

# Wolli Creek Preservation Society

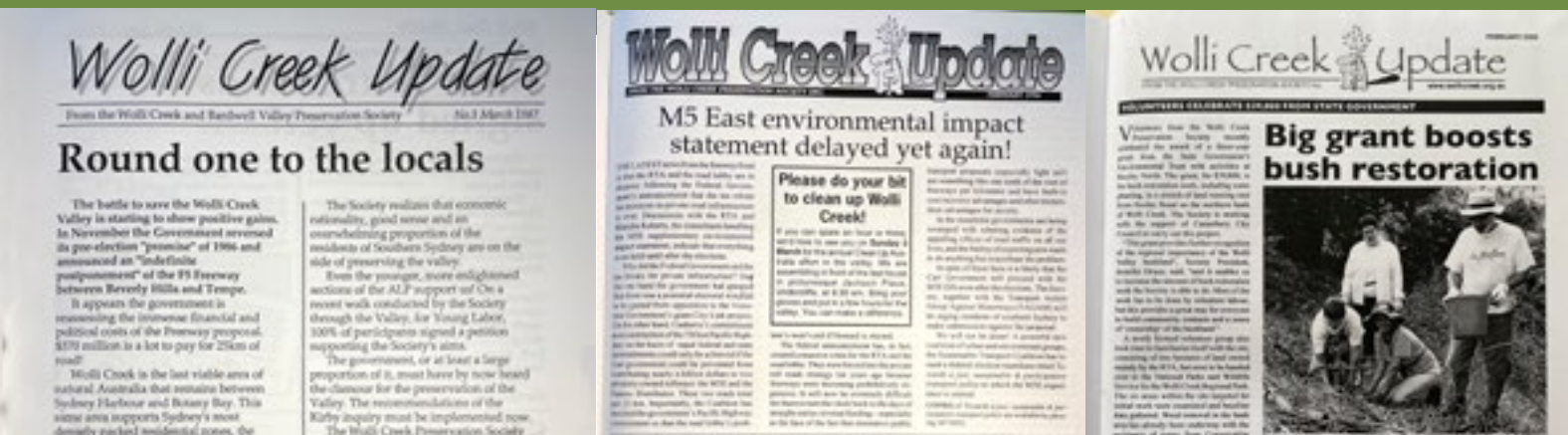
# Update #100!

June 2023

The Wolli Creek Preservation Society would like to acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional owners, the Cardigal and Bidjigal people of the Eora Nation

1. 100th Update since 1987
2. Vale Judy Finlason
3. Unwin Green Street Launch
4. Guided Walks Return
5. Annual Dinner Speaker Peter Ridgeway
6. Fungi Foray
7. What's Happening in the Valley
8. Calendar of Upcoming Events

## 100th ISSUE OF THE UPDATE



Since the first Update was published in 1987, WCPS has now produced 100 issues. What a history we have documented since then!

Under the stewardship of previous editors Gavin Gatenby, and later Deb Little and Peter Stevens, the Update has chronicled a history of not only the issues faced by the bushland of the Valley, but also the dedicated and concerted efforts of so many people fighting to save and protect it.

Links to pdfs of all our Updates right back to #1 will be available when we launch our new website later in the year. Peter Stevens has been applying his formidable attention to detail to digitizing and cataloguing older issues for the website. His research reveals that, up until issue 21, the Update carried an issue number in its banner. But then there seems to have been a confusion about the numbering that resulted in the numbering being dropped. So it was only recently that we discovered that this June issue was indeed to be the 100th issue!

It's not only the Updates that highlight our impressive history. Canterbury library has offered to house the Society's archives, which include bound copies of the Updates and publicity and correspondence from our campaigns. Member Ute Forster is kindly cataloguing our historical material before the handover to the library and we may need to apply for funding to have records digitized, so that they are available online.

Laura Zusters



Photo by Laura Zusters

## JUDY FINLASON LEAVES HER BELOVED WOLLI VALLEY

**As many of you will know, long-term member Judy Finlason, tireless protector of the Wolli Creek Valley, died in April at the grand age of 92.**

Many members and walkers on the TVT will forever remember Judy at her beloved home 'Wren Cottage' in Jackson Place. She and that cottage were made for each other. A visit to her house was always a highlight of many of our guided walks through the Valley.

