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# Walcha



experience  
the **highs**



**W**alcha is a warm and welcoming community and a town rich in art and culture. The ever popular OPEN AIR GALLERY is a fantastic asset to Walcha's streetscape, with contributing sculptors being well renowned local, national and international artists, a photographer's delight with the background of the New England High Country Autumn colours ready to burst into life. The dramatic and natural beauty of OXLEY WILD RIVERS NATIONAL PARK is easily accessible and a stone's throw from town. The spectacular APSLEY FALLS are merely 20km from town and the TIA FALLS a further 17km – close enough to explore without necessarily having to give up your creature comforts, enjoy a cosy bed at one of our many hospitable accommodation options or a heart warming meal from one of Walcha's restaurants, café's or pubs. For the more adventurous and fit, try out the award winning GREEN GULLY TRACK, a 4 day bushwalk with breathtaking views and refurbished mustering huts as accommodation along the way.



Walcha Visitor  
Information Centre  
P: 02 6774 2460  
[walchansw.com.au](http://walchansw.com.au)



## THE *Enchanted* GARDEN

THE BISHOPS HAVE **CREATED** A HAVEN FOR WILDLIFE  
WHICH INSPIRES THEIR CHILDREN'S BOOKS





The garden creates a sanctuary, an oasis separate from all the other troubles outside.

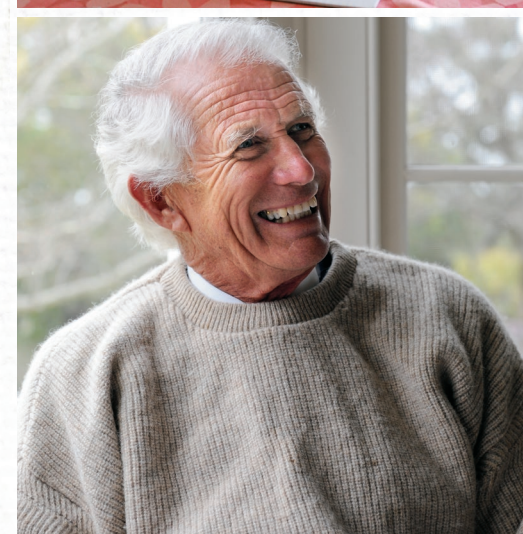
Anne and Tony Bishop's property is located on the 'wrong' side of the creek. 'Myrabluan' sits between Scone and Merriwa in the Upper Hunter Valley with the house and garden nestled in a hollow. These features mean that the Bishops live in a protected haven and if the creek floods, cutting them off from the road, then they are happy to be stuck in what they call their 'cubby house'.

Tony and Anne built the house in 1967 on a parcel of land separated from the original 'Wootton' holding and raised their two daughters there. Now their enchanted garden is also a haven for their grandchildren and other visitors.

Tony Bishop has lived on this land all his life. His grandfather Jesse purchased the area called Wootton in 1913. His father William took over the running of the property when quite young and Tony has carried on his legacy and developed a successful

Hereford cattle and sheep enterprise.

The paddocks of this grazing property are dominated by *Eucalyptus melliodora*, yellow box and *Angophora floribunda*, apple box, as well as kurrajongs, which can be glimpsed from the garden through the additional trees planted by Anne and Tony. The garden glows with different colours from the golden elms, the plane trees, the green poplars and cerise prunus and now these trees form a barrier, which is, as Anne says, 'like being enclosed in a secret place.' Anne sees the house itself as 'a sort of gigantic garden ornament' – the large romantic garden dressing the house with the landscape beyond an extension of the garden. A path leads across the lawn down to the pond, which is the focal point, and draws you to it. 'The pond leaks like a sieve,' Anne confesses, 'and has to be topped up.' She believes that every garden must have water in it. 'It is essential to your spirit.'







They have fostered a deep love for the land and now share their love of words, nature and art, combining these passions in the wonderful books they produce.



There is a small wooden boat pulled up on the bank and pink flowering water lilies decorate the surface of the pond.

The lawn and garden create a sanctuary, an oasis 'separate from droughts and all the other troubles outside.' It is also a place of contemplation and a source of inspiration. The Bishops have exercised their creative talents, producing beautifully illustrated children's books based on the animals that come into the garden. Anne created the text in rhyming verse and Tony added the exquisite watercolour illustrations.

Tony has a separate studio where he paints, surrounded by tubes of watercolours and well worn brushes, while Anne sits at the dining room table and surveys her garden, watching the animals and birds and seeking further inspiration.

