



# O.F.F. NEWS



Published by  
**OATLEY FLORA & FAUNA  
CONSERVATION SOCIETY INC.**

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Price: 10 cents

Issue: 2005/1

January / February 2005

## HAPPY NEW (ANNIVERSARY) YEAR

This is the first issue of O.F.F. News for 2005 and our best wishes for a happy new year are extended to all. As O.F.F. was established in 1955 the Committee has been planning some special 50th Anniversary activities for 2005. One of these will be a conducted tour of the **natural and cultural features of Oatley Park** on Sunday, April 17 (further information in later issues). If you would like to help with any of the year's special activities please contact **Lesley Cox on 9579 3782**. The first meeting for 2005 will be the Annual General Meeting on February 7, as detailed overleaf.

## LIMESTONE CAVE IN ROYAL N.P.

Also detailed overleaf are arrangements for the first outing of the year on March 5 to Palona Brook and Palona Limestone Cave in Royal National Park. This cave contains stalactites and stalagmites and is an extraordinary geological feature for the sandstone-dominated Sydney Basin. Apparently the sandstone in just this spot has an unusual, calcium-rich matrix. Deposited solutes from seepages through the matrix have resulted in formations typical of limestone caves.

## GUIDES WANT CORKS FOR RECYCLING

A program for collecting and recycling corks has been established by Guides Australia. This is making small but significant reductions in our surprisingly large cork imports and is helping to improve an unfavourable balance of trade. At the same time, **a renewable, but declining, natural resource is being conserved** (Cork Oaks do not produce for 30 years and new plantations are not attractive investments). Also, the funds raised by the recycling are **contributing to environmental projects**. A number of collecting depots have been set up, the closest to Oatley being The Body Shop at Hurstville and BWS Liquor Stores at South Hurstville and Penshurst. Members can help the program by taking their corks to these depots. (Thanks to Val Douglas for this item.)

## HYACINTH ORCHIDS IN OATLEY

Alan Fairley reports that two species of ground orchid were recorded for the first time in Myles Dunphy Reserve in November. They were *Dipodium variegatum* and *D. roseum*, both of which have the common name 'Hyacinth Orchid'. *D. variegatum* also occurs in Oatley Park and is of special interest to O.F.F. because it was recorded there by the Sydney Botanic Gardens staff as early as 1885.

## KURNELL FIELD DAY

The migratory wading bird sanctuary at North Cronulla was the meeting place for 17 O.F.F. members who attended the field day on Saturday, November 27. It was fortunate that this was mainly a car-based tour because very high temperatures later in the day made it unsuitable for some of the optional walking that had been planned. The aim of the tour was to examine natural and cultural sites of the proposed Kurnell Peninsula Heritage Area. Some of the features noted were the endangered Kurnell dune community, a large area of flannel flowers, Botany Cone (highest remaining sand dune), Towra Point and Boat Harbour aquatic reserves, historical sites near Captain Cook's landing place, and the whale information centre and sighting platform at Cape Solander. Also noted were the environmental threats of continuing extensive sand extraction and landfill, and plans for further large industrial, residential and tourist developments.

## THREATENED SPECIES GUIDELINES

Draft Guidelines for changes to NSW Threatened Species legislation (see previous O.F.F. News) are now on display for public comment until **February 18**. Details may be obtained from Catherine Price, Department of Environment and Conservation by emailing [catherine.price@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:catherine.price@environment.nsw.gov.au)

## ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

Have you paid your annual subscriptions for 2005 ?  
It is now \$25 per family (at the same address).

Meetings are held at the **Uniting Church Hall, Frederick Street, Oatley.**  
(near the corner of Letitia Street)

It is intended that meetings commence promptly at 7.45 pm.  
Visitors and children are welcome to attend all meetings and field days.

## Coming Events

**February 7 (Monday) ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 7.45pm.** Reports on O.F.F.'s activities during the past year and election of the office bearers and committee for 2005. Members are also invited to comment on the activities, management and direction of the Society. As usual, the AGM will be as brief as possible and followed by members' slides and a light supper. Please bring along any slides of interesting places and Society activities, and a plate of food to contribute to the supper.

**February 28 (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, 7.45pm.** Dr Fred Bell, Environmental Consultant, will speak on the North Queensland World Heritage Area.

**March 5 (Saturday) FIELD DAY.** The Forest Path and Palona Cave, Royal National Park. A walk through rainforest vegetation and tall eucalypt forest with plenty of shade. First section, mostly flat, about 6 km with lunch at Palona Brook Picnic Area on Lady Carrington Drive. Second section to Palona Limestone Cave, on a track which climbs about 60 metres - 3km return to Lady Carrington Drive, then 1.7 km back to the cars. About 50 metres upstream from the cave we will explore the waterfall and the stream above. Meet at 9am at Waterfall Station Car Park (about 40 minutes by car from Oatley). Bring water, morning tea, and lunch. Leader: Janet Austin tel. 9579 2375.

## FINANCIAL REPORT OF OATLEY FLORA AND FAUNA CONSERVATION SOCIETY INC.

by Carolyn Cotter, Hon. Treasurer

### Receipts & Payments for year ended 31.12.04

Credit Balance as at 31.12.03 \$20,821.22

#### Receipts:

Subscriptions	1945.00	
Donations	499.50	
Annual Dinner profit	43.00	
Annual Dinner raffle	252.00	
Sales - plants/books	72.00	
Trash & Treasure stalls	458.80	
Refund Oatley Lions	60.00	
Interest	63.62	\$3,393.92
		\$24,215.14

#### Payments:

Subscriptions (Note 1)	358.50	
Donations (Note 2)	106.00	
O.F.F. News-printing	516.80	
-postage	479.95	
-stationery	24.95	
Dept Fair Trading	40.00	
Uniting Church don.	260.00	
Printing programs	170.00	
P.O. Box rental	55.00	
Dishonoured chq	40.00	
Bank Fee	10.00	
GIO P.L. Insurance	802.24	
Lions Fair Oatley	60.00	
Administration	171.15	
School book prizes	66.95	
Oatley Sports Club	55.00	
Grants - Kog. Council	2000.00	
- N.Heritage T.	7701.00	\$12,917.54

Credit Balance as at 31.12.04 \$11,297.60  
Less Grant amounts owing\* 3,749.46  
**Total Society Funds** \$7,548.14

#### \*Grant amounts owing

N.Heritage T.	Kog. Council	Total
10,450.46	3,000.00	13,450.46
7,701.00	2,000.00	9,701.00
\$ 2,749.46	\$1,000.00	\$3,749.46*

We are holding National Heritage Funds of \$2,749.46 pending work by Kog. Cncl + \$1,000 Kog. Cncl grant

During 2004 Public Liability Insurance was increased from \$462 in 2003 to \$802.24.

#### Note 1: Subscriptions (\$358.50)

ADI Residents Action \$25, Colong Fndn \$36, Nat Parks Assn \$65, Fraser Id D. O. \$15, Kuringai Bats \$20, NCC \$172.50, S.W. Enviro Centre \$25.

#### Note 2: Donations (\$106)

Birds Australia \$106

The Society's funds @ 31.12.04 were \$7548.14 which included \$2,174.27 for the Presidents Fund. Therefore, the operating funds of the Society were \$5,373.87 which is in line with the policy of adequate reserves.



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February/March 2005

## KEITH STEVENSON

The Society mourns the sudden death of a Life Member, Keith Stevenson, on 26th January. Sincere sympathies are extended to his wife Sandra, son Keith, and daughter Roslyn. Keith, a professional architect, was a man with wide interests and an extensive knowledge of flora and fauna, particularly native orchids. Very sadly, we also report the sudden death of his sister, Merrelyn, on 7th February. (John Watters)

## NOTES ON THE AGM

At the Annual General Meeting of 7th February Jan Douglas was re-elected President and Robin Dickson retired as Secretary. **Special thanks were given by Jan to Robin** for her dedication and competence over the past 11 years. This would be strongly endorsed by all members of the Society. Faye Coughlan was elected the new Secretary and will also continue as the Society's Welfare Officer. Cliff Crane retired from the Committee but will remain an active Society member. David Koffel was elected a new Committee member. All other Committee members from last year were re-elected and will be listed on the **2005 program to be issued soon.**

## NEXT MEETINGS: PROGRAM CHANGES

As shown overleaf, the program previously announced for the meetings of 28th February and 21st March has been changed. The talk on **the effects of fire on flora and fauna in Royal National Park** has been put forward at the request of the National Parks speakers. Note that the March meeting is on the **third** Monday in the month because the fourth is Easter Monday.

## HAVE YOU PAID YOUR 2005 SUB ?

If not, please post your cheque to P.O. Box 52, Mortdale 2223, or pay Carolyn at the meeting on 28th February. The annual subscription is now \$25 per person or family (living at same address).

## CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA SUNDAY, 6th MARCH

A special appeal is made this year for members to help clean up the creek on the Peakhurst side of the Oatley Park pedestrian bridge and along the boardwalk. Just half an hour or more of your time would be appreciated. **Register in the Reserve at the bottom of Pamela Avenue from 8.30am.** Bring boots, gloves etc. We should finish about 12 noon and all volunteers are invited to a barbecue by Hurstville Council at Evatt Park from 12.30pm.

## AWARD TO GRAHAM QUINT

Congratulations are extended to Graham Quint, Deputy Conservation Director of The National Trust, who has received an **Australia Day Achievement Award** for community services. Graham was O.F.F. President from 1991 to 1994 and has been a member of the Society for many years.

## PORT BOTANY INQUIRY CONTINUES

To deal with questions arising from earlier hearings, the Port Botany Commission of Inquiry was reconvened from 14th to 18th February for a 'Submissions in Reply Session'. Presentations to this session were made by O.F.F. members Graham Austin and Fred Bell on behalf of the Botany Bay and Catchment Alliance. Further details will be placed on our website [www.off.oatleypark.com](http://www.off.oatleypark.com)

## NEW NATIONAL PARKS STRATEGY

A 32-page document is now on display at the Hurstville NPWS office entitled 'Living Parks-draft sustainable visitation strategy for NSW national parks'. There is some **concern this will pave the way for greater commercial exploitation of our parks** at the expense of nature conservation. It would be desirable for interested O.F.F. members to examine it and respond to the invitation for comments **before 8th April**. Free copies may be obtained by calling NPWS on 9585 6444 or by downloading from: [http://www.nationalparks.gov.au/PDFs/Living\\_Parks\\_draft.pdf](http://www.nationalparks.gov.au/PDFs/Living_Parks_draft.pdf)

Meetings are held at the **Uniting Church Hall, Frederick Street, Oatley.**

(near the corner of Letitia Street)

It is intended that meetings commence promptly at 7.45 pm.

Visitors and children are welcome to attend all meetings and field days.

## Coming Events

**February 28 (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, 7.45pm.** Leigh Moses and Andrew Jennings, Rangers at Royal National Park, will speak on **Effects of Fire on Flora and Fauna in the Royal, and Bush Regeneration** (note that the program in the previous O.F.F. News has been changed).

**March 5 (Saturday) FIELD DAY.** The **Forest Path and Palona Cave**, Royal National Park. A walk through rainforest vegetation and tall eucalypt forest with plenty of shade. First section, mostly flat, about 6 km with lunch at Palona Brook Picnic Area on Lady Carrington Drive. Second section to Palona Limestone Cave, on a track which climbs about 60 metres - 3km return to Lady Carrington Drive, then 1.7 km back to the cars. About 50 metres upstream from the cave we will explore the waterfall and the stream above. Meet at 9am at Waterfall Station Car Park (about 40 minutes by car from Oatley). Bring water, morning tea and lunch. Leader: Janet Austin tel. 9579 2375.

