



Wolli Creek Preservation Society

Update

February 2019

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THE REWARDS OF GETTING INVOLVED

Tim Pullen, Committee Member

Since joining the society and getting involved in its activities, I have been rewarded by a deeper appreciation of our local environment, a strengthened connection to the local community and a sense of purpose and shared values. When I first moved to this area 30 years ago I was interested in the environment, we went for walks in the valley and I was aware of the Wolli Creek Preservation Society. But I didn't get involved at that time because our days were taken up with home, family and work.

Over the years I have appreciated the opportunity to attend talks and guided walks of the valley, learning about the history of the local area, bush tucker and aboriginal cultural practices, plants and animals of the local area, as well the threats posed by development, pollution and invasive species. Unfortunately, the society isn't currently able to put on talks, although a small group of members is organizing guided walks. New threats to the local bushland continually emerge and fighting them needs vigilance and energy from concerned volunteers.

I am continually inspired by the energy and commitment of members of the society who give up their time to coordinate bushcare work, arrange bird surveys and bat counts, lobby to protect the valley, put on events like the Bat Picnic and kayak trips. It's a privilege to know and work with these people, to help in small ways and to share in the joy and sense of achievement you get from working together with shared values and common purpose.

I highly recommend getting involved!



Come along to the Planning Meeting on 18 February
where we will be talking about volunteering opportunities

'Bat Watch' Picnic Friday March 8th 2019

**Turrella
Reserve beside
Wolli Creek.
Activities from
6.30 pm**



**Come along and watch one of
the great urban 'David
Attenborough moments' during
Australasian Bat Month**

Just after sunset, watch Grey-headed Flying-foxes stream out in their thousands from their Turrella camp, beside Wolli Creek. Share this 'wow' experience with friends and family.

Learn more about these important night workers - our best long-distance pollinators, keeping forests healthy.

Bring a picnic dinner, rug or chair and insect repellent. There will be creative and crafty batty activities for young and old to enjoy. Get into the spirit of things by coming in batty costume.

At Turrella Reserve: Enter via Henderson St. Turrella (close to Turrella Station) or Finlays Ave. Earlwood. For more info email bats@wollicreek.org.au

Organised by The Wolli Creek Preservation Society, with support from The National Parks and Wildlife Service, Canterbury-Bankstown Council and Sydney Trains





Mistletoe Bird



Clamorous Reed Warbler



Red-browed Finch or Firetail

Photos by Voren O'Brien

A SKEPTIC'S VIEW OF BIRD SURVEYS

By member David Fairburn, who recently joined in on the monthly bird count with experienced birdos Deb Little and Peter Stevens

Skepticism is in my blood. Wollie Creek is a small patch in an ever smaller part of suburban Sydney bushland.

So for me, after being “on country”, as Aborigines call it, travelling and seeing so much that is new to me and different as far as nature and wildlife, the Wollie Creek Valley seemed so much like small fry, so local, so familiar, so very nearly contemptible. As if bushland can ever be that.

After all I'd paddled it, walked it, driven around it and had seen it from the train. Which by the way, may be the best way of all to see it, as an introduction.

Somehow it is shocking from a carriage window to see suburbia, suburbia, then blindingly, a sea of green, then the Nannygoat Hill outcrop. Hills and bush smack in the middle of suburbia. There like an outcast is something from a foreign place, maybe an escapee from the upper North Shore, maybe from the Royal NP, transplanted as an outcast along the train line, to shock passengers into a calmer place, as if that is all that is required of bushland.

Then it's gone, glorious suburbia again.

Along the line I'd forgotten that these small green patches knit together to make up a whole for all of Sydney. Remnants indeed, but they are essential and are the proverbial wildlife corridors that we need.

So grudgingly I arose early to see what I could see, as far as birdlife and wildlife. Well, you know where this is going don't you? Surprising is the word. Luckily Deb and Peter are the eyes and ears of the bush around here. So all I had to do was watch and listen and let them suggest to me what we were hearing. Nothing more.

And over the next few months the early morning sights and smells of the bush and the familiarity of walking the same track each time and knowing what to see where, has its rewards. I can expect a Firetail here, maybe a Reed Warbler there. And the familiarity I took for granted has a deeper reward, the idea of expectation, of knowing, of being part of this bushland, and the realisation that nature is not predictable and maybe we will not see or hear anything different this time.

