

Wolli Creek Preservation Society

Update

February 2014

www.wollicreek.org.au

Wolli Creek Clean Up at Bexley Road

In the land threatened by WestConnex

Several WCPS members recently donned their gumboots and waded into Wolli Creek where it crosses under Bexley Road to remove unsightly rubbish.

Six people worked for an hour and a half to remove two large tyres, three sections of metal fencing, one shopping trolley, a TV cathode ray

tube and several bags of general rubbish, old clothes and metal.

Thanks to Canterbury Council for collecting the rubbish.

Looking on in the shadow of the road bridge were a Water Dragon, a White-face Heron and a family of Pacific Black Ducks.

The work has made a better habitat for the animals living there and restored some of the creek's natural beauty, reminding people why Wolli Creek needs saving.

PETER STEVENS



PHOTO: PAUL IBBETSON



PHOTO: UTE FOSTER

WestConnex – NoW Public Transport

Opposition to WestConnex is spreading - Sunday's Ashfield Park rally had a great turnout with 500 people attending. The February meeting in Marrickville was also well attended.

NoW (No WestConnex) Public Transport is an alliance of community groups opposing the WestConnex motorway, a 33km toll road to be built over the next 10 years around Sydney. Part of the WestConnex project involves destroying two hectares of important Wolli bushland in order to duplicate the M5 East Tunnel. The Wolli Creek Preservation Society has been fighting this government proposal and Society members are on the executive committee of NoW PT.

We encourage WCPS members to find out more about NoW PT's campaign against this public waste of money, the environmental destruction, the sell-off of public land and the lack of investment into sustainable public transport alternatives.

ANNA LE MASURIER



For more information, visit <http://westconnex.info/> or Like No WestConnex: Public transport not motorways on Facebook.

Wolli-specific information can be found at http://www.wollicreek.org.au/wolli_valley/issues

Concerned members can also write to their local politician or ask the Society for copies of the postcard we have produced to send to the NSW Premier.



We are keen to have lots of WCPS members at the **MARCH IN MARCH** on **16TH**. And if you are interested to join our contingent please let Peter know ASAP. The link to the **MARCH IN MARCH** site is <http://marchinmarch.com.au/sydney> which also has reference to a Facebook page.

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Rankin Awards



Last year we gave awards 'in recognition of fostering children's enjoyment and understanding of the natural world'.

The following projects received an award in Term 4.

CANTERBURY PS

The school's garden project involved students and staff in a wide variety of hands-on learning experiences about the natural world.

Costa Georgiadis from ABC's Gardening Australia presented the award at the school assembly.

EARLWOOD CARING FOR KIDS

The before and after school care centre at Earlwood PS converted an unused area of the grounds into a productive vegetable garden. Long time member Judi Rossi presented the award.

MARRICKVILLE WEST PS (MWPS)

The *We Are The River People* project, using a curriculum unit developed for the whole school, allowed children of all ages to cooperate with community residents in a learning experience based on the Cooks River. It's also available for other schools to use. Laura Zusters made the presentation at the school assembly.

ST MARY'S AND ST MINA'S COLLEGE, BEXLEY

Year 5/6 used the bushland near Bexley North as part of their curriculum unit on rainforests and presented their findings in a TV interview format.

WCPS member Dorothy Luther led the school excursion through the bush and presented the award at the school assembly.

Thanks to members Judi Rossi and Peter Munro for assisting me with this project.

Please contact me if you'd like to assist with the Rankin Award in 2014.

JUDY FINLASON



PHOTOS (FROM TOP TO BOTTOM): COSTA EXPLAINS COMPOST; PRINCIPAL & SCHOOL CAPTAINS (MWPS); DOROTHY LUTHER PRESENTS AWARD.

WCPS Annual Dinner 2013

On 18th October, 2013, eighty people attended the WCPS Annual Dinner at the St. George Rowing Club. This is always a fun time because of the information-packed approach to grass-roots concerns. On this occasion, local artist Ken Searle was guest speaker.

At the time of his address, Searle was exhibiting his work at the Watters Gallery and it's possible to see examples of his artwork at www.wattersgallery.com.au. The urban landscapes we enjoyed that night depicted areas Searle had roamed as a boy, areas which have undergone change. Searle paints these modern streets with an awareness of secret lanes, canals, pathways and indigenous history, not always visible to the rattling motorist or ferried commuter. We saw "Newtown 1978", "Cooks

River Valley 2009", "Wolli Bluff 2009", "Gumbramorra Swamp, Sydenham 2013", "Woolshed, Alexandra Canal, 2011". Hidden inside these wondrously watertight worlds were places we knew, like Rickety Street, or a familiar block of units. But they were dramatically cast anew.