**March 6 (Sunday) CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY.** See details overleaf (page 1).

**March 21st (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, 7.45pm.** Dr Fred Bell, Environmental Scientist, will speak on the **North Queensland World Heritage Area.**

### NEW HIBBERTIA SPECIES AT MENAI

O.F.F. Vice President Alan Fairley has found yet another new species! During 2003 the Menai Wildflower Group obtained permission from RTA to remove native plants in the path of the Bangor Bypass, then under construction. Alan was invited there to advise on species to save, and **noticed an unusual Hibbertia in flower.** A sample was sent to an expert reviewing the genus who confirmed that it was a new species 'in the *H. stricta-riparia* complex'. Subsequent searches have revealed about 90 other specimens in the area but the species is apparently **endangered because of its very small population.** Lloyd Hedges of the Menai Group has recently described the discovery in the newsletter 'Bushcare Link', suggesting the plant should be named *Hibbertia fairleyii*.

### ALAN'S NEXT PRESENTATION

A talk and slide show entitled '**Rare Plants of Greater Sydney**' will be given by Alan Fairley to the Sutherland Group of the Australian Plant Society at Gynea Community Hall, 39 Gynea Bay Road (near Station) on Wednesday 16 March, 8pm. This will feature many of the fascinating plants and photographs in his recent book '**Seldom Seen**', and also the new *Hibbertia* species (see above). The admission is free and O.F.F. members are welcome to attend.

### WHAT'S ON OUR WEBSITE NOW ?

([www.off.oatley.com](http://www.off.oatley.com))

See photographs and reports on recent field days. Also, check out David Waterhouse's study of waterbirds at Moore Reserve during 2004.

### VERY BRIEFLY .....

**UN Decade of Education** for Sustainable Development 2005-2014, <http://portal.unesco.org>

**Sea Week - SOS Save Our Sharks:** March 4-13, [www.mesa.edu.au/seaweek.asp](http://www.mesa.edu.au/seaweek.asp)

**NCC Metro Strategy Conference:** March 12, Nature Conservation Council, 9279 2466.

**New National Parks Strategy:** closing date for submissions is April 8. See overleaf.

**Oatley Park Guided Walk:** Sunday, April 17, with National Trust. Details in next OFF News.

**Secrets of Barrington Tops:** April 27, 8pm. NPA

Slideshow, Sutherland Multipurpose Centre.

**Sedges & Rushes Identification:** Two-day workshop for Bushcare volunteers, Kirrawee, April 30 & May 1, details & bookings 9710 5790.

### DID YOU KNOW ?

According to ABC Gardening Australia's new book 'Native Plants' there are more than 1,200 Orchid species native to Australia in 100 genera. Worldwide there are about 30,000 Orchid species in 600 genera. This is about 10% of all flowering plant species.



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March/April 2005

## **KANGAROOS NESTING IN TREES**

At the next monthly meeting on Monday 21st March the presentation will be on the North Queensland World Heritage Area (see overleaf). This will feature some **remarkable native rainforest fauna**: rare and endangered species such as the magnificent cassowary, highly intelligent monkey-like cuscuses, and tree-kangaroos that construct nests of branches high in the canopy. Please note that this meeting will be on the third Monday of the month because the fourth is Easter Monday. The April monthly meeting will also be on the third Monday as the fourth is ANZAC Day.

## **DOUBLE ANNIVERSARY**

2005 is not only O.F.F.'s 50th Anniversary year but also the National Trust's 60th Anniversary Year. The latter is being celebrated with a **National Trust Heritage Festival** which includes about 400 events (mainly in April) in association with affiliated organisations. One of these events will be the Oatley Park Heritage Tour with O.F.F. as outlined below.

## **OATLEY PARK HERITAGE TOUR**

This is a guided walk through Oatley Park on Sunday, 17th April as part of the National Trust Heritage Festival and to commemorate our 50th Anniversary. It will be conducted by O.F.F. members and will **feature the Park's natural and cultural heritage items** such as significant plants, army camp site, historic baths, and depression era stone work. As the tour is open to the public, **bookings are essential** (limited group numbers). Contact Graham Austin on 9579 2375.

## **TELL ROBIN IF YOU DON'T GET IT**

We want to make sure all members receive their monthly copies of O.F.F. News a few days before each monthly meeting. Whether you receive it by post or email, please tell Robin Dickson on 9580 5663 if any issues do not arrive.

## **FINAL SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER**

Is your 2005 subscription overdue? Please note that, according to the Constitution, **membership ceases if payment is not made by 31st March.**

## **50th ANNIVERSARY NOTES**

O.F.F. began with a meeting at the home of Rafe and Moyia Kowron on 30th November 1955. A number of special events will therefore be held during 2005 to mark our anniversary year. The first of these is the **Oatley Park Heritage Tour** on April 17 (see details in column 1). Below are two other events.

**Anniversary Dinner**, Friday, October 21. Ask friends and family to come along and enjoy a Big Night Out at Roslyn Gardens, Peakhurst. Good menu and live music. More details at meetings and in later issues of O.F.F. News

**Birthday Picnic in Oatley Park**, Wednesday, December 7. This was the day when the name of the Society was decided 50 years ago. The Georges River Community Services have generously offered to help by providing coffee and cake for the picnic. More details in later issues of O.F.F. News.

**Further information: Lesley Cox, 9579 3782**

## **OATLEY PARK PLAN OF MANAGEMENT**

Hurstville City Council has now released its long awaited Plan of Management of Oatley Park. The Society has made substantial inputs to this and we are pleased to see that most of our recommendations have been accepted. It is now officially recognised that the Park should be managed **primarily as a natural bushland reserve** for protecting the 'diversity of biological species, populations and communities it accommodates'. We are particularly pleased that the Plan accepts our recommendation for allowing bikes on sealed roads and fire trails but **not on walking tracks** or any other part of the Park.

## **ROYAL NATIONAL PARK FOREST WALK**

Happily for 14 O.F.F. members at the field day on 5th March, the forecast of rain was wrong and walking conditions were good. Features of the walk included:

- easy walking along the Forest Path through beautiful rainforest with stately eucalypt emergents
- lunch under the rainforest canopy at Palona Brook
- Palona Cave and its fascinating limestone formations
- A scramble up Palona Falls to the ferny flats above.

Pictures and other details of this excellent trip will be placed on our website [www.off.oatleypark.com](http://www.off.oatleypark.com)

Meetings are held at the **Uniting Church Hall, Frederick Street, Oatley.**

(near the corner of Letitia Street)

It is intended that meetings commence promptly at 7.45 pm.

Visitors and children are welcome to attend all meetings and field days.

## Coming Events

**March 21 (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, 7.45pm.** Dr Fred Bell, Environmental Scientist, will speak on the **North Queensland World Heritage Area.**

**April 2 (Saturday) FIELD DAY. Drawing Room Rocks, near Berry.** A short steep walk up the Illawarra Escarpment at Wood Hill with some level sections and splendid views. Total distance about 4 km return. Meet at **9.30 am at Apex Park** - on the Sydney side of Berry just over the bridge. About two hours drive from Oatley. Bring water, morning tea and lunch. Hat, strong walking shoes etc are advisable. Leader: *Graham Lalchere*, tel 9580 3107.

**April 18 (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING. 7.45pm.** Nick Carlile, Dept of Environment and Conservation, will give a presentation entitled **In search of KacauNi Gau (Fiji Petrel).**

### O.F.F.'s CLEAN-UP-AUSTRALIA DAY A GREAT SUCCESS

Thirty volunteers turned up at Pamela Avenue, Peakhurst on a beautiful Sunday morning 6/3/05 to clean up the banks of Lime Kiln Bay. Twenty five bags of rubbish, several tyres and other materials were removed. **We were helped by the use of kayaks** supplied by Sharyn Cullis. With these we could get more effectively into the mangrove area.

Volunteers noted that the bush and mangrove areas, while still containing rubbish, were not as polluted as in previous years. In fact as site supervisor and faced with so many keen cleaner-uppers, I felt it only fair to redistribute some of the rubbish back to the bush and so ensure that all volunteers gained a sense of achievement from the exercise. **I resisted this temptation.**

Hurstville Council cooperated well with the volunteers and provided a very good lunch afterwards.

A big THANK YOU to all those members and friends who took part

Julian Sheen

### WARNING: FOXES AND SMALL PETS

An addendum has been issued by Lesley Winters to her very informative account at the last monthly meeting of the local fox problem. There have been three recent reports of small pets (2 kittens, 1 pup) being taken by foxes in the Oatley-Mortdale area. In all cases, food had been left in the backyard for the pets, and the **foxes ate this and the pets as well.** Members are asked to advise local councillors of all fox sightings as Hurstville and Kogarah Councils are obviously not dealing effectively with this problem.

### 'TERRIBLE' KURNELL DECISION

A decision on the Heritage Listing of Kurnell Peninsula has just been announced. The only parts considered worthy of listing are the Headland and Cook's Landing Place, both of which are already protected in Botany Bay National Park. By the Australian Heritage Council's 'objective' criteria, the Towra Point waterbird habitats, great sand dune remnants, and special Aboriginal sites **are not considered unique or unusual 'in a national context'**. 'This is a terrible result' said Bob Walshe, a leading conservationist who has been striving for many years to have the Peninsula's qualities recognised. However, as noted (cynically) in last year's August issue of O.F.F. News, the area is so important economically that such a disappointing decision is really no surprise.

### VERY BRIEFLY .....

**Goat Island Picnics:** March 20 & 27, Sydney Harbour National Parks. Bookings 9247 5033.

**National Trust Foundation Day:** April 6, further information: tel 1800 650 093 or 9258 0123

**New National Parks Strategy:** closing date for submissions is April 8. See Feb/Mar O.F.F. News.

**Secrets of Barrington Tops:** April 27, 8pm. NPA Slideshow, Sutherland Multipurpose Centre.

### DID YOU KNOW ?

The total remaining area of rainforest in Australia is about the same as the Sydney-Newcastle-Wollongong urban area, i.e. 20,000 sq. km. Half of this rainforest is in North-east Queensland and is the **only habitat for 78 species of rare or endangered native fauna.**



**VERY BRIEFLY .....**

**Sustainable Development Education Decade**

(UN) 2005-2014, <http://portal.unesco.org>

**Goat Island Picnics:** March 20 & 27, Sydney Harbour National Parks. Bookings 9247 5033.

**World Forests Day:** March 21, [www.unesco.org/forests/forests\\_celebrations](http://www.unesco.org/forests/forests_celebrations)

**World Water Day:** March 22, [www.unesco.org/water/water\\_celebrations](http://www.unesco.org/water/water_celebrations)

**National Trust Foundation Day:** April 6, further information from ??????????

**New National Parks Strategy:** closing date for submissions is April 8. See Feb/Mar OFF News.

**Oatley Park Heritage Tour:** Sunday, April 17, with National Trust. Details overleaf.

**Secrets of Barrington Tops:** April 27, 8pm. NPA Slideshow, Sutherland Multipurpose Centre.

**Sedges & Rushes Identification:** Two-day workshop for Bushcare volunteers, Kirrawee, April 30 & May 1, details & bookings 9710 5790

**Burnum Burnum Sanctuary,** May 1, Open Day, Woronora River foreshore section, Jannali. Details from Graeme or Gary, 9545 3077.



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April/May 2005

## SEARCHING FOR PETREL AROUND FIJI

At the next monthly meeting on April 18 (see details overleaf), our guest speaker will be **Nicholas Carlile** of the Threatened Fauna Ecology Unit of the Department of Environment and Conservation. He will tell us about his search for the breeding grounds of **Kacau Ni Gau** (pronounced something like 'cathow see now'). This is the Fiji Petrel or *Pseudobulweria acgillivray*, regarded as the least known seabird of the Pacific. Three years ago Nicholas gave us a fascinating talk on the endangered Lord Howe Island Land Lobster and we look forward to hearing about his latest work on other rare Pacific island fauna.

Please note that this meeting will be on the third Monday of the month as the fourth is ANZAC Day.