Judy loved people and loved to pop out and chat with passers by, educating them about the history of the Valley and how easily we could have lost this precious strip of remnant bushland to an eight-lane motorway. She was very generous with her time and knowledge, and a dab hand at getting people to sign up as members. Walkers would leave her place behind schedule, but with a new-found appreciation of the specialness of the bushland they were walking through.

Starting in 1975, Judy was one of Wolli's earliest environmental campaigners. Long-time neighbour Judi Rossi said, *"For forty years, Judy's cottage was the hub of so many planning meetings and campaigns to protect the valley from threats, everyone crammed into the kitchen with cups of tea. Judy's optimism and energy were truly infectious and inspirational."*

In 1989, in response to the NSW government environmental impact statement for a surface M5 motorway, Judy masterminded an album of songs celebrating the threatened bush valley, created and performed by children from Earlwood Public School and Our Lady of Lourdes. The cassette album *"Eyes on Wolli"* was launched with a live performance in Girrahween Park and, to the government's discomfort, won the Sir William McKell award for environmental journalism.

*continued over*



Judy outside her cottage in the early days



Judy's kitchen crammed with environmentalists



Judy researched and wrote *The Place That Jackson Built*, which was launched by Jack Munday at Jackson Place. She also stored extensive scrapbooks filled with newspaper cuttings detailing the extraordinary history of the early days of the campaigns to save the valley. These will be added to our archives at Canterbury Library.

Past President and old friend Gavin Gatenby said in his obituary, *“Judy was instrumental in championing local involvement with Wollie, tirelessly liaising with schools to foster children’s love of the bush. She helped organize children’s activities for the annual Bat Watch Picnic in Turrella Reserve, was very involved in an archaeological survey of the valley and hosted volunteers’ morning teas in her garden beside the walking track.”*

In more recent years, Judy worked with Damon Basset to create a popular and informative travelling exhibition of 16 posters, called *Amazing Wollie*. This exhibition has been shown in schools, community centres and libraries throughout the area. [See here.](#)

Judy was also the instigator of our now notorious 50 year commemoration of the 1967 Battle for Nannygoat Hill, a community action that saved the local landmark from destruction. Judy inspired about a hundred members and locals to dress up in our best 1960s outfits and recreate the famous march up Nannygoat Hill, making sure the ABC told the story on that night’s news. [See here.](#)

A memorial service for Judy was held at the Rowers Club on the Cooks River, site of many of our annual dinners. About 70 people attended, plus many others watched the live stream. Judy will indeed be sorely missed by us all, as a member, campaigner, environmentalist, neighbour and an inspiration.

Laura Zusters



‘Eyes on Wollie’ poster



Judy with Jack Munday at her book launch



Amazing Wollie poster #1



## UNWIN GREEN STREET CAMPAIGN LAUNCH AT WOLLI BLUFF, FEB 2023

The WCPS continues to support residents of Unwin Street Earlwood in their campaign to turn Unwin Street into a “green street” connecting Waterworth Park to Wollie Creek Regional Park, as seen in the [October and February Updates](#).

Last year, the residents approached the previous Minister for Planning, Anthony Roberts, seeking support for their proposal, which includes the re-vegetation of three vacant blocks on Unwin Street. The Minister responded by doubling down on the decision to sell off the blocks for development.

The residents then held a campaign launch on 27 February 2023. [As reported in The Leader](#), it was attended by 80 people including local councillors and the Labor Member for Canterbury, Sophie Cotsis, who spoke in support of the residents’ plan,

***“This proposal is new and unique, you have my full support. We also fully support completing the Regional Park. This proposal clearly has such excellent community support.”***

MC Dr Cate Madill, the Unwin Street resident representative, said,

***“This is a really precious spot. It is THE link between Waterworth Park and the Regional Park. We have a once in a lifetime chance to create a proper entrance to the park. But we found out that the land at the top was to be sold to developers by June 2023.”***

The vacant blocks featured recently in [ABC news reports](#) that drew attention to a failure of the Planning Department to address environmental contamination on the land, including dumped asbestos sheeting.

