

WOOTTON VALLEY NEWS

FEBRUARY – MARCH 2012 NO 76

DISTRIBUTION 450 WOOTTON COOLONGOOK
BUNGWAHL BUNYAH BULAHDELAH

Swift Parrot *Lathamus discolor*

I recently saw this parrot for the first time in Wootton. Have others seen it before? The species breeds in Tasmania (October – January) and moves to the Australian mainland for the non-breeding season (February – September), with most of the population wintering in Victoria and NSW, before returning to Tasmania in spring to breed. They are usually seen feeding in



the canopy of flowering trees, often noisy, active and conspicuous. They often dart from tree to tree, but may also flutter between trees. Their flight is swift and direct, with rapid shallow wing-beats; flocks are typically seen weaving through the canopy at great speed or flying high overhead, with random changes in direction. The Swift Parrot is a small parrot about 25 cm long. It is bright green with red around the bill, throat and forehead. The red on its throat is edged with yellow. Its crown is blue-purple. There are bright red patches under the wings. One of most distinctive features from a distance is its long (12 cm), thin tail, which is dark red. Swift Parrots are endangered. There are estimated to be only a few thousand of them left in the wild.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Wednesday 8th February	GL Catchment Management Group Wootton Hall
Saturday 11th February	Movie & Supper Night 6pm Brush Turkey Cafe
Saturday 18th February	Wootton Fire Brigade Training Day 8am
Saturday 18th February	Brush Turkey Cafe Training Day 2pm all welcome
Saturday 25th February	Community Dinner 'Chinese theme' 7pm Cafe
Saturday 3rd March	Wootton Fire Brigade Training Day 8am
Saturday 17th March	Wootton Fire Brigade Training Day 8am Meeting 10am
Saturday 31st March	Community Dinner 'Bring a plate' 7pm Wootton Hall

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Editors Caro Badcock 49977337 and Pat Tate 49977292

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Wootton Community Network Community Dinners

Last year's Spanish dinner was a great success. Thanks to Jim for cooking all the pre dinner tapas.

Our Christmas party was well attended with lots of new faces. Thanks to Fran for organising games and carol singing.

January's dinner celebrated Australia Day with prawns, baked lamb, pavlova and lamingtons. The evening was enjoyed very much by all and it was great to see some more new faces.

February's dinner on Saturday 25th will celebrate Chinese New Year.

March's dinner on Saturday 31st will be a bring a plate to share. This year's bring a plate dinners will be held in the hall. (Cost \$5) Bookings 49977296

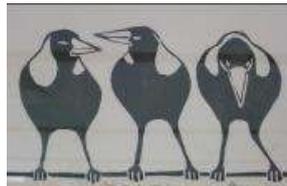
Cafe news

The cafe reopened with lots of locals coming, enjoying breakfast and catching up with one another. It's been busy every Sunday since. Unfortunately, as the cafe is run completely by volunteers, it is doubtful we will be able to keep operating as it is. We have lost some regular helpers and others are now too busy to spare their time. On February 18th we are having a training day (food prep, coffee making etc) at 2pm to 6pm followed by drinks and nibbles when we can informally discuss the future of the cafe. If you have any ideas or would like to volunteer your time (great for teenagers!) please come on the day. If you can't come to the training just turn up at 6 o'clock or send us your ideas. We will still be having our usual monthly dinners and movie nights.

Thanks to...Mark Addison for donating and delivering soil for levelling the outside table and to Leanne and Peter for spreading it. Thanks also to Geoff and Julie for donation of our Xmas raffle and a prize for our January trivia. Thanks again to all the usual café volunteers and others that help on the committee and at the dinners. Thanks especially to Dulcie for her ongoing help with cooking (and taking on making the Lemon Myrtle Cheesecake after Bronwyn's departure).

Come along and look at the art at the Brush Turkey Community Café

Our artist for January and February is Barry Morrow. He has studied art since the 1970's, doing life drawing and sculpture and more recently, the Fine Arts course at the Great Lakes TAFE College. He has recently been concentrating on printing, mixed media and life drawing. He is also a member of the Great Lakes Art Society. He recommends that anyone interested in art to contact TAFE about the Fine Arts course and to join the local Art society.



