



## More funding for bush restoration

Since the February Update, we have received a grant of \$3,500 from the Lands Dept for further bush restoration work at the east of Girrahween Park. Thanks to Lands Dept support, work there is now in its third year and walkers will have seen the weed removal work evident along the track. This is extending the well-maintained areas of Girrahween Park itself. We have also received a grant of \$4,000 from the Catchment Management Authority to complete primary removal of the noxious aquatic weed *Ludwigia peruviana* from the Bray Avenue wetland. That work is proceeding apace.

The Society has also applied for a further three-year Environmental Trust grant to support work by volunteers and contractors on the Undercliffe Track just east of Jackson Place. During 2007-8, much primary weed removal was carried out here by corporate volunteers from Westpac and Price Waterhouse Coopers, under WCPS and National Trust supervision. If successful, we will be able to start work there in March next year (slow isn't it?!) and are already looking for extra volunteers to fulfil our commitments under the grant. If interested, please let Peter know on 9554 3176 or via [info@wollicreek.org.au](mailto:info@wollicreek.org.au). We will also be aiming to recruit from the general public via press articles etc, but if you can recruit family, friends, or neighbours that would help a great deal.



### Time travelling at Wolli

On 6 May it was all bustle at the Henderson Street weir as a film crew descended on Turrella Reserve complete with girls in 1880s skirts, a boy in a sailor suit and koories in 19th century cast-offs. Wolli Creek was standing in for South Sydney's Sheas Creek in a Chapman Pictures production of Nadia Wheatley and Donna Rawlins' kids' classic, *My Place* for ABC TV.

Photos: Gavin Gatenby

## Regional Award for Preservation Society

In recognition of 'an outstanding contribution to their local environment', the Wolli Creek Preservation Society has been awarded the inaugural Regional Community Group Environment Award by the Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority (SMCMA). The Award was presented at the SMCMA's Community Forum in Kirribilli on May 23.

This is very encouraging acknowledgement of the major efforts made by the Society over recent years to preserve and restore the important native bushland within the Wolli Valley, and to educate and inform the public about its significance.

The SMCMA region extends from Mona Vale to Stanwell Park and from Blacktown to the coast and contains a wide range of community and Council-supported groups eligible for the award. There were



Chris Miles, Judi Rossi and Judy Finlason receive the award and cheque on behalf of the Society. Photo: Ann Porter.

many other groups also deserving of wider recognition for the work they do as volunteers to protect Sydney's environment.

In making the award, CMA Board member, Allan Ezzy, cited several reasons why the Society was chosen for the award. These included involvement with the community

and the many volunteers participating in a wide range of projects covering bush regeneration, schools' programs and the publication of information and resources. With the award's acknowledgment of its work, the Society will also receive a very generous addition of \$1,000 to its funds.





## Bridge and steps installed along Two Valley Trail

Both the steps near the old swimming pool and the bridge crossing Paperbark Creek foreshadowed in February have already been installed and we look forward to hearing the reaction of walkers to these changes on the Two Valley Trail. And things are moving so much on the items to be funded under the federal money reported in the last issue that we can't fit it in here. Go to [www.cooksriver.info](http://www.cooksriver.info) for the latest information from the Catchment Management Authority, which is co-ordinating the various projects in Cooks, Wolli and Bardwell (and there are lots of them!).

Discussion is going on about the future arrangements for rock-climbing in the park. There is a well-established, though not greatly used, set of climbs up the most striking cliff face between Girrahween and Turrella – the anchor points are very visible in the rocks. There are issues about the compatibility between walkers using the track past these imposing cliffs, and climbing activity – climbers need ropes spread about and passage can be difficult, and sometimes rocks are dislodged from the top of the cliffs, with obvious safety implications. There is also the problem of trampling and equipment being put on top of native plants. WCPS and NPWS are looking into ways to enable both sets of users to co-exist together safely for all species concerned.



The bridge at Paperbark Creek.

And on the bad news front, paint-spraying of (poor quality) tags continues to be an eyesore in the valley, on signs and rocks and trees. Photographs of the perpetrators would be very handy to have. Worse still, fire started in rubbish bins at Girrahween Park damaged the women's toilets and put them out of use for several weeks.

