



New twist in Henderson Street development saga

There has been a series of interesting moves over the proposed industrial units on the creek at 13 Henderson Street, Turrella.

In attempting to meet the pre-conditions for consent set by Rockdale Council, the developers appear to have found that their buildings went over the high pressure ethane gas pipeline.

This would prevent them going ahead with the original DA, for which they had the agreement of adjacent property owner Allkotes, subject to other conditions being met. A revised DA was the result, rearranging the buildings to avoid the pipeline without improving the elements of concern to the Society. However, this no longer had Allkotes' agreement, needed to provide the access road on the creek bank that we have so strenuously objected to.

The revised DA has now been withdrawn. At the same time Allkotes has two of its buildings up for sale. These adjoin No. 13 and possibly offer alternative access to the land.

We expect further episodes in this saga, and hope for an improved outcome.

We win Sustainable Cities Biodiversity Conservation Award!



In August, the Society was the Overall State Winner of the Biodiversity Conservation Award of the Sustainable Cities program presented by Keep Australia Beautiful NSW. Together with the earlier CMA Award, this makes us "a multi-award-winning" Society!

Pictured: Ron Calrow, Peter Stevens, Judy Finlason and Mary Foley receiving the Award at the Sustainable Cities dinner, to which they were sponsored by the City of Canterbury.

Book now for the Annual Dinner!

Friday 23 October 2009

St George Rowing Club

Highly popular, and a great event to bring family and friends along to. We anticipate a wide interest in this year's speaker and topic. Lesley Muir is the co-author of the history of the Wolli Creek Valley and has written or co-written numerous other local histories, including ones of Earlwood and Campsie. She will be presenting an amazing collection of slides of Sydney from the very earliest days of photography back in the 1850s and 60s. They are of a quite remarkable quality and are not to be missed. Cost will be an unchanged \$40 a head and we'd love to see you there. Bookings can be made on the form enclosed with this Update.

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 to confirm).



A Rainbow Lorikeet admiring the view from a nestbox. At least two of the boxes installed in the Girrahween park area (see Update for February 2009) have been successfully rented out to birds.

Bush restoration volunteers tip the balance

The key element in our bush restoration work is the persistent application of willing volunteers every month helping to 'tip the balance' in favour of our local natives by removing competing weeds. Every month there are changes and improvements as a result, but the real changes are only apparent to an educated eye and don't get noticed as often as they deserve. But we do like to report on the more visible changes as well and the past period has shown a few major events:

National Tree Day on 1 August saw over 30 people mulching, planting, and weeding in a very visible way at the junction of Bray and Hartill-Law Avenues near Bardwell Park station. This completed an earlier planting from 2005 which has grown prodigiously well.

Caritas and Westpac volunteers transform weed patch

Groups of volunteers from Caritas and from Westpac, organised and overseen by Society members and supported by Canterbury Council, have transformed a very weedy patch of land at the junction of Highcliff Road and Jackson Place, removing the remaining above ground weeds (Caritas) and distributing two huge piles of crushed sandstone over a low, wet part of the site while removing much rubbish and many weed parts, such as Madeira Vine corms (Westpac). There is more work to do and some major planting to come, with the next session on September 25, but this is a project we will be handing over to local residents to maintain as part of Canterbury Council's 'Adopt-a-Patch' program.



The planting scene on National Tree Day, well supported by members, community, and by Canterbury Council.



The Jackson Triangle work nearing the end of stage 1 in late August.

A tale of two tree removals

The removal of a healthy tree on private property in Forrest Avenue, Earlwood (below), had Council approval, but seems quite unnecessary and a significant loss of habitat immediately adjacent to the regional park lands. A very large crane was needed to remove limbs.



On the other hand, Council has not yet approved the removal of a grand specimen on public land in Wavell Parade, Earlwood a gateway to the regional park (above). Indeed, its retention was a condition of approval of the DA to build the nearby house. However, the house was still built so that cars would have drive over the root

system, which could well kill the tree. This makes the removal of the tree almost essential for the house's driveway, and a DA has been put to Council seeking this.

* Contact WCPS via info@wollicreek.org.au or 9554 3176 (Peter)

Going upstream ...

At high tide, tiny fish swarm up Henderson St fish ladder



It was a bit like watching an Alaskan salmon run, but in miniature, and without the bears. I took these pictures at the Henderson St Weir on the late afternoon of Thursday 17 September. It was a king tide, so, although there was only a weak downstream flow, the thousands of tiny fish trying to get up into the fresh water were able to swim straight into the first three locks (above left). Above right: hundreds of fish queuing up to make a run through into the fourth lock. Two species are represented here. Right: The final step up was about 12cm. Here, a tiny fish (circled) can be seen propelling itself up the slimy slope to the top. • GAVIN GATENBY