## EXCELLENT TRIP TO NEW AREA

"The seventeen members then continued to climb on foot up the track to Drawing Room Rocks. There were many stops along the way to admire the bush and the magnificent views and to allow re-grouping and drawing of breath. The bush changed from eucalypt forest with many lichen and orchid covered rocks to heath at the top. The views ranged from vistas down along Brogers Creek to the Kangaroo River valley in the distance to magnificent views up and down the coast from the top of the escarpment. From here you could see as far south as Pigeon House, south east to Jervis Bay and Nowra and north to Gerroa."

This is an extract from the report by Graham Lalchere on the excellent field day he led on Saturday, 2nd April. Although there have been previous trips to nearby Barren Grounds, this particular area was a new and memorable experience for most participants. See our website [www.off.oatleypark.com](http://www.off.oatleypark.com) for Graham's full report and photographs of the views etc.

### ARE YOU NOW ON EMAIL ?

There are advantages in getting O.F.F. News by email - you receive it earlier, and save postage costs for the Society. If you are not yet receiving the News this way you may arrange it by contacting Robin on 9580 5663 or Fred on [joanmariebell@aol.com](mailto:joanmariebell@aol.com)

## 50th ANNIVERSARY NOTES

**Don't forget the Oatley Park Heritage Tours** on Sunday, 17th April (see details over). Bookings are essential. Contact Graham Austin on 9579 2375.

### **Commemorative mug available soon**

An attractive coffee mug bearing the Society's Grevillea emblem and the inscription 'Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society - Established 1955' will be available for purchase soon. It should be on sale at future monthly meetings and other functions of the Society. A glossy cobalt blue with gold emblem and inscription, the mug will make a splendid addition to the family sideboard. It is safe in microwave ovens and dishwashers.

(from David Koffel and Lesley Cox)

## **PERHAPS YOU FORGOT ?**

Some members are not sure if they've paid their subscriptions for 2005. If you are one of those please call Carolyn on 9579 6631 or Robin on 9580 5663.

## **ADDITIONS TO ILLAWARRA PARKS**

Several valuable additions to conservation areas south of Sydney have been recently gazetted. These total more than 900 hectares and extend the Illawarra Escarpment State Conservation Area, Garawarra State Conservation Area, Royal National Park, and Dharawal National Park. As a result, there will be a continuous strip of bushland reserve for more than 60 kilometres along the Illawarra Escarpment when the acquisition of another small parcel of land near Coalcliff is completed. Eventually, we hope to have a **magnificent scenic bushwalking track from the Royal National Park to south of Wollongong.**

The new addition to Dharawal National Park includes O'Hares Creek Gorge and a forested area near Wedderburn. These are very significant habitats for a number of vulnerable plants and animals, including the **largest remaining Koala colony near Sydney.** There is now a protected natural corridor for the movement of Koalas between Wedderburn and habitats in the Royal National Park and Illawarra Escarpment areas.

Meetings are held at the **Uniting Church Hall, Frederick Street, Oatley.**  
(near the corner of Letitia Street)

It is intended that meetings commence promptly at 7.45 pm.

Visitors and accompanied children are welcome to attend all meetings and field days.

## Coming Events

**April 17 (Sunday) OATLEY PARK HERITAGE TOURS**, in conjunction with the National Trust Heritage Festival. Guided walks of about one and a half hours to see some of the forgotten history of Oatley Park, as well as the beautiful native flora. Free and suitable for families (but not prams or wheelchairs as there are stairs). As tour numbers are limited, booking is essential. For further details and booking phone Graham Austin on 9579 2375.

**April 18 (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING**, 7.45pm. Nick Carlile, Dept of Environment and Conservation, will give a presentation entitled **In search of Kacau Ni Gau (Fiji Petrel)**.

**April 30 (Saturday) FIELD DAY. Upper Blue Mountains.** Narrow Neck Fire Trail to Clear Hill. Approx. 20 km return. Magnificent views over Kanangra - Boyd wilderness and Lake Burragorang. Meet 8.45 am at the locked gate about 1km from Golden Stairs car park. To get there, drive from Katoomba along Cliff Drive and turn into Lenraphael Drive. Continue until you reach the locked gate, about 3km from the Cliff Drive turn off. About 2 hours drive from Oatley. As this is a full day walk, bring plenty of water, hat, first aid, morning tea & lunch plus snacks. Wear strong walking boots/shoes as the trail is stony/steep in places. Clothing for changeable weather is also advisable. Leaders: Peter and Lesley Cox, tel 9579 3782.

**May 23rd (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING.** 7.45pm. Les Bursill, Sutherland Shire Aboriginal Archaeologist will speak on **Aboriginal Use of Plants as Food and Medicines**.

### EXTINCTION OF DINGO ?

Biomolecular scientists at the University of NSW and other institutions have been using **DNA analyses** to assess the ancestry and purity of dingoes in Australia. These suggest that dingoes evolved about 135,000 years ago in Asia and were the **world's first domestic dogs** from which all other domestic dog breeds are descended. They were brought to Australia in an early stage of domestication about 4000 years ago. Because they are different strains of the same species (*Canis familiaris*), dingoes and more domesticated dogs readily interbreed. This has happened to such an extent during European occupation that **full-blooded dingoes in the wild are almost extinct**. The DNA tests show the Fraser Island population of about 100 individuals is one of the few remaining populations with a high degree of purity. Unfortunately these are now being culled because of their danger to tourists.

### ENDANGERED PINE POPULATION

A small, isolated population of Black Cypress Pine (*Callitris endlicheri*) near Darkes Forest has recently been listed as an endangered population under the NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act. It comprises **only four mature trees** and several hundred seedlings on a 2 hectare sandstone outcrop. Before 2001 there were about 200 mature trees and a much larger number of seedlings and juveniles, but since then a rapid decline has occurred through **bushfires, drought, and cattle grazing**.

As a species, the Black Cypress Pine is not endangered because many stands of it remain in its normal area of occurrence on the dry central western slopes of NSW. The population near Darkes Forest, however, is of **special scientific interest** because it occurs in a high rainfall area much further east than any other stands of that species. It is possibly a relict from a very dry period in the geological past.

### VERY BRIEFLY .....

**The Little Tern colony in Botany Bay:** April 21, 7.30 pm, Sydney NPA meeting. Details: Tara Cameron, 4751 1130 or sydney.po@pansw.org.au

**Secrets of Barrington Tops:** April 27, 8pm. NPA Slideshow, Sutherland Multipurpose Centre. Details: Peter 9350 4875 or Milton 9524 2886.

**Burnum Burnum Sanctuary:** May 1, Open Day, Woronora River foreshore section, Jannali. Details from Graeme or Gary, 9545 3077.

**International Day for Biological Diversity:** May 22.

**World Environment Day:** June 5.

### DID YOU KNOW ?

There are two distinctly different species of Lyrebird. The **Superb Lyrebird**, frequently seen in Royal National Park, is common in various coastal areas of NSW and Victoria. The slightly smaller **Albert's Lyrebird** is now found only in Lamington National Park, Queensland, and is one of our most endangered bird species.

Meetings are held at the **Uniting Church Hall, Frederick Street, Oatley.**  
(near the corner of Letitia Street)

It is intended that meetings commence promptly at 7.45 pm.

Visitors and accompanied children are welcome to attend all meetings and field days.

## Coming Events

**April 17 (Sunday) OATLEY PARK HERITAGE TOURS**, in conjunction with the National Trust Heritage Festival. Guided walks of about one and a half hours to see some of the forgotten history of Oatley Park, as well as the beautiful native flora. Free and suitable for families (but not prams or wheelchairs as there are stairs). As tour numbers are limited, booking is essential. For further details and booking phone Graham Austin on 9579 2375.

**April 18 (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING**, 7.45pm. Nick Carlile, Dept of Environment and Conservation, will give a presentation entitled **In search of Kacau Ni Gau (Fiji Petrel)**.

**April 30 (Saturday) FIELD DAY. Upper Blue Mountains.** Narrow Neck Fire Trail to Clear Hill. Approx. 20 km return. Magnificent views over Kanangra - Boyd wilderness and Lake Burragorang. Meet 8.45 am at the locked gate about 1km from Golden Stairs car park. To get there, drive from Katoomba along Cliff Drive and turn into Henraphael Drive. Continue until you reach the locked gate, about 3km from the Cliff Drive turn off. About 2 hours drive from Oatley. As this is a full day walk, bring plenty of water, hat, first aid, morning tea & lunch plus snacks. Wear strong walking boots/shoes as the trail is stony/steep in places. Clothing for changeable weather is also advisable. Leaders: Peter and Lesley Cox, tel 9579 3782.

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# O.F.F. NEWS

Published by  
**OATLEY FLORA & FAUNA  
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Price: 10 cents

Issue: 2005/5

May/June 2005

## JANET AITKEN

We were saddened to hear of the death of Janet Aitken on 9th April. Janet had been a very active and highly respected member of the Society for more than 20 years. She was also a member of various other organisations and had strong interests in music, ballet and literature.

As a very knowledgeable and experienced bushwalker, Janet was the initiator and leader of a number of our field days. She was also the speaker at some of our monthly meetings, presenting fascinating accounts of her extensive travelling through unusual places such as Mongolia and remote parts of Africa.

She had a science degree from the University of Sydney and was a Senior Scientist at the Prince of Wales Hospital before retiring in the 1980s. The Society extends its deepest sympathies to Janet's brother Jim and his family. (details from Val Boyan)

## SAVE BUSHCARE - WRITE TO COUNCIL

The Committee was very concerned to learn that Hurstville Council's draft budget for 2005/6 includes **drastic reductions to the bushcare allocation**. Undoubtedly this will negate much of the good bushcare work in our district in recent years and result in the degradation of areas we have been striving to protect. The draft budget is part of the draft Management Plan 2005/2006 now on display in the Council offices for public comment until 6th June, prior to finalisation on 22nd June. **Members of the Society are asked to respond** to this display with individual letters pointing out the values of local bushland and the need to maintain these values. Modifications of the proposed reductions are still possible if **councillors can be convinced** that enough ratepayers want the bushcare expenditure to continue.

## CHANGES IN SPEAKERS

The speakers for May and June have been changed. **Dr Michael Batley** of the Australian Museum will be the speaker at the **next monthly meeting on 23rd May**, and his topic will be 'Native Bees'. Michael is co-author of the award winning book 'Native Bees of the Sydney Region'. Les Bursill will now speak on Aboriginal use of plants at the meeting on 27th June.

## 50th ANNIVERSARY NOTES

We are pleased to announce that the **Anniversary Mugs** have arrived and will be on sale at the next monthly meeting for \$7.00 each. In **glossy cobalt blue** with our **Grevillea emblem in yellow**, they are a lovely addition to any kitchen (quite suitable, also for both microwave and dishwasher).

Have you noted the date of our **Anniversary Annual Dinner** in your diary? Don't forget to invite family and friends too. It will be on **21st October at Roslyn Gardens** and, with live music from the **Touchwood Band**, promises to be a very special night.

## NARROW NECK FIELD DAY, APRIL 30

With brilliant sunshine, despite a forecast for rain, 16 hearty members set off for the **20 km walk along Narrow Neck Fire Trail** to Clear Hill and return. We were well rewarded with stunning views to Lake Burragorang, the Wild Dog Mountains, Kanangra Walls and beyond. There were flowers in bloom such as *Banksia spinulosa* and other species of special interest such as the ground hugging *Persoonia chamaepitys*. Frequent mountain bikes whizzing past were an unexpected thrill (?) that kept us alert and alarmed. But by luck, **all walkers returned safely** and feeling very well exercised. Photos etc on our website at [www.off.oatleypark.com](http://www.off.oatleypark.com) (trip leader Lesley Cox).