Following a motion proposed by local councillor, Barbara Coorey, the Mayor of Canterbury Bankstown recently wrote to the new Planning Minister, Paul Scully, urging him to re-zone the vacant blocks as a matter of urgency.

It remains to be seen whether the new Labor Government will make the land available for the “green street” in accordance with the residents’ vision, or sell it off for development, as the previous Liberal government planned to do.

**Christopher Jordens**  
WCPS Committee Member



Photo by Valerie Atkinson

## GUIDED WALKS RETURN TO THE VALLEY

**On April 1 and 15 we held our first guided walks in several years, in partnership with Canterbury-Bankstown Council.**

In common with many organisations, WCPS activities have been disrupted by Covid 19, but it's great to have these walks back.

Lachlan Prentice, Council's Environmental Project Officer, joined WCPS volunteers Deb Little, Valerie Atkinson and Gina Svolos for both of the walks.

Some people were already aware of the Wolli Creek Valley, having previously walked some sections, and wanted to find out more. For others, the Valley was a completely new experience.

It's always great to be able to introduce people to our amazing Wolli Creek Valley. Our stories about the history of the valley and WCPS, the flora and fauna and other environmental aspects spark interest, with comments from some who attended saying the experience was "informative" and "insightful". It's also a great way to introduce people to WCPS, with several of them becoming members after the walk.

See the Calendar re info on upcoming Guided Walks and Eco-Paddles.

**Gina Svolos**  
Committee member

## ANNUAL DINNER TREAT

**Peter Ridgeway, naturalist and author, has agreed to speak at this year's Annual Dinner on the 19th of October.**

**You may know his book "A Wide and Open Land" about walking the Cumberland Plain through the last of Western Sydney's Woodlands, a great read. More in the September issue.**





## FUNGI FORAY IN WOLLI

After some rain and unseasonable warmth the Sydney Fungal Studies Group conducted their third survey for the season in the Wollie Creek Regional Park on Saturday 18th March, 2023.

WCPS members were invited to join. Five of us did, making a group of 17. David Noble (squatting in the picture above) very generously lent his time and knowledge yet again to lead the foray which began at Girrahween Park and made its way along the walking track. My ecologist friends Eva and Maurice Sempe, visiting from France, thoroughly enjoyed being able to join in.

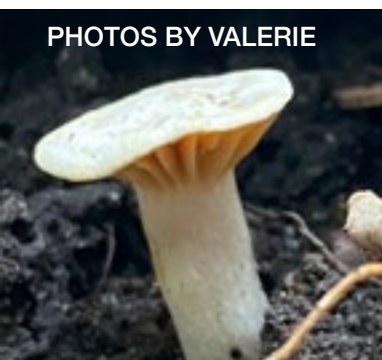
Initially prospects seemed dubious to us participants, but gradually quite a few varieties were located. All sorts of curious specimens were photographed. None were collected although some members of the fungi group are licenced to do so for scientific purposes. The *Hygrocybe austropratensis* was deemed by the experts as the most interesting.

Generally the citizen science approach by all in this study group was clearly impressive, particularly for students present. The mycology world needs enthusiasts and mycology studies need to be reinstated in universities. Practical experiences like this show the wonder of a neglected area of nature.

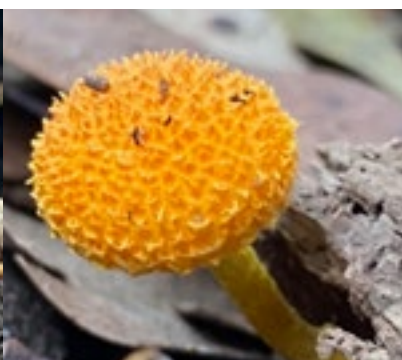
Have a look at [Dave Noble's stunning photos on his blog](#) and this [great talk about fungal biodiversity](#).