Eventually we come, via the black snake area and another sandstone outcrop, to the new regeneration areas. Then I get a lesson or two on the flora of the region. And on that I'm out of my depth, but slowly learning.



WE CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU

Gina Svolos - President, Wolli Creek Preservation Society

PLANNING MEETING - MONDAY 18 FEBRUARY 7PM

We invite you to the Wolli Creek Preservation Society planning meeting at the office of CDF, 1/11-13 Hartill-Law Ave, Bardwell Park. This meeting will discuss strategies for how we manage our current activities.

The response from our membership will determine the future of the WCPS.

We seriously need your help to spread the load in volunteer roles and we need to recruit new people to assist. A small number of people have carried many different roles within the WCPS and we now need new volunteers to take on smaller, more manageable roles to spread the load. We know that most people don't have a lot of extra time in their lives to volunteer. However, many hands make light work.

RSVP by Monday 11 February to info@wollicreek.org.au is essential so we know how much interest there is to help us plan for this meeting. Also, let us know what role or roles you may be interested in taking on.

If you are unable to attend but are interested in finding out more please let us know.

Without your help we will be unable to maintain many of the current activities WCPS currently runs

WE DESPERATELY NEED NEW VOLUNTEERS

CURRENT ROLES AVAILABLE BUSHCARE:

Administrative - Coordinator
Site Specific - site organiser, morning tea providers, site supervisor and recorders, plus bushcare volunteers

General committee members - monthly meeting
Membership secretary 1 - 2 hours per week
Clean up Australia Day Coordinator
Development applications monitor
Campaigns Coordinator of responses to issues
Grant applications coordinator
Annual dinner coordinator



For details and job descriptions, see the email sent to members on 30 January.

In the Valley



In 2016 Catherine Keyzer spotted a turtle covering recently laid eggs



Photo of destroyed nest by Deb Little, November 2018

PROTECTING WOLLI VALLEY TURTLES

Deryn Griffiths

Wolli creek is home to Eastern Long-necked Turtles (*Chelodina longicollis*) and the Sydney Basin Turtle (*Emydura macquarii dharuk*). You have to be lucky to see them. Most local sightings are of them swimming or moving to or from a nesting sight. In spring the female turtles climb up to sandy areas, along the path or in the more open parks, and lay eggs.

In November 2018, we had two sightings of nests dug up and the eggs eaten, probably by foxes which are believed to decimate over 90% of nests. We have had one sighting of a mauled turtle, probably by a cat or fox.

If you see a turtle, leave it alone and keep pets and children away from it. Keep cats inside.

Do what you can to discourage rats and foxes such as ensuring dog food is entirely eaten or brought inside.

Some members are surveying the turtle population in Wolli Valley. We hope to report on that in the next Update.

Read more about turtles on the WCPS website wollicreek.org.au under Plants and Animals > Reptiles

ISLE OF WOLLI PLASTIC

Deryn Griffiths



Catherine, a WCPS member, walks her dogs through Girrahween Park and collects rubbish as she goes. Sometimes she creates things, such as this *Isle of Plastic*, in protest against the littering, based on the plastic island in the Pacific Ocean.

The plastic bottles were found over a period of several weeks at Girrahween park. The plastic refuse inside the bottles was found over a period of several months. It is only a small percentage of litter Catherine has collected.

If you see her sitting in the park displaying the *Isle of Plastic*, say hello. Please join her by collecting litter you see along Wolli Creek.



LAND SWAP COULD SAVE WOLLI BLUFF

Gina Svolos

Current threat to the Wolli Creek Walking Track – Sydney Water Odour Control Unit

Following odour complaints from nearby residents, Sydney Water is currently planning to upgrade their wastewater assets at the end of Unwin Street in Earlwood, next to local landmark Wolli Bluff.

They are proposing to install an odour control unit (OCU) on the land at the head of the South-West Ocean Outfall Sewer (SWOOS), which crosses Wolli Creek at this point. To fit in a 13m x 14m odour control unit, the current design would require a large amount of cutting into the magnificent local sandstone Wolli Bluff just behind the SWOOS. This will have a pronounced visual impact on the much used and valued Two Valley Trail.

Peter Stevens, our Bushcare Coordinator, along with Vice-President Deb Little and member Pat Thomas have been in on-site discussions with Sydney Water staff. WCPS is keen to find an alternative location for the OCU.