## OATLEY PARK IN MAY/JUNE

Alan Fairley has listed the following plants as flowering in Oatley Park in May/June :

Sunshine Wattle (*Acacia terminalis*; shrub to 2m, bipinnate leaves, bright yellow flowers)

Sweet-scented Wattle (*Acacia suaveolens*; slender shrub to 2m, pale yellow or cream flowers)

Heath Banksia (*Banksia ericifolia*; small crowded leaves, orange-red flower spikes)

Variable Bossiaea (*Bossiaea heterophylla*; shrub to 1m tall, yellow and red pea-type flowers)

White Fingers (*Caladenia catenata*; white ground orchid with a single flower on a 20 cm stem)

Rough Wax-flower (*Philotheca scabra*; white with 5 petals, small shrub on sheltered slopes).

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It is intended that meetings commence promptly at 7.45 pm.

Visitors and accompanied children are welcome to attend all meetings and field days.

## Coming Events

**May 23rd (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING.** 7.45 pm. Dr Michael Batley, Australian Museum, will speak on **Native Bees** (note that the original program listing Les Bursill as the speaker has been changed ).

**May 28th (Saturday) FIELD DAY. KU-RING-GAI CHASE NATIONAL PARK.** We will start at the Basin Track carpark (no public transport, unfortunately), walk the track to Mackerel Beach, then on to Resolute Bay, up to the picnic ground and then back to the start along the road. It is about 10km. The attractions are magnificent views of Pittwater and Broken Bay as well as two sets of Aboriginal rock carvings. The Basin carpark is on the right of West Head Road about 10km beyond the park gate (Gregory's map 108 D14). **Meet there at 9.30 am.** Bring bush track shoes, water and lunch. Leaders: Julian and Annette Sheen. Contact them on 9594 4888 for transport help.

**June 27th (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING.** 7.45pm. Les Bursill, Sutherland Shire Aboriginal Archaeologist will speak on **Aboriginal Use of Plants as Food and Medicines.**

### OATLEY PARK HERITAGE TOURS

Very successful heritage walks of Oatley Park were conducted by the Society for about 45 people on Sunday, 17th April. **Most participants were local residents** who frequently use the park and wanted to know more about it. Each group of 8 to 10 people was provided with a leader and an assistant. Having been tutored previously by Alan Fairley, the leaders guided their groups, with detailed commentaries, to the various natural and historical features which included:

- the historic 'Lone Pine' from Gallipoli
- site of the 1951 Rover Moot attended by the then Prime Minister R.G. Menzies
- three species of rare and endangered plants
- stone work by 1929-35 depression relief workers
- history of Sandy Bay Baths.

**Our thanks to all those involved,** particularly Alan Fairley, Graham Austin, Lesley Cox, David Koffel, Val Boyan, Jan Douglas, Peter Cox, Janet Austin, Faye Coughlan and David Crawford.

(from notes by Graham Austin and Joan Bell)

### RECYCLING YOUR COMPUTERS

As computers now become quickly outdated, the disposal of old ones is becoming an environmental problem. However, a group called **YCW** (for 'Young Christian Workers') **will recycle some old computers** and peripherals as part of their 'Reboot to reduce eWaste' program. This very worthy scheme includes the training of unemployed people in computer maintenance and the donating of refurbished computers to disadvantaged people and community organisations. **Further information** on the program and on YCW may be obtained from Colin McDermott on 0415 230 980 or by email at [reboot@ycw.org.au](mailto:reboot@ycw.org.au).

### RECYCLING YOUR CORKS AND STAMPS

The conservation benefits of recycling corks and some local collecting depots for **Guides Australia** were mentioned in the January/February O.F.F. News. Since then the Editor has been advised that corks will also be **collected at our monthly meetings** by Lesley Winters, Heather Mackey or Valmai Douglas for recycling by the Guides. Lesley will also collect used **postage stamps for recycling by the Lions** in their 'Sight First Fund' which helps establish clinics in Asia. Each stamp should be cut from the envelope, leaving a small border to protect it from damage.

### VERY BRIEFLY .....

**International Day for Biological Diversity:** May 22.

**Alan Fairley's recent trip, Korea & Japan:** May 25, 8pm. Slides, NPA meeting, 123 Flora St. Sutherland.

**Orica Community Consultation** on groundwater pollution threatening Botany Bay. May 30, 5pm-8pm, Matraville. Details: Lily Robert-Everett 9352 2015.

**Wildlife Preservation Society Student Grants:** Five grants of \$1000 per year are available for wildlife conservation research by honours or postgraduate tertiary students. Applications close May 31. Details: [www.wpsa.org.au/default2.asp?contentID=4](http://www.wpsa.org.au/default2.asp?contentID=4)

**World Environment Day:** June 5.

**World Oceans Day:** June 8.

### DID YOU KNOW ?

Estimates of 8 to 10 feral foxes per square kilometre have been made for the inner urban areas of Sydney. Foxes will eat most forms of animal and vegetable matter, are active for up to 20 hours per day, and are one of the most difficult pests to eradicate. (from reports by experts to a recent Canterbury Council meeting on fox control)



# O.F.F. NEWS



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June/July 2005

## **NEXT SPEAKER: LES BURSILL**

At our next monthly meeting (see over), Les Bursill will speak on **Aboriginal Use of Plants as Food and Medicine**. Les is an archaeologist and anthropologist with a master's degree and particular expertise in the Aboriginal culture of southern Sydney. His own ancestry may be traced back to a prominent Aboriginal leader in the Sydney area at the time of the first European settlement. He is the author of many articles and reports, including two fascinating items entitled 'The Dendroglyphs of NSW' and 'First Dates in Australia'. These are now both available on a single CD for \$12 (including postage) from Sutherland Shire Environment Centre, P.O. Box 589, Sutherland 1499. We are fortunate to have Les as our speaker on **27th June** and look forward to a very interesting evening.

## **KU-RING-GAI CHASE WALK, MAY 28**

It was a magnificent morning when 15 walkers gathered at the start of the Basin track off West Head Road. We called in at some well marked Aboriginal rock carvings before changing to the Mackerel Beach track and stopping for morning tea overlooking a beautiful view of Pittwater and the settlement at Mackerel Beach. Having negotiated the private property we reached the beach and walked along the quiet water. Then there was a good rough track round the headland to Resolute Bay, a secluded beach which made a perfect lunch spot.

After lunch we took on the steep climb up the escarpment, past an Aboriginal rock shelter and a spectacular overhanging angophora. Along the top the views of Pittwater were again breathtaking. There was another area of rock carving on the unusual tessellated sandstone. Finally we paused at the West Head picnic ground before heading back along the road to the cars. There was general agreement that it was a pretty good walk. (by Julian Sheen)

## **MORE GOOD NEWS WANTED**

Because of all the recent bad news for conservation and the environment (e.g. see overleaf), the Editor would welcome relevant items of **good news** from members, up to 250 words. ([joanmariebell@aol.com](mailto:joanmariebell@aol.com))

## **50th ANNIVERSARY NOTES**

At recent monthly meetings, members have been informed of a collection box for 'spare' 50c, or any other, coins. This was set up, thanks to Faye Coughlan, to assist in meeting the expenses of our 50th anniversary projects. The total amount collected so far is **\$100. 60**. One of the proposed projects, yet to be discussed with Council, is to enhance Jinna Reserve by **planting native shrubs**. Members wanting to help with this practical environmental work are asked to contact Lesley on 9579 3782.

## **PRESTIGIOUS AWARD TO ROSE YOUNG**

We congratulate Rose Young who has recently received the **Victor Chang** Award for community services. Rose was an active O.F.F. member until a few years ago when she moved to Castle Cove. (from Jean Hilton)

## **PHILIP MOORE'S BOOK AT MEETING**

Dr Philip Moore spoke at the November 2004 meeting about his Central Australian adventures while photographing for his book on **Australia's Inland Plants**. The book has now been published and Philip has agreed to bring a few copies along to the 27th June meeting. It will be offered to members for \$44.95 which is 10% less than the normal shop price.

## **MINERS TAKE OVER OUR GARDENS**

Noisy Miners are large, aggressive native honeyeaters that live in colonies and attack other birds entering their territories. Their recent invasion of suburban gardens in large numbers has resulted in the **disappearance of smaller birds such as wrens**. The widespread planting of hybrid, long-flowering grevilleas, which provide a copious supply of nectar throughout the year, has been blamed for this invasion. However, a Sydney University study by Lisa Ashley (reported recently in Sutherland Shire's *Bushcare Link*) shows that Noisy Miners spend more time feeding on the insects and nectar of **eucalypts and open garden areas** with lawns, bark mulch etc, than on grevilleas. Lisa suggests the planting of more shrubs and groundcover with dense thickets to provide protection for small birds, and this should encourage their return.

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It is intended that meetings commence promptly at 7.45 pm.

Visitors and accompanied children are welcome to attend all meetings and field days.

## Coming Events

**June 27th (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING.** 7.45 pm. Les Bursill, Sutherland Shire Aboriginal Archaeologist will speak on **Aboriginal Use of Plants as Food and Medicines.**

**July 2nd (Saturday) FIELD DAY. LOWER BLUE MOUNTAINS,** Glenbrook to Euroka clearing, 10 km return, with a steep ascent/descent over Glenbrook Creek and another down to Euroka. Euroka is a cleared volcanic neck in a fertile depression surrounded by sandstone bushland. It is the home of Grey Kangaroos and a variety of bird life. Bring lunch, drinks, sturdy shoes and warm clothing. Train from Oatley at 8.04 am. Change at Central for 9.02 am train to Glenbrook, arriving Glenbrook 10.02 am. Leader: Alan Fairley, tel 9570 8332.

For those not inclined to walk, you can drive to Euroka clearing and meet us there for a picnic lunch. Enter the national park south of Glenbrook and follow the signs (1 hr 30 mins from Oatley) OR drive to Glenbrook station and meet us there for the walk.

**July 25th (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING.** 7.45pm. Peter Sage, Photographer, will speak on **Rookwood, the Garden Cemetery**

### DEVELOPERS TAKE OVER NSW

A decade of pandemic, pro-greed ideology, and its 'economic reforms', has helped developers become so wealthy and powerful that they have finally persuaded the NSW Government to **effectively dismantle the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.** The proposed changes are now before Parliament and will apply particularly to 'State Significant' projects, as decreed by the Minister. The changes will:

- remove the need for environmental impact assessment (unless directed by the Minister),
- remove the requirements for public display and consideration of public submissions,
- remove the need for concurrences or approvals by other Government agencies or departments.

Community groups have reacted with dismay and alarm, and have been urgently lobbying members of Parliament to vote against the proposal. Following the emasculating of the threatened species legislation last year and developers' recent victories over local councils in the Land and Environment Court, there will be **almost no environmental constraints on developers' activities** in NSW if the changes are implemented.

### MORE BAD NEWS ?

The findings of the **Port Botany Expansion Commission of Inquiry** are scheduled to be announced during June, and a huge proposal to convert part of the adjoining **Sydney Airport** to a 'mini-city' has already been announced. If both schemes proceed (as is now expected) it is difficult to see how a **permanent state of traffic chaos** can be avoided in that part of Sydney.

### URBAN CONSOLIDATION FORUM

Urban consolidation or **higher density living** is an important feature of the NSW Government's recently released 'Metrostrategy' intended to solve the problems of Sydney's relentless population growth. To many of us, however, more crowded living would mean a **lower quality of life.** There are also good reasons to believe that urban consolidation would actually increase, rather than decrease, some of the problems it is touted to fix, i.e. air pollution, traffic congestion and social disharmony. These issues will be debated in a public forum at the Sydney Mechanics School of Arts, 280 Pitt Street, on Saturday 25th June, 1 pm. The speakers will include **Dr Tony Recsei** of Save Our Suburbs, **Fran Kelly** of Total Environment Centre and **Gordon Hocking** of Sustainable Population Australia. Admission: \$4 (individual) or \$5 (family).