If you see anything that looks suspicious such as paint sprayers, drug use, teenage drinking parties, trail bikes, etc. please do help us put a stop to it. Ashfield Local Area Command are intending to increase police presence in both Girrahween Park and Turrella Reserve, but they still need everyone to help by reporting in. Dial 000 if it's happening when you are there, or report to Constable Sean Brennan 97974051 (9 to 5) or the station on 9797 4099 if it has already happened. And please let WCPS\* know as well, so that we have records when we discuss with police and NPWS.

## TVT map and leaflet translated

The leaflet and map of the Two Valley Trail has been translated into Arabic, Chinese, and Korean, and can be downloaded from the TVT website at [www.tvt.org.au](http://www.tvt.org.au). This has come about through a grant to the Cooks River Valley Association, one of the consortium of TVT groups, from the City of Canterbury. We now have the challenge of funding the printing of each one, and hope to work with the organisations and media of the relevant language groups. We also intend to get the TVT bookmark translated and printed, with translated lead-in text put on the website. We are keen to involve more of the area's very diverse communities in caring for the valley and getting them to know it seems like a good place to start! If you'd like to help in this area please let WCPS\* know, particularly if you have relevant language skills!

Interesting sightings

## Whipbird definitely, bandicoot possibly

Just possibly, the bandicoots known to inhabit backyards and the unused Rozelle freight rail corridor in Dulwich Hill may have made their way into the Wolli Valley – a very exciting and important development if a recent brief sighting of a beastie generally fitting the description is confirmed. Keep eyes peeled and carry a camera at all times in the valley!

The sighting was near the small sewer pipe crossing the creek east of Girrahween Park. NPWS has set up an infra-red cameras in the area, but only rats have agreed to be photographed so far. Visit <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/animals/Bandicoots.htm> for background on what to look for and please report in to [info@wollicreek.org.au](mailto:info@wollicreek.org.au) if you see evidence.

Definitely confirmed is the presence (during late April and early May) of a male Whipbird (we have yet to hear the female's answering call to his whipcrack, heard by many people). This is a bird not noted in Neil Rankin's records (going back to the 1940s), although one long-time resident reports hearing them occasionally over the years. Anyway, yet another addition to the 176 species noted in the valley between 1940 and 1999, to go with the Variegated Wren and other new species reported in Updates since 2006. This is a reflection, in part, of the greater number of members out observing and reporting as part of our monthly bird surveys. Interested? Contact [birds@wollicreek.org.au](mailto:birds@wollicreek.org.au) - scope for both learners and the experienced.



Long-nosed Bandicoot (*Perameles nasuta*)  
Illustration: Gavin Gatenby (courtesy NPWS).

\* Contact WCPS via  
[info@wollicreek.org.au](mailto:info@wollicreek.org.au)  
or 9554 3176 (Peter)





## Kayaking in search of local wonders

**I**n the early morning of the 28<sup>th</sup> March 2009, a rough-looking crew of 15 set forth from the banks of the Cooks River in search of uncharted waters and new lands. With many a teary farewell and plenty of handkerchief waving from friends and loved ones, we ventured into the unknown ... Or not ... yes, perhaps a trifle overblown; the rough being from the lack of coffee or sleep from the night before for some.

We did, however, set out from the River Canoe Club (RCC) on that morning to explore elements of the Cooks River and Wollie Creek. Tracy Hudson and his team from the RCC geared us up, shipped us off in a variety of kayaks and canoes and with X Y and Z accompanied us on our mission. Deb Little of WCPS was our guide on the water, enlightening us with history of the

Cooks River and Wollie Creek tributaries. In her sleek red and white kayak, Deb led the way with information about past pioneering days, local fauna and flora, and things in store for the Wollie Valley and its waterways in the near future.

We made our way up Wollie Creek to Turrella Reserve, where we met Peter Stevens (WCPS) who was eager to take us on the land component of our expedition. Peter led us via the new fishway and recent Society plantings to a portion of the Two Valley Trail and on to Nanny Goat Hill. Having climbed Nanny Goat Hill with its 360° views, we got a session on local history and landmarks. Then it was back to the creek and navigating our craft back to the RCC, anticipating the hearty lunch provided by Peter – delicious soup and

crusty bread to top. What a way to spend the morning!