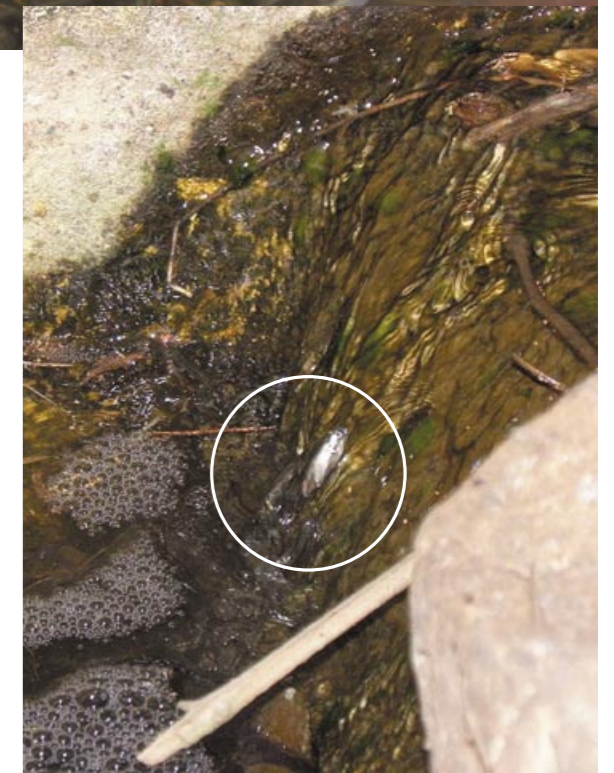
Bandicoots, bats and birds

Once again we have reports of sightings of **Bandicoot** doings at two places in the Wollie Valley and NPWS staff have been following up with infra-red cameras, but with a rat result! But they can't be far away. All the more reason to keep up vigilance re **foxes**: keep food away from them, restrict lying-up areas and report any sightings. We have a leaflet produced by regional Councils with more detail and can provide this on request. Reports of fox sightings have increased recently and we keep a record of these, so please let us know if you see foxes around in the valley. Report in to WCPS* - time, place, numbers, condition are the important things to report.

The **Grey-headed Flying-foxes** are back. Reports of increased presence and daytime roosting have been coming in. The official count was on Friday 18 September with numbers around 3,000 expected. If you would like to be involved in future counts, please contact WCPS* as soon as possible.

Whipbird, Spoonbill, Pacific Heron, Sacred Kingfisher, and Mistletoe Bird are among the rarer visitors to the valley noted over the last month or two. And at least two of the nest boxes installed in the Girrahween park area (see Update for February 2009) have been successfully rented out to birds.

The new sightings owe a lot to our regular bird surveyors. There are now over 20 of us, mostly learning as we go, on monthly one-hour surveys of our chosen area of the nine being monitored so far. Come along and join one of the small teams and learn heaps or help others learn. Contact Sue via birds@wollicreek.org.au. Quite apart from the inherent fascination of bird activity, the surveys enable us to continue and even expand the work of the late Neil Rankin that provided the data for the *Birds of Wollie Valley*, published by the Society.



Weir work completed

Work on the weir at Turrella Reserve has now been completed with some additional facing on the upstream side to reduce leakage and keep fish directed towards the fishway flow. Still to come are some weed removal and native plantings on the immediate upstream banks and the installation of some novel interpretive elements; worth a visit now and again to check out these changes as they occur. Canterbury Council and the Department of Primary Industries will again be organising sampling of the fish above and below the weir to see if the fishway has yet made a difference to the species inhabiting the creek. Expect to see this in October. If you'd like to be involved contact Wollie Creek Preservation Society*.

VALLEY HISTORY

The Earlwood landslide of 1986

This is an extract from an article that appeared in the edition of the Earlwood News for December 1986/January 1987. It explains a few things about the car park above Girrahween Park.

"Pictured here is one of the biggest geological changes that Earlwood has undergone in many years. It is a mudslide, no doubt caused by the record winter rains that deluged Sydney 8 weeks ago.

"It occurred at the back of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School, in grounds near the bottom of the Earlwood Shopping Centre carpark, on a steep, grass-covered embankment overlooking the Wolli Valley below.

"Not many people would remember that the land upon which the carpark is built was originally a deep-gullied extension of the small tributary valley connecting the larger Wolli Creek Valley to Girrahween Park.

"In more recent years, the site was a rubbish tip. Years of landfill gradually raised the land's height to a nice level plateau, ideal for car parking. However, the ravine had been a watercourse for many years and the original watercourse from Clarke Street (under Galimi's [then at 389 Homer Street]) was replaced by strategic piping and the matter of draining through the car park probably forgotten.

