

# Wolli Creek Update



From the Wolli Creek Preservation Society Inc

PO Box 270 EARLWOOD 2206

## Clean Up Australia Day

On Sunday, 1st March 1992, the annual Clean Up Australia Day will be here again. As in previous years, the Wolli Creek Preservation Society has agreed to participate and organise the clean up of the creek above the weir at the Henderson Street bridge. This year we will extend our clean up to around the base of Nanny Goat Hill and Turella Reserve.

Last year we dragged 35 bags of rubbish out of the creek. Canterbury Council lends us a boat to reach the rubbish that floats down with the stormwater runoff and lodges in the reeds. If you can bring a boat or canoe, it's a great help.

Volunteers are needed!!!! Stay as long as you can between 8 am and 11am. Meet below Nanny Goat Hill at the end of Finlays Ave or at the Henderson St Footbridge. Wear strong shoes, bring gloves, rakes, or anything to help pick up rubbish. Garbage bags are provided.

All volunteers are invited by St Georges Anglican Church, to a BYO BBQ lunch in Girrahween Park at 12 midday after the cleanup, contact Judy Finlason 5592821 or Tony French 5671100.

### A Regional Greenhouse Strategy

SSROC (Southern Sydney Regional Organisations of Councils) involving the following councils -Sutherland, Bankstown, Canterbury, Marrickville, South Sydney, Waverley, Randwick, Rockdale & Botany, was set up to act on common problems for member councils.

A recent initiative has been a project to see what can be done about the Greenhouse Effect. A combined councils working group has developed a draft document for broader discussion and input. Consultations have been held in four locations to allow community members to discuss the recommendations which look at strategies covering:

- Transport and land use planning
- Coastal impacts and stormwater drainage
- Energy efficiency in buildings
- Waste minimisation
- Pollution Control
- Vegetation conservation
- Councils internal operations
- Community education and participation

A representative of the WCPS attended the Canterbury consultation held on Feb. 22.

This is an important initiative and one to be applauded. Implementation of the final recommendations will be crucial for the future of our city and its people.

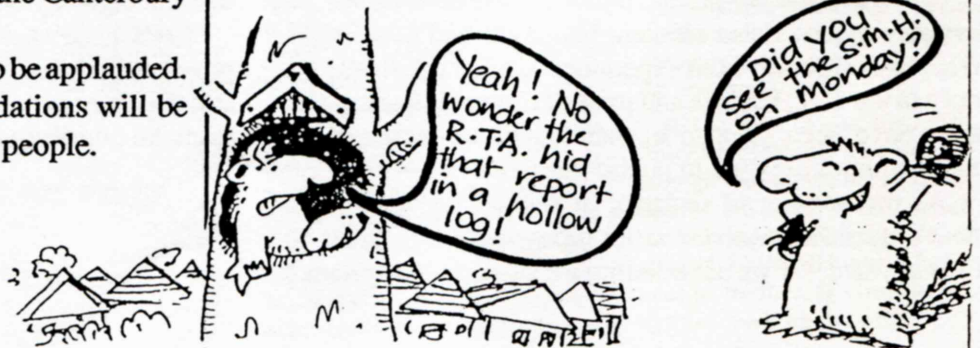
For further information  
Contact SSROC Project Officer  
Stephanie Pillora 317 0570

## THIRD RUNWAY

At our next general meeting, on Wed. 4th March, we will have a guest speaker from the Citizens Airport Environment Federation. The third Runway is being delayed in the Federal Court until at least June. Come and hear Allen Rees give the arguments against the construction of the Third Runway.

### Up coming dates

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|--------------------|--|
| 1st March, 8 am    | Clean up Wolli<br>Turella Reserve                          |
| 4th March, 7.30 pm | General meeting<br>Community Resource Centre               |
| 26th April, 10 am  | Heritage Week Event<br>Community Brunch<br>Girrahween Park |
|                    | (bring your info. to add to our study - story back page)   |
| 6th May, 7.30 pm   | General meeting<br>Community Resource Centre               |



## What's been unearthed in the Valley

Some intriguing relics of the past have recently been unearthed as a result of heritage investigations in the Wolli Creek Valley.