### VERY BRIEFLY .....

**Hurstville Council:** June 15, new date for decision on Budget and bushcare allocation (see last OFF News).

**National Schools Tree Day:** July 29.

**National Tree Day:** July 31.

**Aboriginal Spirituality and Religious Ceremony**

August 25, 8pm. Slideshow by Les Bursill. NPA Southern Sydney monthly meeting, Multi Purpose Centre, 123 Flora St., Sutherland. Visitors welcome.

### DID YOU KNOW ?

The present population of the Sydney and Central Coast area is 4.1 million. The current 'Metrostrategy' of the NSW Government envisages an increase to 5 million by 2022 and then further growth **with no upper limit !**



# O.F.F. NEWS



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## **BEYOND THE GRAVES**

**Peter Sage** is an excellent photographer who has delighted us at past meetings with superb slides from his travels in Europe and Africa. At our next monthly meeting on 25th July (see over) he will present slides from an area closer to home: **Rookwood Cemetery**. With an area of over 3 square kilometres, this is the largest cemetery in Australia, and one of the largest in the world. It was designed and landscaped in the 1860s as an **ultra-modern, garden cemetery**, departing from the old traditional grid layout, and closely linked with the newly constructed first Australian railway line. Subsequent developments resulted in a number of outstanding structures and other features which now have much **historical and heritage significance**. We expect Peter's accounts of these at the next meeting will highlight a very interesting evening.

## **EXCITING SIGHTING NEAR OATLEY**

Our first known sighting of a **Jabiru** in the Georges River area was made a few weeks ago by Debbie Andrew. Her spectacular photograph of this magnificent bird on **Illawong Point mudflats** will be placed on O.F.F.'s website at [www.off.oatleypark.com](http://www.off.oatleypark.com). Before about 1960, Jabirus were reasonably common in coastal areas of Northern and Eastern Australia (north of Sydney), and also in New Guinea, Indonesia and South-east Asia. Since then, however, they have declined seriously in all these areas except Northern Australia which is their last stronghold. They have been listed as **endangered in NSW where only about 40 pair remain**. An unusual feature of Jabirus is that the eyes of adult males are dark brown while those of adult females are bright yellow. The specimen sighted near Oatley was clearly a female. (from notes provided by Debbie Andrew and David Waterhouse).

## **BEAUTIFUL ANNIVERSARY MEMENTO**

Have you obtained your Oatley Flora and Fauna **Anniversary Coffee Mugs** yet? You will find them a very attractive memento in **glossy cobalt blue** with our emblem and **inscription in yellow-gold**. They will be on sale at the next monthly meeting for \$7.00 each.

## **50th ANNIVERSARY NOTES**

**Anniversary Dinner - bookings open next meeting**  
The special dinner to celebrate O.F.F.'s 50th Birthday will be held on the evening of **Friday 21st October** at Roslyn Gardens, Peakhurst. There will be live music by Touchwood, pre-dinner drinks and savouries followed by a two-course menu of a main and dessert. The cost is \$35.00 per person. Val Boyan will take bookings at the next meeting. Organise a table for friends and relatives - the more the merrier! (Lesley Cox, tel 9579 3782).

## **OFFSETTING GLOBAL WARMING**

For just \$40 per year (< 5% of your petrol bill), a quite respectable, non-profit group called 'Greenfleet' will plant 17 trees in cleared areas of NSW on your behalf. They have calculated that this will offset the CO2 emissions from your car if you are an 'average' Australian driver (see [www.greenfleet.com.au](http://www.greenfleet.com.au)). Doesn't this suggest that a **world-wide petrol tax of 5% to be used specifically for tree planting** might be more effective than the Kyoto Protocol?

## **GLENBROOK FIELD DAY, JULY 2**

The planned walk from Glenbrook to Euroka Clearing had to be cancelled as heavy rain on the previous days had flooded Glenbrook Causeway. So the walk was shifted to the historic Lapstone Bridges track north of Glenbrook. Train cancellations and school holidays meant a smaller than usual attendance (only 10 people) but it was a great day weather-wise and most interesting discovering new areas. First we visited the lookouts over Penrith and the Cumberland Plain, from where the skyscrapers of Sydney could be clearly seen. Then a very steep descent brought the group to historic Knapsack Bridge, built in 1867 for the Blue Mountains rail line. Return was via Mitchells Pass to Lennox Bridge, built in 1833 and the oldest bridge on mainland Australia. On our return to the cars it was decided to have a quick look at the old zig-zag rail route with cuttings, embankments and Lucasville Station. In all, it was another interesting O.F.F. trip, made all the better by being shared with interested and interesting people (report by Alan Fairley).

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(near the corner of Letitia Street)

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## Coming Events

**July 25th (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING.** 7.45 pm. Peter Sage, Photographer, will speak on **Rookwood, the Garden Cemetery.**

**July 30th (Saturday) FIELD DAY. COLONIAL SYDNEY.** A walk to appreciate the challenges of the first European settlers, archaeology of early buildings, developing a town plan through the works of Francis Greenway and John Verge. Approx 6 km on footpaths through Potts Point, Woolloomooloo Basin, Botanic Gardens, Circular Quay and Millers Point to return to Wynyard Station. Opportunity for a quick view into some restored buildings. Bring morning tea and lunch.

Take the 8.28 am train from Mortdale to Kings Cross Station. Assemble at 9.10 am on the west side of Victoria Street outside the Holiday Inn. Leaders: Darrell and Narelle Morrow, Tel 9579 1396 or 0409 587 687 (M).

**August 22nd (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING.** 7.45 pm. Sharyn Cullis, Department of Education, will speak on the River Ecology Program for schools.

### GOOD NEWS FOR BUSHCARE

Congratulations and thanks are extended to the many O.F.F. members and other residents who submitted strong objections to Hurstville City Council's proposal to drastically reduce the bushcare allocation in their **Draft Budget for 2005/6.** Largely as a result of the community's objections, the Council, at a special meeting on 15th June, changed the Draft Budget and resolved to **maintain the current level of bushcare and wetlands staffing.** They also resolved to explore other options to assist funding of the bushcare program, and 'continue to deliver the best quality outcomes'.

### NOT SO GOOD NEWS FOR MULGA ROAD

Oatley residents and Hurstville City Council are disgusted with a decision by the Land and Environment Court to allow the construction of a large **Coles Supermarket in Mulga Road.** The Council had rejected this development on a number of grounds, including the **destruction of the community's local character, traffic and other environmental impacts.** However, the developer's appeal to the Court was successful despite the Judge agreeing that the concerns about the project were valid. Legal advice on possible further action is now being sought by the Council.

Coles claims to support communities and the environment, and is a sponsor of National Tree Day on 31st July. Residents' groups are aiming to demonstrate the hypocrisy of this in various protest actions, with **details to be advertised in local shops.**

### NEW BOOK BY ALAN AND DAVID

Our irreplaceable authorities, Alan Fairley and David Waterhouse, have produced an excellent new book on the **flora and fauna of Western Sydney.** It will be available for inspection at the meeting of July 25th and further details will be in the next issue of O.F.F. News.

### KURNELL: UNCLEAR OR NUCLEAR ?

The large energy requirements of our **World's Best Practice (WBP) water desalination** scheme at Kurnell, if it proceeds, would significantly increase **greenhouse emissions** from the present coal-fired electricity supply system. However, in view of the Premier's recent comments on 'greenhouse-friendly' nuclear energy, and the Knowles-Carr Government's public disdain of the Botany Bay area (see *Leader* p.1, 14/7), a proposal for a **WBP nuclear power station** at Kurnell would not surprise angry residents of the area.

### VERY BRIEFLY ....

**National Schools Tree Day:** July 29.

**National Tree Day:** July 31.

**Biodiversity Banking** - a market-based approach to biodiversity conservation. Wednesday, August 3, 3.30pm, Maiden Theatre, Royal Botanic Gardens. Details: Desiree, [dlvb@tpg.com.au](mailto:dlvb@tpg.com.au), tel 0439 469 871.

### DID YOU KNOW ?

Biologists have identified 12 'megadiverse' countries that together contain more than 75% of the world's biodiversity. Australia is the only 'developed' country in this group (from 'Waves' Vol.10 No.4, 2005).



# O.F.F. NEWS



Published by  
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August/September 2005

## HANDS-ON ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

At the Society's next monthly meeting (see over) the presentation will differ somewhat from our usual monthly talks. It will be given by well known environmentalist and educationalist, **Sharyn Cullis**, who is also a longstanding O.F.F. member and past member of our Committee. She will demonstrate, in practical ways, the equipment and procedures her students have been using to study the water quality of Georges River and the biodiversity of its catchment.

As an employee of the Department of Education, Sharyn has been responsible for the **Georges River Environmental Education Centre** at Chipping Norton for more than 10 years. She is also responsible for the extensive teaching program associated with that Centre. Although the original title of her talk at our monthly meeting was 'River Ecology Program for Schools' she will also deal with **broader issues of environmental education**, and try to stimulate interactive discussion with the audience. Participation in this discussion by members with ideas on what our children or grandchildren should be learning about the environment will be welcomed.

## BIKE RIDING IN OATLEY PARK

In recent years mountain bikes have become a **serious threat** to Oatley Park, as may be seen in a photograph on our website at [www.off.oatleypark.com](http://www.off.oatleypark.com) and in items in the June 2003 and July 2003 issues of O.F.F. News. Despite the Society's efforts to have the problem recognised, and the subsequent erection by Council of signs prohibiting the practice, **damage to vegetation from this offence is still occurring**. The Committee therefore asks members to watch out for people riding bikes in the Park (except on the firetrail or sealed roads), and **report any occurrences** to the Council on 9330 6222.

## MULGA ROAD BATTLE CONTINUES

Most O.F.F. members and the Committee support the **continuing community protests** against the proposed **Coles Supermarket** in Mulga Road (as reported in the last O.F.F. News). The Committee has therefore sent letters to Coles management in Victoria, expressing our objections to the proposal **in the strongest terms**.

## 50th ANNIVERSARY NOTES

Bookings are now open for O.F.F.'s very special Anniversary Dinner on **Friday 21st October 2005**. It will be held at Roslyn Gardens Peakhurst at 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm and the cost is \$35 per person. Pre dinner drinks and savouries are provided, followed by a two-course dinner, tea or coffee. If you have any **special dietary requirements**, please give Lesley a call on 9579 3782. Val Boyan will be at each meeting night to take bookings. It should be a great evening so why not ask friends and relatives to help celebrate O.F.F.'s 50th birthday. Bookings close 30th September.

## O.F.F. HISTORY

Unfortunately our application for a Commonwealth grant for publishing the Society's **50 year history** was unsuccessful. The history was written by Alan Fairley in a 75-page report and we are now looking for other sources of funding. In the meantime, **two chapters**, 'Moore Reserve - the fight for preservation' and 'Poulton Park - the fight for preservation', have been **photocopied and bound into a booklet**. Copies of this will be available for inspection and loan at our next monthly meetings, and several copies will also be given to Kogarah Library.

## COLONIAL SYDNEY FIELD DAY,

The field day on 30th July to appreciate 'Colonial Sydney' was well attended with 30 participants. Not only did the group avoid the usual weekend City Rail maintenance shutdown but also enjoyed perfect weather. The walk covered colonial buildings by John Verge in Potts Point through Woolloomooloo basin and the Botanic Gardens to an inspection of the remodelled Conservatorium (originally the Government Stables designed by Francis Greenway). After lunch near the present Government House, the group proceeded through the first government house site, Customs House and Circular Quay to the Rocks; then via the Garrison Church to conclude at Fort Phillip and the Observatory at Millers Point. This opportunity to appreciate the challenges and achievements of the early European settlers was very much enjoyed by both members and visitors.  
(Report by Darrell Morrow, Field Day co-leader)

Meetings are held at the **Uniting Church Hall, Frederick Street, Oatley.**  
(near the corner of Letitia Street)

It is intended that meetings commence promptly at 7.45 pm.

Visitors and accompanied children are welcome to attend all meetings and field days.