All the participants completed the day's activities without incident (although we did have to save a large water skink from certain death inside a canoe), and a fantastic time was had by all. If you would like to explore parts of the Wollie Valley not often seen and have a ball in the process, then I highly recommend that you sign up for the next canoe and kayak trip. The day is for all ages from 10 up and is low impact.

A big thank you to Tracy Hudson and his crew from the RCC, and also to Deb Little and Peter Stevens for planning a fantastic day. • **Graham Weaire-Buchanan**

**For more info about the next available kayak excursion, please contact WCPS\***

## The flying foxes are (were) back

**A**t the end of March, Grey-headed Flying-foxes (GHFF) were to our delight again observed roosting in the Wollie Valley camp, in the triangle of land between the railway line and the creek at Turrella. This was after an absence of 10 months – we last saw them back in May 2008 when our regular 3rd Friday evening count was of the order of 7,600 GHFF. Back then the reason for their departure was understood to be the good flowering of many plant species in SE Qld and northern NSW. This was followed earlier this year by good flowering of Bloodwoods on the NSW south coast in the Nowra area, where many thousands of GHFF were observed feeding on the blossoms.

With GHFF back in Wollie, our 'counters' were getting back in the swing of counting them as they stream out to feed for the night. On our last Friday evening count on May 15, nine people counted just over 5,000.

The GHFF is a highly mobile species, and shortly afterwards most of them had again departed. This time it could be due to flowering in the Bateman's Bay area, reported by bat watchers and researchers, but we don't really know if that is where 'ours' have gone. Other camps in the Sydney area (such as the relatively recent camp at Kareela, just south of the Georges River) were similarly depleted at this time.

Such migration is of course linked to the species' need to move in accordance with natural resource availability. We can't predict reliably when and where they will go, or arrive back. But we'll be waiting ... and they may be back by the next count on June 19. More 'bat counters' are always welcome, so contact WCPS\* if you are interested to be involved. We try to cover all flight paths out of the camp, so lots of people are needed.

### Wollie Views on the web

Our website has a new section featuring photos of Society and Valley events. Photos are divided into three sets:

- **Land** – documenting changes to the landscape
- **People** – capturing walks, launches and festivals (you might see yourself!)
- **Water** – including factors affecting the waterways (floods, king tides; fish ladder etc)

To view the photos, go direct to [http://www.flickr.com/photos/wollie\\_events/sets/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/wollie_events/sets/) or get there via [www.wolliecreek.org.au](http://www.wolliecreek.org.au): choose "Wollie views" then "Wollie Creek events - Flickr photo gallery site".

Click on the set you would like to view then choose the "Slideshow" option (top right). Once you're in the slideshow click on "Show info" (top right) to display the names and captions with the photos.

If you have photos of current or historical events that you would like included please send them (along with names, dates and relevant information) to [voren@ihug.com.au](mailto:voren@ihug.com.au).

## DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

### Henderson Street

The developer for the Henderson Street industrial site has until December to meet certain pre-conditions for development consent. Rockdale City Council advises us that he has not yet met these but is believed to be close to doing so. Despite our opposition to this development, we intend, if he is successful, to contact the developer and do what we can to assist in getting the vegetation issues resolved in the best way possible for the valley. Council has set conditions requiring that plantings shall be of locally provenanced natives. There are other conditions of importance to WCPS and we shall aim to monitor these as development proceeds. We need several volunteers willing to take on this task, best if they pass the area regularly already. Let Peter know if you can help.

### Highcliff Road

The RTA house at the end of Highcliff Road has been purchased by a family that already owns three adjacent blocks on Bayview Avenue that back on to this site. We fully expect to see a development application for multiple residences to go onto the conjoined sites. The area immediately adjoins the Regional Park and could well result in the intrusive presence of more buildings overlooking the park. Further down slope lies a highly significant area of saltmarsh and wetland in good condition (the fourth priority area for bush regeneration work in the Operations Plan for the Park). While there are some extra constraints on the development site re stormwater treatment that arise from being a park neighbour, there is still a big risk that extra run-off and garden escapes will impact on this sensitive area. WCPS is following this issue closely, but volunteers to assist would be very welcome.

## Volunteers celebrated

11-17 May was Volunteers Week across the country, and by a happy coincidence was also the time at which the Society had settled to celebrate its own bunch of volunteers over the last two years. Sunday morning tea *al fresco* at historic Jackson Place without the call to weed, plant, lead walks or kayak trips, spot birds, give talks, count bats, campaign, or make hard decisions – other than which bits of the delicious array of food to indulge in next!