Searle said, "I always need to know my environment well before talking about it." He talked about tracing the paths of water and life and of "walking into the picture". His works conveyed enormous respect for the detail of a landscape, as well as the enviable accomplishment of a humble practitioner. Searle did not talk about his materials, or his techniques, but focused on place as the source of story, of self, and of understanding.

I was prompted to think of the place of the artist in our clockwork world. Searle is an artist who refreshes us with a new view of our own backyard. We are so much the better for artists who assert their place and teach us to see. It is then, that we take more care with what we have.

This year's Annual Dinner will be on the 17th October, at the St George Rowing Club. Come along, buy a raffle ticket, do the trivia quiz and support one of the most important and preserved valleys in Sydney.

SUZANNE ROSE



MORNING LIGHT, ALEXANDRA CANAL BY KEN SEARLE 2013

ENDANGERED LILLY PILLY CONFIRMED

IN "WESTERN GATEWAY" AREA THREATENED BY WESTCONNEX



SYZIGIUM PANICULATUM

Society member Fiona Vaughan carried out her major TAFE assignment on the bushland of the Western Gateway and developed a lingering curiosity about the exact species of Lilly Pillies found there. Collecting suitable material to aid formal identification wasn't a straightforward task and took a few visits. But the results have been exciting.

In January this year the Sydney Botanic Gardens Botanical Information Service confirmed that specimens presented by the Society were not only the more

common *Acmena smithii*, but also the much rarer *Syzygium paniculatum*, which is classified as Endangered in NSW. As far as we presently know, the *Syzygium* trees are an isolated occurrence and are smack bang in the area that should have become part of the Wolli Regional Park, as originally planned. Instead, it would be trashed by the Westconnex M5 east expansion. Details about this rare *Syzygium* have been reported to The Office of Environment and Heritage.

DEB LITTLE



PHOTO: LAURA ZUSTERS

TURRELLA RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

The giant 'Genesis' development near Turrella railway station is rapidly taking shape, only a few blocks from the creek and Turrella Reserve and hardly sympathetic to the existing landscape of sleepy Turrella.

This YouTube video shows what the completed complex will look like and 'our' Turrella Reserve features as one of the major draw cards for prospective buyers and investors.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yavoQGW2SLc>

LAURA ZUSTERS

In the Valley...

TURTLEWATCH

Long-necked Turtles are a fascinating part of Wolli Creek wildlife. But they are under threat, particularly from foxes, dogs, ravens and human interference. The ravens are a new one. Unable to dig up the turtle's deeply buried eggs, they've taken to following turtles in search of a laying spot and taking the eggs as they pop out!

We have plans to protect the eggs from these threats and to help increase the number of hatchlings that make it back to the creek. If you would be interested to help our Turtlewatch team to do this, please contact the Society at info@wollicreek.org.au or 0431 914 553.



New Home for Microbats

Recently Gavin and Paul put up a new microbat/bird box in Girrahween Park. The microbat chamber is a long narrow one, entered from the slot seen here. Then there's

hollow (optimized for small lorikeets) in the fake broken-off stump. Three microbat species have been recorded at this location, so it'll be interesting to see if anyone takes up residence.

RED BELLY BLACKS ON THE PROWL



In November, several valley residents reported seeing Red Bellied Black Snakes near their homes. This is the time of year they are most commonly seen as the males are roaming about in search of mates.

While venomous, they are shy and sensitive to vibrations, so will typically move away when they feel footsteps.



SUMMER BABYSITTING

Summer in the Valley was marked by the maniacal crowing of the large Channel-billed Cuckoos, who make their annual journey down from Indonesia and PNG to lay eggs in Currawong nests. The 'more melodic' Koels also parasitize Wattlebird nests. After weeks of feeding by their tireless, unsuspecting hosts, the overgrown fledglings have now been taken by home by their parents.

WOLLI 'CREEK TO CREST' KAYAK TRIPS



PHOTOS: PETER STEVENS

We have entered the tenth year of our kayak trips, run in partnership with the River Canoe Club. We reckon there have been over 30 trips so far. They remain very popular and are usually fully booked weeks ahead of the event. Many WCPS members have been on the trip but increasingly the website, social media and word-of-mouth are bringing in non-members, who are now a solid majority.

This year began with two great trips in January and February. The tides allow us to run a further two trips this year, but not until October and November. If you are interested, please let Peter know via PeterStevens@iinet.net.au and more details will be sent to you. We will also add you to the list for early notification of these trips when booking opens.