## Coming Events

**August 22nd (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING.** 7.45 pm. **Sharyn Cullis**, Department of Education, will speak on 'The River Ecology Program for Schools and other issues of environmental education'.

**September 3rd (Saturday) FIELD DAY.** Rockdale wetlands. The trip leader, Arthur White, is an environmental consultant who has studied and monitored the frog life of the Rockdale wetlands for 20 years. This will be a drive and walk excursion of about three hours duration to four of the wetlands: the Landing Lights Salt Marsh at Arncliffe, Kings Road Swamp at Brighton-le-sands, Patmore Swamp at Kogarah, and the Scarborough Park Pond at Ramsgate. Arthur has many stories about these ecologically rich areas which include the habitat of the endangered Green and Golden Bell Frog and other interesting aquatic animals. **Meet at the wetlands end of Eve Street, Arncliffe** (off West Botany Street) **at 9.00 am.** Bring everything you need. Lunch at Scarborough Park or Cook Park if the weather is fine. Inquiries: Carolyn 9579 6631 or 0422 499 568.

**September 26th (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING.** 7.45 pm. **Ashley Hay**, Author of 'Herbarium', will speak on 'Australia's botanical collectors and collections'.

### WEST SYDNEY WILD - Exploring Nature in Sydney's Western Suburbs

This is the title of the **new book by Alan Fairley and David Waterhouse** briefly mentioned in the last issue of O.F.F. News. It describes the flora, fauna and other special features of **12 nature reserves in Western Sydney.** The natural features of these reserves are generally quite different to those of the sandstone areas well represented in Sydney's national parks and better known nature reserves. Unfortunately, most of the original ecosystems of Western Sydney have been lost or severely disturbed through agricultural and urban development but small remnants may still be seen in the 12 reserves described. As expected, they contain **many rare and vulnerable species**, and also some surprises for those of us whose experience is mainly from the sandstone areas. **Priced at only \$20**, this excellent little book should now be available in many bookshops.

### BIG SCRUB RAINFOREST DAY 2005

In the 1800s a huge expanse (750 sq. km.) of **continuous subtropical rainforest** dominated the Lismore-Ballina-Byron Bay area of northern NSW. It was called the 'Big Scrub' and regarded in that era as a frontier of exploration and development. Today, **only 300 hectares** (less than half a percent) of the original big Scrub **remain.** This is scattered over about 45 remnant patches most of which have been degraded in varying degrees by weeds etc. Nevertheless, these patches still support a **rich diversity of flora and fauna**, including at least 28 threatened plant species and 22 threatened animal species. A number of Landcare Groups have been energetically restoring the

patches and for the past seven years their efforts have been assisted by a special festival on the first Sunday in each September, designated '**Big Scrub Rainforest Day**'. This festival features entertainment, educational and fund-raising activities sponsored by a number of organisations and businesses, and has become the **largest event of its type** in Australia.

(See: [www.rainforestrecovery.org.au](http://www.rainforestrecovery.org.au))

### VERY BRIEFLY ....

#### Aboriginal Spirituality and Religious Ceremony:

August 25, 8pm. Slideshow by Les Bursill. NPA Southern Sydney monthly meeting, Multi Purpose Centre, 123 Flora St., Sutherland. Visitors welcome.

#### Keep Australia Beautiful Week: Aug 29-Sept 2,

Details: [www.keepaustraliabeautiful.org.au](http://www.keepaustraliabeautiful.org.au)

#### Big Scrub Rainforest Day: Sunday, September 4,

Rocky Creek Dam picnic grounds, Lismore. Details: [bigscrubday@rainforestrecovery.org.au](mailto:bigscrubday@rainforestrecovery.org.au)

#### National Threatened Species Day: September 7,

Details: [www.deh.gov.au/biodiversity/tsday](http://www.deh.gov.au/biodiversity/tsday)

#### NCC Climate Change Conference: Sept 15-16,

Sydney. Details: 9279 2466 or [www.nccnsw.org.au](http://www.nccnsw.org.au)

#### O.F.F. Anniversary Dinner: October 21. Bookings

close September 30. Contact Lesley on 9579 3782.

### Sign beside a high mountain lake in Western China:

*It would be wonderful that everyone is in favour of environment protection - take good care of environment is a kind of civilization of human.*

(noted by Alan Fairley on his recent trip, with the comment '... sentence structure may not be quite right, but the sentiments are certainly sound')

Hon. Secretary : Faye Coughlan, P.O. Box 52, Mortdale 2223. Ph : 9570 6338 (after 7pm)

Hon. Editor : Fred Bell, P.O. Box 441, Sutherland 2232. Ph : 9525 0552



# O.F.F. NEWS



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September/October 2005

## ASHLEY'S ARCHIVES

At the Society's next monthly meeting on 26th September (see overleaf) the speaker will be **Ashley Hay**, author of 'Herbarium' and several other books. In her extensive research for 'Herbarium' she explored the enormous amount of information available on Australian botany and its collectors, and uncovered a number of fascinating stories related to this information. We look forward to her sharing some of these stories with us at the meeting.

## TOWRA TRACK STILL CLOSED

O.F.F.'s scheduled field day on 1st October in Towra Nature Reserve **has been changed**. This is because the asbestos found along the track has not yet been removed and walking through the Reserve is still prohibited. The field day will now be a **walk from Heathcote to Lake Eckersley** as detailed overleaf.

## OATLEY PARK IN OCTOBER

Mid spring is always a good time for wildflowers in Oatley Park. Some of the plants you should see are: Blue Dampiera (*Dampiera stricta*), Shiny Guinea Flower (*Hibbertia nitida*), Fuchsia Heath (*Epacris longiflora*), Rough Wax-flower (*Philotheca scabra*), Wedding Bush (*Ricinocarpus pinifolia*), Green Spider Flower (*Grevillea mucronulata*), Pink Spider Flower (*G. sericea*), Red Bean (*Kennedia rubicuna*), Small-leaf Daisy (*Olearia microphylla*) and Eggs and Bacon (*Dillwynia retorta*). (list from Alan Fairley)

## ROCKDALE WETLANDS FIELD DAY

On Saturday, 3rd September, 21 adults and 3 children assembled to tour on foot and by car the wetlands of Rockdale. The journey began at Eve and Marsh Streets Arncliffe, home of the endangered Green and Golden Bell Frog. We then wandered through the Landing Lights Salt Marshes, home to migrating birds from as far afield as Siberia. Next stop was Patmore Swamp near Moorefield Girls' High School, then Tonbridge Creek in Scarborough Park. Our leader, Arthur White, kept us well informed about the local fauna and past history of each area. Some birds seen were Blue Wrens, Red-rumped Parrots, Red-breasted Firetails, New Holland Honeyeaters, Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos and Kookaburras. (by Carolyn Cotter)

## 50th ANNIVERSARY

**Don't forget the special Anniversary Dinner** to celebrate the Society's 50th birthday. The evening will include a slide show of photographs of events from the 1960's to the present, highlights of O.F.F.'s history related by Alan Fairley, fascinating details of the very beginning of O.F.F. by Rafe and Moyia Kowran, and easy-listening **music from the band Touchwood**. There will also be a Roll of Honour, where executive members, past and present, will be presented with Certificates of Appreciation. As at past annual dinners, a raffle will be held with great prizes generously donated by Oatley Hotel, Altra Nursery, Mary Moodies Nursery, Oatley Bottle Shop and Mortdale Cellars.

The dinner will be on **Friday 21st October at Roslyn Gardens**, 764 Forest Road Peakhurst, at 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm. There will be pre-dinner savouries and drinks followed by a two course meal at a cost of \$35 per person. You can pay this at the next meeting, or send a cheque to the Hon. Secretary, Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society, PO Box 52 Mortdale 2223. **Please include your name and contact phone number**, and the names of people accompanying you. For reservations or any special dietary requirements you may also phone Lesley on 9579 3782.

## KEEP UP THE PRESSURE ON COLES !

Undoubtedly the proposed Coles development on Mulga Road would be **detrimental to the present environment and character of Oatley**. It has been reported that Coles' senior executives are now worried about the vigorous campaign against them but some believe it will tire and the community will adapt (as taught in Business Management courses). **You can show this belief is wrong** by maintaining the pressure in letters and email to Coles and news media, and also through talk back radio. Other ways of contributing to the campaign may be obtained by contacting Anne Wagstaff on 9580 7919 or at [wagstaf@bigpond.net.au](mailto:wagstaf@bigpond.net.au)

## WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE TREASURER ?

Our Treasurer, Carolyn Cotter, has given notice that she will not be available for this office after the current year. If you are interested in taking her place please contact her on 9579 6631 or [carolcotter@hotmail.com](mailto:carolcotter@hotmail.com)

Meetings are held at the **Uniting Church Hall, Frederick Street, Oatley.**  
(near the corner of Letitia Street)

It is intended that meetings commence promptly at 7.45 pm.

Visitors and accompanied children are welcome to attend all meetings and field days.

## Coming Events

**September 26th (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING.** 7.45 pm. **Ashley Hay**, Author of 'Herbarium', will speak on 'Australia's botanical collectors and collections'.

**October 1st (Saturday) FIELD DAY. HEATHCOTE NATIONAL PARK,** Heathcote to Lake Eckersley via Scouts Training Area, 10 km return. About two hundred metres of steepish, rough and eroded track but most of the remainder is easy walking on the service road beside the Woronora water supply pipeline. Lake Eckersley is a large, picturesque pool on the Woronora River about 8 km east of the abandoned historical settlement of Eckersley (now in the Military Reserve - access prohibited). Interesting geological features and good variety of wildflowers in bloom. Meet 9.30 am at entrance to Scouts Training Area, Freeman Road, Heathcote. This is less than half a km from Heathcote Station along Oliver Street and Boundary Road. There is a train From Oatley at 8.52 am arriving at Heathcote about 9.10 am. Bring lunch, drinks, sturdy shoes and protection from sun. Leaders: Joan and Fred Bell, tel 9525 0552 or 0409 449 770 (mobile).

**October 24th (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING.** 7.45 pm. **Joy Hafey**, Environmental Consultant, will speak on 'Threatened Species and Bush Regeneration'.

### PORT BOTANY POLITRICKS ?

The findings of the Port Botany Commission of Inquiry, scheduled to be publicly released in June, **have been held back** by the State Government. Applications by community groups to view the Commission's final report under the Freedom of Information Act have been refused 'in the public interest'. Consequently there is speculation that the Commission has actually confirmed the potentially serious environmental and social impacts of the proposal, as claimed in community submissions (including those from O.F.F. and O.F.F. members). If this speculation is correct the **findings could influence voting** in the Marrickville and Maroubra by-elections on 17th September. Could this be the reason for delaying their release ?

### BEIJING OLYMPIC MASCOT

One would think that when Beijing authorities choose a mascot for the 2008 Olympic Games it will be a Giant Panda, a Chinese Tiger or perhaps a Red-crowned Crane. But the mascot race is being led by the little-known Tibetan Antelope. This rare animal lives on the high plateau of Qinghai-Tibet between 4000 and 5000 metres and can run at speeds of 100 kph. This was not fast enough to stop its slaughter in the 1980s and 1990s when it was killed in the thousands (often by the machine guns of soldiers) as a single shawl from its hair could fetch as much as US \$30,000. Numbers dropped as low as 15,000 but since government protection in 1998, there may be now as many as 50,000. The campaign to make it the Olympic mascot is hoped to draw greater attention to the animal and help in its protection. (by Alan Fairley)

### NOTABLE LOCAL WILDLIFE SIGHTINGS

Have you seen Debbie Andrew's great photograph of a **Jabiru** (or Black-necked Stork) on Georges River ? It's on our website at [www.off.oatleypark.com](http://www.off.oatleypark.com). Last month on two occasions near Jewfish Point Debbie saw an **Osprey**, another rare northern visitor. She has also recently observed a small **Echidna** in Oatley Park. It was apparently a juvenile, suggesting that Echidnas are breeding there. Other recent sightings in Oatley Park by O.F.F. members include a pair of **Crested Hawks** and a **Swamp Wallaby**.