With so few natural rock areas in this part of Sydney it would be a great loss to cut into Wolli Bluff. Rock-cutting, removal and construction of the large structure would also result in the closure of this section of the track for most of a year. Peter Stevens has been writing to Sydney Water and the Minister Don Harwin MLC, Minister for Energy and Utilities, to ask that they consider various alternative options to reduce the impact on the walking track. He has included our local members of parliament to keep them informed.

The only commitment from Sydney Water so far is to minimally reduce the footprint of the OCU. But this would still include cutting back the rock. Sydney Water staff are considering WCPS's latest option for a viable alternative, involving a swap with nearby land owned by the Department of Planning. This option would avoid the costs and visual impact of cutting into Wolli Bluff next to the popular Two Valley Trail walking track. We will keep members informed about this current threat and may ask you to take action to support our efforts. Please keep an eye out in your emails for further actions.

Peter Stevens has also offered a site inspection to interested members on Saturday 16 February. If interested, please contact him bushcare@wollicreek.org.au

WOLLI WALKS PROGRAM FOR AUTUMN

Gina Svolos



June 3 Guided Walk 2018



White-faced Heron
by Voren O'Brien



As the cooler weather approaches we will once again be conducting walks in the Wolli Creek Valley. Various members of the Wolli Creek Preservation Society lead the walks with commentary through different parts of the valley. Some walks cover short sections, while others extend the full length of the valley. All the walks introduce you to wonderful areas and give you the opportunity to learn about changes to the valley and current issues affecting its viability and survival.

Registration is essential, and bookings are now being taken for these walks
Walks are free to Wolli Creek Society members
Membership is \$10 pa for an individual & \$15 for a family/household

Saturday 27 April and 22 June

Join us on a 3.5km walk. These walks are for those who would like to see the Wolli Creek Valley at a leisurely pace.

Sunday 19 May

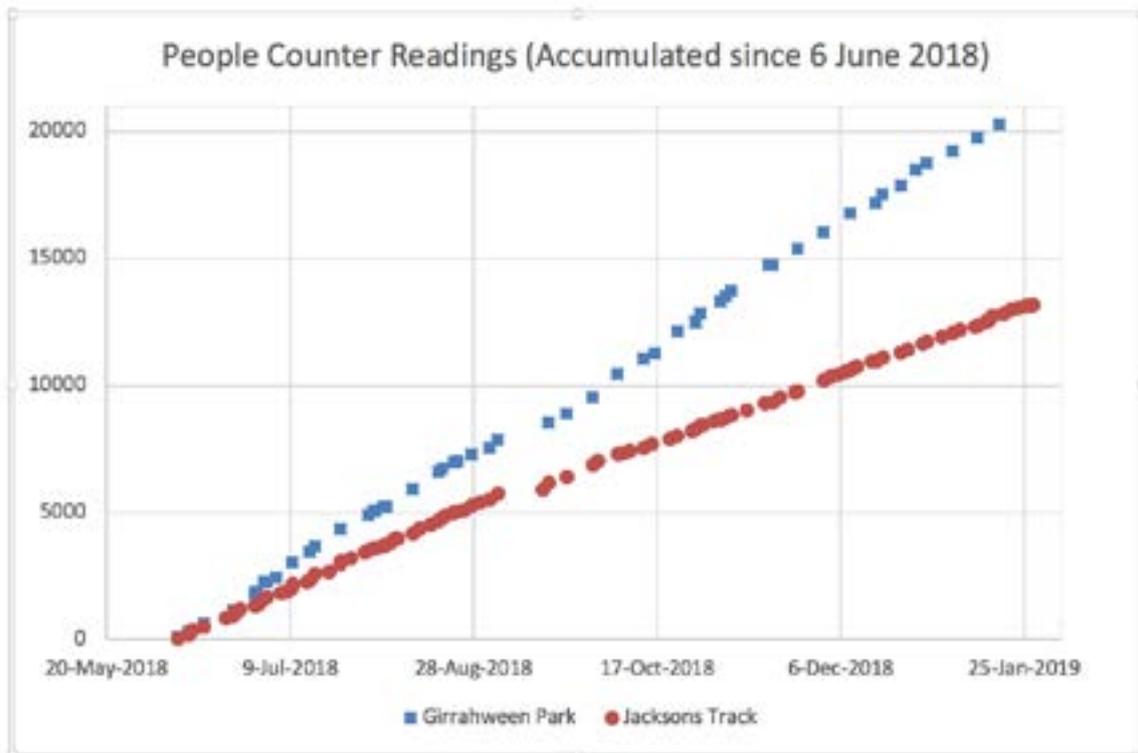
This will be a 5km guided walk along the full length of the Wolli Creek Valley section of the Two Valley Trail (TVT).