PETER STEVENS

Birds of Western Wolli Creek: A study in local extinction

Written by Wolli Birdo Justin Cahill, this study is now available as an e-book from Smashwords at: <https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/375787>

Justin's study documents the bird species found in the bushland in the western part of the Valley threatened by the proposed duplication of the M5. It also draws attention to the increasing localized extinction of native birds in Sydney, an issue of concern to environmentalists that has had very little media coverage.



Surprising results have emerged from the first ever scientific study of fungi growing in the Wolli Creek Regional Park.

Endangered fungi species find

A DEADLY *Galerina* species, as well as the common Shaggy Ink Cap, have been identified in the first ever scientific study of fungi growing in the Wolli Creek Regional Park.

Undertaken by about 30 volunteers earlier this month, including members from the Sydney Fungal Studies Group Inc (SFSGI), the Wolli Creek Preservation Society and the public, the study led to the discovery of more than 60 species of fungi in

total.

"The society is very pleased with this first effort, which added much to our knowledge of the biodiversity of the park, which also contains more than 300 native plant species," study organiser Joanna Robinski said.

"People may underestimate fungi, but they are a vital part of every ecosystem, without their huge role in recycling dead plant material, all new growth would soon come to a stop."

Dr Ray and Elma Kearney from the SFSGI, were thrilled that among the findings was a rare and endangered fungal species, the *Hygrocybe austropratensis*.

Two further specimens were not familiar to the experts and may indeed be new species - the Genus *Humidicutis* and Genus *Pleurotus* which was found in the Bexley North bushland that is threatened with demolition for the construction of the proposed M5 East duplication.

FUNGI FIELD DAY

For those who missed out last year, the popular and informative Fungi Field Days are on this year on Sat 8th March (with the 29th as a Plan B) and Sat 22nd July. See what the Valley Times reported and keep the dates clear in your calendar!

Help Us Uncover The Hidden Stories Of The Wolli Creek Valley

We have received a grant from the Royal Australian Historical Society to engage archaeologist Graham Wilson to revisit the archaeological survey he carried out in the Wolli Valley in 1992. At the time, many sites were hard to reach and Graham recommended a further study be carried out in the future when thick weeds had been cleared.

Now, thanks to the work of our bushcare volunteers and our increased knowledge of the Valley's past, the RAHS grant will allow Graham to take another look at some of the sites already identified and investigate new finds.

Have you ever seen something hidden away and wondered, 'What IS that?' You never know what hidden stories there are to be told.

Contact Judy Finlason 9559 2821, 0431 914 553 or info@wollicreek.org.au

JUDY FINLASON

Farming Family in Wolli Creek Valley



CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY, OLD BOWEN'S CAMP, SUNDAY MARCH 2

We will be working at the creekside below the bio-retention basin on Johnston St Earlwood, which is full of large amounts of floatable rubbish, particularly plastic bottles. We'll meet at 9.00 at the little bridge off King's Track (leading from Johnston St to Illoura Reserve). There will be signs to guide late-comers. This steep site near the old Bowen's Camp is not great for small children, but it will be a particularly rewarding one.

Please advise Ute if you intend to come, on fosteru44@gmail.com or 9559 2363. Register by 'joining' this site: www.cleanupaustaliaday.org.au/Bowens+Heritage+Site

PETER STEVENS

CALENDAR

Bush regeneration: Feb 1, 9, 12, 21, 22; Mar 1, 9, 12, 14, 15, 22; Apr 5, 9, 13, 18, 19, 26; May 3, 11, 14, 16, 17, 24; Jun 7, 11, 15, 20, 21, 28. Details of locations from WCPS or website calendar.

Bat counting: Third Friday of each month, just after sunset. Come along to see the fly-out or join in the counting. 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 WCPS.

Committee Meetings: Feb 26, Mar 26, Apr 23, May 28, Jun 25. Inner south-west CDO, suite 1, Ground Floor, 11-13 Hartill-Law avenue Bardwell park. All members are welcome to attend the meetings, notification to WCPS essential due to security at the building.

Sunday 2 March – from 9am – *Clean Up Australia Day.* see page 8 in this Update.

Friday 14 March – *Watch the Bats Fly Out Social Evening.* 6.30 - 8pm, Turella Reserve. BYO

Saturday 15 March – *Walk the Wolli Track.* 8.30 am start, with environmental and historical commentary along the Wolli Track from Bexley North to Wolli Bluff above Waterworth Park. A special focus on the section threatened by WestConnex and the large number of bush restoration and stormwater management sites, plus 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 29 March – *Fungi Field Day* (to be confirmed).

To register, info@wollicreek.org.au or 0431 914 553

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