### BLUE MOUNTAINS HERITAGE PLAN

The 45-page Draft Strategic Plan for the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area is now on public exhibition. Copies may be obtained free from National Parks and Wildlife Service by calling 4784 7326 or faxing 4782 6199. **Submissions are invited** from the public up to 14th October.

### VERY BRIEFLY ....

**Forests and Free Speech:** Public Meeting, September 22, 6pm, University of Technology, Sydney. Panel discussion on the right to peaceful protest, importance of Tasmanian forests and related topics. Details from Colin Maltman on 0411 578 178.

**Oil depletion....coming ready or not:** Public Forum, October 8, 2pm, Mitchell Theatre, 280 Pitt St Sydney, Details: [www.population.org.au](http://www.population.org.au) or Gordon, 9528 6091

**Great Australian Bushwalk** - Across Australia in a Day: October 16. 100 nationally co-ordinated bushwalks by community organizations to celebrate walking in the Australian outdoors. Details: 9290 2503 or visit [www.greataustralianbushwalk.org.au](http://www.greataustralianbushwalk.org.au)



# O.F.F. NEWS

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## 'MORE RARE THAN WOLLEMI PINE'

Our next monthly speaker, **Joy Hafey**, has been much involved with the identification and preservation of a plant described as 'more rare than the Wollemi Pine'. This is *Persoonia bargoensis* which occurs only in several tiny populations near Bargo. It is one of the very rare and vulnerable species in Alan Fairley's book 'Seldom Seen'. Joy is an ecologist and molecular biologist who worked at **Wirrimbirra Sanctuary** for a number of years, continuing some of the valuable conservation projects initiated there by Thistle Stead. Joy has also been working in other areas as an environmental consultant, and has particular expertise in bush regeneration. The title of her talk on 24th October (see overleaf) is '**Threatened Species and Bush Regeneration**'.

## CHANGES TO CHILDREN'S WALK

As so many children are involved in sporting and other regular Saturday activities, the special walk for children has been changed from Saturday 29th October to **Sunday, 30th October**. All participants must be officially registered with the walk leader, Matt Allison, preferably before Thursday 27th October, and all participants under 18 must have **written permission from a parent or guardian**. See overleaf for details.

## 50th ANNIVERSARY DINNER

**Don't forget - Friday 21st October 2005 at Roslyn Gardens, 764 Forest Road Peakhurst. There is an entrance from Forest Road and also from Prospect Road where on-street parking is available. Pre-dinner drinks and savouries will be served at 7.00pm and we expect dinner to commence at 7.30pm.**

**Contact Lesley on 9579 3782 if you have any inquiries.**

**A special thank you to Martinello Exquisite Chocolates for donating beautiful hand-made chocolates for our raffle.**

## JOAN MONAGHAN

The Society was saddened to hear of the recent death of Joan Monaghan after a long illness. Joan and her husband, Dr Bill Monaghan, have been members of the Society for many years. We extend our deepest sympathy to Bill, and their family and relatives.

## MYRA WALL GARDEN

**Thanks to Hurstville City Council** for renovating the wall around the Myra Wall Garden in Oatley Park and also for arranging an appropriate plaque to celebrate our 50th Anniversary. We are inviting **volunteers to help with replanting** the garden, possibly at our Naming Day Picnic on 7th December. If you would like to participate **please contact Lesley on 9579 3782.**

## DIGITAL VOICE RECORDER

**Thanks also to Kogarah Council** for approving O.F.F.'s application for a grant for a digital voice recorder. This should be useful for many of our activities, including the O.F.F. History Project. In the application we offered to make the equipment **available to other community organisations** such as the Oatley Heritage Group.

## LAKE ECKERSLEY FIELD DAY

The 1st October was a fairly hot day for the Society's 10 km walk from **Heathcote to Lake Eckersley** and return. However, mild breezes in the valleys ensured that conditions were not too arduous for the 16 participants. The first section was through the Harold Kaye Scout Training Camp which stimulated nostalgic memories for some of us who took part in scout activities here many years ago. Morning tea was at Mirang Pool on Heathcote Creek, and lunch was at Lake Eckersley on the Woronora River. During lunch some of the party scrambled through the bush at the northern end of the Lake to examine a large rock shelter shown on the maps as Dingo Cave. Throughout the walk there were excellent displays of **wildflowers typical of Hawkesbury Sandstone** terrain in spring. These were highlighted by a number of **stands of Waratahs**, all in full, magnificent bloom. We were fortunate, no doubt, in seeing **Heathcote National Park** at one of the best possible times.

Meetings are held at the **Uniting Church Hall, Frederick Street, Oatley.**  
(near the corner of Letitia Street)

It is intended that meetings commence promptly at 7.45 pm.

Visitors and accompanied children are welcome to attend all meetings and field days.

## Coming Events

**October 24th (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING.** 7.45 pm. Joy Hafey, Biologist and Environmental Consultant, will speak on 'Threatened Species and Bush Regeneration'

**October 30th (Sunday) FIELD DAY (Note that date has been changed) . Oatley Park - Walk around Lime Kiln Bay.** A walk for children (and adults too). This gentle stroll is pitched particularly at children to allow them to discover the bush on our doorstep, with discussions at various points where different plant communities display their completely different characteristics. It will take 1-1.5 hours on easy grades with a few steps. At the end, those wishing to stay may have a BBQ/picnic lunch in the Park. Bring hats, sunscreen and, if staying, lunch. **It is essential for all participants to register with the walk leader,** and for all participants under 18 to have written permission from a parent or guardian on the required form. You can obtain the form and register at our meeting on October 24th or by phoning the leader, Matt Allison, on 0408 605 923 (mobile) or 9570 8271 (home), preferably before the 27th. On registration you will be provided with details of the meeting place and time.

**November 28th (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING.** 7.45 pm. Ann & Bob Young - geoscience academics - Reading the Landscape - the Woronora Plateau.

### PORT BOTANY POLITRICKS CONTINUE

The long awaited findings of the Port Botany Commission of Inquiry (see last issue of O.F.F. News) have now been released. They recommend that the **originally proposed development not be approved.** However, the NSW Government has chosen to ignore the findings and has announced that the original massive expansion **will still proceed.**

### SYDNEY'S INSATIABLE SAND DEMAND

The once great sand dunes of Kurnell Peninsula have virtually disappeared and Sydney's other main sand source for the building industry at Penrith Lakes will become exhausted by 2011. New potential supplies are therefore being urgently investigated by the NSW Government's **Sydney Construction Materials Strategy (SCMS).** The most likely sources are several large deposits of consolidated sandstone which, according to the SCMS, can be economically mined and converted to the required product by crushing and washing. However, these deposits are in **environmentally sensitive areas** of the Blue Mountains and Central Coast, namely Newnes Plateau near Lithgow and the Calga-Somersby ridge near Gosford. As there is much concern about the social and environmental impacts of mining in these areas, **this is fast becoming a major issue.** It is, of course, just another example of the underestimated and unheeded costs of an ever-growing Sydney, with its insatiable demands for space and resources.

### MAKE YOUR HOME GREENER

A Home Renovators' Workshop featuring domestic **energy and water saving** will be held on Saturday 12th November, 1pm to 4 pm, at Arncliffe. It will be conducted by the Australian Conservation Foundation in conjunction with Hurstville, Kogarah and Rockdale Councils. The event will include a presentation by **Michael Mobbs** whose sustainable, self-sufficient home at Chippendale has been widely acclaimed. Call Cindy on 9330 6260 for further details and to book.

### NEW SYSTEM OF STANDARD PLANS

In accordance with the Department of Planning's new system, a **Draft Standard Local Environmental Plan** has been placed on public exhibition, and comments are invited up to 4th November. It may be viewed at: [www.planning.nsw.gov.au/planning\\_reforms/index](http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/planning_reforms/index)

### DRAFT PLAN FOR MIGRATORY BIRDS

The Department of the Environment and Heritage is calling for **public comments** on a Draft Conservation Plan for Migratory Birds before **17th November.** Copies may be obtained by emailing [ciu@deh.gov.au](mailto:ciu@deh.gov.au) or by phoning freecall 1800 803 772

### DID YOU KNOW ?

The Platypus (*Ornithorhynchus anatinus*) has been observed to remain under water for up to 14 minutes. During this time its heart beat slows down from about 200 per minute to less than 10 per minute, greatly reducing its need for oxygen.



# O.F.F. NEWS

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November/December 2005

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## 50th Anniversary Edition

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### HOW THE SOCIETY BEGAN

Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society began on **30th November 1955** with a meeting at the home of Rafael and Moyia Kowron. This relatively young couple were delighted with the bushland setting of their Oatley home but were appalled at the continuing destruction of the bushland through vegetation removal, tree felling, rubbish dumping, fire lighting and other acts of vandalism. About 20 other Oatley residents with similar concerns attended the Kowrons' meeting. The subsequent history of the Society and their success in halting the destruction have been recorded in Alan Fairley's 100-page book '**Being Green - The First 50 Years**'. Pre-release copies of this book may be inspected at the next monthly meeting on November 28th (see p.4).

### ANNIVERSARY (NAMING DAY) PICNIC

**Come along to celebrate a very special day by helping replant the Myra Wall Garden in Oatley Park followed by a very relaxed and informal BYO Picnic at the Castle.**

**Date: Wednesday, 7th December. THIS IS 50 YEARS TO THE DAY SINCE THE SOCIETY WAS NAMED.**

**Time:**

- for planting, meet 3.45 pm at the Steam Roller Park (BYO gardening gloves)
- for picnic, meet 5.00 pm at the Castle (BYO picnic, including a cup or mug for tea/coffee)

**If you would like to help with the planting, please call Lesley on 9579 3782.**

**We will have a Birthday Cake and the Georges River Community Service have generously offered to serve tea/coffee as well as the cake.**

**Anniversary Mugs will be on sale at the picnic - so here is a great opportunity to buy, and use, this handsome memento.**

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY O.F.F.

We have received congratulatory messages from:

- Kevin Greene MP, Member for Georges River
- Nature Conservation Council of NSW
- Hurstville City Council
- Hurstville Labor Women's Committee
- Kogarah Municipal Council
- Daryl Melham MP, Member for Banks
- Betty Weekes of Evans Head, a former O.F.F. News Editor (late 1970s and early 1980s).

### ANNUAL DINNER: 'BEST EVER'

Everyone (all 105 of us) at the 50th Anniversary Dinner on 21st October thoroughly enjoyed the evening. One member who had been to most of the Society's annual dinners since the 1960s described it as the 'best ever'. Thanks to the impeccable planning by **Lesley Cox** and her hard-working subcommittee, and the cool, professional competence of MC **Julian Sheen** it 'all went like clockwork'. Every item was a memorable feature: fascinating talks, especially by founder **Rafe Kowron**, and Vice President **Alan Fairley**, the Roll of Honour (see below), the entertainment group Touchwood (with their beautiful harmonising), and the excellent food and beverages. Between speeches and other items, the stimulating atmosphere was maintained by a '**rolling**' slideshow of O.F.F. activities and people, starting with the earliest days and extending to the present time. This marvel of latest technology was arranged and set up by former O.F.F. President **John Winters**, using photographs and pictures provided by many O.F.F. members. It involved the linking of a digital light projector with a portable computer which operated continuously and automatically after initial activation. Thanks to **Faye Coughlan**, our tireless Secretary, a number of really nice gifts were generously donated by local businesses and others for the raffle and lucky door prizes (see below). These were just a few of the many features that contributed to a delightful and fitting climax to our 50th Anniversary celebrations.

## ROLL OF HONOUR

At the Anniversary Dinner, **Certificates of Appreciation** were presented to 18 members on our Roll of Honour. This comprises past and present members of O.F.F. Executive (presidents, secretaries and treasurers) and founding members. Notable inclusions amongst the recipients were the first president and secretary, **Rafael and Moyia Kowron**.