For further information and to register in to one of these popular walks email us at info@wollicreek.org.au to express your interest. Numbers are limited so don't leave registering till too late.



WOLLI REGIONAL PARK - USE BY WALKERS

Deryn Griffiths



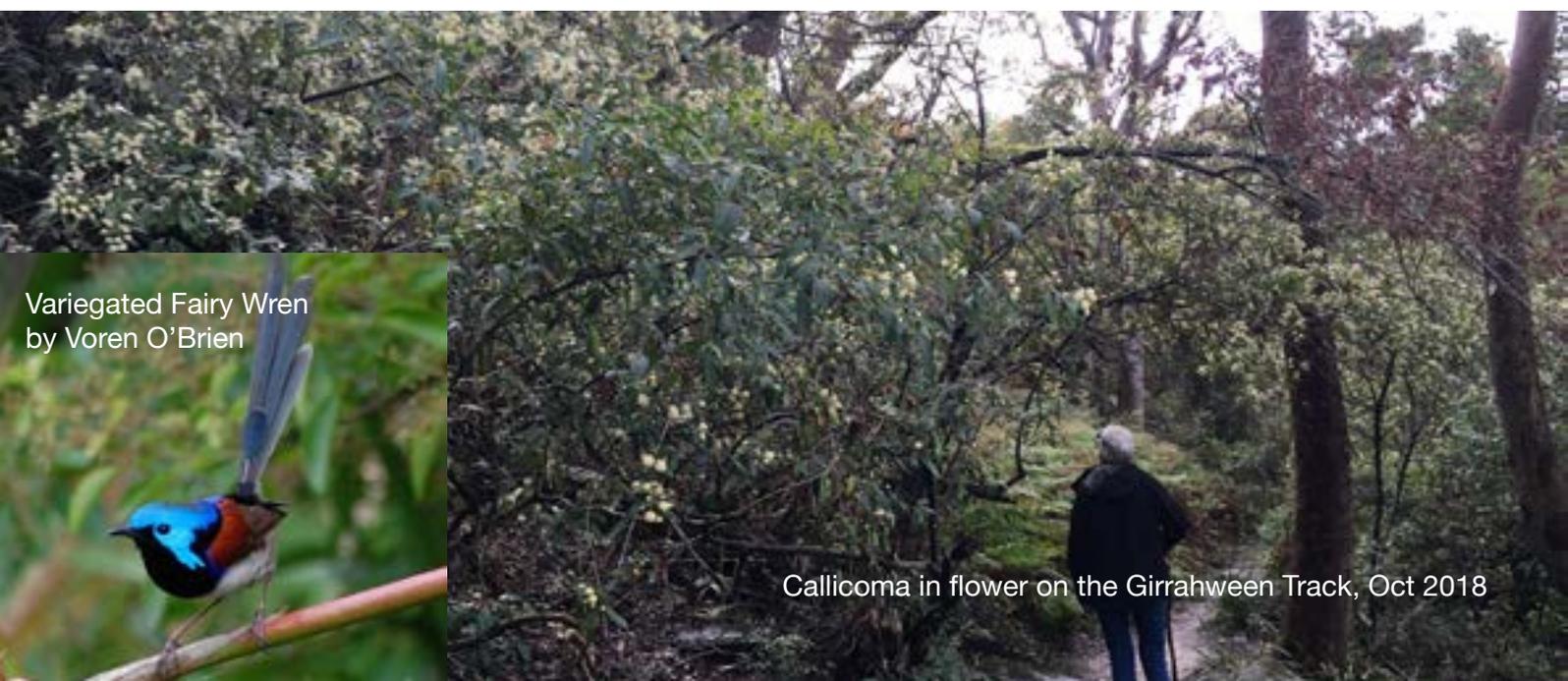
NPWS have two people counters, one at Girrahween Park and one on Jackson Track, which runs from Turrella Reserve to Jackson Place. This graph shows readings taken by WCPS volunteers. In the seven month period from June 2018 to January 2019, we recorded an average of 90 people per day passing the Girrahween Park counter, and 56 people per day on Jacksons Track. Both locations showed a drop off in early September, when we had quite a wet week, but generally the weekly numbers have been fairly steady.