In early 1991 the Valley was selected as a site for study under the National Estate Grants Program, sponsored by the NSW Department of Planning and the Federal Dept. of Arts.

Members of the Wolli Creek Preservation Society were delighted that their submission for funding had been accepted.

Brian Madden and Lesley Muir, two highly respected local historians, were selected to do part of the study, the compilation of a document listing all known historical reference materials related to the Wolli Creek Valley.

Finishing touches to their excellent 83 page document are almost complete.

A local historical archaeologist, Graham Wilson was employed to do the field work in the bush. Graham had just completed the supervision of a major "dig" at the old Paddy's Market site in the Haymarket and was keen for a change of scenery.

His report, now nearing completion, includes a summary of his numerous and at times surprising archaeological finds. It makes for fascinating reading.

For instance, did you know of the old Tennis courts near the corner of Bray Avenue and Hartill-Law Avenue, Bardwell Park? Graham found what he believes are its relics. Perhaps

you knew of the old Chinese market gardeners at Turrella who built a still operating series of dykes and channels to irrigate their crops? Or maybe you know the location of the old hobo's crude rock shelter, built during the harsh times of the Great Depression, the real one, which still contains remains of his old mattress.

Maybe you can help out on one of the Valley's great mysteries, what are the Bexley Road ruins all about?

Buried in thick scrub near Bexley Road at the western end of the Valley is the remains of a massive complex of buildings, walls, terraces gates and roads stretching for over 100 metres. Graham Wilson dates them from the mid to late 1800's. Nothing else is known about the site, except what can be deduced from its physical remnants.

I bet you didn't know that one of the country's most famous old paintings depicted locals swimming in Wolli Creek. Australia's famous painter Sydney Long painted his "by Tranquil Waters" depicting this very scene.

It's all now part of our fascinating local history.

It is hoped that these reference texts will soon lead to the production of a detailed written history of the European heritage significance of our fine patch of local bushland.

**Further information on this exciting local history project can be obtained by writing to the Secretary, Wolli Creek Preservation Society.**

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## The More Things Change .....why do they remain the same?

Sitting in the dentist's waiting room the other week, flicking through a 1972 edition of a national news journal, I came across the following letter to the Editor (remember ..... 1972):

**"Auto Assassination**

Your cover article "Can we kill the car?" was timely, considering a recently distributed brochure in which a group of citizens in Middle Harbour suburbs of Sydney seriously questioned the wisdom of the NSW government continuing work on the Warringah Expressway. This \$70 million folly will not only scar some of the finest natural bushland around Sydney but help worsen the city's already infuriating traffic chaos.

The authors of the brochure point out that the expressway extension is simply a resurrection of proposals first made in 1948. Since then population growth has far exceeded anticipated growth and the private motor car has become less and less able to provide an efficient journey to and from work. When will we learn from experience in other countries? The story in the U.S., Canada and parts of Europe is that expressways have been stopped in their tracks, re-assessed and public monies diverted to public transport.

As the premier of Ontario, in announcing his government's decision to abandon its urban motorway plans for Toronto, said, "If we are building a transportation system to

serve the automobile, the Spadina expressway would have been a good place to start ..... but if we are building a system to serve people, it is a good place to stop."

In this scramble to induce more and more vehicles onto our roads, let me quote one voice of reason in the person of Peter Blake, architect and editor of Architectural Forum, a respected American journal: "The first thing we did wrong in the U.S. seems to be to really give in to the highway engineers who invaded the American cities, starting about 15 to 20 years ago, cut enormous scars through existing cities, built their highways like Chinese walls that divided up cities into communities that had no contact with one another at all after that. "It seems completely irrational to me to attempt to develop a highway network for cities or suburban areas for that matter without, at the same time, developing a mass transit network which would supplement and mesh with that highway system that the highway engineers are planning to build."

Let's hope that today Australians can throw up a few prophets in their own time like Peter Blake whose voice will still the crazy pursuit to build more and bigger avenues for us to choke ourselves to a standstill in our own petrol fumes."

Yours etc.

**Will we have to wait another 20 years?**