Valerie Atkinson, committee member

### PHOTOS BY VALERIE



*Hygrocybe austropratensis*



Spiky orange *Cyptotrampa asprata*



"Very tough, dry jobs"



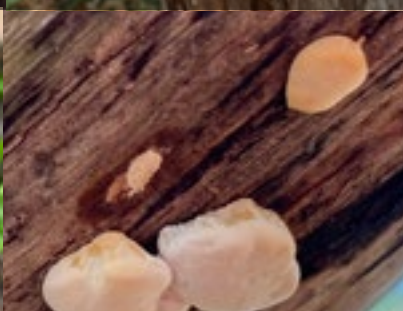
Dangerous-looking *Russula* species



"Bruises when touched"



"Like old-fashioned hair bun"



Jelly fungus *Tremella mesenterica*



NPWS contractors lowered this large tree weed Camphorlaurel at our Paperbark Creek bushcare site to allow more sunlight for native plant species. There are plans to cut in hollows as nesting sites for local wildlife.

## WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE VALLEY - TAKE A LOOK



The plantings at the remediation site on Jackson Place are growing well, thanks to a damp autumn. Encroaching weeds at the margins are being tackled by WCPS bushcarers.



Sydney Water contractors have been removing weeds, plus doing extensive planting in areas requiring it next to the SWOOS, from the walking track down to the Creek.

## GET READY FOR WALKING

Winter is here and it's been pretty cold. Good weather for bushwalks. It might be time to update your wardrobe with one of our shirts, long or short sleeve. They are the perfect way to show your support for the Valley. Wear them on the walking track or at the park, they're a great conversation starter.

Once we have enough orders, we can place an order with our suppliers. We'll let you know when the shirts have arrived.

## WCPS T-SHIRTS

If you would like a t-shirt please let us know



T Shirts are \$30 each  
Children's \$25

The order form is available at [Supporters T shirt](#) or via our website/ About Us/ Support Us

We will be printing as soon as we have sufficient orders to make it financially viable.

## CALENDAR

### Bush Regeneration

**Jun 3, 8, 11, 14, 16, 17. Jul 1, 12, 9, 21, 22, 27. Aug 5, 16, 13, 18, 19, 31.**

Details via [bushcare@wollicreek.org.au](mailto:bushcare@wollicreek.org.au), website calendar or phone Peter Semple on 0411 021 440. Always check in case of changes at short notice.

### Bat Counting

**Generally third Friday of each month, just after sunset**

Meeting at the footbridge, Turrella Reserve

For up-to-date details, join the bat group email list by contacting [bats@wollicreek.org.au](mailto:bats@wollicreek.org.au) and come along to see the fly-out or join in the counting

### Bird Surveys

**Teams are doing regular monthly surveys of bird species**

Teams work to their own timetable, but we can get you involved in a team if you contact [birds@wollicreek.org.au](mailto:birds@wollicreek.org.au)

### Fungi Foray

**No forays planned in the next three months**

Register via [info@wollicreek.org.au](mailto:info@wollicreek.org.au)

### Eco Paddles

**New Eco Paddles planned for 9 Sept and 4 Nov**

For more information, contact [info@wollicreek.org.au](mailto:info@wollicreek.org.au)

### Guided Walks

**Guided Walks will hopefully resume in spring.**

For more information, contact [info@wollicreek.org.au](mailto:info@wollicreek.org.au)

### Committee Meetings

**26 July, 23 August + AGM, 27 September, 22 November.**

Currently held bi-monthly by Zoom. All members welcome.

If interested to attend please contact [info@wollicreek.org.au](mailto:info@wollicreek.org.au)

EDITOR & LAYOUT: LAURA ZUSTERS

All photos by Laura unless otherwise credited

See previous issues at [wollicreek.org.au/publications/update-newsletter](http://wollicreek.org.au/publications/update-newsletter)

Wolli Creek Preservation Society  
[info@wollicreek.org.au](mailto:info@wollicreek.org.au)  
[www.facebook.com/protectwollicreekvalley](http://www.facebook.com/protectwollicreekvalley)  
[www.wollicreek.org.au](http://www.wollicreek.org.au)  
[twitter.com/wollipossum](https://twitter.com/wollipossum)  
[youtube.com/user/wollicreekvalley/videos](https://youtube.com/user/wollicreekvalley/videos)

