent camp that the camp has been empty. When it was a seasonal camp, they used to leave during the colder months. Other Sydney GHFF camps including the large camp at Gordon also emptied around this time.

Reports from around the traps indicate that the reason Flying-Foxes have left Sydney is due to unprecedented flowering of Eucalyptus trees in areas outside of Sydney. In particular, there is a mass flowering of Spotted Gums around the Bateman's Bay area and over 100,000 GHFF have been reported feeding and roosting there. The Hunter region is also experiencing an influx of GHFF as they seek the good supplies of nectar that the large numbers of flowering Eucalypts are providing.

The temporary absence of the FF's has not only given the regular counters a break at this colder time of year, but has made it easier for volunteer and professional bush regeneration contractor teams to start work on the vine and other weed management work needed to ensure the sustainability of the camp area as suitable roosting habitat.

A volunteer bush regeneration session was held on the 21st May in the area to the north of the creek and by the TVT track, where the FF's now also regularly roost. The land owner Sydney Trains has also awarded a contract to the bush regeneration company Toolijooa and their work commenced in late May.

People have reported that the well-fed FF's returned to the camp in the last week of May



6 of the 11 people who came, carrying weeds out at the end

Photo by Luke Durrington (volunteer from Sydney Trains)



photo by Tammy Owens

WEEDING BLITZ

The Adopt-A-Patch site at the top of Jackson Place got a make over in early May, organized by Shari May, the new Biodiversity Officer at Canterbury Council.

In a short workshop, she showed volunteers how to identify and remove weeds, then residents and volunteers got stuck in to 'blitzing' the weeds and transforming the site.



Batwatch Picnic in March

Word had certainly got out and head counts showed that around 320 people came to the picnic on a perfect night. Even Batman came this year!

We certainly need a few more craft helpers if we run the event again, as Judy was particularly hard pressed to manage all the interest, and Kitty and Sandi still had kids queuing into the dark - again.

Here is a short video made by Meg Churches, bat counter and bat carer - featuring my mum too. And I look forward to Laura's video, made with her professional equipment and skills.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9sInXgJX3Cw>

Deb Little

MEMBERSHIP

Family One Year \$15
Individual One Year \$10
Concession \$7
Group Membership \$30

Direct Deposit Westpac BSB 032 067
WCPS Inc 288295, with your
SURNAME and RENEW in
the information line

Email info@wollicreek.org.au to confirm
years and any donation included

ONLINE VIEWING

Saving Wolli Creek Part 5: Looking back, looking forward

The Wolli Creek Valley might have been an 8-lane freeway, but it was saved by Sydney's longest conservation fight.

For those of you who have been viewing Gavin's video history of the forty year struggle episode by episode, Part 5 will serve as a good wrap on the whole series.

For those of you who haven't looked at it, settle back to learn some important Sydney and Wolli Creek history. Each episode of five is 15 minutes long.

[Saving Wolli Creek Episode 5](#)

[Saving Wolli Creek Episode 1](#)

The Battle for Nannygoat Hill

For those who missed out on seeing this wonderful episode of the ABC's 'This Day Tonight' in 1967, which we showed at the last Annual Dinner, you can now catch it on our

[YouTube Channel Wolli Creek Valley](#)

EDITOR & LAYOUT: LAURA ZUSTERS

CALENDAR

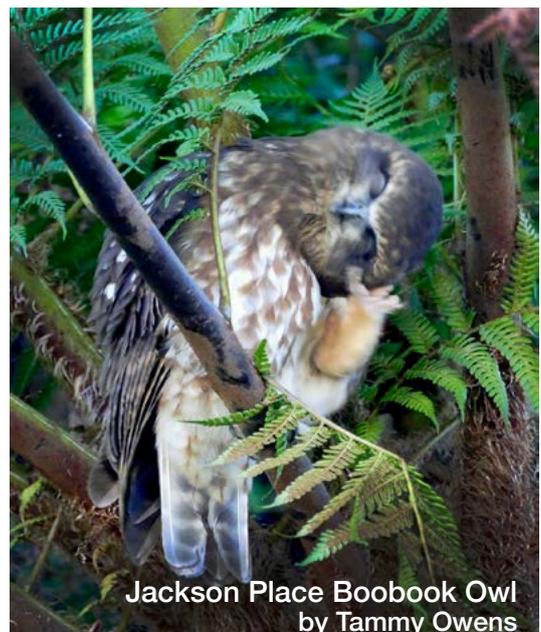
Bush Regeneration: June 5, 8, 13, 18, 19, 26. July 3, 11, 13, 16, 17, 24. August 7, 8, 10, 20, 21, 28. September 4, 12, 14, 17, 18, 25. Get details of locations via bushcare@wollicreek.org.au, from WCPS website calendar or phone 9554 3176. Always check in case of changes at short notice.

Bat Counting: Generally, third Friday of each month, just after sunset. For up-to-date details, join the bat group email list by contacting bats@wollicreek.org.au and come along to see the fly-out or join in the counting

Bird Surveys: Ten teams are doing regular monthly surveys of bird species and numbers present. They work to their own timetable, but we can get you involved on a team if you contact birds@wollicreek.org.au

Committee Meetings: June 27, July 25, August 22, September 26. 7:30 to 9:30 pm. Inner south-west CDO, suite 1, Ground Floor, 11-13 Hartill-Law Ave Bardwell Park. All members are welcome to attend the meetings, notification to WCPS essential due to security at the building.

Wolli Walk: Sunday 19 June from 8.30 am. Starting at Bexley North and going through the Valley, with environmental and historical commentary focusing on the various battles fought there. To register contact info@wollicreek.org.au



Jackson Place Boobook Owl
by Tammy Owens

Wolli Creek Preservation Society
PO Box 270 Earlwood NSW 2206.
T 0431 914 553 E info@wollicreek.org.au
www.wollicreek.org.au