Other recipients who have been particularly active O.F.F. members over a long period of time included Harry Whaite, Keith Underwood, June Underwood, Alan Fairley, Val Boyan, Lesley Cox, John Watters and Robin Dickson.

## PRIZE DONORS

We are very grateful to the following local businesses for their generous donations of raffle and door prizes at the Anniversary Dinner:

**Altra Nursery**  
**Martinello Exquisite Chocolates**  
**Mary Moodies Nursery**  
**Mortdale Cellars**  
**Oatley Bottle Shop**  
**Oatley Hotel**

Our Program Officer, **Melina Amerasinghe**, donated the book 'Herbarium' as an additional prize. It had been autographed by the author, Ashley Hay, who spoke at the September O.F.F. meeting.

## ANNIVERSARY DISPLAY AT LIBRARY

A display of the Society's activities and achievements, referring particularly to our 50th Anniversary, may be seen at **Penshurst Library**, 630 Forest Road.

## THISTLE Y. HARRIS LECTURE

Thistle Y. Harris was a famous writer, botanist and conservationist, especially in the period after World War II. She accepted an invitation to be the **Society's first guest speaker** at one of the earliest meetings on 27th February, 1956. The 50th anniversary of this event coincides with our monthly meeting in February 2006 and we have therefore arranged a special speaker to present a 'Thistle Y. Harris Lecture' on that evening. **Associate Professor Paul Adam** will be the speaker and his topic will be 'Saving the NSW floral heritage: good intentions meet reality'. Paul is a leading authority on Australian wetland biota and spoke on that topic at a Society meeting a few years ago. This time he will reflect on his broader experience as Chairperson of the NSW Government's **Threatened Species Scientific Committee**.

## O.F.F. ACHIEVEMENTS 1955-2005

- Continually opposed proposals for Oatley Park which would have destroyed its natural values.
- Raised nearly \$400,000 in grants to rehabilitate local bushland reserves at Yarran Road, Neverfail Bay, Riverwood Park, Poulton Park, Moore Reserve, Myles Dunphy Reserve, Shipwrights Bay and Oatley Pleasure Ground.
- Contributed to campaigns opposing rubbish dumping in Jewfish Bay, Gungah Bay, Poulton Park mangroves and to keep Moore Reserve for passive recreation.
- Assisted in the preparation of leaflets for Hurstville and Kogarah Councils, namely 'Living with Trees' and 'Caring for Bushland Reserves'.
- Continually informed the local community about green issues and developed a conservation ethic through monthly newsletters, expert speakers at monthly meetings, leaflets, and stalls at functions such as Lions Festivals.
- Provided a vehicle for involvement of local people who are interested in environmental matters and wish to act on those interests.
- Acted as a voice for the local community concerned about local policies such as urban consolidation, tree removal, feral animal control, Georges River management and bushland protection.
- Provided a focus for people who wish to meet and walk in a stimulating and friendly atmosphere and, at the same time, to enjoy outdoor activities and learn about the environment.
- Provided input to Councils' policies through written submissions and participation in meetings and committees, for example on the management plans for Oatley Park and Heinrich Reserve, bushfire control plans, environmental plans and the riding of mountain bikes in Oatley Park.
- Negotiated with Hurstville Council and Fire Brigade to develop a Fire Management Plan for Oatley Park.
- Worked on Hurstville Council's Tree Preservation Working Party to develop environmentally friendly policies.
- Contributed to campaigns opposing Helensburgh urban development, Lucas Heights mega-tip, construction of Sailing Club at Vincentia, Holsworthy Airport, sell-off of Commonwealth land at Mill Creek, telecommunication tower in Oatley Park, and other similar issues.
- Financial and moral support to other conservation organizations.

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SANDSTONE

**Dr Bob Young** and **Dr Ann Young**, both O.F.F. members, would know more than anyone else in the world about the sandstone dominating our favourite areas south of the Georges River. As **geoscience experts** at the University of Wollongong, they have been studying sandstone landforms for more than 30 years, and have just completed a book 'Understanding the Scenery - Royal National Park.' We are fortunate in having them as the speakers at our final monthly meeting for 2005 on 28th November (see over). Their talk is titled '**Reading the Landscape - the Woronora Plateau**' and it is sure to enhance our appreciation of the significance of sandstone for our special biota and scenery.

## FIRST ISSUE OF O.F.F. NEWS

Alan Fairley was editor of O.F.F. News for 25 years to 2004. Before Alan the editors were Betty Weekes, Olive Whaite, Ida Carder and Beatrice Goldstein. The very first issue was produced by **Beatrice Goldstein** in **February 1968**. It advised of a talk at the following monthly meeting entitled 'A New Approach to Bird Photography' by Donald Trounson. It also gave notice of a 'bird field day' at Scheyville and Pugh's Lagoon to be led by Athol Colemane. Items discussed in the issue included Lake Pedder, the woodchip industry, NSW water pollution control legislation, and mining leases at Colong Caves.

## RECOVERY OF THREATENED FLORA

The **Illawarra Regional Threatened Flora Recovery Program** is now progressing well after a dubious start several years ago. It is a co-operative effort between the Department of Environment and Conservation, Natural Heritage Trust and Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority, and involves local councils, community groups and landholders.

The Program's activities include surveys and monitoring, weed removal and feral animal control. There are **six target species** scattered through the coastal plain from **Stanwell Park to Nowra**, namely:

- Illawarra Socketwood (*Daphnandra sp. C*)
- Illawarra Ziera (*Ziera granulata*)
- Illawarra Irene (*Irenepharsis typherus*)
- Illawarra Greenhood Orchid (*Pterostylis gibbosa*)
- Pink Rice Flower (*Pimelea spicata*)
- White-flowered Wax Plant (*Cynanchum elegans*).

Detailed information on most of the above species may be found in Alan Fairley's book '**Seldom Seen**'.

## NEW TREASURER NEEDED

Our honorary treasurer, Carolyn Cotter, has reminded us that she will not be available for this office after the current year. If you are interested in taking her place please contact her on 9579 6631.

## LOCAL FAUNA SIGHTINGS

Well, perhaps not exactly local, but in nearby suburbs across the river. The latest issue of Sutherland Shire's 'Bushcare Link' has reported sightings of a **Koala** at Engadine (in a front yard palm tree !) and **Swamp Wallabies** at Bonnet Bay, Loftus, Heathcote and Engadine.

## NEW PLANT FOUND IN OATLEY PARK

A 1-metre tall yellow pea reported flowering in Oatley Park late September turned out to be *Gompholobium grandiflorum* (Large Wedge-pea). Confirmed by Alan Fairley, it is a new record for Oatley Park and an addition to the plant species list. Only two specimens have been found in the Park. Both are on the plateau in the south-western corner of Zone D.

## DESALINATION PLANT PROTESTS

Most environmental and conservation organisations in the Sydney area have **expressed concerns** about the proposed Kurnell desalination plant to the Premier and also to Senator Ian Campbell (Federal Minister for the Environment and Heritage). They are urging individuals to make similar submissions to the Premier and suggest that some or all of the following points could be mentioned:

- there is much concern about the **lack of an EIS** and the **lack of community consultation**
- the vast amount of electrical power required for desalination and the resulting significant **additions to greenhouse emissions and global warming**
- the need to dispose of a **highly concentrated brine** solution and the potential impacts of this on marine and estuary life
- the impacts of the development on **flora and fauna** at the site of the plant and in adjoining areas
- the impacts on the **Kurnell community** and on the **heritage qualities** of the Kurnell peninsula
- the failure of the NSW Government and water supply authority to fully utilise **other water saving methods** such as recycling, compulsory roof tanks, economic incentives for saving water, and stronger disincentives for wasteful water uses
- the enormous cost to taxpayers of this economically inefficient method of supplying water.

It is also suggested that writers ask what the Government is going to do about these issues and to keep the writers informed of relevant actions and decisions. This is intended to impose a stronger obligation on the Premier to respond.

## PAY YOUR SUBSCRIPTION EARLY

As for 2005, the annual subscription for 2006 will be \$25 per person or family (at same addresss). You may pay this early, if you wish, by mailing a cheque to P.O. Box 52 Mortdale 2223 or by giving it to Carolyn at the meeting of 28th November.

Meetings are held at the **Uniting Church Hall, Frederick Street, Oatley.**  
(near the corner of Letitia Street)

It is intended that meetings commence promptly at 7.45 pm.

Visitors and accompanied children are welcome to attend all meetings and field days.

## Coming Events

**November 28th (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING.** 7.45 pm. Ann and Bob Young, geoscience experts, will speak on 'Reading the Landscape - the Woronora Plateau'. This is the last monthly meeting for 2005, ending with a social supper and bargain stall. Please bring a plate of 'finger food' and money for the bargains.

**December 7th (Wednesday) ANNIVERSARY PICNIC IN THE PARK AND REPLANTING OF MYRA WALL GARDEN,** Oatley Park. For replanting Myra Wall Garden (see p.1), meet 3.45 pm at Steam Roller Park WITH GARDENING GLOVES. For Picnic, meet 5.00 pm at the Castle. Bring your own food and drink. This is a special event to commemorate not only the Anniversary but also the naming of the Society on December 7th 1955.

**February 6th (Monday) ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.** 7.45 pm Election of officers, members slide night and social supper.

**February 27th (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING.** 7.45 pm. This will feature the Thistle Y. Harris Memorial Lecture, commemorating 50 years since the Society was addressed by the eminent conservationist and botanist, Thistle Y. Harris, on February 27th, 1956. It will be given by Associate Professor Paul Adam and is titled 'Saving the NSW floral heritage: good intentions meet reality'. Professor Adam is Head of the School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of NSW, and former Chairperson of the Scientific Committee for the NSW Threatened Species and Conservation Act.

### LIME KILN BAY CHILDREN'S WALK

At least 20 children with parents, grandparents and other minders turned up to register for our special children's walk around Lime Kiln Bay on October 30th. Unfortunately the weather changed from cloudy and fine to very cloudy and wet so Matt Allison, the walks leader, decided to officially postpone the outing to another day, perhaps early next year.

### SNOWY MOUNTAINS 2006

As usual each year in January, members will be able to enjoy a break from summer in Sydney by heading for Smiggins Chalet in the Snowy Mountains.

**Dates:** Saturday, 14th January to Saturday 21st January.

**Cost:** \$48 per person per night double or share  
\$71 per person per night single.

For more information and bookings please phone **Robin Dickson** on **9580 5663**. If you already have your name on the list please phone Robin to confirm.

### YOUR FAVOURITE WALK ?

If you have a favourite **bushland or heritage walk** up to about 12km and are prepared to lead an O.F.F. outing, please contact our Field Officer, **Janet Austin**, on **9579 2375**. Janet is now preparing the program of field days for 2006 and would like to hear from you.

### VERY BRIEFLY.....

**Coastcare Week**, December 1-7. For details see [www.landcareaustralia.com.au](http://www.landcareaustralia.com.au)

**Climate Protest Day**, Walk against Global Warming, December 3. Meet 11am at Sydney Town Hall and walk to Hyde Park. For more information call Nature Conservation Council on 9279 2466.

**Ocean Care Day**, December 4. For details email [judy.reize@manly.nsw.gov.au](mailto:judy.reize@manly.nsw.gov.au)

### 2006: THE WAY FORWARD ?

With globalisation and the ascendancy of continuing economic growth ideology in both Federal and State Governments, many changes are occurring that seem unfavourable to conservation. At our local level these are evident in current issues such as the Port Botany expansion, Kurnell desalination plant, high density urbanisation, and the Mulga Road Coles proposal. To deal successfully with such issues in 2006 **we will need to find better ways of identifying and influencing the people who can make a difference.** We need new and innovative strategies, perhaps through the political system and latest technology, because our traditional methods are now less effective.

(Editor's expansion of a note by Graham Austin )