We have sufficiently frequent readings from Jacksons Track to see that the track is used more on weekends than on weekdays, as one might expect.

However, our daily maximum reading of 187 is for Tuesday 15 January.

I have been collating the readings since June 2018, but won't be able to when I move to Melbourne.

If someone else is prepared to take on this role please contact me by emailing info@wollicreek.org.au.



Variegated Fairy Wren
by Voren O'Brien

Callicoma in flower on the Girrahween Track, Oct 2018

REPORT ON OUR 2018 ANNUAL DINNER

Voren O'Brien



Photos by Laura Zusters



The WCPS Annual Dinner was a lovely evening shared by many familiar faces, and some brand new members. It was held for a second time at the Scots Club in Arncliffe. Thanks to Anne Cooper, who organised the guest speaker and liaised with the Club, Tim Pullen as MC, and a host of dedicated volunteers, the evening went smoothly and provided much enjoyment and entertainment. \$2640 was raised to support the ongoing work of the Society, up from \$2,273 last year. Just over 100 people came, which was a record attendance, and about the limit for the venue.

President Gina Svolos gave the Acknowledgment of Country and spoke about the support she receives from the Society in performing her role. She also invited long-term powerhouse Peter Stevens to describe the role of Bushcare Co-ordinator, from which he is retiring. With decades of hard work as President, Treasurer and Bushcare Guru, Peter well deserves a break. But I think we can all agree they are some mighty shoes to fill. Take heart from Gina's example. There are many people to provide support and advice and as Co-ordinator you don't need to know a lot about bush care. It is a role for someone with organisational skills who can keep track of dates and equipment. Could this be you?

Our guest speaker, Dr Stephen Gapps, spoke about his book "The Sydney Wars" and also brought us "hot off the press" photos of archaeological discoveries from his continuing research into the earliest of the frontier wars between the local Aboriginal population and the colonists. Stone structures in the Appin Area have been found to have narrow windows described in one instance in the archive as being "possibly defensive". It is one of the many pieces of evidence that point to a sustained military approach to dealing with threats to the young colony in the Sydney region.

In the queue to buy autographed copies of Dr Gapps' book, I met Kane Durrant who is working with the community towards the conservation of turtles in the area. He has since solved the mystery of an unidentified turtle that turned up in one of my bird photos a few years back! It was a Macquarie Turtle (*Emydura macquarii*), not local to the area.

Who better than our much admired (and missed) ex-NPWS Field Officer Paul Ibbetson to win the quiz with answers to questions about history, wildlife and current events in the Valley. I'm sure his table appreciated the box of chocolates.

A spectacular array of prizes saw much enthusiastic ticket buying. A substantial purchase by long-time member Colin Hesse saw him win three times but generously gifting his 2nd and 3rd prizes, one of them to new member and birthday celebrant, Kate Flannery. Her prize selection was accompanied by a rousing chorus of Happy Birthday sung by the entire room!

WCPS member Suzanne Rose responded to Dr Stephen Gapps' talk. She spoke about the euphemisms that have been used to describe the occupation of Sydney and thanked him for his research that has refuted this "fake news" of the past.

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 description line

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



Fledgling Kookaburra on Christmas Eve, Turrella Reserve, one of three born this summer. Laura Zusters

CALENDAR

Bush Regeneration	Feb 2, 10, 13, 16, 17 Mar 2, 10, 13,15,16 April 6,10,14, 19,20 May 4,8,12,17,18 Details via bushcare@wollicreek.org.au , 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	25 March, 29 April, 27 May Inner south-west CDF, suite 1, Ground Floor, 11-13 Hartill-Law Avenue Bardwell Park. All members are welcome to attend the meetings, but notification to WCPS is essential due to security at the building.
Planning Meeting	Monday 18th Feb, 7pm. Community Development Forum (CDF) offices, suite 1, Ground Floor, 11-13 Hartill-Law Avenue Bardwell Park.
Kayak Trips	Kayak trip April 20th is fully booked. May date TBC If you wish to be notified email info@wollicreek.org

Wolli Creek Preservation Society
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