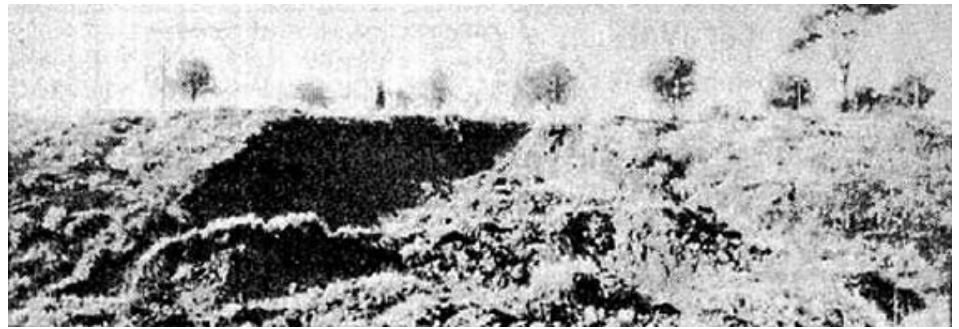
"The steep, grassy slopes that hold the carpark and its earth-filled foundation 30 metres higher than Girrahween Park's tree topped valley floor, should have had trees planted on them years ago. If trees had been planted each time Council has announced plans to do so, the required few needed to drink the groundsoak water from the creek under Galimi's would have been in place now and so too would this large area of earth behind the convent grounds. August rains filled the earth with moisture, and like wet rolling mud, the hill slid down the incline like a glacier."

Guides needed for school visits

Having spent last year developing resource materials for schools, our emphasis is now to encourage schools to use the resources and visit the Valley without assistance. However, most teachers still prefer to have a guided walk. It is difficult to meet these requests as our regular volunteer has returned to full time study and we have few others able to assist on weekdays. We urgently need more people to assist with this important aspect of our work, please contact WCPS* if you're interested.

During the past term we have conducted walks for 130 Dulwich Hill PS students and about 100 Kingsgrove PS students. A walk to introduce teachers to guiding their own classes was held in August.

Belmore PS and Wilkins PS both began using the Birds Nest resource and since then sharp-eyed Year 2 students have spotted a Tawny Frogmouth in the school grounds.



Annual General Meeting

The Society's AGM will be held on Tuesday 24 November at 7pm at the Community Development Organisation's offices at 11-13 Hartill-Law Avenue, Bardwell Park. The outgoing committee will be seeking approval for the Annual Report to June 30, 2009, and for the annual accounts. We will also be seeking nominations for the incoming committee. Nominations have to be with the Society two weeks ahead of the AGM ie, by close of business on Tuesday 6 November. The report, nomination forms, and other information will be sent out in hard copy during October.

Website revamp

The Society is commissioning a rework of the Wolli Creek Preservation Society website which has grown like Topsy over the years,

as have communication mechanisms. If you have views or suggestions about the site and how it could be improved and enhanced, please let WCPS* know. We have formed a small reference panel of members to review proposed changes and other volunteers for that role would also be welcome.

Rejoining WCPS for 2010

If you need to rejoin for 2010 you will be advised in the material accompanying this Update. Many members now take advantage of multi-year membership and will already be financial for 2010. Renewing and new members from now until the end of 2009 will be financial until 31 December 2010. It's a great help to us if you renew now and we encourage you to sign up for three years. For new members, joining now gives a full 15 months membership for the same low annual fees - a good thought for gift givers!

Events Calendar

September 19; October 3, 11, 14, 17; November 7, 8, 11, 21; December 5, 9, 13, 19; February 6, 10, 14, 20. Regular **bush regeneration** sessions – 9 am -12.30 each session. To get involved contact WCPS*. New volunteers welcomed and training and tools provided.

Friday September 25 – completion of stage 1 at the Jackson Triangle (above Jackson Place). More volunteers welcome to supplement the work of a small group of Westpac staff. Some rock removal and a fair bit of planting to do. Contact WCPS*

Saturday October 10 – 8 am. "**Secret paths of Girrahween**". Come exploring some of the little-used (and possibly unused) tracks in Girrahween Park, plus streets along the northern perimeter. Starts and ends at Turrella Reserve near the foot of Nannygoat Hill. Wear solid footwear and bring some water. About 1.5 hours. Free to members, but numbers limited, register with WCPS*.

Friday October 23 – from 6 pm. The Society's **Annual Dinner** at St George Rowing Club, 1 Levey Street, Wolli Creek (the suburb). \$40; main speaker: Lesley Muir. Vegetarians and coeliacs well catered for. Details elsewhere in this Update.

Sunday October 25 – 9am –12. **Wolli Bird Walk**. Introductory bird observation walk from Bardwell Park to Turrella and back with experienced birdwatcher and bander, Alan Leishman. A variety of bird habitats will be encountered along the way and Alan will give tips on bird identification and what to watch for, where and when. Pre-registration essential. Free to members, but numbers limited – Register with WCPS*.

Saturday November 14 – 7.45 am start. **Walk the Wolli Track**. A walk with environmental and historical commentary along the Wolli Track from Bexley North to Wolli Bluff above Waterworth Park. A special focus on the large number of bush restoration sites the Track passes through or close to and a visit to the fishway. Free to members, but registration is essential as numbers are limited. Allow about 4.5 hours. Contact WCPS* to register.

Saturday November 21 – morning. **Wolli from Creek to Crest**. Our very popular kayak trip up Wolli Creek with River Canoe Club kayaks and training and WCPS commentary, and a light lunch thrown in. Cost \$40. The August trip was full and we have many people wanting to come. There will probably be more trips next year, but early registration makes sure you get advance notice. To register contact WCPS* soon.

Wednesday 25 November - 7.00 pm. **WCPS AGM** – see details above.