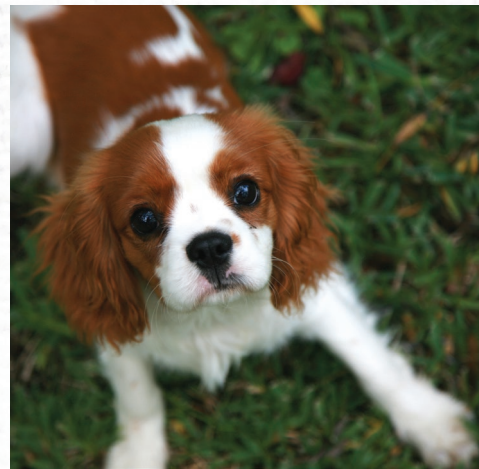
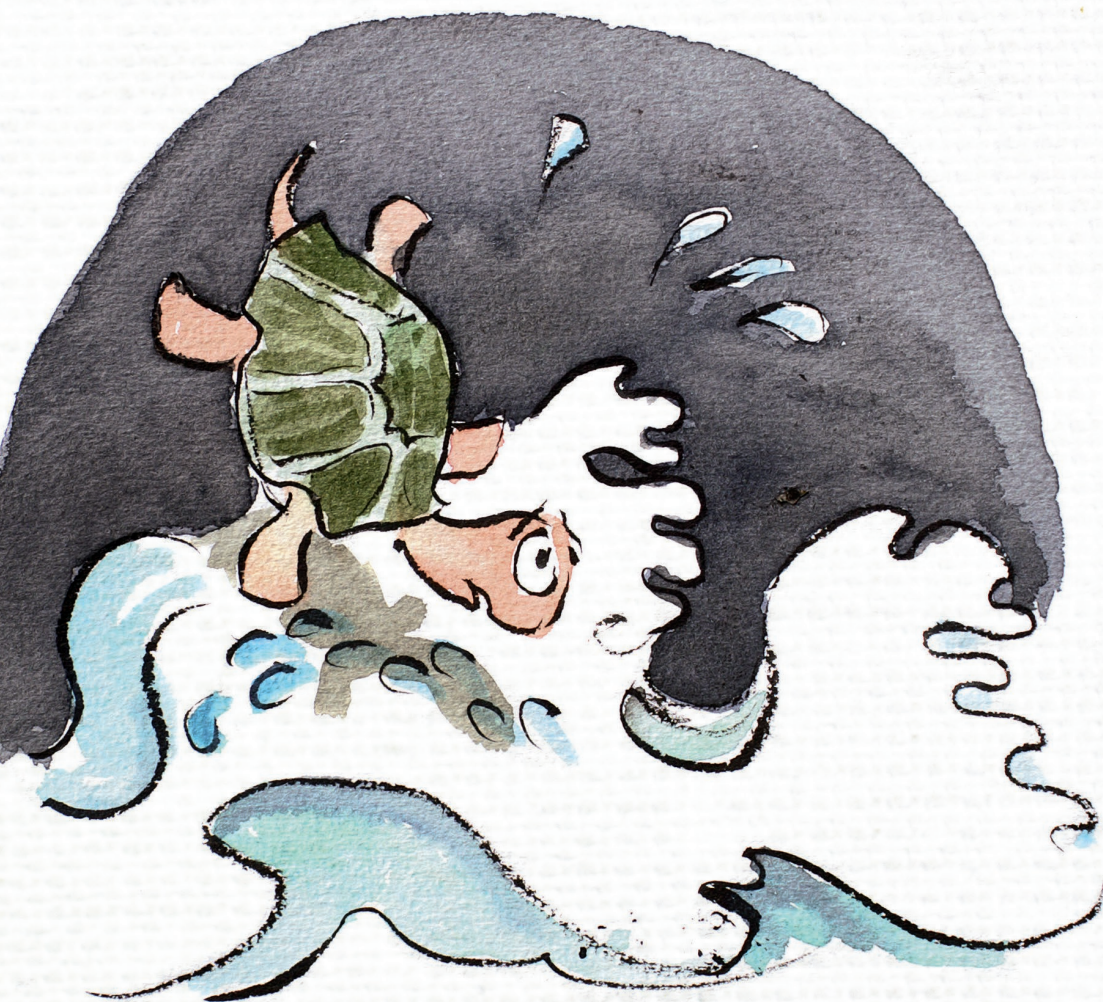
The book series is called Tales from a Country Garden and the animals mentioned in the stories are either permanent residents in the garden or visitors to it. Anne's two mischievous Cavalier King Charles Spaniels feature in each book and the initial story in the nine-book series focuses on them and is titled Winston: A Tale of Disobedience.







“Every garden must have water  
in it... it is essential to your spirit.”



Winston learns a hard lesson. After chasing everything that moves, he is finally kicked by a horse and has to learn that rules are there not to spoil his fun but to keep him safe.

The other residents who have chosen to stay and live in the garden include a strutting peacock, who is growing a new tail of splendid colours, and a number of guinea fowl who flap about in the trees near the house. Visitors to the garden include goannas, lizards, kangaroos, echidnas, foxes, possums, turtles, snakes, rabbits, mice and wombats and all these have a story in which they feature. The titles include *The Goannas' Lunch*, *Eric Echidna and the Turtle Family*, *The Adventure of Tiny Tim Turtle* and the latest one in the series is *A Mouse Story*.

The stories include the tale of Tiny Tim Turtle who is swept away in a flash flood and gets stuck between two rocks and is rescued by a family of echidnas. In another story, the goannas delight in stealing eggs from the nests of small finches and wrens but are dissuaded by the bravery of the small Spaniels who drive them away.

Anne and Tony have worked together on Myrabluan for more than 40 years mustering on horseback, marking cattle in the yards and shearing sheep in the old Wootton woolshed. They have fostered a deep love for the land and now share their love of words, nature and art, combining these passions in the wonderful books they produce. <sup>CL</sup>

For more information: [bishopbooks.com.au](http://bishopbooks.com.au)

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