**Next Wootton Valley News Deadline is
26th March, 2012**

Farewell

We had a lovely farewell party for Bronwyn, where we presented her with a seat made by Ray Towers. It now sits overlooking a dam on her new property. Bronwyn definitely made her mark in Wootton. She was involved in playgroups, after-school Kidsplay, fundraising for Coolonglook School and the Wootton Community Network. She helped build the Community Cafe and volunteered from the beginning. We had lots of fun putting together this newsletter. I will miss her greatly. She has been an inspiration. Bronwyn is a “doer”. There are always plenty of “gunnas” and plenty that say “they should do...”, few “doers” and I think Wootton will be poorer for her going. There are many things she has done without anyone even knowing she’s been doing them and I suppose we will only know when we notice that something isn’t being done or we start saying “who did this before?.”

Pat



Above: Sue Smith (Pam Dunne in background) sharing some memories of her first meeting with Bronwyn
Right: Brigid Bradbury and Leanne Wright enjoying the party.



Welcome to our new editor!!

Caro Badcock has offered to help put this newsletter together in the wake of Bronwyn’s departure. Caro works from home, is on the Wootton Hall Committee and the Catchment Management Committee. She also has farm and family commitments. Her offering to help proves the saying “if you want something done, ask a busy person”. Anyway, I look forward to Caro putting her own mark on this newsletter.

Pat

PS: We are always looking for contributions. If you have any funny or unusual experience or other idea for content please contact us.

Great Lakes Catchment Management (GLCM) Group

It is our goal to promote sustainable use of land, water, vegetation, soil and other natural resources.

The next meeting will be held in the Wootton Hall, February 8. Anyone is welcome to the open forum for landholders at 10.30 am so please put the date in your diaries and RSVP to Karen on 6591 7305 and I look forward to seeing you all there.

Caro Badcock Chair, Community Representative GLCM Group

Wootton Rural Fire Brigade

It's a new year and our local RFS are already arranging training for the next fire season. We will be refreshing all our usual skills, plus some new training on new gear we have acquired. Come along and join us, and learn about fire fighting practices, pumps, hoses, and their deployment, using GPS in the bush, chainsaw use, and even train for an HGV licence to drive the big red truck. Training is held on Saturdays, usually twice a month. New members are always welcome.

Remember: Fire permits are required until 31st March 2012

Contact Mike Badcock (Captain) on 49977337 for fire permits or any of our members for membership, training details.

Dates:

18/2/2012 Training 8:00 am

3/3/2012 Training 8:00 am

13/3/2012 Training 8:00 am;

13/3/2012 Meeting 10:00 am



Wootton Brigade at Bombah Point



Steve and Mike at Herivals Road

Wootton Hall Happenings

2012 sees the Wootton Hall again being used for a regular yoga group. See elsewhere for details.

In addition we are pleased to announce that every third month the Wootton Community dinner will be held in the hall. The first one being on March 31. The format will be bring-a-plate and the cost will be \$5 per person.

The November meeting of the committee discussed the state and use of the tennis courts. Council has been notified of the state of the metal gate into the courts and that it poses a risk to visitors. Please take care when entering. Alison Watts, Treasurer of the tennis club is in the process of contacting members of the club to assess the level of interest in reintroducing a tennis competition if we can get the courts up to a reasonable condition. Anyone who is interested can contact Alison on 4997 7126.

We are sorry to say that Bronwyn Little, who has been regularly cleaning the hall both inside and out, the toilets and playground area for many years has now left the district. We would like to give our appreciation to her and compliment her on our hall always being presented at its best for any occasion. The committee is currently working with Council to come to an agreement as to how these activities will be continued into the future.

The next meeting is to be held February 12 at the Hall. If you have any suggestions or feedback please contact Caro..

Bookings contact Caro Badcock 49977337, caro_badcock@bigpond.com

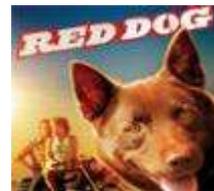
WOOTTON SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL GROUP

If anyone would like to join contact Karen Bee at Council 65917305

Members are a mixed bunch, with small and large properties, full time residents and weekenders. Some have cattle, some just a backyard garden.