The weather was splendid and some 30 of the 70 or so volunteers contacted, made it on the day to enjoy relaxing, catching up with old friends and making new acquaintances. And some walkers on the Two Valley Trail, which passes down Jackson Place, were also drawn into the fun; we hate to miss out on recruitment opportunities - even when relaxing!

## Desperately seeking teachers

We are a bit taken aback with the low level of response to a free offer to schools. All primary schools in the lower Cooks River catchment were sent a letter with a form to order a free copy of the Resources Manual for the Two Valley Trail. This resource has been very warmly received by all the teachers who have seen it, yet the number of copies requested has been very low. We fear that the letters are not actually reaching the relevant staff in the schools. So, if you are, or if you know of, a teacher who might be keen to make use of the Wolli and Cooks Valleys as an outdoor classroom, please get in touch with us and make sure that you or they they have the opportunity to score a very impressive freebie. Call Judy on 9559 2821 or email [Judy@imageoz.net](mailto:Judy@imageoz.net).

## Events Calendar

**Sunday June 21** – 9 am; (about 2 hours): Planting session at Turrella Reserve

Lots of groundcovers to go into the crushed sandstone at the western end of the pond and just a few trees to provide shade over the sitting stones. To take part please WCPS\* as soon as possible.

**July 4, 8, 12, 18; August 1, 9, 12, 15; September 5, 9, 13, 19** – 9 am -12.30 each session Regular bush regeneration sessions. To get involved contact WCPS\*. New volunteers welcomed and training and tools provided.

**Sunday July 5** – morning; (allow 4 hours): A Walk up Wolli. This walk will start from Wolli Bluff and end at Bexley North, near the railway station. We'll meet in Unwin Street, Undercliffe. The walk is just under 5km in Wolli Regional Park along a good track. We will encounter a variety of bush and parkland with different plant communities and hope to see some interesting wildlife. Wear comfortable walking shoes and bring your camera. We will pass close to Turrella and Bardwell Park Stations if you feel a need to finish earlier. Free to members; full details on registration with the WCPS\*.

**Tuesday July 14** - 7 pm; *Fish and Wolli*. An illustrated talk by Scott Nichols of the Dept of Primary Industry – what fish there are in Wolli Creek, the role of the fishway, the issues involved, and lots more – none of us know much about this yet and we should! At CECAL Hall, entry in Lewins St, Earlwood, opposite Coles car park.

**Saturday August 22** – 9 am; (about 4 hours): Wolli from Creek to Crest. A kayak trip up Wolli Creek with River Canoe Club kayaks and training and WCPS commentary, and a light lunch thrown in. Cost \$40. The May trip was full and this one already is over half booked. To register contact WCPS \* soon.

**Tuesday September 8** – 7 pm: *Darwin in Sydney*. An illustrated talk presented by Emeritus Professor Frank Nicholas, author of the acclaimed book *Darwin in Australia*, about Charles Darwin's fascinating visit to Sydney in 1836. We doubt Darwin walked the Two Valley Trail, but he certainly made the most of his time in the Sydney area; come and learn more. At CECAL Hall, entry in Lewins St, Earlwood, opposite Coles car park. For catering purposes, please RSVP [info@wollicreek.org](mailto:info@wollicreek.org) or 9559 2821 by Monday 7 Sept.

## Annual Dinner 2009

Get out the diary and mark in Friday 23 October. The Society's Annual Dinner is growing in popularity and if we get many more than the 90 at last year's dinner, we will be stretching the seating available at the St George Rowing Club and may have to limit attendance! And this year's speaker and topic will be of interest to all members and friends. Lesley Muir is the co-author of the history of the Wolli Creek Valley and most recently has developed an amazing presentation of slides of Sydney from the very earliest days of photography back in the 1850s and 60s – yes, that long ago! – and of quite remarkable quality. Not to be missed and it's not too early to book yourself in or organise a table. Cost will be an unchanged \$40. Send payment to WCPS PO Box 270 Earlwood 2206 or make a direct deposit to Westpac BSB 032 067 WCPS Inc 288295 with surname and 'AD' in information line (and send an email to [info@wollicreek.org.au](mailto:info@wollicreek.org.au) to confirm).