

## **The way to Wootton.**

### **Daphne's story**



You never know how people end up where they are. I have heard so many interesting stories locally that explain the eclectic mix that is the Wootton community. So I thought I would add my 2 cents worth.

In about 2000 -2001 I was working full time as manager of Cartier in Sydney, crazy hours, crazy people and spending my free time taking clients, [otherwise known as the terminally self indulged], to Opera openings, dinners, blah, blah, blah.

My little soul started to crave some peace and dare I say it 'serenity'. My friends laughed at me when I started buying The Land and there was another rural paper at that time...I put up with jibes, such as 'you and which other person in Sydney is buying that!!'

Anyway I continued to crave somewhere green away from the city and was really looking down south as I knew the area a little having stayed at great places like Skyfarm in the Kangaroo valley.

Well the crazy retail season of Christmas 2001, found me and some friends volunteering to work the Salvation Army Christmas lunch in Redfern. We were a bunch of 'auslanders' with no relatives here so we did that, it was great fun and an antidote to my daily life at Cartier, as you can imagine. After we did our bit, my friend Catherine invited me to Christmas dinner at her brother's place. The subject of wanting somewhere in the country came up and they had 2 properties in Bulahdelah, but they said I had to look at this piece of land in Wootton...couldn't spell it, let alone tell you where it was!

The New Year saw me taking my first drive north, having tee'd up 3 properties, [including the recommendation], with Steve De Vries.

It was a perfect weather day, and as soon as I turned onto the Old Pacific Highway, [now Wootton Way], the wow factor hit, driving with the windows open past state forest, huge flooded gums and accompanied by seriously loud birdsong. That alone was amazing, as was no traffic and the picturesque winding road into Wootton.

We viewed all 3 properties but the only one that spoke to me was the Wattley Hill Road recommendation, despite the overgrown state it was in, the seclusion and perspective were very special.

I won't bore you with all the boring stuff, suffice to say, deal on, deal off, deal on! I brought some friends to have a look, and some got it, others didn't, but I could always see what it could be. To me it wasn't a scruffy shed, surrounded by dead Wattle, it was cool industrial space and freedom.....sorry if that sounds over the top but that's what I felt.

My partner came over from London to have a look, and was not sure why you would put yourself through so much work! Now try even getting him to the beach. The last few years has seen us extend the original shed etc into a home for us, family and friends. We were fortunate enough to be introduced to a great builder, Marc Schulenberg, whose parents lived in Wootton at that time, we found various houses to rent over the next three years while project Wootton got underway. Many kind people would wave or stop and say hello when they saw me brush clearing out front, and on days when I had worked myself into a stupor, [before heading back down to Sydney to go back to work]!!.....I could always rely on tea and sympathy from Gloria and Jack Squires, Mark and Paul Addison were also a great, not to say eccentric help with learning country stuff!

We now have an ever increasing circle of friends, and really enjoy the sense of community here, the hub for this being the Wootton community Hall with its authentic country dinners, film screenings and now yoga!

Many friends and neighbours are more than generous with their time and advice etc, you really get the feeling that help, if you want it is on hand.

One of my great loves here is spending time in the garden, my morning ritual is to make a huge cup of tea, [even have special mug with lid]! And just wander around the garden before him in doors is up.

Kind friends like Kerry, [Lotus Retreat], Gloria, Jane, Pat, Coleen and Fran have given me plant stock from their gardens to add to the mix.....so the garden is now getting the same treatment the house got, in that we are avoiding buying shop goods, and up-cycling what we are given, which we love.

Anyway the brain is full of ideas for continuing to enjoy this special place with its great micro climate, and warm, eclectic community. So watch this space! With most of the house and garden kind of complete we are looking forward to some creative down time .....and our next year's resolution is to spend more time at the beach than at Bunnings!

PS Written in Wootton the Isle of Wight UK while visiting ma!

Extract from Wootton Valley News June/July 2013