We even have a snail grower. It is a great way to share ideas and get to know neighbours. So far we have done water testing, soil testing and looked at erosion control and road building. Anyone is welcome to join.

*Supper and Movie Night
Saturday 11th February
6pm Supper for 7pm movie \$10
Brush Turkey Café
Wootton Way Wootton*



“Red Dog”

Based on the legendary true story of the Red Dog who united a disparate local community while roaming the Australian outback in search of his long lost master.

What brought YOU to Wootton?

This is the first in what we hope will be a regular item where we interview local residents and find out what brought them to Wootton, when, what Wootton was like at the time they arrived and so on. Our lucky first effort goes to Geoff and Julie from Avondale on Wootton Way.



Geoff started looking for a property around 15 years ago when he needed to get out of the oil refining business and wanted to return to his farming roots. (He owned a dairy farm in Nana Glen.) As for most of us newcomers he gave himself a 200 km radius of Sydney in which to find somewhere and just happened to drive through Wootton on numerous occasions. Every time he passed through he saw this property was for sale and it kept calling to him. So, one day he stopped and talked with the owner, the vegetation was mainly whiskey grass and bracken that came over the roof of his vehicle and he had no idea what size the property was! Geoff thought no more about it until sometime later when Julie asked him if he was going to buy the property and lo and behold the dream became a reality! So Geoff and Julie have been Woottonites since around 1997. The original Wootton Hall had already been demolished and the Wootton Way was still the Pacific Highway with traffic thundering past their door day and night!

They hadn't realized how run down both the property and the house were but over the years have painstakingly brought them back, not without making city slicker mistakes and some terrifying experiences of course. For example, they decided to burn the river flats area with the whiskey grass and bracken. The captain of the local fire brigade at the time would not agree to burn the area due to the conditions; however, Geoff ploughed ahead undeterred. A ball of flame rolled across the paddock and Geoff and Julie watched in horror as they thought it would engulf Jack Squires' bailed hay on the neighbouring property. Lucky for them the flames got to the river and ran out of steam! At least one disaster averted, more luck than good management!

Both can remember clearly when the highway bypass opened. They went on a bus tour of the bypass where they were informed of all the environmental care that was taken with animal underpasses etc, followed by a bar-b-q at Coolongolook. There was a vintage car parade that just started when the heavens opened. I bet we can all imagine what that was like! The night the highway was opened for the first time was a shock for everyone. Wootton Way was so quiet no-one could sleep a wink and for at least a fortnight all the dogs kept barking at each other because they finally realized they weren't the only dogs in town!

Up until recently Julie commuted to Sydney on a weekly basis, leaving very early Tuesday morning and returning Friday morning. She recalls some horrendous drives in those early days with accidents closing the road (she recalls one trip of 7 hours!) dead animals along the roadside and trees down. As a fellow commuter for four years I take my hat off to her for maintaining it for so long! She is now enjoying her retirement living at Avondale full time with only the occasional trips to Sydney and both are continuing to enjoy their Wootton lifestyle.

Coolongolook Public School

Check out the website for information in 2012

www.coolongolo-p.schools@nsw.edu.au

School has only just resumed so we hope for some news in our next issue.



Wootton Yoga Group

A group of us are meeting in the Wootton Hall every Tuesday at 5 pm to practise yoga together. This is an informal group where we use a variety of recorded yoga sessions provided by members of the group. It involves easy stretches and relaxation suitable for anyone and lasts for about 1.5 hours. Anyone is welcome to join us. Just bring a mat and wear comfortable clothes. Cost is \$3.00 to cover the hall hire.



Wootton Guest House News

We had another busy Xmas period with many interesting people through the door. We also catered for some locals, helping out with family gatherings. Leanne and Peter

Sail from Hawks Nest



Pete, hoisting the mainsail

During January, a group from Wootton met at Hawks Nest for a day of sailing on the "Beach Daze" charter boat. It was a lovely day of sailing, swimming, lunch and dolphin spotting. A huge thankyou to Chris and Sandra. Beach Daze Charters can cater for up to 30 people and cruises around Port Stephens. If anyone would like to join a cruise, ring 0417 403 796 or look up their website www.beachdazeportstephens.com.au

Sandra, the skipper, at the helm



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contact the editor.**



Swamp Hen
eating grass seed on my lawn
Pat